



**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  
Julie Timm

March 13, 2023

**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: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Larry Davis, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Katie Medina, Julie Timm

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

Justin Jinsky commented on the topic of snow days and safety considerations that should be taken into account when inclement weather causes hazardous travel conditions. He feels tough decisions should be made to err on the side of safety for closure, even if there might be pushback given the number of days school has already been cancelled.

Student Representative Report

Sarah Panzer reported on:

- Spring sports are beginning with a track meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 16th
- A Teen Job Fair is being hosted on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and is open to any teen in the community
- Spring Break is coming up on March 27-31st
- Freshman and sophomore classes will take the PreACT on April 4th

School Showcase – Washington Elementary

Washington Elementary Principal Kelly Schaeffer was joined by staff members Barb Bondioli, Aida Juarez, Kayla McLean, and Lisa Derfus to showcase the mission and initiatives of the school to move students forward and close achievement gaps. The four areas of focus for the school are on student/teacher relationships, family engagement, school and instructional leadership, and effective instruction. The “Wolf Pack Lounge” was featured which is a new space in the building designed to support small group instruction and provide meeting space for both students and adults as needed, provide quiet workspace for students and classroom accommodation support, and offer crisis and conflict resolution support. With the new addition to the building made possible by the referendum, this dedicated space has been a tremendous asset to both students and staff. The presentation demonstrated how students are learning to be respectful, responsible, and safe, concluding with a video of Washington students singing the school song. The Board expressed their appreciation for the efforts by Washington staff members to showcase the fantastic activities happening to help students be successful.

Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Julie Timm to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of February 13, 2023, and open and closed session special Board of Education meeting minutes of February 13, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.**

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – March 6, 2023. 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 Food Around the World Summer Academy class to be offered in summer of 2023.
- ES-2 Approval of having Washington Elementary School apply to become a Title I School-Wide program.
- ES-3 Approval of recommended revisions to the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Co-Curricular Activities Code of Conduct.
- ES-4 Approval of the 3-year purchase agreement of Care Solace for a total cost of \$60,021.00 to be funded through the School Based Mental Health Grant funds, and Get Kids Ahead Grant funds if needed.
- ES-5 Approval of the additional equipment purchases for the Digital Media Live Broadcast course to be paid through the Curriculum and Technology Referendum budget in the amount of \$32,976.72.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items ES 1-5. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Ms. Medina provided updates and reports on:

- The Committee learned about upcoming student travel plans to the National Veterans Day Commemoration Ceremony at the Air Force Memorial in Washington, D.C. from November 8-13, 2023; and travel by members of the Lincoln High School Theatre Department to participate in the “Thespys” at the International Thespian Festival at Indiana University Bloomington on June 19-23, 2023.
- Mr. Steven Hepp, Director of Pupil Services, informed the Committee that despite some improvement, WRPS still disproportionately identifies Black students as having a disability, with Black students being 2.2 times more likely to be identified than their peers in 2022 (down from 2.5 times in 2021). Moreover, Black and Hispanic students are more likely to be identified with a Specific Learning Disability than their peers. With Black students being 3.06 times more likely (down from 3.61 in 2020 and 3.11 in 2021) and Hispanic students 2.4479 times more likely (increase from 2.1756 in 2020 and 2.4459 in 2021). To address this issue, the District has contracted with Center 4All to conduct "Equity Walks" in three of its Title I elementary schools (Howe, Grove, and Mead). The Equity Walks will gather observational data to confirm or challenge assumptions about school improvement and equity and identify areas that may have been overlooked. Center 4All consultants and school staff will work together to collect data which will be included in a report for each individual building, as well as a system-wide district report. The reports will be used for planning, goal-setting, and inclusive conversation, and will be discussed with leadership teams to determine next steps.

The cost of the Center 4All contract is \$13,769.64 which includes the 3 days of Equity Walks, data collection/analysis, lodging/mileage reimbursement, and presentation on findings. Due to being identified as disproportionate, WRPS must budget 15% of IDEA Part B funds for comprehensive coordinated early intervening services (CCEIS) to address the root cause of racial disproportionality, as identified through continuous improvement activities. These Equity Walks are considered a continuous improvement activity and will be funded through these IDEA Part B funds.

- Ms. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, provided an update on planned improvements for the WRPS Curriculum webpage which serves two purposes. The first purpose is to provide an overview of the curriculum that is followed including the mission and vision of each area, the essential questions for learning, as well as the learning objectives that students are expected to meet. This portion is intended for parents/guardians, and others in the community who may have an interest. The second purpose is to house individual course lessons, assignments, assessments and materials used to organize and teach a particular lesson. This portion is for *classroom use* and is not intended to be shared openly with the public at large. However, parents/guardians have access to virtually all aspects of coursework that their child(ren) are involved in simply by asking their classroom teacher.

With the entirety of the WRPS curriculum being posted in the same place on one landing page, there are several webpage links that are not open to the general public, but only open to classroom teachers. This is due to the fact that these links typically lead to common assessments, copyrighted resources, or daily lesson plans. This causes confusion for members of the public when they are attempting to access items intended for staff use only. As a result, the curriculum webpage is currently being revamped to remove links not available to the public while still providing a general outline of what is taught at each grade level, the standards that are addressed, and what is expected in order to show proficiency in each content area. The webpage will be under construction through the spring. While under construction,

parents/guardians or other interested parties may direct specific curriculum questions to their child's teacher, building administrator, or the Director of Curriculum & Instruction. Once complete, the new and improved version of the webpage should cut down on confusion and give users the experience and information they are seeking.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the March 6, 2023 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Business Services Committee – March 6, 2023. 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 contract with Point of Beginning (POB) for survey, design and construction services for the Woodside OPLAC project at an estimated cost of \$42,568.94 to be funded by the Woodside OPLAC account.
- BS-2 Approval of the purchase from Central Restaurant Supply for tilt skillet to be placed at WRAMS and LHS at a total cost of \$41,685.00 to be funded by the Food Service budget.
- BS-3 Approval to enter into a 3-year contract with Solarus to provide Wide Area Network services to the District at a monthly cost of \$11,460.00 to be funded 80% by the Federal Erate program, and 20% from the annual Technology Budget.
- BS-4 Approval of the purchase of 35 Juniper switches and accessories, and a 5-year support and licensing bundle from Bytespeed at a total cost of \$231,350.00 to be funded 80% by the Federal Erate program, and 20% from the 2023-24 Technology Referendum Budget.
- BS-5 Approval to contract with Current Technologies to rewire Grove Elementary at a total cost of \$69,730.00 to be funded in combination with any remaining Category 2 dollars from the Federal Erate program and the 2023-24 Technology Referendum Budget.
- BS-6 Approval to purchase 440 Bytespeed B660S Mini Computers from Bytespeed at a total cost of \$323,400.00 to be funded in combination from the 2022-23 Technology Referendum Budget and the 2022-23 District Technology Budget.
- BS-7 Approval to renew the Skyward contract at the 3-year contract pricing with the annual cost to the District per year of \$9.42 per student based on the annual 3rd Friday pupil count to be funded through various District accounts.
- BS-8 Approval of entering into a new CESA 5 agreement for the 2023-24 school year in an amount of \$512,673.90 to be paid for with Flow Through and other District accounts.
- BS-9 Approval of the WRYSA proposed plan to add additional parking space and expanded greenspace at the Kellner ball diamonds located on District property with all costs related to the project paid for by WRYSA.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda items BS 1-9. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made.
- Due to extreme wait times to obtain network switches, the District has not received its switch order placed in April, 2022. Since that time, the manufacturer of the switches has introduced a new model of switch that actually is a better fit for the District network. The Technology Support Department has entered a Service Substitution Request to Erate to substitute the switches purchased originally with the new model released by Juniper. The Erate program has approved the Service Substitution request and District staff have been working with the vendor to cancel the old order and place a new order with the updated switches. The original cost of the switches totaled \$324,574.00 and the cost of the new switches is \$324,573.96, saving the District \$0.04. While this amount is extremely minimal, it is important to note that the District will be receiving the most advanced technology at essentially the same cost.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the March 6, 2023 Business Services Committee meeting and special closed session Business Services Committee meeting minutes of February 27, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Personnel Services Committee – March 6, 2023. 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 support staff appointments of Laura Carlson (First Cook - Lincoln), Jamie Knetter (Second Cook – Lincoln), Jamie DeWitt (Accounts Payable Specialist – District), Jennifer Havlik (Kitchen Helper – Lincoln), Rae Ann Nelson (Kitchen Helper – Lincoln), Chani Pulchinski (Cleaner – THINK), Joy Ahlstrom (Noon Duty Aide – Grove), Rasim Aliu (Night Custodian – Lincoln), and Ashley Brandl (Noon Duty Aide – Washington).
- PS-2 Approval of the professional staff resignation request of Christy Meld (Teacher – Grant).
- PS-3 Approval of the support staff resignations of Jordyn Placzek (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Dawn Koch (Noon Duty Aide – Grove), Lacy Alling (Instructional Aide – WRAMS), Sabrina Blundon (Kitchen Helper – Lincoln), Vicki Shafranski (Special Ed Aide – Woodside), and Lori Diver (Noon Duty Aide – Washington).
- PS-4 Approval of the professional staff retirements of Katherine McCarthy (Teacher – WRAMS), Mary Freeh (Teacher – Lincoln), Cathy Tritz (Teacher – Lincoln), Stephanie Morman (Teacher – Lincoln), and Randall Vinter (Teacher – Lincoln).
- PS-5 Approval of the support staff retirement of Lisa Rasmussen (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln).

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items PS 1-5. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Hett provided updates and reports on:

- Brian Oswald, Director of Human Resources, provided an update on the District’s utilization of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Usage was slightly up for last year, but still near the average usage over the past four years.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the regular March 6, 2023 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Ms. Hett requested clarification on what authority a Board member carries when posting on social media accounts while identifying themselves as a School Board member, and what the implications are should they misrepresent themselves as speaking on behalf of the Board. Superintendent Broeren explained that Board members are only acting in their official capacity and carry authority when they are attending a legal meeting appropriately noticed as outlined in Board Policy 161. Individuals who identify themselves as Board members in a social media post carry no more authority than when they identify themselves by name alone, and such a post would become problematic or be inappropriate if the individual were to express that they represent the Board’s opinion or position on an issue or act as if they are an official spokesperson for the Board. Mr. Broeren made mention that the ramifications for Board members who choose to post or share information inappropriately are minimal, and it would be up to the Board to address concerns in this regard while in session at a meeting.

Ms. Hett requested a report on disciplinary activity at Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS) that compares data from trimester 1 of this year to the same trimester last year; and at the end of the year have the Board receive a more comprehensive report containing data around discipline activity comparisons for this year to last, as well as outcomes to improve both school climate and student progress. Mr. Broeren explained a bit about the entry of truancy and absence detail in Skyward that can misrepresent the total number of concerning behaviors exhibited by students since all data is combined. He described the human element and judgement involved with imposing discipline and the variety of discipline situations and codes that get used in the student database management system. He will gather the information requested for trimester 1, and a more comprehensive report from the WRAMS administration will be forthcoming toward the end of the school year.

Ms. Hett noted that she learned in the news of a Speed Cup Stacking event host by WRPS recently, and extended appreciation and congratulations toward Justin Weinhold, Phy Ed Teacher, and those involved to bring this positive co-curricular activity to the area for elementary aged students.

Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- The Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) has announced four public hearings that are scheduled related to the State Budget. The public hearing schedule includes the dates of April 5<sup>th</sup> in Waukesha; April 11<sup>th</sup> in Eau Claire, April 12<sup>th</sup> in Wisconsin Dells; and April 26<sup>th</sup> in Minocqua. The JFC has also created an online portal for constituents to provide input. Mr. Benbow requested that the online portal link be sent to Board members.
- The Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Legislative Breakfast on Friday, March 17, 2023 at Mid-State Technical College. The meeting is typically recorded and available for viewing at a later date for those unable to attend.
- The Spring General election will occur on Tuesday, April 4, 2023 and Mr. Bier encourages voters to become informed and exercise their right to vote. Information can be found on myvote.wi.gov to see sample ballots and check registration status.

Bills

**Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis to note February, 2023 receipts in the amount of \$11,286,240.07 and approve February, 2023 disbursements in the amount of \$5,373,564.10. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

New BusinessEmployee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

None.

Update on 2023-24 District Budget

Aaron Nelson, Director of Business Services, stated that there is no new information to share concerning the 2023-24 budget as school districts wait for the State to finalize the budget process. A \$600,000 shortfall is currently predicted for the coming year. More details will be shared in the coming months as information becomes available.

Property Sale Due to Highway Project

Superintendent Broeren explained that the District received notice that a portion of the property (0.319 acres) adjacent to County Highway W and 48<sup>th</sup> Street South near River Cities High School will be impacted by a planned highway project to modify the intersection. Under the Wisconsin Eminent Domain Law, the Wood County Highway Department plans to purchase this needed right of way at an offer of \$10,000.00 per acre which amounts to a payment to the District of \$3,190.00 for 0.319 acres. The sale of this property will not negatively impact school operations, and the administration recommends approval of the sale. The Board had an opportunity to ask questions.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to approve of the sale of .319 acres of District property for \$3,190.00 that is adjacent to County Highway W and 48<sup>th</sup> Street South near the River Cities High School building falling under eminent domain as a result of a planned upcoming highway project. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Potential Sale of Vesper Community Academy and Surrounding Property

Mr. Broeren explained that the District was contacted recently by a party interested in potentially purchasing the Vesper Community Academy property. Following a closed session meeting of the Board held on March 6, 2023, additional information has been gathered concerning District obligations in terms of the process to put the property up for sale. A title search is underway to ensure there are no impediments that might preclude the potential sale. There are no legal notices required for the sale; however, it would be prudent to accept sealed bids by a certain date. The property would be sold “as is” with no additional work, such as razing the building, performed by the District. Mr. Broeren described the process that would be used to advertise the sale, and the Board had an opportunity to ask questions. Ms. Hett questioned how this might impact the lease currently in place for the upcoming year with CESA 5, and Mr. Broeren explained that CESA 5 is aware of the potential sale and is beginning to explore other property options for their programming should the need arise.

**Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of advertising the sale of the Vesper Community Academy building and affiliated 18.5 acres of property owned by the District using a sealed bid format with the Board reviewing bids and taking action on the final sale. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association Sale of Alcohol Products on District Property

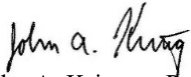
Mr. Broeren explained that he was approached by representatives of the Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA) recently to discuss the possibility of WRYSA being granted the approval to sell beer and alcoholic seltzer products while using the ball fields located on District property near Grant Elementary School in Kellner. If approved, WRYSA would sign an addendum to their current property use agreement similar to the arrangement made for sales to adult spectators during River King games held at the South Wood County Recreation Center and Red Hawk and Legion baseball games hosted at the quadplex. A primary difference in this arrangement is in the fact that the age of player participants is around 14 years and under. The same requirements for WRYSA to obtain any licensing and permits would apply. Board members questioned whether any alcohol on the premises would be locked up or secured when not being sold, and how potential bad behaviors exhibited by those consuming alcohol might be addressed. Eric Millard, a representative of WRYSA, explained that WRYSA is aware of and in agreement with their responsibilities to uphold the agreement, and would lock alcohol up during off hours and have proper supervision, oversight, and expectations set during all events. Penalties WRYSA would impose such as removal and/or suspension from the premises by violators was explained. The Town of Grant has indicated their willingness to work with the group to issue permits as long as WRPS is in agreement to allow it. WRYSA is grateful that the Board is considering their request as it would provide a helpful boost in revenues to support programming.

**Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Sandra Hett to approve of a request by the Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA) to sell alcoholic products during WYRSA sponsored activities held at the Kellner ball diamonds located on District property by entering into an amendment to their current Lease Agreement. Motion carried 6-0 on a roll call vote. Larry Davis abstained.**

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