



Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee

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

MINUTES

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

Minutes Amended and Approved by the Board of Education on January 11, 2010

January 4, 2010

LOCATION: Conference Room A/B

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

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Jr., Katie Bielski-Medina, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Anne Lee, and Mary Rayome

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT: Larry Davis

OTHERS PRESENT: Robert Crist and Sharon Toellner

I. Call to Order

Anne Lee called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. Curriculum Development

A. Able Learner Program Report

Sharon Toellner, Director of Instruction; Rod Henke, Assistant Principal at Lincoln High School; Shannon Matott, Principal of Pitsch Elementary School; Carol Katzmark, Able Learner Coordinator and Reading Specialist at Woodside; Mary Beth Freeh, Able Learner Coordinator at Grant, Grove, Howe and Washington Elementary Schools and Staff Development Coordinator at Howe; Tina Miller, Able Learner and Staff Development Coordinator at Mead Elementary Charter School; and Lynda Blomberg, Able Learner and Staff Development Coordinator at West Junior High School, were present to discuss the Able Learner Program and its future in the District.

Due to budget concerns there was a recommendation in June to eliminate the Able Learner program. However, through the IDEA maintenance of effort opportunity, funding for 1.95 FTE positions was extended through the 2009-10 school year.

Ms. Katzmark explained the five essentials for an Able Learner Program:

- identifying students
- options for programming
- resources
- management/documentation of student records
- staff development

An annual budget of \$20,000 is used for many group and District enrichment programs that not only benefit the Able Learner students, but all students.

Ms. Matott reviewed some of those programs, including:

- Geography Bee
- National Science League
- College Days For Kids
- Family Math Nights
- Midwest Academic Talent Search
- ACT/SAT Testing
- Chess Club
- Children's Theatre
- WAGT State Conference
- Student Instructional Supplies

Mr. Henke explained a proposal for a 1.0 FTE position for the Able Learner Program. Key responsibilities for this position would be: Assessing student needs, developing a menu of available options, advocating for differentiation, communicating with parents and staff, and building an active parent support group. Mr. Henke indicated that 2% to 3% of the student population is classified as Able Learners.

Ms. Toellner explained that staffing for the Able Learner has changed due to budget reductions over several years. Despite this, the District needs to have an advocate and coordinator for this special population of students. As an example, the Waukesha School District maintains a 1.0 FTE position. A limited program of offerings has been developed for elementary, middle and high school students. This model would allow the District to meet Standard (t), which specifies a District must provide an identification process, programming options and parent communication/support for able learner students.

Mr. Henke explained that some students have been missed and without the program many more may not be aware of programming and scholarship offerings.

Ms. Matott suggested paying more attention to the middle and senior grade levels, as elementary level students could be showing developmental differences.

B. Virtual Learning Committee Report

Sharon Toellner, Director of Instruction; Bryon Kolbeck, Director of Technology; Steve Smith, Assistant Director of Pupil Services; Ryan Christianson, Principal of LHS; and Terry Whitmore, Principal of Rudolph Elementary and Vesper Community Academy, were present to update Committee members on the work of the Virtual Learning Committee.

At the September 2009 Educational Services meeting the creation of the Virtual Learning Committee was discussed. Since that time, members have defined virtual learning and created a mission statement. Mr. Smith explained the definition was needed to make sure all committee members were working toward the same goal. The mission statement reflects the purpose of the Committee.

Mr. Kolbeck explained that virtual schools began in the mid-1990s in Florida and Kentucky. The virtual student population has gone from 40,000 to over 1 million to date, which is a 30% growth rate. He also explained that approximately 10,000 school districts offer online or blended courses and that number is increasing.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has partnered with CESA 9 (Wisconsin Virtual School) to offer virtual programming. Beginning July 1, 2010, teachers will be required to have 30 hours of professional development time to prepare them to teach online courses. Mr. Kolbeck indicated that some Wisconsin school districts, such as Antigo and Menomonie, promote the virtual program as a regular part of the school district.

Ms. Toellner explained that examples of virtual learning are already occurring in the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools District. Ms. Stebbins shared a situation with an East Junior High School student who had difficulty attending school on a full-time basis. He is currently using the virtual component at home in the mornings to take math and English. He attends school in the afternoon for the remainder of his coursework. Ms. Stebbins further shared with Committee members that PLATO is used for students who have failed science during summer school.

Ms. Blomberg explained West Junior High School also uses PLATO for science in summer school. Ninth graders who need to make up missed standards in the areas of math, science, social studies and reading, also use PLATO in the beginning of the school year. Ms. Blomberg also shared a situation of an Able Learner student who is currently enrolled in one of the CESA 9 courses. She commented that the course is rigorous.

At River Cities High School, Mr. Smith explained that students have used PLATO for 10 years with much success. All the math instruction is done using PLATO. Students take a pre-test with PLATO, which places them appropriately for their future instruction.

Vesper Community Academy is in their second year with virtual students. Currently the school hosts 12 families with 22 full-time students and one part-time student. Mr. Whitmore indicated that there is a potential for six 7-12 grade level students in

the 2010-11 school year. He also explained that last year, the revenue brought into the District by the virtual students was \$140,024.62 and a revenue amount of \$148,480.43 has been realized for the current school year.

Mr. Christianson indicated that the Virtual Learning Committee has discussed the question of what happens to the students who are beyond the eighth grade as the current program ends at the eighth grade. The Committee has decided a short-term plan for the 2010-11 school year is needed. Questions related to graduation requirements will need to be addressed. Mr. Christianson explained that the Menomonie School District requires all students to meet the same requirements.

Ms. Toellner further explained that policy language needs to be developed. She indicated that there has been communication with WASB and other districts about this issue.

Mr. Kolbeck told Committee members that the Virtual Learning Committee will put together policy language and bring recommendations to the Educational Services Committee at the February meeting.

C. Career and Technical Education Acquisition Recommendation

ES-1 Motion by John Krings, second by John Benbow, to approve the Career and Technical Education acquisition requests not to exceed \$91,576.00 to be funded from the regular curriculum acquisition budget.

Eric Siler, Career and Technical Education Coordinator, CTE Committee Chairperson and Marketing/Business instructor at Lincoln High School; Dennis Nelson, Technology Education teacher at LHS; and Rachel Lent, Family and Consumer Science Education teacher at LHS and Health Services instructor at Central Cities Health Institute, were present to explain recommendations for the Career and Technical Education acquisition.

Mr. Siler explained that although the annual Carl Perkins grants help keep machinery updated and maintained, four out of the six clusters in the Career and Technical Education Department are in need of materials in order to provide students a seamless transition to post secondary schools. He explained that through creative measures, needs were met in the Marketing and Agriculture clusters.

Ms. Lent told Committee members that to keep current with the transcribed credit and advanced standing credit agreement with Mid-State Technical College, updated textbooks, workbooks and software are needed in the Family and Consumer Science Education and Health Services clusters.

The Technology and Engineering Education cluster is also in need of hardware and software. Mr. Nelson also explained that for safety reasons, two new welders are needed, along with a new tire balancer in the automotive lab.

Mr. Siler explained the breakdown of the acquisition request to be:

Equipment	\$52,688
Software/Multimedia	20,148
Textbooks	18,740

On a roll call vote – motion carried unanimously.

D. Grades 3 and 6 Exit Survey Recommendation

Sharon Toellner, Director of Instruction; J.L. Gray, Principal of Washington Elementary; and LeeAnn Schmidmayr, Principal of Grove Elementary School, were present to discuss the future of exit surveys.

Mr. Gray explained that the elementary principals identified three options for administration of the surveys:

- Administer survey to sixth grade parents annually;
- Administer survey to third and sixth grade parents annually; or
- Administer survey to third and sixth grade parents every three years.

Mr. Gray indicated that the administrators recommend the survey is administrated to sixth grade parents annually.

Ms. Schmidmayr shared the following options for collecting the data:

- Administer paper surveys at portfolio nights.
- Administer online surveys which would allow tabulation more quickly.
- Administer both paper and online surveys with open computer labs at the individual buildings.
- Mail surveys to all families.

Ms. Toellner indicated that last year's survey had a 65% return rate. However, she explained surveys were mailed with return envelopes to those parents who did not attend the portfolio nights.

Discussion of Committee members ensued with a final decision to administer the survey to both third and sixth grade parents annually, using both paper and electronic methods.

IV. Consent Agenda Items

ES-1 Career and Technical Education Acquisition Recommendation

V. 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 include, but are not limited to:

- Social Studies Curriculum Report (February)
- Response to Intervention Report (February)
- Wisconsin Partnership for Childhood Fitness Project (February)
- Virtual Learning Recommendation (February)

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.