



MINUTES

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

REVISED

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

August 4, 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, Troy Bier, Christopher Inda, John Krings, Jaime Sparkes,
Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Elizabeth St. Myers

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Julie Kolarik, Aaron Nelson, Ronald Rasmussen, Betsy
VanBerkel

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

A. Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Indian Education Formula Grant

Ms. Betsy VanBerkel, Assistant Director of Pupil Services, indicated that WRPS has been awarded the Title VI Grant in the amount of \$18,395.00. The goals of this grant include improving academic achievement, increasing cultural identity awareness, and enhancing parent engagement. The grant supports American Indian students through literacy initiatives, guest speakers, access to technology, educational field trips, and ongoing professional development for teachers throughout the year.

ES-1 Motion by John Benbow, seconded by John Krings, for the approval of accepting the Title VI Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Indian Education Formula Grant in the amount of \$18,395.00. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Care Solace Partnership and Legacy Foundation Grant

Ms. VanBerkel noted that WRPS received a Legacy Foundation Grant to extend its partnership with Care Solace for an additional four years. The grant will support services across the entire District.

ES-2 Motion by Troy Bier, the approval of a four-year extension with Care Solace, effective July 1, 2026-June 30, 2030, with services fully funded through the Legacy Foundation Grant. This partnership aligns with WRPS's Strategic Framework commitment to establish a culture of physical, emotional, and intellectual wellness for students and staff. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Updates

A. Seclusion and Restraint Report

Ms. VanBerkel explained that seclusion and/or physical restraint may be used only when a student's behavior presents a clear, present, and imminent risk to the physical safety of the student or others, and it is the least restrictive intervention feasible. During the 2024-25 school year, Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools (WRPS) held training sessions for building-level crisis response teams. A total of 89 staff members participated in the training during the year, bringing the District-wide total to 111 trained staff. The primary goal was to enhance preparedness and ensure that effective crisis response plans were established in advance of any incidents. In 2024-25, the District reported 22 incidents—a decrease from 35 incidents in 2023-24. A Board member emphasized the importance of ensuring that all staff are informed of this legal requirement.

Superintendent Ronald Rasmussen stated that a tracking system will be implemented in 2025-26 to monitor the frequency of room clearances. This system will help the District identify patterns, assess the effectiveness of interventions, and inform future staff training and support needs.

B. Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS) Update

Ms. Julie Kolarik, Assistant Director of Pupil Services, provided an update on the Multi-Level System of Supports (MLSS). The system supports the WRPS mission and beliefs that each student comes first, that all students can learn, and that a safe, caring, and respectful environment is essential for learning. MLSS ensures students receive the support they need, when they need it, so they can reach their full potential – academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally.

Ms. Kolarik reviewed the universal behavior definitions, which are used by all administrators. Behavior is classified as major or minor through a team-based decision-making process. Discipline flowcharts are utilized to promote consistency among staff across all buildings, which is especially important as students transition between schools within the District. It was noted that each student is unique, and consequences will be determined based on individual developmental levels. Mr. Rasmussen stated that he will be presenting scenarios to administrative staff to encourage team-based discussion and decision-making.

Mr. Rasmussen stated that WRPS is one of seven school districts in the state to receive the Early Reading Project Grant, totaling \$80,000. Grove, Mead, THINK, and Woodside Elementary Schools will participate in the initiative, which focuses on strengthening student outcomes by building a strong foundation in literacy. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will provide training to help teachers use data to inform instructional decisions. As part of the eduCLIMBER implementation a video session from Renaissance Learning will be included as part of the training. A Board member has requested a copy of the video once it is presented.

Ms. Kolarik emphasized that MLSS is a tool used to identify areas where students need support as well as opportunities to celebrate their successes. It serves as a framework to ensure every student receives the appropriate level of support at the right time and is intended as a resource for all staff. She also shared a quick reference guide provided to staff to help them easily access key information.

VI. Consent Agenda Items

ES-1 Title VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Indian Education Formula Grant

ES-2 Care Solace Partnership and Legacy Foundation Grant

VII. Future Agenda Items/Information Requests

The Committee reviewed the following future agenda items:

- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (September)
- District CII Parent Representatives (September)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Incentive Grant Funding (September)
- New Course/Curriculum Modifications and Proposals – Discussion (October)
- August Start Date for 2026-2027 School Year (October)

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz adjourned the meeting at 6:47 p.m.