



**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

February 12, 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: Larry Davis, Katie Medina, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Julie Timm

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: John Benbow, Troy Bier, John Krings

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Phil Bickelhaupt, Craig Broeren, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Brian Oswald,  
Tina Wallner, Jennifer Wilhorn

Treasurer Katie Medina called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Public Comment

None.

School Showcase – Grove Elementary School

Principal Tina Wallner and Grade 5 Teacher Erin Michels from Grove Elementary presented on the initiatives at Grove to help students succeed, including a leadership focus for grades 4 and 5. A short video was shared that was created by students, and showcases students and staff members being interviewed to explain what they enjoy about Grove and what makes Grove unique. The Board thanked Ms. Wallner and Ms. Michels for their informative presentation.

Student Representative Report

No report – student excused to participate in co-curricular activity.

Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve of regular Board of Education meeting minutes of January 8, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.**

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – February 5, 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 of the 2024-25 Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Strategic Plan as presented.
- ES-2 Approval of the 3-year renewal of No Red Ink for a total cost of \$55,468.00 to be funded through ESSER III grant dollars.
- ES-3 Approval of the purchase of percussion equipment for the middle school band program as outlined in the proposal from Steve Weiss Music and the purchase of a storage chest from Home Depot at a total cost of \$28,859.90 to be paid from the 2023-2024 WRAMS building budget.
- ES-4 Approval of paying no more than \$150.00 a night to implement FAST WORKS at participating buildings; this cost includes a staff hourly rate of \$25.00 plus other associated costs as presented to be paid out of the “Get Kids Ahead” grant.

Kathi Stebbins-Hintz requested that items ES-1 and ES-3 be held out.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda items ES-2 and ES-4. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

With regard to ES-1, Ms. Stebbins-Hintz made mention that she appreciates the goals set by the District through the Strategic Plan, and how hard staff members work toward the Plan's goals to help students be successful. She also appreciates the commentary and explanations incorporated into the Plan to provide rationale and progress made in each Objective area.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item ES-1. Motion carried unanimously.**

With regard to ES-3, Ms. Stebbins-Hintz stated that she doesn't doubt the equipment may be needed, but expressed some concern about the process used for the percussion purchase since it circumvents the curriculum acquisition process typically used.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Julie Timm to approve consent agenda item ES-3. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Ms. Medina provided updates and reports on:

- Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, updated the Committee with the annual Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Mid-Year Report. Ms. Filtz noted that school districts have the latitude to set their own benchmarks for reporting. Years ago, the District benchmark was set at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in order to ensure any students scoring below that benchmark on the screener in reading or math would have intentional focus to determine if Tier 3 interventions might be necessary. Students scoring between the 26<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> percentile were evaluated to determine if there is a potential need for strong Tier 2 intervention strategies. Over the course of the past year, it has become clear that the AGR scores being used based upon the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile did not align with Forward exam content which concentrates on students being proficient or advanced at the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile and above category. Due to the fact that the screenings for AGR were not aligning with Forward exam proficient and advanced categories, some parents were confused with what appeared to be mixed results in their child's performance. To rectify this, for the first time this year the screener results were adjusted to be based upon the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile benchmark, which is obviously a jump from the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. Parents were informed about the benchmark changes so that they wouldn't be alarmed in the score differences for their students from this year to last.

Due to the changes implemented, the scores reflected on the mid-year AGR report are lower in comparison to what has been reported in the past. The overall District goal remains at 80 percent of students to be scoring in the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile by year-end. The administration is hopeful that the changes implemented will provide more meaningful information for classroom teachers to detect issues, adjust instruction if needed, and help students be more successful.

Ms. Filtz reviewed formative and summative assessment methods being used in each grade level as well as AGR strategies implemented for reading and math at each level.

- Ms. Filtz reported that Lincoln High School (LHS) has recently learned that AP United States History can be accepted as Dual Credit through Mid-State Technical College. As a result, the class will be offered for AP credit or Dual Credit during the 2024-2025 school year. Social Studies teacher Jacob Bertagnoli has gone through the certification process necessary to teach this course in the coming year.
- An update was provided concerning a group of students who will be traveling to National level competition at the International Thespian Festival (ITF) at Indiana University Bloomington on June 23-28, 2024.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the February 5, 2024 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. Business Services Committee – February 5, 2024. Report given by Julie Timm.

Ms. Timm 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 lease agreement with CESA 5 at East Jr. High for the 2024-25 school year for a fee of \$26,000.00.

- BS-2 Approval of the proposals for floor finish from Nassco, Inc. in the amount of \$18,555.56 and Hillyard Floor Care Supply in the amount of \$7,870.47 to be paid from the 2023-24 Buildings and Grounds budget.
- BS-3 Approval of the proposed revisions to Board Policy 352 Exhibit 2 – Student Travel Release Form for first reading.
- BS-4 Approval of the purchase of 520 HP Chromebooks and management from PDS at a total cost of \$129,740.00 to be funded from the 2023-2024 WRPS Common School Fund Budget and the Technology Referendum Budget.

**Motion by Julie Timm, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda items BS 1-4. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Ms. Timm provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made
- Skyward Warehouse software will be implemented in spring, 2024 at a first-year conversion cost of \$6,879.00 and annual recurring cost of approximately \$1,403.00. The cost will be paid from the Business Office budget account.

**Motion by Julie Timm, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the February 5, 2024 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Personnel Services Committee – February 5, 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 appointments of Heather Robertson (Cross Categorical Teacher – Lincoln) and Sydney Frandsen (Cross Categorical Teacher – WRAMS).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Luis Hernandez (Security Aide – WRAMS), Tricia Hofer (Kitchen Helper, FFVP – Mead), Autumn Peckham (Special Ed Aide – Woodside), Dale Joosten (Custodian – Lincoln), Tong Thao (Custodian – Lincoln), Cassandra Mancl (Supervisory/Instructional Aide – WRAMS), Alan Wollschlager (Custodian – Lincoln), Kami Indermuehle (Special Ed/Noon Aide – Grove), Debra Cleworth (Special Ed Aide – Washington), Gabrielle Barbeau (Special Ed Aide – Mead), and Johnathan Jennings (Special Ed Aide – Grove).
- PS-3 Approval of the professional staff resignation of Megan Hernandez (Cross Categorical Teacher – Mead).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff resignations of Mercedes Erdman (Special Ed Aide – Washington), Taylor Olson (Noon Duty Aide – Washington), Emily Westover (Special Ed Aide – Mead), and Joy Alstrom (Noon Duty Aide – Grove).
- PS-5 Approval of the professional staff retirements of Deanna Williams (World Language Teacher – WRAMS), Timothy Bean (Health Teacher/Athletic Director – WRAMS), Robert Gawlitta (Social Studies Teacher – Lincoln), Brenda Krings (Interventionist – Mead), Mary Pat Erdmann (Elementary Teacher – Woodside), Kelly Sneen (ELA Teacher – WRAMS), Karen Schill (Social Studies Teacher – WRAMS), and Tracy Ceballos-Pronga (Interventionist/Math Coordinator – Grove/District).
- PS-6 Approval of the support staff retirements of Douglas Quinnell (Custodian – Howe) and Lisa Schulz (Special Ed Aide – Lincoln).

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda items PS 1-6. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz provided updates and reports on:

- Brian Oswald, Director of Human Resources, updated the Committee on the status of District substitutes, sharing that fill rates include vacancies that are filled internally and the number of absences are only counted if a substitute is needed. Mr. Oswald pointed out that the number of substitute aides has dropped due to low applicant pools for regular positions and competition with other hourly jobs in the community.

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the regular February 5, 2024 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Mr. Broeren mentioned that Mr. Benbow requested information concerning the gross sales and profit of alcohol sales by the Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA) raised last summer. He is gathering these details to provide to the Board.

#### Legislative Agenda

Mr. Broeren shared the following information concerning K-12 education legislation being considered in both houses in the coming week before adjourning from the legislative session:

- SB-367 relating to guaranteed admission to University of Wisconsin System institutions and technical colleges and requiring high schools to prepare class rankings for certain pupils
- SB-549 relating to allowing representatives of certain federally chartered youth membership organizations to provide information to pupils on public school property
- SB-742 relating to an alternative teacher certification program for an initial license to teach
- SB-917 relating to student teaching requirement for teacher preparatory programs and granting rule-making authority
- SB-971 relating to early literacy programs administered by the Department of Public Instruction
- AB-510 relating to rights reserved to a parent or guardian of a child
- AB-688 relating to reductions to state aid paid to school districts for payments to certain independent charter schools
- AB-900 relating to reductions to state aid paid to school districts for payments made under parental choice programs and the Special Needs Scholarship Program
- AB-1024 relating to notice to the parent or guardian of a habitually truant child
- AB-1025 relating to definitions related to truancy
- AB-1026 relating to prohibiting grade promotion on the basis of absences from school
- AB-1027 relating to funding a truancy reduction grant program and making an appropriation
- AB-1028 relating to a truancy reduction grant program
- AB-1029 relating to including truancy information in the school district and school accountability report
- AB-1034 relating to participation in interscholastic athletics and application of the public records and open meetings laws to interscholastic athletic associations
- AB-1042 relating to combining the choice programs and granting rule-making authority
- AB-1050 relating to position authorizations in the Office of School Safety and making an appropriation
- AB-1069 relating to mandatory early literacy professional development

#### Bills

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Larry Davis to note January, 2024 receipts in the amount of \$4,705,107.48 and approve January, 2024 disbursements in the amount of \$42,905,638.31. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

#### New Business

##### Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

None.

##### Revision to 2024-25 School Calendar

Superintendent Broeren explained that it was discovered that the 2024-25 school calendar has the Autumn Break date scheduled on October 25, 2024 which is the same time the State cross country meet is scheduled to occur. It would be beneficial to move the Autumn Break date to November 1, 2024 and make the October 25, 2024 date a student contact day for instruction to accommodate the logistics and volunteer needs associated with the cross country meet.

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Julie Timm to approve of updating the 2024-25 school year calendar to move the scheduled Autumn Break day from October 25, 2024 to November 1, 2024 and have October 25, 2024 be scheduled as a student contact day. Motion carried unanimously.**

##### Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA)

Superintendent Broeren presented proposed slight revisions to be made to the Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA) Agreement which include provisions around trash receptacles and clean-up after events hosted by WRYSA. Board members had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the Agreement.

**Motion by Julie Timm, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of proposed updates to the Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA) agreement. Motion carried unanimously.**

Vista Sands Solar LLC Pledge Agreement

Superintendent Broeren reviewed the updated Vista Sands Solar LLC pledge agreement which provides for a nonbinding pledge of \$250 per megawatt of installed solar capacity located within the school district on an annual basis for twenty years. The contribution to the District is estimated to be approximately \$125,100 per year to be used on whatever the District deems appropriate. Language around the District's ability to terminate the agreement with proper notice was added, as well as coordination with the District on any material produced and intended for release by Vista Sands Solar. Mr. Broeren stated that the Stevens Point School District has approved a similar agreement. He also provided details around the corporate relationship involving Doral Renewables, LLC and Cogency Global, Inc.

Ms. Timm questioned whether the project has been approved to move forward, and Mr. Broeren explained his understanding is that the solar electric generation facility construction project application is being moved through approval process by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Ms. Timm questioned the language in the agreement which states that nothing in the agreement is to be interpreted or construed as obligating Vista Sands Solar to make any gifts to the District, which she feels seems to make entering into the agreement pointless. Mr. Broeren explained that the agreement is arguably for Vista Sands Solar's protection and to specifically outline their intentions about providing a donation annually to the District which as he understands it impacts their tax status. He clarified that the organization could donate to the District without entering into the agreement; however, the agreement does allow Vista Sands some ability to determine how the donation is used and establishes a relationship about how each party involved will release information and published materials. Ms. Timm mentioned that she doesn't read where the District has final say in materials produced or released. Mr. Broeren stated that the agreement was vetted by District legal counsel, and he believes that since it states there will be coordination for release with the District it is a given that the release will be mutually agreeable by the parties involved.

**Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve of an agreement proposed by Vista Sands Solar LLC which provides a nonbinding pledge to provide an annual gift to the District for twenty years. Motion carried on a vote of 3-1. Ms. Timm voted no.**

Immanuel Lutheran Church and School Letter of Intent Concerning District Potential Property Purchase

Superintendent Broeren reviewed a letter of intent received by the District from Immanuel Lutheran Church and School, explaining that the District has been discussing possibilities for the Howe Elementary parking lot with Immanuel for some time. Immanuel owns the parking lot and since it is used extensively during the week by Howe staff members and parents, the District has covered a portion of the costs for maintenance and upkeep over the years. The Immanuel parking lot is the only space available to meet the needs of Howe, so it would pose significant issues to the school if Immanuel were to sell the property to another entity. As a result of their relationship with the District, Immanuel is willing to sell the lot to WRPS for a negligible amount (e.g. \$1.00), with the understanding that the District would also then take possession of the church and pay to have it razed. A recent appraisal of the lot itself has it valued at \$110,000. An estimate of the costs associated with razing the church is \$270,000 which includes \$150,000 for asbestos abatement and \$120,000 for demolition and backfill. The administration is currently in the process of ensuring that there are no historical designations for the church itself that would inhibit its ability to raze the building. The letter of intent from Immanuel outlines the possible transaction. There are no plans currently for the property on which the church sits if the District takes ownership of it, but it could potentially be sold to a developer or other interested party at some point in time in the future if the District has no need for it.

Mr. Broeren noted that the Howe lot will need to be torn up and redone within the next year or so based on the condition that it is in. This will be costly since the District will be obligated to change entrance and egress routes as well as include "permeable surface" as required by City ordinance. The estimated cost to redo the entire lot is around \$1,000,000. Mr. Broeren stated that there is ample funding available in Fund 46 for this purpose; the parking lot upgrade is a separate item that would be brought to the Board for action at some point in time in the future.

Board members had an opportunity to ask questions.

**Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve of proceeding with plans outlined in a proposed Letter of Intent received from Immanuel Lutheran Church and School for the District to purchase church property located on 8th Street North with the intention of razing the church and upgrading the parking lot at some point in the future for school district use. Motion carried unanimously.**

Elementary Playground Project Funding Commitment and Legacy Foundation Grant Agreement

Superintendent Broeren explained that a grant agreement with Legacy Foundation was previously approved by the Board in June, 2023 to provide for substantial upgrades to elementary schools and the middle school's outdoor spaces. The costs of the projects approved at that time was just under \$4 million. The District engaged with Point of Beginning (POB) as a construction administrator to oversee these projects as well as provide the necessary engineering, licensing, and coordination of contractors; however, in the original proposal and request to Legacy, Mr. Broeren neglected to include an estimate of the costs associated with construction administration services in his presentation and request to Legacy. The estimate for the fees associated with POB's work is roughly 10% of the construction costs or, around \$400,000. That fact, in addition to POB putting more "legitimate" numbers (including inflation, contingency, etc.) to these projects in coordination with building principals, caused the estimated costs of the projects to increase to \$6 million. Knowing that this amount is well over what was approved, Mr. Broeren contacted Legacy to determine their willingness to consider providing additional funding to help the District offset these increased costs. After working with principals, Mr. Broeren had the overall request pared down to a total of \$5.3 million for all projects. This includes approximately \$400,000 (\$200,000 from Legacy and \$200,000 from the City of Wisconsin Rapids Parks and Recreation Dept.) in work that *the City* is engaged in near Mead on City property.

After presenting to Legacy, they have agreed to provide an additional \$750,000 towards the projects. This is outlined in the proposed amendment and *is contingent upon* the District agreeing to commit an additional \$556,742 toward the projects. Legacy's expectation is that the TOTAL cost of the combined projects reaches the \$5.3 million total as presented to them. Should dollars become available as the projects move forward based upon actual costs, certain items may be added back in that were removed to get to the \$5.3 million total to meet Legacy's expectation. Mr. Broeren noted that plans for Mead, Pitsch, and WRAMS have not changed since no items were removed from those sites to ensure that the west side of town receives the needed updates and amenities for this geographical area, and given that fact that the Pitsch upgrades were already in progress. Mr. Broeren stated that there is adequate funding available in Fund 46 to cover the District's additional \$556,742 commitment.

If all gets approved, it would be prudent to split the projects up for completion over two years – four projects would be completed in spring/summer of 2024, and four projects would be completed in spring/summer 2025.

Board members had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the request. A question was raised around what implications spending an additional \$556,742 may have on the District's budget in light of a potential looming deficit. Mr. Broeren stated that the dollars transferred to Fund 46 at the end of each fiscal year are designated specifically for capital and maintenance projects as outlined in the District's 10-Year Facility Plan. These dollars are not part of the Fund 10 operational budget, so the District will not be hampered in any way by committing to proceed with the proposed playground projects since the dollars are already sequestered in Fund 46. With the aging playground equipment in place across the District, it is an opportune time with the Legacy grant to make significant upgrades that might not otherwise be possible if the District were to rely primarily on parent-led fundraising as has been typical in the past. He believes walking away from the dollars that Legacy is willing to commit would be a short-sighted move. Ms. Stebbins-Hintz made mention that she does believe issues such as safety, equity between buildings since not all parent groups are able to raise similar funding, and the fact that a community partner is willing to provide significant funding toward the project to upgrade WRPS playgrounds is a huge benefit that the District would be foolish to walk away from.

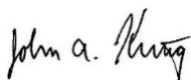
**Motion by Larry Davis, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve of an additional District commitment of \$556,742.00 from Fund 46 to be used toward playground project upgrades in conjunction with the Legacy Foundation Grant Agreement originally executed on June 23, 2023. Motion carried on a roll call vote of 3-1. Ms. Timm voted no.**

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of an amendment to the Legacy Foundation of Central Wisconsin Grant Agreement dated June 23, 2023 which has WRPS committing an additional \$556,742.00 toward proposed playground upgrade projects and Legacy Foundation contributing an additional \$750,000.00 toward the projects. Motion carried on a vote of 3-1. Ms. Timm voted no.**

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

Ms. Medina adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk