



MINUTES

Katie Bielski-Medina, Chairperson
John Benbow, Jr.
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
John Krings, President
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz
Julie Timm

February 5, 2024

LOCATION: Board of Education Office, 510 Peach Street, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Katie Bielski-Medina, Troy Bier, John Krings, Larry Davis, Julie Timm

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: John Benbow, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Phil Bickelhaupt, Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Jennifer Wilhorn

- I. Call to Order
- II. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- III. Public Comment – none.
- IV. Actionable Items
 - A. 2024-25 Strategic Plan

Ms. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Superintendent Craig Broeren presented recommended updates to the District Strategic Plan. Ms. Filtz explained that under Objective 1, work continues on the K-12 Technology scope and sequence, and upgrades from SmartBoards to interactive flat panels is occurring at the middle and elementary school levels. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will continue to be a focus with a goal for all staff to be provided with a fundamental understanding about how it can be used productively and positively by staff and students. AI will be integrated more comprehensively at the secondary level.

Objectives 2 and 3 in the Strategic Plan have been combined into a single Objective 2. The revised Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS) process falls under this objective which examines the “whole child” and provides a District framework for each building to develop systems specific to their own needs. The roles of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and student success and intervention teams are more clearly defined in the MLSS guide. With a social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum now adopted in grades K-12, a District committee has been working on writing the Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) for grades K-5 that will be reported on for parents. Elementary grade level teams will discuss the initial draft of these ELOs during the March, 2024 professional development (PD) day.

The focus for the 2024-25 school year will be on implementing successful “Late Start Mondays” that support MLSS/PLC integration and appropriate tiered instruction and timely intervention as needed both academically and behaviorally. Administrative teams will consistently be evaluating the effectiveness of the MLSS framework and systems of support provided.

Lastly, the Act 20 reading initiative falls under Objective 2, and the Board will continue to be updated as the process unfolds.

With regard to Objective 3, the District will continue to strengthen community partnerships with local organizations and entities to complement and enhance WRPS programming. Collaboration with agencies and mental health providers in a variety of ways to meet student and family needs is also a focus under this objective.

Mr. Broeren explained that under Objective 4, there is a slight modification with regard to describing the playground upgrades anticipated at various sites throughout the District. With regard to building usage, the only building that remains somewhat underutilized is the East Jr. High facility. However, the East building is used for numerous District and non-school related activities that many in the community may be unaware of such as housing District and Board administrative offices, Central Oaks Academy programming, Wood County Alternative School programming, professional development activities and team meetings, elementary and middle school theatre and secondary level athletic practices and events, elementary stack cup competition, archery competitions, state art convention activities, and community use by organizations such as the Wisconsin Rapids City Park & Recreation Department for volleyball and pickleball activities, law enforcement and fire department drills and trainings, Wood County Sheriff Department workshops, community educational events, kitchen rentals, Mid-State Technical College law enforcement cadet training, and as a polling place for elections.

Under Objective 5, the implementation of a comprehensive cybersecurity incident response plan was moved here from Objective 1 since it fits better under the topic of safety and security. The digitized mapping project through Critical Response Group was finalized this year using grant dollars through the Office of School Safety.

Ms. Filtz provided commentary around action and task steps affiliated with Objectives 6-9 and explained that a comprehensive report on the use of ESSER III funds would be coming to the Board this spring.

Mr. Broeren provided some background around including a new Objective 10 to the Strategic Plan which pertains to the development of a comprehensive public relations program that showcases WRPS programming, builds support and trust among stakeholders, and unifies staff, students, families, and the community around District initiatives. He explained that oftentimes districts the size of WRPS have a person hired to promote such advocacy. Securing support from all aspects of the community by WRPS telling its story, rather than relying on others to promote accurate and positive information is hugely beneficial. Controlling our own narrative would help members of the public gain a better understanding and receive an accurate interpretation of circumstances. Everyone throughout the organization plays a part in changing the community narrative from negative to positive, and the tasks and action steps outlined in Objective 10 help to provide a road map to get where we want to be.

Committee members signaled support for the new objective, and questioned whether or not hiring an individual to assist with public relations is part of the plan since it is possible that the position could pay for itself if the role is that vital. Mr. Broeren stated that given the looming budget deficits anticipated in the next few years, it wouldn't be prudent to add such a position that is so far removed from the classroom. He shared that one of the biggest factors between supportive communities and those that are not has everything to do with the narrative being spun within the community, and whether individual attitudes and conversations are positive or negative when folks talk about their community and the organizations within it.

ES-1 Motion by John Krings, seconded by Julie Timm, to approve of the 2024-25 Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Strategic Plan as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

B. No Red Ink 3-Year Renewal

Ms. Filtz presented a proposal to approve of a 3-year renewal of the "No Red Ink" software program that allows staff to individualize grammar instruction and identify any gaps that may need to be addressed. The 3-year renewal will cost \$55,468.00 and cover all students in grades 6 through 12. ESSER III grant dollars would be used for the purchase.

ES-2 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Krings to recommend approval of the 3-year renewal of No Red Ink for a total cost of \$55,468.00 to be funded through ESSER III grant dollars. Motion carried unanimously.

C. WRAMS Percussion Purchase

Mr. Broeren explained that while the music curriculum acquisition is not scheduled to occur for another two years, he happened to have a conversation with Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS) Teacher Dale Dahl this summer regarding the general condition of middle school band equipment when he bumped into Mr. Dahl as he was handling an instrument donated from a community member. The conversation evolved into an evaluation of the condition of equipment currently being used by students at WRAMS. After identifying that the condition of most of the equipment is near end of life, Mr. Broeren requested that music staff at WRAMS develop a list of items needing to be replaced. Knowing that there are funds available in this year's budget and given the condition of the existing equipment, the administration recommends the purchase of replacement equipment as outlined in a quote provided by Steve Weiss Music at a cost of \$28,859.90.

ES-3 Motion by Julie Timm, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the purchase of percussion equipment for the middle school band program as outlined in the proposal from Steve Weiss Music and the purchase of a storage chest from Home Depot at a total cost of \$28,859.90 to be paid from the 2023-2024 WRAMS building budget. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program

Ms. Filtz explained that the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program is an internationally acclaimed parent engagement program shown to help children succeed at school by building stronger, more supportive relationships at home. Four buildings currently operate a FAST program which include Pitsch, Grove, Howe, and Washington. In a FAST cycle, families meet for eight weeks. FAST WORKS is an extension of FAST aimed at continuing the connection between schools and families after the eight-week FAST cycle has ended. Ms. Filtz described how the FAST WORKS session operates with parents meeting monthly for a parent led event. Certain individuals from the original FAST team must be in attendance to support families.

ES-4 Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Troy Bier, to recommend approval of paying no more than \$150.00 a night to implement FAST WORKS at participating buildings. This cost includes a staff hourly rate of \$25.00 plus other associated costs as presented to be paid out of the Get Kids Ahead Grant. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Updates

A. Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Mid-Year Report

Ms. Filtz presented the annual Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Mid-Year Report, noting that school districts have the latitude to set their own benchmarks for reporting. Years ago, the District benchmark was set at the 25th percentile in order to ensure any students scoring below that benchmark on the screener in reading or math would have intentional focus to

determine if Tier 3 interventions might be necessary. Students scoring between the 26th and 40th percentile were evaluated to determine if there is a potential need for strong Tier 2 intervention strategies. Over the course of the past year, it has become clear that the AGR scores being used based upon the 25th percentile did not align with Forward exam content which concentrates on students being proficient or advanced at the 40th percentile and above category. Due to the fact that the screenings for AGR were not aligning with Forward exam proficient and advanced categories, some parents were confused with what appeared to be mixed results in their child's performance. To rectify this, for the first time this year the screener results were adjusted to be based upon the 40th percentile benchmark, which is obviously a jump from the 25th percentile. Parents were informed about the benchmark changes so that they wouldn't be alarmed in the score differences for their students from this year to last.

Due to the changes implemented, the scores reflected on the mid-year AGR report are lower in comparison to what has been reported in the past. The overall District goal remains at 80 percent of students to be scoring in the 40th percentile by year-end. The administration is hopeful that the changes implemented will provide more meaningful information for classroom teachers to detect issues, adjust instruction if needed, and help students be more successful.

Ms. Filtz reviewed formative and summative assessment methods being used in each grade level as well as AGR strategies implemented for reading and math at each level.

B. Dual Credit/AP United States History

Ms. Filtz reported that Lincoln High School (LHS) has recently learned that AP United States History can be accepted as Dual Credit through Mid-State Technical College. As a result, the class will be offered for AP credit or Dual Credit during the 2024-2025 school year. Social Studies teacher Jacob Bertagnoli has gone through the certification process necessary to teach this course in the coming year.

C. Student Travel

Sara Danke, Theatre Educator and Director for WRAMS and LHS, registered members of the LHS Thespian Troupe #525 to participate in the Thespys educational program which occurred in November, 2023. Students receiving a Superior rating at local and regional competitions are invited to participate in Nationals at the International Thespian Festival (ITF) where students have the opportunity to receive significant scholarships.

This year, the ITF will be held at Indiana University Bloomington on June 23-28, 2024 and four LHS students scored with Superior ratings in state competition and are advancing on to Nationals. Ms. Danke is not certain she will be able to attend the June competition; however, she has teamed up with a colleague from Kettle Moraine High School who will be their chaperone and who is willing to sponsor them throughout this process in Bloomington if needed. The cost is \$999 for a Student All Access Pass and includes housing and meals for the entire week. The LHS Theatre Dept. will sponsor money for the Thespy entry and transportation cost. The students plan to fundraise and ask for sponsorships to cover any remaining costs.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

- ES-1 2024-25 WRPS Strategic Plan**
- ES-2 Renewal of No Red Ink Software**
- ES-3 Percussion Purchase for WR Area Middle School**
- ES-4 Implementation Cost of FAST Works**

VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Committee reviewed the following future agenda items:

- FAST Program Updates (March)
- Play and Learn Updates (March)
- Start College Now (SCN) and Early College Credit Program (ECCP) Applications (April)
- CTE Updates (April)

Ms. Medina adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.