



MINUTES

Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee

510 Peach Street · Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 · (715) 424-6701

Mary Rayome, Chairperson
John Benbow, Jr.
Katie Bielski-Medina
Troy Bier
Larry Davis
Sandra Hett
John Krings, President

May 3, 2021

LOCATION: Board of Education, 510 Peach Street, Wisconsin Rapids WI
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Akey, Cheryl Bournoville, Craig Broeren, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp,
Maurine Hodgson, Chris Kawleski, Heidi Kawleski, Gretchen Niedbalski, Bill
Oswald, Ronald Rasmussen, Dani Scott, Rose Steinhafel

Call to Order

Mary Rayome called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

I. Public Comment

Rose Steinhafel commented that she and her husband, Dr. Pete Steinhafel, practice chiropractic healthcare and are parents of children attending WRPS. Ms. Steinhafel raised concerns around District face covering policies which she believes is forcing kids to be part of an experiment that many parents are not okay with, and which poses health risks in the form of bacterial infections as well as detrimental physical and mental health side effects. In their practice, Ms. Steinhafel states they have seen an increase in patient visits from school staff and students presenting with headaches due to prolonged use of face coverings. With high recovery rates and little or zero complications in children who contract COVID-19, and with the COVID vaccine readily available and having staff members vaccinated at this point, Ms. Steinhafel believes it is time to revisit the mask requirement and change it to allow parents the opportunity to choose whether or not to mask their child. She requested that the topic be placed on the next Board agenda for discussion and potential action to adjust it.

Heidi Kawleski expressed her appreciation to the Board on their decision to open schools for in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year. She appreciates the structure and social aspects school offers her child; however, she struggled with masking her healthy daughter stating there were doctors speaking out against mask mandates and citing OSHA protocols that had to be followed to ensure adequate oxygen intake was occurring while masks are worn. Not wanting to put her daughter in an uncomfortable position, she allowed her to attend school with a mask. Ms. Kawleski states her daughter has had many instances of almost passing out and daily headaches, and has noticed changes in her bubbly, happy, outgoing personality. She provided copies of three different articles for Board members to consider. One article speaks to the fact that mask wearing is negatively impacting students both physically and mentally, which she is experiencing first-hand with her own child. The other articles address potential concerns of asymptomatic spread and children spreading the virus to staff members, concluding that

asymptomatic spread is extremely low, and children are rarely affected and are not super spreaders of the illness. No long-term studies have been done on the potential long-term ill effects that mask-wearing may have on children, and Ms. Kawleski believes the mask mandate is an experiment that forces or coerces parents to send their children to school in masks or alternatively attend virtually. She further stated virtual education is not an equal educational opportunity when compared to in-person schooling. Citing protection through the Bill of Rights, she does not consent to the experiment of masking her child for numerous hours per day, 5 days per week. She urged the Board to review the WRPS non-discrimination statement paying particular attention to the definition of "Creed" which she defined as a system of beliefs, principles, or opinions. While there are only a few weeks left in the school year, she and other parents with similar beliefs and opinions that masking is not in the best interest of every child would like the Board to place the mask mandate topic on the May 10, 2021 Board agenda for discussion and possible action to make masking optional.

II. Actionable Items

A. Elementary Math Acquisition – Grades K-5

Kim Akey, District Math Coordinator, presented a proposal for the purchase of Bridges and Number Corner series curriculum for use at the elementary level beginning with the 2021-2022 school year. Ms. Akey described resources that were piloted, the materials evaluation rubric utilized, how the decision-making process occurred, and the pros and cons of the Bridges and Number Corner materials ultimately selected. Parents and the community had an opportunity to review materials and provide feedback on March 5, 2021, and all was positive. A cost breakdown was shared which covers classroom sets, student workbooks, additional materials and site licenses, freight charges, and the purchase of storage units for the materials. Ms. Akey reviewed online and in-person workshop professional development opportunities that will be made available to staff for proper implementation to occur during the 2021-22 school year.

ES-1 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier, to recommend approval of the proposed math curriculum acquisition of \$319,335.00 to be paid using ESSER grant dollars and the estimated yearly cost of \$34,240.00 to be paid from District Curriculum Referendum dollars.

Motion carried unanimously.

B. School Counseling Acquisition – Grades K-12

Dr. Dani Scott, Director of Pupil Services, and Gretchen Niedbalski, School Counselor, presented the work that the School Counseling Department completed in its initial curricular acquisition process, as well as materials that were decided upon. This will be the first time WRPS has engaged in a counseling curricular acquisition process. Counseling resources to be purchased include core curriculum, trade books, sensory items, journals, videos, workbooks, online resources, and games. A portion of the funding for the acquisition will come from the Behavior and Mental Wellness Grant.

ES-2 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis, to approve of the proposed counseling curriculum acquisition of \$64,161.98 to be paid using Behavior and Mental Wellness Grant dollars and ESSER grant dollars.

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Professional Development Plan (2021-2022)

Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, reviewed the proposed Professional Development Plan for 2021-22. Input was gathered from the Quality Educator Committee, Council for Instructional Improvement, Instructional Coaches, and the administrative team as the plan was developed. Core values and collective commitments were identified with an overall belief statement developed which indicates a belief that all students can achieve high levels of academic growth and develop/maintain healthy social/emotional skills. With this being the focus, goals have been set for teachers and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) teams, building administrators, and Central Office administrators. Action steps for implementation are under development by the various individuals and teams responsible, and will be available to review as time progresses by clicking on links contained within the plan's electronic document.

ES-3 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Katie Medina, to recommend approval of the 2021-2022 Professional Development Plan as set out in Attachment C.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Professional Development Day Schedule for 2021-22

Ms. Filtz introduced the Professional Development Day schedule for 2021-22, explaining that for the 2020-21 school year, district and building level expectations and meetings have been significantly curtailed in order to allow staff to have more time to adapt to student learning needs and instructional model changes needed as a result of the on-going pandemic.

ES-4 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Krings, to recommend approval of the proposed Professional Development Day schedule for the 2021-2022 school year.

Motion carried unanimously.

E. District New Colleague/Mentor Handbook

Ms. Filtz indicated that the Handbook was created when the new colleague mentor program began in 2008-2009. The recommended changes to the handbook reflect updates and current practice.

ES-5 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the proposed changes/revisions to the New Colleague/Mentor Handbook as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

F. Reduction of Class Sizes at the Elementary Level Using ESSER Dollars

Ms. Filtz explained that federal grant monies are available for addressing how states combat the learning loss experienced by students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. She reviewed a plan to increase staffing at the elementary level. Additional FTE's would be provided at Grant, Grove, and THINK at various K-2 levels depending upon class size to keep them below 19 per classroom; and to keep class sizes for

grades 3-5 at Title 1 schools below 23, an additional 1.0 FTE would be added at Howe in grade 4. Class sizes would be closely monitored with adjustments and reduction in FTE's implemented based upon need. The estimated cost for one year using ESSER funds for the class size reduction plan is \$378,335.00. The Administration proposes a two-year commitment to the plan for a total estimated cost of \$760,000.00 to cover the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.

ES-6 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier, to recommend approval of the proposed increase in staffing at the elementary level for school years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 at an estimated cost of \$760,000.00 for two years to be funded through ESSER grant dollars.

Motion carried unanimously.

G. Agenda Planners

Ronald Rasmussen, Principal of Lincoln High School (LHS), presented proposed changes for the 2021-2022 LHS Agenda Planner. An update on page 4 to remove Dr. Dani Scott's name under the Title IX information is necessary since she is resigning in June; and page 18 has the word "hats" stricken when it should not. The agenda planner will be updated to keep the word hats in the paragraph since the requirement for hats to be left in lockers will continue.

ES-7 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Katie Medina, to recommend approval of the proposed modifications to the LHS Agenda Planner with discussed changes for the 2021-2022 school year.

Motion carried unanimously.

Bill Oswald, Associate Principal of Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS), presented proposed changes for the 2021-2022 WRAMS Agenda Planner. An update on page 6 to correct the spelling of Brian Oswald's name will occur before printing.

ES-8 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the proposed modifications to the WRAMS Agenda Planner with discussed changes for the 2021-2022 school year.

Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Filtz presented proposed changes for the 2021-2022 elementary Agenda Planner. Dani Scott's name will also be removed since she will not be a Title IX Coordinator for WRPS in the upcoming year.

ES-9 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the proposed modifications with discussed changes to the elementary schools' Agenda Planner for the 2021-2022 school year.

Motion carried unanimously.

H. Secondary Code of Conduct Handbook

Mr. Rasmussen reviewed recommended changes for the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Co-Curricular Activities Code of Conduct for Grades 6- 12. He presented additional changes for pages 4-5 to modify the language around violations concerning plagiarism and shared documents. Title IX language on page 2 will also be updated to only have Brian Oswall listed.

ES-10 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the recommended revisions to the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Co-Curricular Activities Code of Conduct including the updates as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

I. Gaggle Purchase – ESSER Grant

Ms. Dani Scott explained the District is currently using Gaggle's Safety Management System which monitors computer usage. The system identifies any inappropriate searches, alarming content, or crisis situations such as self-harm or suicidal comments. Building administrators are notified of any flagged activity. Gaggle Therapy is another program option that provides mental health and support services to students using a secure video platform. These services are provided by licensed therapists who have experience working with children and teenagers. With parent permission, students participate in weekly 45-minute video therapy sessions. Sessions can occur during or outside of the school day depending on the students' needs and availability. Gaggle Therapy follows all FERPA and HIPAA guidelines. There are no out-of-pocket costs for parents or families. The District would pay a retainer fee and can use only those services that are needed, with unused services either being refunded or rolled over to the next year. The retainer fee is based on 1 percent of a district's student population receiving eight sessions at \$110 per session. The retainer fee for WRPS (50 students) would be \$44,000. Group sessions (maximum of eight students) are available for \$200 per session.

ES-11 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by John Krings, to recommend approval of the purchase of Gaggle Therapy for \$44,000.00 as proposed, through ESSER dollars.

Motion carried unanimously.

J. Turn It In Purchase – ESSER Grant

Turn It In is a program that allows teachers to check for similarity in student work. Students submit work, the work is run through the originality program, and a percentage is assigned to the work. This percentage tells the teacher and student how similar their work is to internet sources and/or to other student work. All work that is submitted using this program becomes a part of the student repository which allows us to build a database of student work and it discourages student cheating. We have successfully used this program in the District since August 2015. The 3-year quote provided will cover all students in Grades 8 through 12.

ES-12 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the 3-year purchase of Turn It In for a total cost of \$26,216.25 to be paid through ESSER grant dollars.

Motion carried unanimously.

K. No Red Ink Purchase – ESSER Grant

No Red Ink is a software program that will allow staff to individualize grammar education. This program has been used extensively at the 7th and 9th grade levels, but staff and students have only had access to the free version of the program. The premium program offers new levels of differentiation and a completely reimaged focus on writing, and how to teach writing, while including individual grammar instruction. This program will address gaps in grammar instruction and will allow staff to meet students where they are at with their grammar knowledge. The quote for three will cover all students in grades 6 through 12.

ES-13 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the purchase of No Red Ink for \$53,300.00 covering a span of three years to be funded through ESSER grant dollars.

Motion carried unanimously.

L. Policy 347 Rule (1) – Guidelines for the Control and Maintenance of Student Records

Beginning with the 2019-20 school year, the District has been piloting the collection of Directory Data release information from parents through the "Online Enrollment Verification" process at the beginning of the year. Prior to this, a physical form was sent home for parents to complete and return. The move to this new, streamlined process has gone well and has eliminated the need for staff to spend time collecting and individually entering paper forms. The Administration recommends that the District continue utilizing this effective method of collecting Directory Data Release information with parents/guardians each year. To do so, Board Policy 347 Rule (1) – Guidelines for the Control and Maintenance of Student Records needs to be updated since it reflects the prior method in which Directory Data consent was handled.

ES-14 Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Larry Davis, to recommend approval of the noted revisions for Policy 347 Rule (1) – Guidelines for the Control and Maintenance of Student Records for first reading.

Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Updates

A. ESSER Expenditures Under \$25,000.00

SAM Site License for Microsoft Office (3-year membership)

WRPS has encumbered ESSER funds in the amount of \$18,000 for K-12 SAM Site License for Microsoft Office 2019 (3-year membership). SAM is a Student Assessment Management System that will be used in LHS's Information Technology I course that is required for graduation and LHS's Advanced Information Technology II course, a dual credit course.

SAM supports learning loss by helping instructors identify students who are at-risk of not mastering the curriculum competencies using specialized assessments and allows teachers to develop individualized learning plans for students. It also provides interactive and adaptive technology for students with disabilities and facilitates real-world scenarios and assessments while teaching practical skills.

Ultrasonic Musical Instrument Cleaner

Currently the Music department sends out all District brass instruments from the middle and high schools to be cleaned at the end of the school year. The typical cost of this practice is about \$60-\$150 per instrument, depending on the size of the instrument. Past practice was to send out instruments on a rotating basis; however, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cleaning will need to occur more frequently. As a result, the District purchased a Sonic Instrument Cleaner from ProSeries at the cost of \$11,800.00 to be funded through ESSER grant dollars.

Houghton Mifflin Hardcourt Digital and Hard Copy Materials for 6-12 English Language Arts (ELA)

When the ELA department purchased the Collections program for grades 6-12 six years ago, the online versions of the program would expire after year six. As a result, the department now needs to extend that software purchase for three years to get to the purchasing year of their acquisition cycle.

Grades 6, 7, and 9 chose to purchase the teacher versions of the online software. These three grade levels believe that they can use the print materials we currently own and supplement the teaching materials with the new online platform.

Grade 8 intends to purchase the classroom package which gives every student and teacher access to the online version of Collections. The cost of the 3-year purchase is a total of \$19,972.60 and will be covered through ESSER grant dollars.

Math Intervention – Bridges

Bridges Intervention provides targeted instruction and assessment for essential K–5 mathematics skills within a tiered system of support. The small-group instruction and ongoing progress monitoring are consistent with a Response to Intervention (RTI) or Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. Intended to complement regular math instruction, Bridges Intervention is ideal for small groups and can also be used with individuals. Students work with models that spur thinking and build confidence—starting with manipulatives, moving to two-dimensional representations and then mental images. Organized by content rather than grade, progress monitoring is key to the program. Each focused, 30-minute session is matched to student needs. In order to address learning losses, the District purchased the Bridges Intervention program at a cost of \$20,204.80, to be funded through ESSER grant dollars.

Solution Tree PLC On-Site National Conference

The District recently learned of an opportunity to be a "satellite host" for a Solution Tree Professional Learning Communities (PLC) conference to be held on August 2-4, 2021. The times would be 9:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. on August 2 and 3, and 9:00 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. on August 4. WRPS could use the PAC or other large space to broadcast a live PLC conference and then use other rooms at Lincoln High School for breakout rooms. We would ensure proper social distancing is made possible when choosing room sizes/locations.

Breakout sessions will be hosted by PLC national experts Tim Brown, Luis Cruz, Timothy Kanold, Anthony Muhammed, Mike Mattos among others. This opportunity would allow us to bring the PLC conference to a large amount of our WRPS teachers.

The cost of the conference is \$24,000. At this point just over 100 staff members have expressed an interest in attending. This conference would be funded through ESSER grant dollars.

B. Grant Updates

Peer Review and Mentor Grant

Each school year the District provides a comprehensive "New Colleague Program" in consortium with surrounding districts. During the 2021-2022 school year, Port Edwards will be partnering with WRPS in our consortium. The program provides an orientation component, monthly seminars, a mentor, and other support systems to make new colleagues' adjustment to their district a successful one. WRPS received this grant last school year and plans to again apply in hopes to defray some of the costs of this successful program. The District will be applying for the maximum amount of \$25,000.00.

School-Based Mental Health Services Grant

The School-Based Mental Health Services Grant is a competitive grant program offered by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), with grants awarded to eligible applicants who demonstrate a need for better mental health access and services for children and youth. It is a requirement of the grant to have a community partner(s). WRPS is once again partnering with Aspirus Riverview Hospital and Clinics, Boys and Girls Club, and Advocates Psychotherapy Services. WRPS received this grant in 2019. The District is applying once again with hopes to receive the maximum amount of \$75,000. Work with community-based providers will continue, along with the District Behavior and Mental Wellness Committee and Equity Committee to provide access and mental health services and support to WRPS students and staff.

C. Possible Impact of Quarantining on District Benchmark Book Data Results

At its April meeting, the Board of Education requested information around the possible impact of multiple classroom or individual student quarantines for significant periods of time on student progress being made. District Benchmark Books data was analyzed to determine any corollaries. Ms. Filtz stated that there are some common reasons that can be attributed to a lack of progress, including:

- Learning loss from the school shutdown in March 2020 – September 2021
- Change in teaching strategies that reduces one-on-one and small group support
- A change in Reading and Math Intervention delivery
- Transiency between schools, virtual and building
- Change in family dynamics which may cause more stress on students
- Reduction in interventionist staffing due to an increased need for virtual teaching staff
- Emotional and mental fatigue of students and teachers

The data indicates that all of these factors combined with the on-going quarantining of students and staff members throughout the past year have contributed to a reduction in student learning progress. The proposed plan to reduce class sizes in Grades K-2 and in identified Title I buildings for grades 3-5 made possible through ESSER funding is intended to help address learning losses affiliated with the pandemic.

D. PAC – Operations and COVID Updates

Craig Broeren, Superintendent, provided updates on the Performing Arts Center (PAC) in terms of its operational response to COVID. A staff member communicated via email with John Krings and Mary Rayome inquiring about operational aspects of the PAC. Concerns and questions were raised around what is or isn't allowed given the pandemic, potential District liability, and an unwillingness of staff members to be involved in working events if COVID protocols are not followed by groups using the space. Mr. Broeren stated there seemed to be some confusion around the topic which he responded to, and hasn't heard any more on the topic as a result.

E. Off Campus Enrollment

Ms. Filtz provided an enrollment update of off-campus/virtual programming. Elementary student numbers continue to decline as students transition back to in-person learning at their schools.

V. Consent Agenda Items

- ES-1 Elementary Math Curriculum Acquisition – Grades K-5**
- ES-2 School Counseling Acquisition – Grades K-12**
- ES-3 Professional Development Plan (2021-2022)**
- ES-4 Professional Development Day Schedule**
- ES-5 District New Colleague/Mentor Handbook**
- ES-6 Reduction of Class Sizes at the Elementary Level Using ESSER Dollars**
- ES-7 Lincoln High School Agenda Planner**
- ES-8 Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School Agenda Planner**
- ES-9 Elementary Schools Agenda Planner**
- ES-10 WRPS Co-Curricular Activities Code of Conduct Handbook**
- ES-11 Gaggle Purchase – ESSER Grant**
- ES-12 Turn It In Purchase – ESSER Grant**
- ES-13 No Red Ink Purchase – ESSER Grant**
- ES-14 Policy 347 Rule (1) – Guidelines for the Control and Maintenance of Student Records**

VI. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

Agenda items are determined by the Committee Chair after consultation with appropriate administration depending upon other agenda items, presentation information, and agenda availability.

Future agenda items/information requests include, but are not limited to:

- CTE Updates and Grant Proposals (June)
- Pupil Academic Standards (July)
- Achievement Gap Reduction (July)
- End of Year Report (July)
- Seclusion and Restraint (August)
- Parent CII Representatives (September)
- ESSA Update (September)
- ACP Update (October)

Ms. Rayome adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.