



August 9, 2021

**REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

LOCATION: East Jr. High School, 311 Lincoln Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494  
Cafeteria

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Steve Hepp, Brian Oswald, Roxanne Filtz, Ed Allison

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

A number of individuals made public comment:

Blake Schultz – is a resident and business owner who has children attending Assumption which had school 5-days in person last school year; he opposes masks and encourages alternative methods be used to combat COVID-19

Anita Jacisin – opposes a mask mandate

Heidi Kawleski – opposes a mask mandate and encouraged Board members to do their research concerning mitigation strategies to learn about the negative impact masking has on children

Lynn Derrie – opposes a mask mandate and teaching Critical Race Theory

Tracy VanAsten – opposes the mask mandate

Laura Ewell – opposes a mask mandate, teaching of Critical Race Theory, and the contract purchase with US<sup>2</sup>

Julie DesJarlais – opposes a mask mandate, believes everyone should have an option/choice and there should be more transparency and communication in the decision-making process

Ranee Graf – opposes a mask mandate and supports the freedom to choose whether to wear a mask; also opposes teaching Critical Race Theory which she believes will be promoted through the purchase of US<sup>2</sup> services

Michael Speich – supports masking as a mitigation measure and encouraged the Board to closely monitor the pandemic and implement whatever mitigation measures are needed to keep children safe

Mike Schedgick – opposes a mask mandate

Tony Dowalt – resides in Nekoosa, opposes mask mandate and political narrative pushing vaccines and masks

Jean Gustin – opposes a mask mandate

Mike Derrie – opposes mask mandate and urged Board members to take a stand and learn from history

Anne Lee – supports required masking as a mitigation strategy to keep schools open for in person instruction

Scott Kissinger – opposes a mask mandate, provided a hand-out for Board members containing two articles describing the ineffectiveness of masking

Shelley Rynish – opposes a mask mandate

Nancy Peterson – opposes a mask mandate and teaching Critical Race Theory as well as accepting grant money to purchase it

Paula Reaves – supports required masking as a mitigation strategy to start the school year; shared concerns around required quarantines that will negatively impact in-person learning for students when masks are not mandatory

Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of July 12, 2021; and special open and closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of July 12, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.**

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – August 2, 2021. Report given by John Krings.

Mr. Krings 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 to: 1) have students begin the 2020-21 school year attending 5-day, in-person instruction at all levels; 2) have masks/face coverings be optional for all age levels, yet strongly encouraged for unvaccinated individuals; 3) vest authority in the Board, based upon District and local circumstances, to implement any or all mitigation strategies necessary to maintain in-person learning to the degree possible and maintain a safe and health learning environment for students and staff; 4) vest authority in the Board to move classrooms, schools, or the entire District between virtual, hybrid, or other instructional models and/or schedules deemed appropriate given the circumstances.

Mr. Krings requested that consent agenda item ES-1 be held out.

With regard to consent agenda item ES-1, Mr. Krings held it out to allow for any additional discussion and to have the item voted on separately. Key points from the discussion include:

- Board members have read through numerous articles and information shared by individuals, performed their own research on the topic, and have been updated on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and local Health Department and medical advisor recommendations
- New information shared about positive cases causing a temporary shutdown at the local Boys and Girls Club due to isolation and required quarantines
- Public health officials having difficulty with uncooperative families as they attempt to perform contact tracing which will likely be what District schools encounter as cases are identified
- Case counts continue to trend upward across the state; the Delta variant is a concern
- A lower efficacy rate for mask use when only a portion of the population is wearing them
- High standards and evidence based practices followed by scientific organizations opining on the topic
- Individual communication and contacts received by the Board on the topic
- Continued fluidity of the pandemic with information known today quickly becoming obsolete as circumstances change on a daily and weekly basis
- A decision around health protocols to be implemented is not being made lightly, nor is it an easy decision; but it will be made in the best interest of protecting the health and welfare of all students
- How the topic of masking has been politicized and continues to divide people and cause incredible anger as well as place kids uncomfortably in the middle
- Consideration of how effective the mitigation strategies in the prior year were as students experienced in-person learning the entire year with no building or District-wide shutdowns
- The importance of keeping students in school, learning in person
- The fact that any mitigation measures implemented can be relaxed if local circumstances/case counts safely allow it
- A requirement for all individuals riding a bus to be masked per a Federal Order currently in place
- A recommendation by Katie Medina for the Board to consider a new motion to require face coverings for all individuals under the age of 12, and strongly encourage masking of unvaccinated individuals
- Mr. Bier reiterated his support to continue with the approach voted on and passed at the Educational Services meeting held on August 2, 2021
- Mr. Benbow would support a motion that would require masking at the middle school and elementary buildings, rather than a motion tied to an age level simply because the middle school has students both eligible and ineligible to receive the COVID vaccine due to age; he also expressed concern in waiting on Board action to implement changes given meeting notice requirements that could cause a delay in making a change quickly
- Ms. Hett suggested that a new motion be considered which would provide authority for the Superintendent to implement modifications to mitigation measures up to 72 hours in advance to allow the Board time to convene a meeting and take official action to affirm the changes
- While she would prefer universal masking, Ms. Rayome stated she could live with optional masking at the high school level where all ages have had the opportunity to become vaccinated

Superintendent Broeren explained that he will do his best to ensure that whatever Board action is taken is what gets implemented. Quarantine requirements are set by public health, and the District is obligated to comply or potentially face deliberate indifference litigation as it relates to keeping students safe. Masking approaches do allow for modified approaches to the quarantine guidelines, most notably around the 6 foot physical distancing requirement being reduced to 3 feet. Should a masking requirement be implemented, medical exemptions from masking would continue to be accepted. The Wood County Dashboard currently has 84 active cases noted, of which 46 reside within District geographic boundaries. Mr. Broeren stated that close monitoring of cases to detect upward trends would occur, but doesn't anticipate huge concerning jumps within the first week or two of school. The administration will need to be nimble and adopt changes to mitigation measures quickly if circumstances warrant it. The Board considered granting authority to the Superintendent to implement changes quickly as necessary, and affirming the changes at the next available regular Board meeting or at a special meeting called and properly noticed for that purpose.

President Krings stated the Board will first vote on Consent Agenda Item ES-1 as originally recommended for approval:

**Motion by John Krings, seconded by Troy Bier, to:**

- 1) **have students begin the 2021-22 school year attending 5-day, in-person instruction at all levels;**
- 2) **have masks/face coverings be optional for all age levels, yet strongly encouraged for unvaccinated individuals;**
- 3) **vest authority in the Board, based upon District and local circumstances, to implement any or all mitigation strategies necessary to maintain in-person learning to the degree possible and maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for students and staff;**
- 4) **vest authority in the Board to move classrooms, schools, or the entire District between virtual, hybrid, or other instructional models and/or schedules deemed appropriate given the circumstances.**

**Motion failed on a roll call vote of 6-1. John Benbow, Sandra Hett, Larry Davis, Katie Medina, Mary Rayome, and John Krings voted no.**

The Board questioned whether or not virtual programming will continue to be available for families interested in an off-site option. Superintendent Broeren confirmed that this model of education will be available through Central Oaks Academy and the Lincoln virtual school option. Switching between on-campus and off-campus options will be accommodated where possible, but primarily encouraged at trimester breaks for continuity. Additionally, students in quarantine will be able to be supported virtually to keep them current with their studies and learning with their classmates.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Larry Davis, to:**

- 1) **have students begin the 2021-22 school year attending 5-day, in-person instruction at all levels;**
- 2) **have masks/face coverings be mandated for all persons in elementary and middle school buildings, and strongly encouraged for all unvaccinated individuals;**
- 3) **vest authority in the Superintendent, based upon District and local circumstances, to remove any or all mitigation strategies as long as such a move will not compromise a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff;**
- 4) **vest authority in the Board to move classrooms, schools, or the entire District between virtual, hybrid, or other instructional models and/or schedules deemed appropriate given the circumstances.**

**Motion carried on a roll call vote of 6-1. Troy Bier voted no.**

Superintendent Broeren raised a question to clarify the Board's intent around #3 vesting authority in the Superintendent to *remove* any or all mitigation strategies. With all of the unknowns of the pandemic, he expressed some concern around the possibility of school spread occurring and his ability to react quickly to implement mitigation measures that best protect students and staff. Reacting promptly may be difficult given the Board's statutory meeting notice requirements to call a timely meeting and make the change. He has more concern about being able to implement needed health protocols than removing them, and requested that the Board consider this in light of the motion. The Board discussed a potential change to the original motion.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Larry Davis, to supersede the previous motion made with the following motion:**

- 1) have students begin the 2021-22 school year attending 5-day, in-person instruction at all levels;
- 2) have masks/face coverings be mandated for all persons in elementary and middle school buildings, and strongly encouraged for all unvaccinated individuals;
- 3) vest authority in the Superintendent, based upon District and local circumstances, to implement or remove mitigation strategies necessary to maintain in-person learning to the degree possible and maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff;
- 4) vest authority in the Board to move classrooms, schools, or the entire District between virtual, hybrid, or other instructional models and/or schedules deemed appropriate given the circumstances.

**Motion carried on a roll call vote of 6-1. Troy Bier voted no.**

Mr. Krings provided updates and reports on:

- Steven Hepp, Director of Pupil Services, presented the annual District Seclusion and Restraint report. Historical and current data was shared along with the status of staff member training. A focus for 2021-22 is to ensure that training cycles are maintained to keep certifications current and have prioritized training available for pertinent staff members.
- Mr. Hepp presented a proposal from US<sup>2</sup>, Inc. to provide equity related support services to the District. The cost of the contract is \$20,500.00 which would be paid for using District Flow-through dollars. Engaging with US<sup>2</sup> for equity-related services will help the District develop action steps to address racial disproportionality in educational placement. As a District identified with significant racial disproportionality, 15% of its IDEA budget must be allocated to address student needs. Under the proposed contract, US<sup>2</sup> will provide training and support to teachers in their practice. District level training of administration is also included in the agreement. All staff will have the opportunity to receive training if they are interested.

The Committee questioned who makes the determination on the District's disproportionality identification. Superintendent Broeren provided an explanation around how the District was identified through federal and state initiatives which changed the "cell size" used to calculate and determine disproportionality based upon student demographics. Numerous districts across the state have been similarly identified and are working to address and meet federal requirements. The state of Wisconsin is one of the worst performing states in terms of the achievement gap between students of color and white students. As a result, exploring ways to address equity concerns, fully meet the needs of students regardless of race or other demographic, and ultimately close the achievement gap is not unique to the District. Mr. Broeren further explained that when the topic of equity comes up it can be misconstrued or conflated with the topic of Critical Race Theory. He clarified that equity has to do with finding ways to meet the needs of kids regardless of skin color or other factors, and Critical Race Theory is not taught within District schools. Effectively addressing equity concerns, particularly when it comes to doing so for non-white students, may at times be done best through engaging with a consultant such as US<sup>2</sup> for proper coaching and support since they have extensive experience in this area.

**Motion by John Krings, seconded by John Benbow to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the August 2, 2021 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Business Services Committee – August 2, 2021. 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 a proposal from American Asphalt to replace the parking lot at River Cities High School at a cost of \$72,187.00 to be paid from the Buildings and Grounds budget.
- BS-2 Approval of a proposal from Tweet Garrot to replace Washington Elementary School's four rooftop condensing units and evaporators at a cost of \$74,504.00 from the Buildings and Grounds budget.
- BS-3 Approval of the supply bids from multiple vendors for a total cost of \$88,701.60 to be paid from the District supply budget.

- BS-4 Approval of a bid from Mainstage Theatrical Supply, Inc. less the sales tax for \$36,675.00 to be paid for with Incurage Performing Arts Center funds.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items BS 1-4. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Various invoices, bid specifications, and purchase orders

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the August 2, 2021 Business Services Committee meeting; and special closed session Committee meeting minutes of July 27, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Personnel Services Committee – August 2, 2021. 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 Chelsea Everson (Teacher – Washington), Sarah DeGuire (Teacher – Howe/Woodside/Central Oaks), Jacob Hintz (Teacher – Lincoln), Shelby Stafford (Teacher – Woodside), Morgan Grasamkee (Teacher - Grove).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Stephanie Gonzalez-Vientos (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Alyssa Johnson (Special Ed/Noon Duty Aide – Grove), Breanna Kelly (Study Hall Aide – Lincoln), Haley Casper (Special Ed Aide – Grove), Emily Plowman (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Hannah Bialas (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Susan Faust (Special Ed Aide – Grove), Melissa Bouchard (Administrative Assistant to Athletic Director – Lincoln), and Dan Doerrler (Relief Custodian – District). *Ms. Hett mentioned that Emily Plowman declined an offer of employment and is being removed from the listing of recommended employees to be approved under PS-2.*
- PS-3 Approval of the professional staff resignation of Nicole Fatsis (Teacher- District).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff resignations of Brian Killian (Van Driver – District), Cynthia Milkey (Special Ed Aide – Grant), Lynn Peterson – (Noon Duty Aide – Woodside), Mark Peterson (Custodian – Howe), and Anita Hernandez (Special Ed Aide – Woodside).
- PS-5 Approval of a 1.23% wage increase to the following employee groups: Psychologists, Athletic Director, Food Production Coordinator, Food Services, School Nurses, Computer Technicians, PAC Director, PAC Assistant Coordinator, Network Manager, Systems Manager, Instructional Software Support, Confidential Secretaries, Custodial and Maintenance, AV Coordinator, Van Drivers and Office/Clerical and Aide Support Staff, retroactive to July 1, 2021.
- PS-6 Approval of a full-time custodial position to cover Pitsch Early Learning Center and River Cities High School.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve consent agenda items PS 1-6. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Hett provided updates and reports on:

- Brian Oswald, Director of Human Resources, shared that the COVID addendum that was placed in Employee Handbooks for the 2020-21 school year will be removed. This is due to a variety of changes pertaining to COVID protocols and FFCRA no longer existing. The administration will provide District staff with COVID protocols for the 2021-22 school year in the coming weeks.

In a special Personnel Services Committee meeting held on August 2, 2021, the Committee considered an individual employee resignation request. In open session, the Committee made a motion to recommend approval of the professional staff resignation request of Lauren Koch waiving the requirement of paying liquidated damages.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of the resignation request of Lauren Koch effective August 9, 2021 to include waiver of the requirement to pay liquidated damages. Motion carried on a vote of 6-1. John Benbow voted no.**

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the regular August 2, 2021 Personnel Services Committee meeting, and special open and closed session Personnel Services Committee meeting minutes of August 2, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.**

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Larry Davis suggested that the Pledge of Allegiance be considered for inclusion prior to the beginning of each Educational Services Committee meeting. President Krings confirmed that this item would be added to future Educational Services Meeting agendas.

Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- Governor Evers called the Legislature into Special Session on July 27, 2021 to take up his proposal, “to do what’s best for our kids and schools,” to boost funding for Wisconsin’s K-12 schools and higher education by \$550 million. The Legislature convened and ended the special session with no discussion or consideration of the Governor’s proposal.
- On August 1, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education released a “Return to School Roadmap,” as a resource to support students, schools, educators, and communities preparing to return to safe, healthy in-person learning in the fall. The Roadmap provides key resources and supports and includes three “landmark” priorities that schools, districts, and communities are encouraged to focus on to ensure all students are set up for success in the 2021-22 school year: 1) prioritizing the health and safety of students, staff, and educators; 2) building school communities and supporting students’ social, emotional, and mental health; and 3) accelerating academic achievement.

Bills

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to note July, 2021 receipts in the amount of \$1,912,967.66 and approve July, 2021 disbursements of \$353,750.24 from 2020-21 fiscal year books, and \$4,772,640.29 from 2021-22 fiscal year books. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

Brian Oswall, Director of Human Resources, presented the following hiring recommendations:

Professional Staff Appointments

Caitlyn Nielson	Location:	Mead Elementary
	Position:	Teacher (1.0 FTE)
	Education:	Bachelor’s – UW Stevens Point – December, 2019
	Major/Minor:	Early Childhood Education/Special Education
	Salary:	\$41,500

Ali Mayer	Location:	Grove Elementary
	Position:	Teacher (1.0 FTE)
	Education:	Bachelor’s – UW Oshkosh – January, 2018
	Major/Minor:	Elementary and Special Education
	Salary:	\$42,000

Support Staff Appointment

Rebecca Johnson	Location:	Central Office
	Position:	Aesop Coordinator/Admin Assistant to Human Resources (7.0 hours/day)
	Effective Date:	August 9, 2021
	Hourly Rate:	\$15.96 (starting rate) / \$16.80 (after 60 days)

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of the recommended employee appointments of Caitlyn Nielsen, Ali Mayer, and Rebecca Johnson. Motion carried unanimously.**

Resignations

Mr. Oswald presented the following support staff employee resignations:

Marcie Doersch	Location:	Lincoln High School
	Position:	Testing and Tutoring Coordinator (7.0 hours/day)
	Effective Date:	August 2, 2021
	Date of Hire:	August 29, 2016

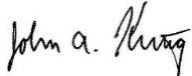
Jennifer Westover	Location:	Washington Elementary
	Position:	Noon Duty Aide (2.0 hours/day)
	Effective Date:	August 4, 2021
	Date of Hire:	November 13, 2017

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the employee resignations of Marcie Doersch and Jennifer Westover. Motion carried unanimously.**

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk