



MINUTES

Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee

510 Peach Street · Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 · (715) 424-6701

Mary Rayome, Chairperson
John Benbow, Jr.
Katie Bielski-Medina
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
Sandra Hett
John Krings, President

June 7, 2021

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

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Jr., Katie Bielski-Medina, Troy Bier, Larry Davis,
John Krings, Mary Rayome

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Sandra Hett

OTHERS PRESENT: Phil Bickelhaupt, Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Anita Jacisin, Heidi Kawleski,
Keith Kedrowski, Becky Kressin, Elizabeth Messerli, Aaron Nelson, Ronald
Rasmussen, Janna Roberts, Kent Roberts, Mike Schedgick, Dani Scott, Eric
Siler, Jake Wendtland

Call to Order

Mary Rayome called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

I. Public Comment

The following individuals spoke:

Anita Jacisin – Ms. Jacisin spoke on the topic of mandatory masking of students, stating that there are numerous county and school entities currently making masks optional, and she feels it is time for WRPS to remove the masking requirement. She spoke of data now available which shows how much masking harms kids both physically and mentally, and how younger age groups are not super spreaders of the COVID virus and experience a 99.97% survival rate if they contract the virus. She believes the psychological damage caused by creating fear in children who become frightened when they see unmasked people around them needs to stop. She spoke of division and segregation likely occurring among vaccinated and unvaccinated children, and until people open their minds to stop the insanity it puts the country's freedom in jeopardy.

Mike Schedgick – Mr. Schedgick stated he has nine children of which half have gone through the WRPS system and had a wonderful experience with sports, music, drama, etc., and expressed his thankfulness for the fine care his adopted special needs children received while in school. He has concerns currently with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are nearly school aged being subjected to masking. He questioned why vaccinated Board members are wearing masks when the CDC does not require it, and stated there is something not right with the whole pandemic situation and what people are being told. He remarked that he believes people are being played and listening to the wrong voices, and that masks do not stop the virus at all. He stated that while Board members may have been doing a good job over the years, there is a new group of people that want to take over and have a say. It is time for a change which he believes will happen, and for Board members' own health, safety, and well-being, they should all just resign. He stated that it is going to be tough for the Board in the future with lawsuits and people scrutinizing and questioning every decision they make.

Becky Kressin – Ms. Kressin stated that decisions around the country for masks were made last summer when data regarding COVID was limited and there was fear that super spreader events were going to occur

and millions of people would die. The research indicates that the information known from other countries proves to be true in that children are not super spreaders and furthermore, that quarantines make no difference in case numbers. Ms. Kressin believes the fear needs to stop and current data needs to be taken into consideration – data which she says consistently shows that masks aren't making a difference and instead cause negative health side effects in children such as headaches and concentration/emotional issues which have in turn caused skyrocketing suicide attempts and drug overdoses. Kids need to be able to smile, breathe, and be kids again. Stevens Point School District with 40% more kids than WRPS just made masks optional for summer, and other districts such as Amherst, Wausau, and 121 districts across the state have done so as well. Ms. Kressin would like to see the topic put on the next Board agenda to make masks optional for summer school as a trial period leading up to the 2021-22 school year.

Keith Kedrowski – Mr. Kedrowski stated that he agrees with the public commentary shared in that masks do not work in preventing viral spread, citing it as “foolish” and explained that doctors wear masks for bacterial concerns, not viral concerns. He believes that shaming children into wearing a mask is child abuse and all school districts and Board members who have done this should be tried for it. He stated his friend's son failed for the first time in his life because he wasn't allowed to attend school. He feels Board members work for the teacher's union, not the children or parents. The Board needs to do its job and give the kids a chance for the summer by making masks optional.

II. Actionable Items

A. Carl Perkins Grant

Eric Siler, Career and Technology Education Coordinator, expressed appreciation to the Board for their interest in touring the Building Construction Trades home which is one of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) pinnacle projects of the year. The Carl Perkins Grant supports cutting edge programming in the CTE realm, and helps to foster and develop partnerships between the District and technical college, business, trades, and manufacturing stakeholders with the end goal of preparing students for post high school career and education pathways.

For the 2021-22 school year, the Carl Perkins Grant will focus on gaps found in the CTE Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment in five pathways including Agriculture, Business and Administration, Engineering, Manufacturing, and Family and Consumer Sciences Food & Beverage. Grant dollars will be utilized on professional development, dual credit course expansion, computer technology for courses, and equipment for the Lincoln High School Manufacturing and Fab Lab. Over the course of the past few years, the lab has been developed to integrate the wood shop, welding shop, machinery, and software/technology areas together in a dedicated space to enhance student programming. Mr. Siler provided some specific highlights and accomplishments of students taking coursework in CTE programming areas.

ES-1 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier, to recommend approval of the Carl Perkins Grant for the 2021-22 school year in the amount of \$52,584.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. Department of Workforce Development Career & Technical Incentive Grant

Mr. Siler stated that the competitive Department of Workforce Development Technical Incentive Grant enables students to participate in numerous opportunities through Youth Apprenticeship offerings, become Certified Nursing Assistants within the community, as well as earn a variety of certifications such as the “A+” computer certification. By offering high-quality career and technical education programs, the Grant reimburses up to \$1,000 for each pupil earning an approved industry-recognized certification. The District is eligible to receive \$55,200.00 through this grant, and will utilize these funds to expand CTE program opportunities for students to earn industry-based certifications.

ES-2 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier, to approve of the Department of Workforce Development Technical Incentive Grant funds for \$55,200.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Fab Lab Grant

Mr. Siler reported that WRPS was one of 28 Wisconsin school districts awarded a \$25,000.00 grant to continue the creation of its Fab Lab at Lincoln High School to promote STEM education. This grant came with a \$12,500.00 match through certifications that students received in their coursework.

ES-3 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier, to recommend approval of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Fab Lab Grant in the amount of \$25,000.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. eduCLIMBER and FastBridge Purchase

Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, provided a recommendation to approve a 3-year contract to purchase eduCLIMBER and FastBridge technology through Illuminate Education at a cost of \$211,965.00 using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. The administration has been exploring data warehousing options since January, 2020 to determine which program would best meet the needs of the District. The end goal in utilizing the program is to help identify potential achievement gaps, behavioral concerns, and give staff a snapshot of a student's academic progress to ultimately support students better. The District is also seeking to update screeners and intervention software, and discovered that the FastBridge program is a multifaceted option which contains math, English/language arts, and social emotional screeners along with numerous interventions. District math interventionists piloted the program and are in support of utilizing it for District screener and interventions.

The total cost for year 1 of eduCLIMBER, FastBridge, training, implementation and set-up is \$82,815.00, and the second and third year cost is \$64,575.00 per year. The administration anticipates that other software programs currently being utilized will eventually be able to be phased out and/or eliminated once staff become proficient in utilizing eduCLIMBER and FastBridge.

ES-4 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend the purchase of a three-year contract for eduCLIMBER and FastBridge software from Illuminate Education at a cost of \$211,965.00 to be funded from Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II) Grant funds.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. READ 180

Ms. Filtz explained that READ 180 is a blended learning intervention program utilized to build reading comprehension, academic vocabulary, and writing skills that is currently used at the middle school level for reading intervention. The Reading Inventory portion

of the program is used as the Reading Screener for grades 6-12. The administration recommends the purchase of a 3-year subscription renewal, explaining that this is one of the programs that will likely be transitioned out once eduCLIMBER and FastBridge are fully implemented.

ES-5 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the purchase of a 3-year subscription to READ 180 in the amount of \$33,129.84 to be funded from Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II) Grant funds.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Updates

A. Global Scholar Recognition

Jake Wendtland, World Languages Teacher, reviewed how students achieve Global Education Achievement Certification (GEAC) through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. To earn this designation, students must complete eight credits of globally focused coursework, including at least four years of a foreign language. Students must also complete eight reviews of cultural books, movies, or art/music exhibitions and participate in four co-curricular, globally focused activities in addition to completing a 20-hour community service project. Mr. Wendtland provided an overview of how Lincoln High School graduate Sarah Price earned the GEAC designation. President Krings provided a Certificate of Recognition to Mr. Wendtland to pass along to Sarah on behalf of the Board, thanking Mr. Wendtland for his informative presentation.

B. Typing Club 3-Year Renewal

Ms. Filtz explained that Typing Club is a software program that helps students learn how to type through an engaging, interactive experience. It features a virtual keyboard and hand guides to show proper hand position, provides badges and stars to keep students motivated, utilizes games and videos to make learning fun, provides voice over to read words aloud as they are typed, and offers typing playback and a calendar to review past performance of all activities. Typing Club is being renewed for three years at a cost of \$10,103.10 using ESSER II Grant dollars.

C. Fast ForWord and Reading Assistant Plus 3-Year Renewal

Ms. Filtz updated the Committee on the use of Fast ForWord in the District. Fast ForWord is an evidence-based, adaptive reading and language program that offers a personalized and differentiated pathway for each learner to maximize achievement. Fast ForWord with Reading Assistant Plus will be renewed for three years at a cost of \$13,825.00 using ESSER II Grant dollars.

V. Consent Agenda Items

- ES-1 Carl Perkins Grant**
- ES-2 Department of Workforce Development Career & Technical Incentive Grant**
- ES-3 Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Fab Lab Grant**
- ES-4 EduCLIMBER and FastBridge Purchase**
- ES-5 READ 180 Purchase**

VI. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

Agenda items are determined by the 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:

- Pupil Academic Standards (July)
- Achievement Gap Reduction (July)
- GATES Update (July)
- Seclusion and Restraint (August)
- Parent CII Representatives (September)
- ESSA Update (September)
- ACP Update (October)

Ms. Rayome adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.