



**WISCONSIN RAPIDS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

John A. Krings, President
John Benbow, Jr.
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
Sandra K. Hett
Katie Medina
Mary Rayome

September 14, 2020

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

LOCATION: Thomas A. Lenk Educational Services Center, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Larry Davis, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Katie Medina, Mary Rayome

BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED: Troy Bier

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Daniel Weigand, Roxanne Filtz, Brian Oswald, Danielle Scott, Phil Bickelhaupt, Ed Allison

President John Krings called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Student Representative Report

Rachel Marten provided updates on the following:

- ◆ Student clubs and organizations at Lincoln are taking a cautious approach in light of the COVID pandemic with only short in-person meetings scheduled with precautionary measures in place, or choosing to meet virtually
- ◆ The A/B cohort schedule is going well and students appreciate the balance of workload assignments on remote days
- ◆ Students are complying with the mask mandate quite well, with only a few instances of issues which were addressed quickly by administration
- ◆ Rachel believes that most students feel more comfortable coming to school with the mask mandate in place

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of August 10, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from Citizens and Delegations

None.

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – September 8, 2020. Report given by Mary Rayome.

Ms. Rayome reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Educational Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- ES-1 Approval of the appointment of Rachael Stormoen to serve as the CII parent representative for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years; and Melissa Huckabee to serve as the CII parent representative during the 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 school years.

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda item ES-1. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Rayome provided updates and reports on:

- A second-grade pilot program related to the second-grade phonics unit. Leslie Anderson, Grade 2 teacher, piloted the second-grade phonics unit last year and participated in Units of Study professional development virtually through Teacher’s College. Grade two teachers were given the choice to continue with Words Their Way or switch to the Phonics Unit of Study. Teachers unanimously chose to switch. Phonics Units of Study is a fun, interactive way for students to learn, with each grade level having a “stuffed” mascot. The program correlates well with the writing and reading units. Grammar, language standards and foundational skills are taught. At the end of a unit students celebrate in different ways, including bringing other grade levels in to listen to silly rhymes or creating songs.
- Justine Horvath, Lincoln High School World Language teacher presented information regarding a planned student trip to France in June of 2021 through the Xperitus program. Every two years a group of students, along with other schools/districts, travel to France for 21 days. Students live with host families, are introduced to French food and customs, and interact with French people to enhance their language skills. Fund raising efforts help students pay for the trip. If the trip needs to be cancelled because of COVID, dollars will be refunded in full.
- Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, reviewed the summary of professional development opportunities that were available to teachers this summer to prepare for adjusted learning options and to address the social and emotional health of students and staff. In July and August there were 22 classes offered with 549 total participants, 4K-12. These opportunities provided teachers with tools to assist them in teaching off-campus if needed. Comments from participants were positive. Teachers were excited to use what they learned and feel more comfortable transitioning to virtual learning if necessary.
- Ms. Filtz reviewed enrollment numbers to date, explaining parent choices between off campus learning, brick and mortar, or Central Oaks Academy. Within off campus learning there are also different options that were explained. Parents are still sorting through how they would like their children to learn. Ms. Wilhorn reviewed Central Oaks enrollments. At the end of last school year there were 180 students enrolled at Central Oaks Academy. To date there are 535. Also, there were 90 66.030 students last year. This year we are at 152 students to date.

Information was provided reflecting off campus staff as well as the number of students choosing off campus options to begin the school year. Along with classroom teachers, some virtual staff includes Educator Effectiveness coaches and interventionists. Educator Effectiveness will be waived this year, and interventionists were pulled from buildings where enrollments were down because parents were choosing virtual options.

Superintendent Broeren addressed reopening in general, stating that it was off to a great start. Overall staff and students were excited and glad to be back in school. When he questioned students about being back to school, they seemed genuine in their reply that they were glad to be back. Masks were not an issue. He has only been made aware of a handful of contacts/quarantines, and those were contacts made outside of school. Overall, he stated that staff had risen to the occasion. Sandra Hett questioned how busing was going. Mr. Broeren stated he was not aware of any issues. Traffic in general has been very manageable at the buildings, even with parents providing more transportation this year.

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the September 8, 2020 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – September 8, 2020. Report given by John Benbow.

Mr. Benbow reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Business Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- BS-1 Approval of 66.03.01 cooperative agreements for students attending the virtual program from the Port Edwards, Stevens Point, Tomorrow River, and Tri-County school districts as listed.
- BS-2 Approval of the proposed “PAC Reopening Guide for Private Organizations During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” as well as the affiliated prorated fee structure as a result of limited attendance capacity due to COVID-19 precautionary measures implemented.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda items BS 1-2. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- The purchase of Odysseyware software for use by students enrolled in Central Oaks Academy.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the September 8, 2020 Business Services Committee meeting as well as special closed session Committee meeting minutes of August 26, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – September 8, 2020. Report given by Sandra Hett.

Ms. Hett reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Personnel Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

- PS-1 Approval of the professional staff appointments of Sarah Arendt (Behavior Interventionist – WRAMS), Cara Johnson (Teacher – WRAMS), Diane Gibbs (Teacher – WRAMS), Taylor Bergquist (Teacher – Woodside), Crystal Golon (Teacher – WRAMS), Gillian Goetsch (Teacher/Homeless Liaison – Mead/District), Sarah Gildenzoph (Teacher – River Cities), Joshua Strasser (Teacher – Lincoln), Crystal Walters (Teacher – Lincoln), Emily Radtke (Teacher – Grove), Gregory Matthews (Teacher – District), Nicole Taugner (Teacher – District), and Miranda Friedrich (Teacher – Washington/District).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Cathie Buchberger (Head Cook – Grant), Michelle Zuege (Kitchen Helper – WRAMS), Casie Oleson (Kitchen Helper – Lincoln), Kim Ahles (Second Cook – WRAMS), Abigail Krug (Kitchen Helper – WRAMS), Melissa Paz (Cashier – WRAMS), Holly Ihrcke (Noon Duty/Special Ed Aide – Grove), Kelli Harris (Special Ed Aide – Grove), Jody Gerner (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Maria Martinez (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Kellie Garski (Special Ed Aide – Howe), Cheryl Burmeister (Special Ed Aide – THINK), Zoe Wirtz (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Ann Sculley (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Kevin Cushman (Special Ed Aide Limited Term – Howe), Keesha Stoflet (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Erin Hepp (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Karey Netz (Instructional 4K Aide – Woodside), Lita Rosenow (Noon Duty Aide – Woodside), Dawn Sukala (Noon Duty Aide/Instructional Aide – Lincoln), Ashley Worzalla (Special Ed Aide – Woodside), Marita Mitchell (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Amy Radtke (Secretary, Limited Term – Central Oaks), Kirk Schladweiler (Night Custodian – Howe/Mead), William Butzlaff (Night Custodian – Lincoln), Jackie Gaupp (Noon Duty Aide – Washington), Autumn Kelly (Noon Duty Aide – Grove), Olivia Fleck (Noon Duty Aide – Grant), and Gerald Korslin (Noon Duty Aide – Grant).
- PS-3 Approval of the professional staff resignation request, pending liquidated damages, of Michelle Waldvogel (Teacher/Homeless Liaison – Mead/District).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff resignation requests of Sadie Rucker (Cleaner – Mead), Debra Bauman (Noon Duty Aide – Woodside), Michelle Vinter (Instructional Aide – Woodside), Paula Rokus (Special Ed Aide – THINK), Lindsay Manternach (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Michael Sallet (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Vickie Schwalbach (Noon Duty Aide – Washington), R. Michael Sheppard (Noon Duty Aide – Grant), and Kimberly Scott (Kitchen Helper – WRAMS).
- PS-5 Approval of new verbiage to co-curricular assignment letters.
- PS-6 Approval of a \$1,500 stipend for the Chemical Hygiene Officer position, as part of the District Science Coordinator position.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve consent agenda items PS 1-6. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the September 8, 2020 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Sandra Hett inquired about whether the District is keeping track of any COVID-related expenses in order to monitor spending increases occurring as a result of the pandemic. Supt. Broeren assured the Board that this is being done.

Legislative Agenda

John Benbow shared the following information:

- Due to errors made by the state Department of Revenue (DOR) coupled with the Legislature’s failure to pass legislation to correct those errors, numerous school boards and their property taxpayers could be surprised when property tax bills arrive this December. WASB sent a letter numerous months ago to legislative leaders urging them to pass Assembly Bill 753 which, as amended, would correct the problem. The Senate adjourned without taking up the bill.
- The State has allocated \$1.76 billion of its \$2 billion in CARES Act funding, including \$190 million for local governments, with \$243.7 million remaining unspent.
- The Department of Health Services has released guidance for schools on managing COVID-19 outbreaks. The guidance provides “best practices” to inform local decisions to be made by school authorities and local health departments, including movement between different learning environments when halting in-person instruction in individual classroom or student cohort becomes necessary.
- State Rep. John Nygren, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Finance, indicated that State revenues have stabilized and the fiscal reality is better than he would have thought likely, emphasizing that most of the negative impact on State revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt in the second year of the current 2019-21 biennium. He noted that any decisions that can be made now to reduce spending in the second year of the current two-year State budget will make the next biennial budget easier so lawmakers will not have to make large cuts. He specifically pointed toward school leaders with advice to reduce expenditures in the current school year to maintain cash on hand as districts move into the next budget year.
- The Wisconsin Supreme Court on September 10, 2020 temporarily blocked an emergency order issued by Dane County’s joint city-county health department prohibiting public and private schools in Dane County from providing in-person instruction to most students in grades 3 through 12.
- A pared down fifth coronavirus relief bill was blocked by Senate Democrats on September 10, 2020 leading GOP Senators to declare that no deals will be reached before the election on November 3, 2020.
- A controversial rule championed by United States Education Department (USED) Secretary Betsy DeVos that would have diverted additional CARES Act funding to private schools has been quietly rescinded after several federal courts ruled against it. As a result, public schools will be allowed to allocate equitable services to private schools like federal Title 1 funds as planned.

Bills

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to note August, 2020 receipts in the amount of \$7,635,570.14 and approve August, 2020 disbursements in the amount of \$3,239,577.60. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Unfinished/Old BusinessFuture Levy Override and Bond Issue Referendum Questions

Supt. Broeren presented a proposal from School Perceptions to conduct a community survey process in preparation for upcoming potential spring election ballot questions around both a levy override and bond issue. Mr. Broeren has experience in working with School Perceptions from his former position in Barron. The cost to engage in the District survey is \$9,700.00 with an additional cost to cover printing and postage expense and/or on-site visits if requested. School Perceptions will develop a comprehensive survey and deploy it in a variety of methods to ensure that all households within school attendance boundaries are included, and key demographic groups, to include parents and non-parents alike, are represented. Once complete, an analysis of the survey data is performed by School Perceptions and a final report is provided to the Board of Education. At that time, the Board can make an informed decision about whether to proceed with placing the two questions under consideration on the ballot in the spring. Mr. Broeren explained that history of referendum passage rates by other districts has coincided closely with School Perceptions data analysis results. The Board took the opportunity to ask questions around survey content, timelines of the survey, and additional costs beyond the engagement fee of \$9,700.00. Mr. Broeren explained that the Board would be provided a draft of the survey prior to it being issued in mid-October to early November. If after reviewing the data compiled the Board decides to adopt a resolution to go to referendum, it will need to take such action by the January 2021 Board meeting. The Board considered how the local closure of the Verso mill might impact the passage of a referendum and remains hopeful that more will be known by the time a final decision about the referendum being

on the ballot is made. Ms. Hett expressed a concern about being sensitive to what taxpayers may be going through under current circumstances within the area. Mr. Broeren acknowledged the concern and stated that he understands that attitudes and circumstances can change in between the time the survey is conducted and the spring election; however, decisions can only be based upon information that is known by the Board at the time. If the survey data indicates that there is support for a referendum and the Board moves in that direction, there will be extensive community engagement around the topic to inform and educate all stakeholders. When asked about additional expenses tied to School Perceptions' extra analysis and/or presentation fees, Mr. Broeren explained that he does not anticipate a need for any additional data analysis services beyond the normal scope being done, nor does he feel any on-site or presentation services from the firm will be necessary.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve of a proposal from School Perceptions to conduct a community survey process in preparation for potential spring election referendum questions to be on the ballot at a cost of \$9,700.00 plus fees for printing and postage expense, or on-site visits, to be paid from the Board of Education General Fund budget. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations and Retirement Requests

None.

66.030 Agreements with Other Districts

Supt. Broeren presented 66.030 agreements for students from Auburndale and Stevens Point who are requesting to attend the District virtual program, and an additional agreement for Nekoosa students who are enrolled in the 2020-21 Project Search program.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve of the proposed 66.030 agreements with Auburndale and Stevens Point School Districts for students attending the WRPS virtual program, as well as Nekoosa students enrolled in the Project Search program. Motion carried unanimously.

WRPS Stay Connected Program

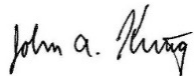
Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, presented a proposed "WRPS Stay Connected Program" developed in partnership with WRPS, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and Solarus, a local business. The program is designed to bring a high-speed internet connection into homes to support educational programming particularly in situations where families either cannot afford it or have no access available to them. The District will either provide a Kajeet wireless hotspot or a hard-wired connection to the home by Solarus, and all internet access will be filtered through District software. Qualification criteria and program participation conditions were explained. The cost to the District for each family participating is \$15.00 per month, along with a one-time initial expense to obtain a router. The program has been budgeted through use of CARES Act dollars and could serve up to as many as 150 families. The Board had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the proposed program.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of the WRPS Stay Connected Program as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk