



**WISCONSIN RAPIDS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

John A. Krings, President
John Benbow, Jr.
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
Julie Des Jarlais
Sandra K. Hett
Katie Medina

August 8, 2022

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

LOCATION: District Board Office, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494
Conf Rm A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Troy Bier, John Benbow, Julie Des Jarlais, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Katie Medina

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Larry Davis

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Phil Bickelhaupt, Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson,
Brian Oswald

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of July 11, 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – August 1, 2022. Report given by Katie Medina.

Ms. Medina 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 proposed changes to the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school year calendars that would move the October Professional Development Day to August, thus providing both teachers and students with an Autumn Break day in late October.
- ES-2 Approval of the b.e.s.t. Grant Application for the 2022-2023 school year.
- ES-3 Approval of the Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Indian Education Grant Application for the 2022-23 school year.

Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items ES 1-3. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Medina provided updates and reports on:

- The novel selection process followed at the secondary level which involves students, parents, and teachers
- The annual Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) End-of-Year Report for the 2021-22 academic year and an action plan developed for 2022-23
- 2021-22 activities related to the Gifted and Talented Educational Services (GATES) program
- The annual District Seclusion and Restraint Report covering historical data from 2017-18 through 2021-22 as well as areas of focus for the future

Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by John Benbow to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the August 1, 2022 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – August 1, 2022. 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 the deletion of Policy 451 - Student Insurance Program for first reading.
- BS-2 Approval of proposed changes to Policy 780 - Insurance Management for first reading.
- BS-3 Approval to transition the District financial data base from Linq to Skyward with a formal start date of April 1, 2023. Transition and future financial software costs will be paid for by the District's Business Office budget.
- BS-4 Approval to purchase nine 86" BenQ IFP's from BG Innovations at a total cost of \$35,100.00 to be funded from the 2022-23 Technology Referendum Account.
- BS-5 Approval to purchase and install additional security surveillance cameras at Grove, Howe, Mead, THINK Washington, Woodside, Pitsch, Wisconsin Rapids Middle School, East Junior High, Lincoln High School and River Cities High School from Systems Technology at a total cost of \$68,202.00 to be funded from Fund 46 in accordance with the District 10-year Facility Plan.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda items BS 1-5. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Various invoices, bid specs, and purchase orders
- School bus rerouting project and progress being made to maximize routes while expanding services for families

Ms. Hett expressed concerns around expanding bus services when there are many unknowns about the cost impact in the future, particularly with the current rate of inflation and the uncertainty around any additional State support for educational budgetary increases. Mr. Broeren explained that as the bus routing optimization project concludes, it is looking as though the District will be able to transport more students at no additional cost to the District and possibly at less cost. The conversations around the expansion of transportation options at the elementary level began when the ESSER plan was being developed. A lack of transportation was an identified barrier being experienced by students/families which causes lower rates of attendance and ultimately impacts a student's ability to succeed. Discussion took place around timelines and the possibility for the expansion of transportation to be run as a pilot at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year prior to the change being made more permanently.

Mr. Krings requested an update on the progress of District referendum projects, which Mr. Broeren provided. While construction will be on-going at school locations, all schools will be prepared to start and welcome students back on September 1, 2022.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the August 1, 2022 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – August 1, 2022. 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 Jennica Dhein (Teacher - Washington), Elizabeth Joosten (Teacher – Mead/Woodside), Lisa Derfus (Teacher – Washington), and Julie Heuer (Teacher – Lincoln).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Carole Pfahning (Administrative Assistant to Curriculum Director – District), Bridget Chariton (Receptionist – District), Dana Pelot (Special Ed Aide – THINK), Pamela Swope (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Tina Russell (Security Aide – Lincoln), Drew Glinski (Study Hall Aide – Lincoln), Nancy Thao (ELL Aide – Howe), Carmen Stimac (Security Aide – WRAMS), Kimberly Robison (Noon Duty Aide – Mead), Mandi Chariton (Noon Duty Aide – Grove), Lacey Worzalla (Supervisory Aide – WRAMS), Beth Crotteau (Library Aide – Woodside), Aferdita Mehmedi (Study Hall Aide – Lincoln), Elizabeth King (ACP Coordinator – Lincoln), Tonya Hawke (Instructional Technology Aide – WRAMS), Julie Kramer (Instructional Aide – River Cities), Teresa Brawders (Instructional Aide – Pitsch), Lindsey Koplien

(Special Ed Aide – Pitsch), Kate McAllister (Special Ed Aide – Grove), Nichole Goetz (Special Ed Aide – Howe), Kevin Cushman (Special Ed Aide – Woodside), Deb Stolp (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Paul Drake (Custodian – East), Abigail Krug (Baker – Lincoln), Samantha Conway (Supervisory Aide – WRAMS), Julie Saeger (Secretary – WRAMS), Angela Peschke (Special Ed Aide – Grove), Justice Kuhn (Special Ed Aide – Washington), Kristeen Leach (Special Ed Aide – WRAMS), Kristilyn Wildish (Food Service Baker – Lincoln).

- PS-3 Approval of the professional staff resignations of Sara Rasmussen (Teacher – Washington), Charles Gehrman-Rottier (Teacher – Lincoln), Anne Barber (Teacher – Lincoln), and Jennifer Balczar (Teacher – WRAMS).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff resignations of Ashley Zimmermann (Special Ed Aide - Mead), Ashley Haferman (Secretary – Central Oaks), and Keesha Stoflet (Special Ed Aide – Mead).
- PS-5 Approval of moving the Pitsch secretary position from Group III to Group VI* effective July 19, 2022.
- PS-6 Approval of Board Policy 830.1 – Facility Use of the Performing Arts Center for second reading.
- PS-7 Approval of Board Policy 821.3 – Staff Listing for first reading.
- PS-8 Approval of proposed language changes to the Professional Staff handbook regarding personal days.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda items PS 1-8. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the regular August 1, 2022 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- The 2022 Legislative Council Study Committee on Shared School District Services had its first scheduled meeting on Wednesday, July 20, 2022. The study committee is directed to review current barriers to shared administrative or other services between school districts, and explore statutory changes or creation of incentives to encourage efficiencies.
- Mr. Bier encouraged voters to participate in the upcoming August 9, 2022 primary election.

Bills

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to note July, 2022 receipts in the amount of \$985,482.40 and approve July, 2022 disbursements from 2021-22 books in the amount of \$439,346.84 and July, 2022 disbursements from 2022-23 books in the amount of \$7,222,134.30. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

None.

2022-23 School Year Return Plans and COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

Superintendent Craig Broeren reviewed a proposal for the Board's consideration around COVID-19 mitigation strategies and protocols for the 2022-23 school year. He explained that after consulting with the Wood County Public Health Department and District medical advisors, the administration is proposing to begin the 2022-23 school year in the same manner under which the 2021-22 school year ended with a few alterations. A recap of the procedures was shared as follows:

COVID-19 Protocols Established in February, 2022 to Conclude the 2021-22 School Year:

*Individuals testing positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms indicative of COVID-19 are excluded from the school environment, and symptomatic family members are quarantined to ensure that COVID-19 case numbers remain low in District schools. Individuals who are sick are to stay home. The following guidelines apply regardless of vaccination status and/or recent infection except as *noted:*

- *Positive individuals are required to isolate for 5 days and wear a mask for 5 days upon return to school.*

- Family members who are close contacts to a positive case and are symptomatic are required to quarantine for 5 days and wear a mask for 5 days upon return to school.
- Family members who are close contacts to a positive case and are asymptomatic can continue to attend school; however, they are required to wear a mask for 10 days after the last contact with the positive case.
 - *Vaccinated individuals and/or individuals within their 90-day immunity period can discontinue wearing a mask after 5 days if they remain asymptomatic.
 - *Unvaccinated individuals and/or those who are not within a 90-day immunity period can get a COVID-19 test (rapid or PCR) on day 5 or after and if negative, can discontinue wearing a mask.
- Symptomatic individuals (not COVID positive/ not a close contact but symptoms indicative of COVID such as a persistent cough, fever, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, significant congestion) should stay home until symptoms are improving. These individuals are required to wear a mask for 5 days upon return to school or provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test (rapid or PCR) taken on day 5 or after to return without wearing a mask.

In 2021-22, the District also implemented thresholds for moving a particular school or building back to masks being required for all:

Thresholds for Moving Back to Masks Required (2021-22)

- 3% of the total building population has tested positive for COVID-19 over a three (3) day period
- 5% of the total building population is absent from school for COVID related reasons (isolation and/or quarantine) over a three (3) day period
- A three-day rolling average will be calculated to determine the percent of positives and/or percent of absences due to COVID-19 for each facility
- Necessary changes would be addressed by building/ location, not District-wide

The 2022-23 proposal is as follows:

Public Health and District medical advisors recognize that moving an entire school or building back to masks being required for all (without an exemption on file) at this stage poses some challenges; therefore, they are comfortable with utilizing an approach in which we closely monitor and report positive cases to the District COVID-19 dashboard for informational purposes for parents, staff, and community members. Additionally, if established thresholds were met, a communication would go out to parents and staff of the building impacted outlining the COVID-19 numbers/ cases at that time and strongly recommend mask wearing for all. *It may also be necessary to require masks for staff to ensure that we can adequately staff facilities and keep schools open.*

If we have a situation in which we have met and possibly eclipsed the thresholds established (the same as the ones established in 21-22) and we continue to see cases climbing creating staffing issues, we would have the opportunity to convene a meeting with Public Health and our medical advisors to seek guidance at that time. The administration could then implement what they recommend for a relatively short period of time allowing for the scheduling of an emergency Board meeting if necessary based on timing. This would allow the administration to implement modifications in the short term under the advisement of Public Health as well as make arrangements for appropriate Board feedback and possible action.

Other Adopted Mitigation Measures Will Continue:

Layered prevention strategies will continue as they have in prior years, including:

- Cleaning and disinfecting classrooms, materials, and surfaces
- Improve and maintain ventilation and air flow
- Continue hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (using hand sanitizer if water is not available and covering your cough)
- Share information about vaccination against vaccine preventable illnesses and options to receive COVID-19 vaccinations for those interested
- Offer diagnostic testing for students and staff – the District is working with the State to again provide this service
- Provide continuity of services and online/virtual learning options for students in isolation or quarantine

Mr. Broeren explained that the Public Health Department follows State DHS guidelines which currently defines an outbreak in a school setting to be two cases per building; however, these are under review by Public Health and he would not anticipate the County stepping in unless there were a significant outbreak. He has a meeting with Public

Health and local superintendents on August 15, 2022 and will apprise the Board of any new information that gets shared pertaining to outbreak guidelines. He is comfortable with the thresholds set in the mitigation proposal established and plans to be in direct contact with Public Health and local hospitals/clinics throughout the 2021-22 school year as COVID cases continue to be monitored. Board members discussed the proposal.

Motion by Katie Medina, seconded Troy Bier, to approve of implementing the 2022-23 school year return plans with respect to COVID mitigation measures as presented. Motion carried on a vote of 5-1. Julie Des Jarlais voted no.

Library Furniture Purchase for Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS)

As the District develops new programming at WRAMS, the administration has been working with relevant staff members to determine how the library at WRAMS could be upgraded and transformed into a more conducive learning space; purchasing furniture to better fit the needs for the space has been explored and is being recommended. ESSER III dollars have been set aside to enhance programming at WRAMS and would be utilized for the furniture purchase. Should the Board approve of the purchase, the carpeting would simultaneously be replaced as well since the space would be vacant and carpet replacement dollars have been budgeted in the District's 10-Year Facility Plan. Ms. Filtz reviewed quotations secured from three vendors to replace the furniture. The administration recommends approval of the quote from Emmons Business Interiors at a cost of \$40,773.43.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded Troy Bier, to approve of purchasing furniture for the WRAMS library from Emmons Business Interiors at a cost of \$40,773.43 using ESSER III funds. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Update on Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results

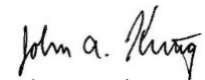
Steve Hepp, Director of Pupil Services, provided an update to the Board on Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results for 2021. The YRBS is conducted as part of a national effort by the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor health-risk behaviors of middle and high school students. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has administered the survey every two years since 1993, and students are able to participate on a voluntary basis while remaining completely anonymous. District parent permission procedures were followed, including informing parents that their child's participation was voluntary, prior to the survey being administered. The survey was administered to 8th graders at WRAMS, grades 9-12 at Lincoln, and grades 11-12 at River Cities. Mr. Hepp reviewed survey results including topics covered, as well as overall and subgroup data relative to a few select questions that were asked. Questions around bullying, how often students feel safe at school, consideration of self-harming or attempting suicide, and whether students are experiencing anxiety are just a few of the areas touched on in the survey.

With survey results gathered, next steps planned by the administration include involving pertinent staff members to take a deeper dive into data results by county and region to determine which areas need attention and focus. Once a determination is made about what the District currently has in place, additional planning around implementing strategies to address outstanding needs will occur. Board members discussed the data and asked questions around how the survey defines student anxiety and considered how the pandemic, as well as screen time students spend on phones and computers, may have impacted survey results. Ms. Des Jarlais requested to receive a copy of the actual YRBS survey questions. Mr. Hepp will gather the information and share it with Board members.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk