



## BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

John A. Krings, President  
John Benbow, Jr.  
Troy Bier  
Larry Davis  
Sandra K. Hett  
Katie Medina  
Mary Rayome

August 10, 2020

### REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

LOCATION: East Jr. High School, 311 Lincoln Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494  
Cafeteria

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Larry Davis, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Mary Rayome

BOARD MEMBER EXCUSED: Katie Medina

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Craig Broeren, Daniel Weigand, Roxanne Filtz, Brian Oswald, Danielle Scott, Phil Bickelhaupt, Jennifer Wilhorn, Ed Allison

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

#### Special Presentation – Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)

FCCLA Advisors Laura Cronan and Valerie DeVries-Polman provided an overview of the events leading up to participation by Lincoln High School and Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School students in FCCLA state and the 2020 Virtual National Leadership Conference. Students Evelyn Bohman, Maggie Kozlowski, Sarah Korte, and Vanessa Freeberg were present to share their personal experiences and involvement in the activities. The Board commended the students and advisors for their efforts and success.

#### Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to approve special Board of Education meeting minutes of June 29, 2020; and regular Board of Education meeting minutes of July 13, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Comments from Citizens and Delegations

Nichole Fuller-Daughtry, WRPS School Nurse, spoke in support of making masks a requirement for students, staff, and visitors to buildings. Ms. Fuller-Daughtry believes it is an integral component to the District's Reopening Plan which will help keep individuals safe, mitigate viral spread, and allow schools to remain open for as long as possible.

#### Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – August 3, 2020. Report given by John Krings.

Mr. Krings 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 2020-21 Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Reopening Plan including the Legacy Foundation grant award as presented; the requirement for students and staff to wear face masks during the school year; instituting a waiver of Lincoln High School student parking fees for the 2020-21 school year; and authorization for Superintendent Broeren to move between instructional models as necessary.
- ES-2 Approval of the contract with Renaissance Learning for the 2020-21 school year in the amount of \$38,356.60, to be paid for from Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) as these programs will allow for continuity of instruction and learning for both on-site and off-campus instruction.

ES-3 Approval of the Happy Numbers contract for the 2020-21 school year in the amount of \$10,590.00 to be paid for from Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) as the program will allow for continuity of instruction and learning for both on-site and off-campus instruction.

Mr. Krings requested that consent agenda item ES-1 be held out.

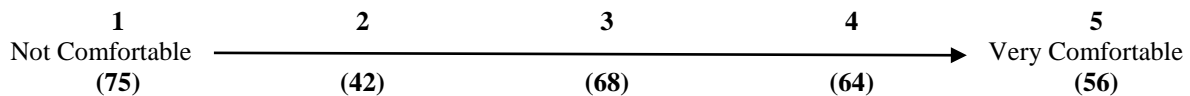
**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda items ES 2-3. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

With regard to consent agenda item ES-1, Mr. Krings stated that prior to the Board’s vote, any final updates or recommendations from the administration would be considered. Superintendent Broeren reviewed the Reopening Plan, which will have students attending school as follows:

- ◆ Grades 4K-5 and River Cities return to in-person instruction, 5 days per week with precautions in place
- ◆ Grades 6-12 return under an alternative A/B cohorting schedule with precautions in place
- ◆ K-12 fully virtual/off-site learning option will be available for students and families not comfortable returning to school, or in case schools are unable to remain open
- ◆ Plan will remain fluid based upon local circumstances and will be adjusted as necessary

With regard to the A/B cohort schedule, Mr. Broeren described some of the activities that would occur on days when students are not in person at school. Additional details about individual building plans will be communicated to families on Wednesday August 12, 2020. Mr. Broeren reiterated that the main point of the plan is to keep cohort groups together and minimize interaction as much as possible, which should aid in any necessary contact tracing that may need to occur. Behaviors by individuals with regard to precautionary measures taken will also have an effect on how long schools will be able to remain open. The plan holds no guarantees with regard to viral spread, but it will allow for swift movement between instructional models as necessary and dictated by local circumstances. Mr. Broeren described scenarios that could occur with respect to required quarantine and isolation among students, and how that might impact entire classrooms or buildings. In all scenarios, the Reopening Plan is designed for instruction to be able to continue to the degree possible with minimal disruption.

Regarding feedback solicited on the Reopening Plan after it was presented on August 3, 2020, Mr. Broeren explained that 305 responses were received with selections made on a sliding scale of 1-5 as follows:



A variety of commentary received through the feedback survey surrounding people’s opinions about the Reopening Plan was shared. Some of the feedback spoke about how many days per week students should or should not be in school and/or whether schools should or shouldn’t be open, masking, virtual/off-campus learning options, health protocols, building sanitation, flexibility offered to parents, continued communication, extra-curricular activities and athletics that will be offered, social-emotional well-being of students, working parent concerns, and uncertainty about what the school day will actually look like for students whether they choose in-person or off-campus learning.

Mr. Broeren shared masking data gathered by Dr. Falk during the 2020 summer school sessions held. The data indicated a much higher percentage of mask compliance following the Governor’s mandate. At the Educational Services Committee meeting, the Board expressed strong support for mask wearing to continue even if there is no Order in place requiring it, and masking continues to be a recommendation in the proposed Reopening Plan.

The Board discussed the Reopening Plan, again reiterating their belief in the importance of adopting a masking requirement throughout the duration of the pandemic, even if the Governor’s Order expires or is overturned. Families of students who object to sending their child(ren) because of the masking requirement do have options for other instructional models. Deference was paid to staff members who have expressed concern for their safety without a masking requirement in place. Masking is one component of other safety precautions being implemented with the goal of keeping schools open as long as possible.

Board members also expressed an interest in ensuring that staff members receive the proper training necessary for virtual/off-campus learning to improve over the model utilized in the spring. Understanding that staff members and the administration did what was needed during the unprecedented circumstances in the spring, the Board

would like to see the virtual component strengthened, and requested information about the professional development that has occurred already and is also scheduled for staff members in the future.

Mr. Davis explained that he is an individual in an “at-risk” category with regard to contracting coronavirus, and in speaking with Director Sue Kunferman from the Wood County Health Department concerning testing capacity within the community he learned that adequate testing is not currently in place. He believes that until the virus can be tracked and controlled better in the community, he cannot support the reopening of schools. Ms. Hett mentioned that she also spoke with Ms. Kunferman and was pleased to hear that Ms. Kunferman was supportive of schools reopening with proper safety measures implemented. Ms. Kunferman appreciated not only being involved on the Reopening Committee during the plan’s development, but also the communication throughout the process by District administration.

While there are many unknowns about the future and how long schools or individual in-person classes will be able to meet based upon the circumstances of the pandemic, decisions of the Board can only be based upon facts currently at hand. The Board considered the fact that the plan provides for the ability to shift to different instructional models as necessary, and students will continue to be educated in the event that schools or individual classes undergo closure or quarantine.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Sandra Hett to approve of the 2020-21 Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools Reopening Plan including the Legacy Foundation grant award as presented; the requirement for students and staff to wear face masks during the school year; instituting a waiver of Lincoln High School student parking fees for the 2020-21 school year; and authorization for Superintendent Broeren to move between instructional models as necessary. Motion carried on a roll call vote of 5-1. Larry Davis voted no.**

Mr. Krings provided updates and reports on:

- Dr. Dani Scott, Director of Pupil Services provided an update to the Committee on the possibility of utilizing the Pitsch building as a District Early Learning Center in the future. With the Boys & Girls Club vacating the facility, the site could potentially be used to house both early childhood and some District 4K classrooms. Advantages for creating an Early Learning Center were shared along with a potential timeline for the Center to be up and operational for the 2021-22 school year.
- Dr. Scott provided the required annual report on the number of incidents of seclusion and physical restraint that occurred in District schools during the 2019-20 school year up to the point of building closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the total number of pupils involved in the incidents, and the number of children with disabilities who were involved in the incidents. Dr. Scott shared historical data, training capacity, and future training plans along with a 2020-21 training schedule.
- Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, provided details about the 1:1 Initiative being implemented at WRAMS in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Student and parents will have an opportunity to participate in a WRAMS Chromebook Care Program similar to the initiative at Lincoln High School (LHS). The main difference will be in the fact that students at LHS can keep their Chromebooks upon graduation for a minimal cost. Choosing to enroll in the Chromebook Care Program is optional, but could result in a significant savings for the student/parent for costs associated with repaired or replaced devices. At the moment there is a backlog for districts who are ordering devices as they prepare for the potential move to virtual learning. Fortunately, new devices were ordered for WRAMS after being approved by the Board in April, 2020 and should be available for student use at the beginning of the school year in September.

**Motion by John Krings, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the August 3, 2020 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. Business Services Committee – August 3, 2020. 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 66.03.01 cooperative agreements for students attending the virtual program from the Adams-Friendship, Stevens Point, and Tri-County school districts as listed.
- BS-2 Approval of the addition of Washington Elementary and Vesper Alternative Schools to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program.

- BS-3 Approval of a proposal from American Asphalt to replace the north parking lot at Woodside Elementary School and expand the parking lot to the west, for a total cost of \$105,340.00, to be funded from the 2020-21 Building and Grounds budget.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items BS 1-3. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices for geological testing at Lincoln High School, custodial supply purchases, instructional supply purchases, and various technology hardware and software purchases.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the August 3, 2020 Business Services Committee. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Personnel Services Committee – August 3, 2020. Report given by Sandra Hett.

Ms. Hett 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 Megan Fox (Teacher – Mead), Mackenzie Rechner (Teacher – Mead/Woodside/District), and Natalie LeRoy (Teacher – Mead).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Alexcis Rehberg (Marketing Work Experience – District), Jacob VanErt (Youth Apprenticeship – Buildings & Grounds), Tricia Joosten (Noon Aide – Woodside), and Heather Krause (Special Education Aide – Woodside).
- PS-3 Approval of the non-represented staff appointment of Brian Baumann (Digital Media & Audio-Visual Coordinator – District).
- PS-4 Approval of the professional staff resignation requests, pending liquidated damages, of Andrea Koester (Teacher – Washington) and Gavin Baade (Teacher – Mead/Woodside).
- PS-5 Approval of the support staff resignation requests of Kathleen Spencer (Noon Aide – Grant), Judy Fuller (Kitchen Helper – WRAMS), and Michelle Krommenakker (Special Ed Aide – Mead).
- PS-6 Approval of a five percent Educators Rising Advisor academic co-curricular position at Lincoln High School starting with the 2020-21 school year.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve consent agenda items PS 1-6. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Hett provided updates and reports on:

- Brian Oswald, Director of Human Resources, shared with the Committee how the position of Summer Swim Head Guard has taken on more responsibilities. Mr. Oswald recommended a title change and an increase in the hourly wage. The Committee elected to table this until April, 2021.
- The Committee reviewed the recommended Employee Handbook addendum and made suggestions for edit. The Committee recommended that the addendum be brought to the full Board meeting on August 10, 2020 for possible approval.
- An update was provided to the Committee on co-curricular positions compensated by the Curriculum Department and explained how these positions will now be administered by the Human Resources Department.
- Mr. Oswald shared the history of the confidential secretary retirement benefit and explained a request from Dan Weigand, Director of Business Services. The Committee elected not to act on this request.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the August 3, 2020 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Sandra Hett requested a report on training that has been offered to staff around virtual programming to date, as well as planned training coming up during the school year.

Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- On July 15, 2020 the U.S. Senate began debate around a fifth coronavirus-response bill, which is expected to be more contentious than the previous four coronavirus aid bills. Discussions in Congress regarding the shape and size of the next COVID-19 relief package have continued over the past couple of weeks, with disagreements over the total size of the aid package emerging. The White House, along with some Congressional Republicans, hope to cap the package at \$1 trillion while Congressional Democrats strongly favor significantly more funding in the future legislation.
- *The Washington Times* reported on July 22, 2020 that the White House and Senate Republicans reached consensus on key parts on a coronavirus stimulus proposal that included \$105 billion for schools, and billions more for COVID-19 testing.
- On July 23, 2020 the Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Government Operations, Technology, and Consumer Protection held an informational hearing on virtual instruction and overall virtual schools.
- On July 24, 2020 Governor Tony Evers announced that 155 local education agencies are eligible to apply for the \$46.6 million available through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund established under the CARES Act.
- The U. S. Department of Education announced that Governor Tony Evers recently directed the Department of Administration to identify \$250 million in cost savings at state agencies for the current fiscal year.
- The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is helping to lead a national effort calling attention to the digital divide in education, including a long-documented and persistent inequity affecting students that lack adequate broadband access, which has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSBA is urging school board members to demonstrate their support for closing the homework gap and supporting the FCC's E-Rate program by visiting the NSBA's homework gap page and downloading their *Day of Action Engagement Toolkit*.
- Congress has made little to no headway on additional coronavirus relief, which means little to no relief will be forthcoming for schools by the time the school year begins.
- The August, 2020 partisan primaries will take place on August 11, 2020 and WASB Government Relations staff has identified at least 16 current or former school board members whose names will appear on the August ballot running for seats in either the Legislature or Congress.
- The Legislative Council is taking a different approach to its traditional interim period activities, scrapping for this year only, the traditional study committee approach. In its place will be a series of virtual symposium sessions, with the first topic being early literacy which will begin in the month of August.
- As school boards finalize decisions about school reopening, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is collecting survey information from Wisconsin districts that have finalized their reopening plans which will eventually be published on the DPI website. As of August 7<sup>th</sup>, the Department had received responses from 197 districts.
- WASB is hosting an online advocacy workshop on August 12-13, 2020 designed to help develop relationships between staff members and legislators, ultimately making better legislative advocates for schools.

Bills

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to note July, 2020 receipts in the amount of \$1,084,558.47 and approve July, 2020 disbursements in the amount of \$3,059,305.45. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Unfinished/Old BusinessFuture Levy Override and Bond Issue Referendum Questions

Supt. Broeren stated that he didn't have any new updates to share concerning the potential future referendum being considered, but did inquire of the Board as to their consensus around securing an estimate for the cost to perform a community survey in the fall of 2020 around two potential referendum questions as discussed at the July 13, 2020 Board meeting. The Board questioned the type of outreach involved with the proposed service being considered. Mr. Broeren described outreach methods that would be used such as phone calls and other communication forms to penetrate and reach a diverse cross-section of the community at large. School Perceptions is a company being considered for the project. Board members signaled their support for a proposal to be brought through at the September, 2020 meeting. Mr. Broeren also indicated that it is a good time to begin developing and identifying potential community connections who could assist in referendum conversations, perhaps be involved in information sessions, and help educate the community on the topic. Lastly, in preparation for a potential referendum, the District is communicating with Moody's Investors Service to receive an update on the District's bond rating in light of the pandemic and spring virtual closure. More information surrounding the referendum topic will be forthcoming in September.

New BusinessEmployee Handbook Addendum

Brian Oswald, Director of Human Resources, reviewed changes being recommended as an addendum to employee handbooks concerning pandemic workplace protocols. The language continues to evolve as circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic dictate needed changes. Employees have been provided a draft copy of the handbook language as it awaits formal Board approval. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has also been developed and disseminated to assist employees who have questions pertaining to COVID-19 and their employment. The Board had an opportunity to ask questions about the proposed addendum.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Sandra Hett to approve of the proposed Employee Handbook Addendum concerning COVID-19 pandemic workplace protocols. Motion carried unanimously.**

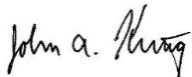
District Reopening Plan

President Krings stated that the Reopening Plan has been approved under the Educational Services Committee agenda area; however, there is a request outstanding with regard to teacher professional development pertaining to virtual instruction. Supt. Broeren explained that more information will be gathered and shared about specific trainings already offered, as well as any plans for upcoming trainings. Professional development offerings have been limited over the summer months as reopening plans continued to be developed and refined; and availability for staff members to engage in training over the summer is typically limited. Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, explained that before See Saw (the learning management platform being used at the elementary level for both virtual and regular classroom circumstances) training could be offered, rosters for staff members needed to be set up by building secretaries in order for the training to be effective. Two courses were offered as soon as rosters were set; however, course attendance was capped at 60 individuals per course and those filled up quickly. Additional training opportunities are being scheduled. Certain elementary buildings have already been using the See Saw program, so not every staff member will need the training. The Board questioned how families without reliable internet connection are being provided the support that they need. Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, explained that he has been working with Solarus to develop a "Stay Connected" program that will provide internet access for families at a reduced rate. Families will make a request for this service through their building principal and the service will be provided based upon need and individual family circumstances.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk