



AGENDA

Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee

510 Peach Street · Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 · (715) 422-6005

Anne Lee, Chairman
John Benbow, Jr.
Katie Bielski-Medina
Larry Davis
Sandra Hett
John Krings
Mary Rayome, President

August 3, 2009

LOCATION: Washington Elementary School Cafeteria

TIME: Immediately following the Business Services Committee meeting, but not before 6:30 p.m.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Curriculum Development
 - A. 2008-09 Writing Assessment Results
 - B. Lincoln High School Advanced Placement Report
 - C. Intermediate Reading Intervention Recommendation
- IV. Updates and Reports
 - A. Volunteer Programs
- V. Consent Agenda Items
- VI. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Wisconsin open meetings law requires that the Board, or Board Committee, only discuss subject matter that is noticed on their respective agendas. Persons wishing to place items on the agenda should contact the District Office, 422-6005, prior to the meeting date to make appropriate arrangements.

With advance notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities by providing a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary aids, by calling 422-6005.

School Board members may attend the above Committee meeting(s) for information gathering purposes. If a quorum of Board members should appear at any of the Committee meetings, a regular School Board meeting may take place for purposes of gathering information on an item listed on one of the Committee agendas. If such a meeting should occur, the date, time, and location of the Board meeting will be that of the particular Committee as listed on the Committee agenda.



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BACKGROUND

Anne Lee, Chairman
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August 3, 2009

LOCATION: Washington Elementary School Cafeteria

TIME: Immediately following the Business Services Committee meeting, but not before 6:30 p.m.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Curriculum Development
 - A. 2008-09 Writing Assessment Results

Sharon Toellner, Director of Instruction, will be present to review the District writing assessment process and share results. The 2008-09 school year represents the fifth year of implementation of a pre/post writing assessment process using grade level and cross-curricular scoring teams. The District writing assessment process involves several components including the following:

- Implementation of a Writing Instruction and Assessment Model (Attachment A) detailing K-12 areas of focus for genres of writing and the Six Traits of Writing;
- A fall (pre) and spring (post) writing assessment, designed to gauge individual growth in writing at grades K-5, 7 and 11;
- Teacher developed prompts representing genres of writing, such as persuasive, descriptive, narrative and information/expository;
- Teacher developed rubrics to assess writing characteristics of the Six Traits of Writing: Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency and Conventions;
- Scoring software which generates a variety of reports for analysis;
- Parent communication letters in both the fall and spring which detail student scores on the assessment.

Attachment B displays the pre/post test scores at grades 3, 4 and 5, providing an insight to student growth in writing over three grade levels.

Attachment C displays a longitudinal view of the pre/post scores at grades 5, 7 and 11 beginning with the 2004-05 school year and continuing to 2008-09. This view of data represents student growth in writing from elementary through high school.

Due to the number of years District writing assessment has now taken place, the opportunity for longitudinal tracking of a particular class of students is also possible. Ms. Toellner will share an example of longitudinal comparison for the classes of 2015, 2016 and 2017 at Woodside Elementary.

The results of the District writing assessment, as well as WKCE scores and other sources of data, will be reviewed by building teams at the District data retreat on August 13.

B. Lincoln High School Advanced Placement Report

Ryan Christianson, Principal at Lincoln High School, will be present, to share the results of the May 2009 Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. AP Exams are college-level tests developed and administered by the College Board in conjunction with AP courses taught by high school teachers. Students who earn a 3, 4, or 5 on an AP exam are eligible to receive college credit.

C. Intermediate Reading Intervention Recommendation

During the 2008-09 school year, WRPS was invited to participate in a two year pilot of a new Renaissance Learning, Inc., product entitled Successful Reader. Reading specialists at Grant, Rudolph and Vesper used the small group reading intervention with intermediate (grades 4-6) students.

Successful Reader includes 20 professionally narrated audiobooks preloaded onto an MP3 player for students to follow along as they read their own paperback book. In addition, accompanying lessons incorporate comprehension strategies and practice activities.

The pilot began in January and all three reading specialists noted that the intervention was very successful in motivating students to read. In particular, students were attracted to the use of the MP3 player and were motivated to read books that peers at their grade level were reading.

Successful Reader was also recommended as an intervention for intermediate grade students by K-12 reading staff when they met during the second semester of last year to discuss reading services.

In the spring, Renaissance Learning, Inc., consultants provided an overview of Successful Reader for all of the elementary buildings at a reading planning meeting. Staff at Grove, Howe, Pitsch and Washington have indicated an interest in the use of Successful Reader for the 2009-10 school year.

A complete Successful Reader kit costs \$7,195.50 and includes: 20 copies of 20 titles of tradebooks; MP3 player with preloaded audiobooks; interactive teacher website; teacher guides and student journals; professional development.

Materials for Grove, Howe and Pitsch will be funded from the regular Title I grant. Materials for Washington will be funded from the regular language arts curriculum budget.

The administration recommends the purchase of Successful Reader for Grove, Howe, Pitsch and Washington Schools with \$21,586.50 being funded from the Title I grant and \$7,195.50 being funded from the regular language arts curriculum budget.

IV. Updates and Reports

A. Volunteer Programs

Sharon Toellner, Director of Instruction, will be present to provide information related to volunteer programs. An initial report on this topic was given at the March 2, 2009, Educational Services Committee meeting, and a request was made to gather further information on the Foster Grandparent Program, as well as explore ways the United Way of Inner Wisconsin's Volunteer Center could assist the school district.

Ms. Toellner contacted LuAnn Paepke of the Wisconsin Statewide Foster Grandparent Program in Madison for additional information. According to Ms. Paepke, the last grant-funded contract for a Foster Grandparent Program was awarded about nine years ago. There are 18 current programs in the state of Wisconsin, with about 300 seniors participating in the program. A commitment must be made to work 15 hours a week and certain income eligibility requirements must be met to qualify for participation in this program. A brief description of the Foster Grandparent Program can be found in Attachment D-1. Current programs found in Wisconsin can be found in Attachment D-2.

Ms. Toellner also contacted Amy Neumann, Volunteer Center Coordinator for the United Way of Inner Wisconsin. It is possible for WRPS to create an account on the agency's website, www.vouunteerinnerwisc.org. Each school within the District could also create an account of their own. Ms. Neumann uses the information that is entered on the website to create the Volunteer Opportunities column that is in The Daily Tribune each week. Coordination of volunteer schedules, as well as background checks, would be the responsibility of the school district.

Another national organization that sponsors volunteers is Experience Corps. Attachment D-3 provides information on Experience Corps, a volunteer program for people over 55. This program currently exists in larger cities, and operational costs, as well as volunteer costs, are associated with this program.

A recent newsletter from Wausau School District highlighted a new volunteer program that will be started in the 2009-10 school year. The program, entitled O.N.E.—Our Network for Education, is a result of the school district's partnership with the DPI's VISTA project. The newsletter article on this program can be found in Attachment D-4. Of particular interest is the Volunteer Handbook for the program (Attachment D-5). This provides an insight into the various areas that need to be considered when beginning a coordinated volunteer program. Sample activities for volunteers from the Wausau School District website can be found in Attachment D-6.

It is possible that the District could explore resources through the AmeriCorps VISTA program. AmeriCorps VISTA is a national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. VISTA volunteers engage in a year of full-time service with a sponsoring organization to create or expand programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty. The VISTA program places individual VISTA volunteers with sponsoring organizations. VISTA provides a small living allowance and certain benefits for members. Sponsoring organizations absorb most of the costs related to project supervision and logistical support. Investment by the sponsoring organization and the community is fundamental to the VISTA program, as the VISTA resource is intended to be short-term.

To apply for VISTA resources, an AmeriCorps VISTA Concept Paper and AmeriCorps VISTA Project Application would need to be submitted.

Through the research that has been done, it is evident that a successful volunteer program would require coordination. In addition, Board policy regarding volunteers would help to define expectations. Attachment D-7 provides the Volunteer Policy, Volunteer Application Form, and Volunteer Confidentiality Policy from the Fond du Lac School District.

V. Consent Agenda Items

Committee members will be asked to decide which items should be placed on the consent agenda for the regular Board of Education meeting.

VI. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

Agenda items are determined by Committee Chair after consultation with appropriate administration depending upon other agenda items, presentation information, and agenda availability.

Future agenda items/information requests include, but are not limited to:

- America Reads (September)
- Build Your Own Curriculum Summer Academies (September)
- Grades 3 and 6 Exit Surveys (September or October)
- 2009-10 Building Professional Development Plans (October)
- Parent Representative to the CII (October)
- Renaissance Learning, Inc., Product Subscription Renewals (October)