



**WISCONSIN RAPIDS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

John A. Krings, President
John Benbow, Jr.
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
Katie Medina
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz
Julie Timm

January 8, 2024

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, John Krings, Katie Medina, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Julie Timm

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

None.

Special Recognition – VFW Teacher of the Year

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 2534 representatives Tom Heiser, Paul Morrison, and Steve Bidwell presented a special “Teacher of the Year” award to Social Studies Teacher Scott Reaves in recognition of his promotion of citizenship education and welcoming classroom environment toward veterans.

School Showcase – Washington Elementary School

Principal Kelly Schaeffer from Washington Elementary was accompanied by a number of staff members, students, and community volunteers to present on how the Washington “Wolf Pack” community is so much more than a school. Topics covered include: the school’s safety patrol program, classroom volunteer support, Reading Corps services, grants secured to support learning and humanitarian activities undertaken by staff and students, the experience of practicum students from UW-Stevens Point who were joined by their professors to speak on the excellent cohort experiences nurtured through Washington, reading mentors, the Parent Teacher organization, and the love students have for the school’s certified therapy dog named Pacha. The Board thanked everyone who attended to present on the fantastic initiatives happening at Washington to help students succeed.

Student Representative Report

Sarah Panzer shared the following:

- A number of LHS students who participated in the DECA Districts competition will be moving on to state competition
- Sportainment Night at LHS is scheduled for Friday, January 12, 2024
- The LHS Theatre Department will be hosting a student “Winter Showcase” on January 19-21, 2024 which includes three one-act plays written by former Advanced Drama students
- There will be no school on Monday, January 15, 2024 since it is a scheduled Professional Development Day for staff
- The annual Fire on Ice spirit week is coming up on February 5-10, 2024

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of regular Board of Education meeting minutes of December 11, 2023; and special open and closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of December 11, 2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee ReportsA. Educational Services Committee – January 2, 2024. 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 to not designate any space limitations for regular education open enrollment students for the 2024-25 school year, and designate space available in special education programming as presented.

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

Ms. Medina provided updates and reports on:

- The Committee heard a report from Brian Oswall, Principal of Central Oaks Academy Charter School, regarding 2023-24 financial, operational, and academic goals for the school.
- Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, provided an overview of the progress made to put technology devices into the hands of students through a one-to-one initiative that began in 2015. A timeline was shared along with an explanation about the technology infrastructure changes that have occurred as well as the introduction of various software to meet programming needs. Additional staff professional development is planned to occur in the future around technology initiatives.
- Jennifer Wilhorn, Assistant Director of Curriculum & Instruction, provided updates regarding elementary language arts materials and the process that will be used for piloting materials during the second half of the 2023-24 school year, particularly in light of 2023 Wisconsin Act 20 which requires numerous changes around early literacy instruction, curriculum, assessments, and interventions as well as teacher licensing and preparation. Act 20 creates a Council on Early Literacy Curricula located within the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) Office of Literacy. The Director of the Office of Literacy has yet to be named; this individual will be responsible for distribution of grant funds tied to the Act 20 initiative and have oversight of the literacy coaches who will be working with school districts. The Council on Early Literacy Curricula consists of nine members who have been meeting to develop a recommended list of science-based literacy curricula and instructional materials for use in grades K-3. By February 1, 2024 a materials list is supposed to be released which is a change from the original date in December, 2023. The Council is accepting vendor proposals until January 15, 2024 which means a quick turn-around will need to happen to meet the February 1st deadline.

No updates have come concerning which K-3 statewide reading screener will be utilized. To prepare for the upcoming school year, District staff will begin providing consistent screener result reports to parents in a uniform manner. Depending upon when the materials list gets released, District professional development completion dates may change. Originally, requirements from Act 20 stipulated that all K-3 teachers must complete required reading training by July, 2025. The State has since revised the timeline to have the training requirement *begin* by July, 2025. However, after considering the possibility of any teacher turnover, the administration feels it is best to maintain training as originally planned to avoid the need for additional training of new staff.

While District based elementary level professional development will have a language arts focus due to Act 20, secondary level professional development being planned will likely be targeted on the expanded use of Canvas in grades 6-12, among other focus areas. A timeline for the elementary materials pilot being introduced was shared, along with the specific materials selected for review up to this point. Ms. Wilhorn expressed her appreciation to staff members who have willingly stepped up to participate in evaluating the pilot materials. The pilot will occur from February through mid-April. The District Language Arts CII committee is meeting on January 17, 2024 to finalize a WRPS rubric for the pilot teachers to use when evaluating the materials. An update concerning the pilot process will be shared at the next Council for Instructional Improvement (CII) meeting scheduled for February 21, 2024.

In April, the Elementary Language Arts CII will meet to review pilot feedback and a presentation will then be made to the full CII Committee and include a recommendation for purchase. The community will have an opportunity to review the materials in May, and it is anticipated that a final purchase recommendation will be presented to the Educational Services Committee at its June 3, 2024 meeting. Staff members will receive training on the new curriculum materials at the end of August with full implementation slated to take place at the beginning of the school year in September, 2024. Superintendent Broeren made mention of the fact that

there may be things throughout the process that administration is unable to anticipate and result in adjustments being made as new information is provided by the DPI.

Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the January 2, 2024 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – January 2, 2024. 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 purchase of 27 BenQ Interactive Flat Panels and BalanceBox mounts from BG Innovations for a total cost of \$114,026.00 to be funded from the 2023-24 Technology Budget.
- BS-2 Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding with Hawkins Ash CPAs for 3 years of audit services to be provided for the following fiscal years: 2023-24 for \$25,400.00, 2024-25 for \$26,650.00, and 2025-26 for 27,975.00.

Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items BS 1-2. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Benbow stated there were no actionable items taken up by the Committee, and reviewed the following updates and reports:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made
- Committee members learned that the District has received notice that CESA 5 has exceeded its annual revenue projection for the 2022-23 school year. The Board of Control at CESA 5 approved a disbursement of \$250,000.00 to its members. The Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools' portion of this reimbursement is \$8,911.62.
- Ed Allison, Director of Buildings and Grounds, presented a utility cost summary report to the Committee which covered costs associated with electric, natural gas, lighting, sewer, water fire suppression, storm water and snow plowing.
- Aaron Nelson, Director of Business Services presented District 2022-23 audited financial statements. The District's audited fund balance is \$17,125,364.00, which is up \$2,445,561.00 from the start of the 2022-23 school year and equates to 22% of total revenues.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the January 2, 2024 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – January 2, 2024. Report given by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz 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 appointment of McKenzie Wickman (Teacher Intern, Cross Categorical – Lincoln).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Jenny Williams (Cashier – Lincoln), Dixie Torke (Supervisory/Health Aide – WRAMS), Martin Sawchak (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln), Sandra Hoefling (Van Driver – District), Trina McDonald (Cashier/Kitchen Helper – Grove), Damara Hudnell (Special Ed Aide – Woodside), Steven Placek (Head Custodian – Lincoln), Daniel Shaurette (Custodian – Lincoln), and Cora Buckle (Special Ed Aide – Woodside).
- PS-3 Approval of the support staff resignations of Daniel Doerrler (Custodian – Lincoln), Bryndiss Agustsdottir (Kitchen Helper/Cashier – Grove), Kaylie Jinsky (Special Ed Aide – Woodside), Roxann Nelson (Kitchen Helper – Mead), Nicole Fitch (Supervisory Aide – WRAMS), Ellen Mazurek (Education & Career Planning Coordinator – RCHS), Carmen Stimac (Security Aide – WRAMS), and Susan Faust (Special Ed Aide – Grove).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff retirements of Patricia Halbur (Special Ed Aide – Washington) and Richard Wodlarski (Head Custodian – Lincoln).

PS-5 Approval of increasing the food service cashier substitute rate from \$15.00/hour to \$15.50/hour effective January 10, 2024.

PS-6 Approval of increasing the LHS Live Stream advisor assignment from 7/5/7 percent per season to 7/7/7 percent per season.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items PS 1-6. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the regular January 2, 2024 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- LRB-2040/5421 is circulating for co-sponsorship and would allow for certain participants of the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) to be rehired by participating employers without having to suspend their annuities (pensions) for up to 60 months. Under current law, retired annuitants generally must suspend their annuity payments in order to return to work, which is a significant disincentive. As Wisconsin continues to face school personnel shortages of all kinds, retired staff is a pool of qualified individuals that can help districts fill positions.
- The Senate Committee on Education was slated to hold a public hearing on January 9, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. on the following bills, but it was announced that the meeting has been cancelled:
 - SB 838 relating to reductions to state aid paid to school districts for payments made under parental choice programs and the Special Needs Scholarship Program;
 - SB 652 relating to reductions to state aid paid to school districts for payments to certain independent charter schools;
 - SB 653 relating to state aid adjustments under the full-time open enrollment program
- The Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. on SB 688 which would require school boards to solicit bids and award a contract to the lowest bidder if the estimated cost of a contract exceeds \$150,000 and the contract is for the construction, repair, remodeling, or materials. The Assembly version of the bill, AB 723, was heard by the Assembly Committee on Local Government in mid- December. WASB is opposed to SB 688.

Bills

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Benbow to note December, 2023 receipts in the amount of \$12,374,037.03 and approve December, 2023 disbursements in the amount of \$37,451,128.13. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

None.

Renewal of WIAA Girls Hockey Coop Agreement

Superintendent Broeren presented a Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) girls hockey cooperative team agreement that would cover programming for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years. Terms of the agreement are identical to past agreements.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the proposed two-year Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) girls hockey cooperative team agreement for the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years. Motion carried unanimously.

Contract with EO Johnson for Managed Print Services

Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, provided information concerning a proposal to terminate the District's current 5-year lease with EO Johnson slated to end on December 31, 2025 and enter a new 5-year Managed Print Services contract with EO Johnson at a base annual cost of \$124,824.82 effective March 1, 2024. Mr. Bickelhaupt provided an

explanation around several issues that came to light after a number of larger Hewlett Packard (HP) copiers were installed. EO Johnson has been working closely with the District to remedy the issues and has explored other options and manufacturers to replace underperforming HP machines. In late November, 2023, EO Johnson approached the administration with a proposal to replace 18 HP copiers with Ricoh copier products, and re-utilize several of the current printers that do perform well in the work environment that they support. The proposal calls for entering into a new 5-year lease with EO Johnson and terminating the current lease. EO Johnson will cover the disposal of current machines and fully install the new Ricoh copiers. With the contract opened back up, the administration is proposing to make a few modifications to add more up-front copies to the agreement. Details about projected costs were shared as follows:

| EO Johnson Contract | Current | Proposed |
|---|--------------|---------------------|
| Base payment that includes 75% of anticipated black/white and color prints. (Note the current contract only covers anticipated black/white prints.) | \$40,871.75 | \$54,076.96 |
| Equipment Cost | \$69,750.78 | \$70,747.88 |
| Base Payment | \$112,523.51 | \$124,824.82 |
| 12 Month Copy Costs | \$30,384.34 | \$18,025.65 |
| Total Annual Cost | \$142,907.85 | 142,850.47 |

Ultimately, the new agreement puts proposed annual costs slightly lower than the District’s current annual costs. Board members had an opportunity to ask questions.

Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve of terminating the District’s current 5-year lease with EO Johnson slated to end on December 31, 2025 and enter a new 5-year Managed Print Services contract with EO Johnson as presented at a base annual cost of \$124,824.82 effective March 1, 2024. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) Delegate Assembly Resolutions

The Board reviewed proposed WASB resolutions to be taken up by the Delegate Assembly during the State Education Convention in January, 2024.

Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Katie Medina to approve to have John Benbow use his own discretion and vote his conscience on behalf of the Board on proposed Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) resolutions when participating as the Board Delegate at the upcoming Delegate Assembly meeting in January, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Vista Sands Solar LLC Proposed Pledge Agreement

Superintendent Broeren introduced a proposed agreement from Vista Sands Solar LLC which is working to build a large solar generating facility in Portage County. The agreement would provide a nonbinding pledge for an annual gift to be made to the District for 20 years by Vista Sands Solar as a way to demonstrate their commitment to the local community. The pledge amount would be based upon the number of megawatts of solar sited in the District’s attendance area and could be as much as \$125,100 per year which as he understands it, can be used on whatever the District deems appropriate. The only expectation seems to be for some recognition of the contribution from Vista Sands Solar.

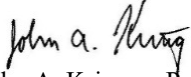
Board members asked questions around the company’s structure as it relates to Doral Renewables who is also involved, expectations around potential promotion or messaging as outlined in the agreement and the District’s ability to be involved and approve communications it is mentioned in, how obligations tied to the non-binding pledge work in years when megawatts usage is down, whether other similar agreements with school districts have been developed, and what issues might arise if the District enters the agreement. Mr. Broeren explained that he is exploring the company’s structure and has had the District’s attorney review the agreement to identify any potential concerns. The nonbinding pledge component means the company wouldn’t be obligated to make a contribution if they aren’t able to in a given year. Similar to how Vista Sands Solar wants to ensure accuracy and consistency of messaging, Mr. Broeren would expect the District to have an opportunity to approve any communication or messaging that involves WRPS as well. Mr. Broeren is unaware of another school district in the state that has entered such an agreement. Once he has received additional guidance from District legal

counsel, Mr. Broeren will bring the agreement back at a future Board meeting for more discussion and possible approval.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk