



MINUTES

Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education
Educational Services Committee
510 Peach Street · Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 · (715) 424-6701

Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Chairperson
John Benbow, Jr.
Troy Bier
Christopher Inda
John Krings, President
Elizabeth St. Myers
Julie Timm

February 3, 2025

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

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Jr., Troy Bier, Christopher Inda, John Krings, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Elizabeth St. Myers, Julie Timm

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Phil Bickelhaupt, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp, Julie Kolarik, Aaron Nelson, Ronald Rasmussen, Jennifer Wilhorn

- I. Call to Order
- II. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- III. Public Comment – none.
- IV. Actionable Items

A. 2025-2026 District Strategic Framework

Ms. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, and Superintendent Ronald Rasmussen presented the updated "District Strategic Framework," which was formerly referred to as the "District Strategic Plan." Ms. Filtz explained that the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools' "Beliefs and Vision" have been incorporated into each of the four "Commitments" using feedback received during Superintendent listening sessions at the building level, and from the Board of Education in recent months. Goals that are clearly measurable are included, and results will be documented to indicate whether they have been achieved or require further attention.

Following are the four Commitment areas included in the Framework:

Commitment 1 - Preparing Students to be Global Citizens

This Commitment incorporates the following beliefs: All students can learn. All students should become effective citizens of the community, state, nation, and the world.

Ms. Filtz shared that Commitment 1 incorporates Information and Technology Literacy Standards (ITLS) into all areas of instruction to empower students with digital literacy and critical thinking skills necessary to navigate, evaluate, and create in an increasingly interconnected and technology-driven world. Strategies to accomplish Commitment 1 were explained.

Commitment 2 - Building Equitable Systems and School Environments within the Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Support (EMLSS) Framework to Address Student Behavioral and Social-Emotional Needs

The focus for Commitment 2 encompasses three WRPS beliefs: All students can learn. Each student is the first consideration of the educational process. We believe in a safe, caring, and respectful environment.

This Commitment defines the work that Assistant Director of Pupil Services Julie Kolarik has begun with the EMLSS program. Committee members expressed an interest in seeing more specifics provided when measuring success. Also, once baseline data has been established, they would like to see goal results presented in a measurable format that allows comparisons from year to year.

Commitment 3 - Expanding Student, Family, and Community Partnerships

This Commitment supports two WRPS beliefs: Learning is a lifelong process. Meaningful home, school, and community involvement is vital to continuous improvement.

Mr. Rasmussen explained that the District has expanded its collaboration in the community to establish connections and strengthen relationships. The District's goal is to promote communication among all stakeholders through the development of a comprehensive public relations program that showcases WRPS initiatives, builds support and trust, and unifies staff, students, families, and the community around District programming. Some examples were provided to accomplish this, including the use of social media and creating brochures and content to highlight the positives in the District. A focus being rejuvenated by Director of Food Service Melanie Hanneman includes the wellness initiative to establish a culture of physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being for students and staff.

Commitment 4 - Maintaining Financial Stability While Addressing Curriculum, Staffing, Technology, Safety, and Facility Needs

Mr. Rasmussen stated that Commitment 4 encompasses two WRPS beliefs: Each student is the first consideration of the educational process. Meaningful home, school, and community involvement is vital to continuous improvement.

One objective from Commitment 4 includes maintaining District buildings and properties. Examples of strategies tied to this objective include the exploration of underutilized space at East Jr. High, and upgrading the parent/student drop-off area at Howe Elementary to potentially include the addition of a community space area. Other objectives include attention in the areas of school safety as well as attracting, developing, and retaining highly qualified staff members. Strategies shared include the consideration of competitive salaries and benefits, and investing in quality Professional Development. Lastly, an objective has been developed to address the District's deficit. Mr. Rasmussen explained that the anticipated deficit has been reduced from \$3 million to \$2.4 million due to action taken to reduce employee health insurance costs.

Mr. Rasmussen provided background on the development of a "Vision" statement for the Strategic Framework which ties into the current Mission Statement and Beliefs. The Vision statement reads: *The Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools is the district of choice for prospective students, parents, and staff in Central Wisconsin. WRPS meets the needs of diverse learners, preparing them to compete and reach their full potential in an evolving and global economy while cultivating values of responsibility, respect, and citizenship to contribute meaningfully to their community and beyond.* This Vision Statement ties in with District professional development

plans and objectives that are outlined in the Strategic Framework. Other documents created, such as those for District and building professional development plans and EMLSS, will have similar layout and formatting to bring everything together and provide a professional finish. The Committee expressed their appreciation for the updates made to the Strategic Framework document, which looks very professional.

A request was made by the Committee to have a future report on the "Reframing Behaviors" program mentioned in the Strategic Framework document.

ES-1 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by John Krings, to approve of the 2025-2026 Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools' Strategic Framework as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Updates

A. Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Mid-Year Report

Ms. Jennifer Wilhorn, Assistant Director of Curriculum & Instruction, presented the results of the Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Mid-Year report. The aimswebPlus Literacy screener is required by the State for all of the reading data in grades K-3. Four-year old Kindergarten numbers will be added in the spring when testing at that level becomes required. Ms. Wilhorn explained that the report indicates the percentage of students who are in the 25th percentile and above. Scores for each grade level are compiled by the number of required subtests. First grade is based on an oral reading score, while 2nd and 3rd grade is based on fluency and vocabulary assessment. Students below the 25th percentile will have written Personal Reading Plans created in accordance with Wisconsin Act 20. The District's benchmark is to have 80% of students at grade level meeting expectations.

The assessment being administered is new for many classroom teachers, and they will be better prepared and familiar with the process when it occurs again in the spring. Ms. Wilhorn advised that through the assessments, a gap area concerning letter names versus letter sounds in the Amplify CKLA materials was identified at the Kindergarten level and is being addressed.

A large number of reading plans will need to be developed, which will also require teacher monitoring. Unfortunately, the time needed to be devoted to these plans will impact the amount of time devoted to classroom instruction. Reading Interventionists have been working diligently to create these plans. Special education students will have Personal Reading Plans included in their IEP. After 10 weeks of monitoring, a progress report will be sent home to families. Committee members expressed concern about the number of reading plans needing to be developed and the time needed to maintain them. Ms. Wilhorn expressed appreciation to WRPS teachers who have worked hard and have been very supportive as the District implements the requirements of Act 20.

With regard to math, Ms. Wilhorn indicated that Kim Akey, Elementary Math Coordinator, has been overseeing the math assessment portion of the AGR Report. Teachers continue to utilize District created assessments for Kindergarten and first grade; for second and third grades, Star Math assessments are used. These are administered at the end of the first trimester, which makes the information being presented a bit outdated since the assessments occurred in November, 2024. Tests are taken again after the second trimester and at the end of the school year, with results to be presented in the End-of-Year AGR report.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

ES-1 2025-2026 WRPS Strategic Framework

VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Committee reviewed the following future agenda items:

- Start College Now and Early College Credit Program Applications (April)
- K-12 Music Curriculum Map Updates and Materials Acquisition Proposal (May)
- 2025-2026 District Professional Development Plan (May)
- 2025-2026 Professional Development Calendar (May)
- Late Start Mondays Update
- 6-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Map Updates and Material Acquisition Proposal (June)

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.