



BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

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

December 14, 2020

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

LOCATION: Thomas A. Lenk Educational Services Center, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494
Conference Room A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Benbow, Troy Bier, Sandra Hett, John Krings, Katie Medina

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED: Larry Davis, Mary Rayome

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Student Representative Report

Rachel Marten provided updates on the following:

- ◆ Lincoln High School (LHS) Student Council members and others have been able to purchase three additional water bottle filling stations for placement in much needed areas around the school.
- ◆ LHS Student Council member Amelia Marti has been elected to serve as the Region 2 President of the Wisconsin Association of School Councils.
- ◆ The Community Candles program goal at LHS is \$3,000 and Student Council raised \$200 to donate by hosting an “ice bucket” challenge which involved the DECA organization.
- ◆ A number of holiday concerts will be livestreamed for interested viewers in the coming days leading up to the holiday break.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by John Benbow to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of November 9, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from Citizens and Delegations

None.

Committee Reports

A. Educational Services Committee – December 7, 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 course “History Through Media” for a one-half credit elective course at Lincoln High School (LHS) for grades 11 and 12 to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-2 Approval of the transcribed credit course “Introduction to Diversity Studies” for a 0.5 elective course at LHS for grades 11 and 12 to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-3 Approval of the course “American History in Depth” for a 0.5 elective course at LHS for 10th grade Advanced Placement United States History (APUSH) students as well as 11th and 12th grade students who have completed their LHS American History requirement to begin in the 2021-22 school year.

- ES-4 Approval of the course “America’s Voice” for a 0.5 social studies credit and a 0.5 ELA credit at LHS for 10th grade APUSH students as well as students who have completed their LHS American History requirement to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-5 Approval of the course “America’s Story” for a 0.5 social studies credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-6 Approval of the course “Health, Safety and Nutrition Blended” for a 0.5 Family and Consumer Sciences MSTC transcribed credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-7 Approval of the course “Physics I” or “Conceptual Physics” for a 0.5 science credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-8 Approval of the course “Astronomy” for a 0.5 science credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-9 Approval of the course “Topics in Physical Science” for a 0.5 science credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-10 Approval of the course “Topics in Life Science” for a 0.5 science credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-11 Approval of the course “PLTW Biomedical Science-Human Body Systems” for a 1.0 science credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-12 Approval of the course “Environmental Science 1” for 0.5 science credit at LHS to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-13 Approval of the course name change of “Comprehensive Natural Science – Chemistry/Biology A” (CNS 10A) to “Chemistry 1” to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-14 Approval of the course name change of “Principles of Chemistry” to “Chemistry 2” to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-15 Approval of the course name change of “Chemistry Applications” to “Chemistry 3” to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-16 Approval of the course name change of “CNS 10B” to “Microbiology” to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-17 Approval of the course name change of “Principles of Biology” to “Macrobiology” to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-18 Approval of the course name change of “Principle of Environment” to “Environmental Science 2” to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-19 Approval of the course name change of “Comprehensive Natural Science – Physics/Earth Science B” to “Earth Structure and Processes” to begin in the 2021-22 school year.
- ES-20 Approval of the prerequisite change for Explorations from attempting Algebra 1 before taking Geometry and attempting Algebra 1 and Geometry prior to taking Explorations, to instead pass Algebra 1 before taking Geometry, and pass Algebra 1 and attempt Geometry prior to taking Explorations.
- ES-21 Approval of the WRPS Handbook of Special Education Systematic Requirements and Procedures.

Motion by John Krings, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda items ES-1-21. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Krings provided updates and reports on:

- Virtual student enrollment numbers for both the end of the first trimester and beginning of trimester 2 were reviewed.

- Roxanne Filtz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, explained that with the enactment of 2019 Wisconsin Act 185 and the federal waiver granted by the Department of Education, no state or federal academic assessments were required for the 2019-20 school year resulting in no School Report Cards being developed, and required assessments for 2020-21 are still to be determined.
- The Committee was updated on the District's use of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds. The District's allocation amounts to \$744,799.87 and the private/parochial school allocation total is \$50,232.13.

Motion by John Krings, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the December 7, 2020 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – December 7, 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 proposed funding of \$55,000 for four years for the Boys and Girls Club Mead partnership program.
- BS-2 Approval of the proposal to purchase HVAC air filters from Air Filtration Specialists at a total cost of \$19,426.65.
- BS-3 Approval of the proposed purchase of hand towels from Nassco at a total cost of \$14,000.00.

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

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Purchases of police liaison services payments.
- Information presented by Daniel Weigand, Director of Business Services regarding 2019-20 Audited Financial Statements.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the December 7, 2020 Business Services Committee meeting and minutes from the special Business Services Committee meeting of December 8, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – December 7, 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 non-represented support staff appointment of Kody Casper (IT Support Specialist – District).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointment of Susan Faust (Special Ed Aide – Grove).
- PS-3 Approval of the support staff resignation of Amy Radtke (Secretary Limited Term – Central Oaks), Melissa Paz (Cashier – WRAMS), Kathleen Young (Special Ed Aide – THINK).
- PS-4 Approval of Board Policy 447.11 – Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint with Students, and Board Policy 447.11 (Exhibit) – Use of Seclusion and Physical Restraint with Students, for second reading
- PS-5 Approval of Board Policy 411.11 – Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination in District Programs, Activities, and Operations, for first reading.
- PS-6 Approval of Board Policy 411.11 Rule (1) – Procedure for District Response to Alleged Sexual Harassment under Title IX, for first reading.
- PS-7 Approval of Board Policy 411.11 Rule (2) – Expectations for Employees to Report Discrimination and Harassment, for first reading.
- PS-8 Approval of Administrative Guideline, for first reading.

PS-9 Approval of Board Policy 411 – Student Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment, for first reading.

PS-10 Approval of Board Policy 511 – Non-Discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity, for first reading.

PS-11 Approval of Board Policy 511.5 – Employee Anti-Harassment, for first reading.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by John Krings to approve consent agenda items PS 1-11. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by John Krings to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the December 7, 2020 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by John Krings to approve of minutes of the November 16, 2020 special open and closed session Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Troy Bier shared the following information:

- State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford-Taylor has submitted the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) budget request for funding public schools and libraries in 2021-23.
- Governor Tony Evers has announced that he will be hosting four upcoming virtual listening sessions on the topic of the 2021-23 budget. One of the meetings dedicated to an educational focus is scheduled for Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. The Governor's website contains links to access all of the meetings.
- All four legislative caucuses have selected their leaders for the 2021-22 legislative session that begins in January. The Senate GOP was the only caucus to see significant changes with Sen. Devin LeMahieu being elected majority leader and Sen. Chris Kapenga elected president. Sen. Janet Bewley, Rep. Robin Vos, and Rep. Gordon Hintz all retained their leadership positions.
- On November 17, 2020 Governor Evers released details of a legislative package addressing COVID-19 including two provisions strongly supported by WASB: 1) waivers for state assessments and report cards for the 2020-21 school year; and 2) allow rehiring of retired teachers and staff and the ability to reinstate their licensure through the end of 2021. The Assembly GOP released their ideas for a COVID-19 bill which includes providing school limited liability protections from COVID-19 lawsuits, enhancing contact tracing, more rapid testing, developing at-home testing and moving around state agency employees to temporarily assist in these areas.

In a follow-up release on December 1, 2020 the Assembly Republicans announced a legislative package to address the pandemic with school-related provisions that would re-establish personal electronic computing device grants for schools, require teacher instruction from school buildings by the end of January subject to certain exceptions, require school board approval of virtual instruction by two-thirds vote of the board, and provide payments to parents of \$371 (half of the per pupil aid increase for the year) for students who have had at least 50% virtual instruction since September.

- Senate Minority Leader Janet Bewley has announced she will reappoint Sen. Jon Erpenbach and Sen. LaTonya Johnson to the powerful budget-writing Joint Finance Committee. Assembly Minority Leader Gordon Hintz announced the reappointment of Rep. Evan Goyke and the appointment of Rep. Greta Neubauer, who replaces retiring Rep. Deb Kolste on the committee.
- WASB's 2021 proposed resolutions are available on their website. The WASB Delegate Assembly will meet virtually on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 to discuss and act on the resolutions.
- WASB Executive Director John Ashley wrote to Governor Evers to thank him for supporting local school board decision-making during the pandemic.

- The Department of Administration (DOA) submitted its November 20, 2020 summary of state agency budget requests for the 2021-23 biennium along with the state tax revenue estimates for the remainder of the 2020-21 fiscal year and the following two fiscal years (2021-22 and 2022-23). In summary, even with a healthy \$1.2 billion ending balance to finish the current biennium and modest new revenue growth expected in the next biennium, the state would face a \$1.2 billion deficit if every agency request were approved as submitted, which the report notes is unlikely.
- The Senate is not likely to reconvene to take up any COVID relief legislation in the month of December.
- Assembly Speaker Robin Vos has appointed Rep. Mark Born as Assembly co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee replacing Rep. John Nygren.
- Governor Evers has announced dates to deliver his virtual State of the State address and biennial budget message. The State of the State address will be delivered at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, and his budget message is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.
- State Senator Alberta Darling has been appointed the new Chair of the Senate Committee on Education succeeding the retiring Luther Olsen. Also announced as serving on the committee are Sens. Kathy Bernier as vice chair and Steve Nass.

Bills

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by John Benbow to note November, 2020 receipts in the amount of \$1,091,357.14 and approve November, 2020 disbursements in the amount of \$3,804,631.14. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Unfinished/Old Business

Future Levy Override and Bond Issue Referendum Questions

Superintendent Broeren introduced Sue Peterson from School Perceptions as she joined the meeting virtually to review the data collected from the Community Survey conducted in November 2020. Following are highlights from the presentation:

- ♦ A total of 2,660 survey responses were returned
- ♦ Age of the respondents: 18-25 (2%); 26-35 (14%); 36-45 (24%); 46-55 (19%); 56-64 (15%); 65+ (26%)
- ♦ 92% of respondents reside within District attendance boundaries – nonresident respondent surveys are removed from the analytical portion of the report since they would be ineligible to vote on the referendum questions
- ♦ 18% of respondents are employees of the District, with 82% not employed by WRPS
- ♦ 45% of respondents have children attending District schools while 55% do not
- ♦ Demographic impact in voting was explained in terms of its correlation to election outcomes; having data that represents a good cross-section of the voting population is significant

Operational Referendum

- ♦ 65% of all residents completing the survey stated they would support the technology and curriculum updates at a cost of \$2 million for each of the next five years, with 22% stating they would not, and 13% being undecided
- ♦ If you remove the parents and school employees from the responses (*although these individuals are critical and important in their support*) since they typically make up 25% of the voting public at the polls, the 75% non-parent, non-staff resident data is important to focus on
- ♦ Non-parent, non-staff resident data indicates that 52% would support the operational referendum, with 14% undecided and 34% who would not support it
- ♦ Overall after all factors around staff, parent, and resident responses is taken into account, the survey results indicate that 57.25% of respondents would support the operational referendum, and if one-third of undecided responders also voted yes, it raises the potential for passage to 61.25%

Capital/Facility Referendum

- ♦ Using the same formula to analyze the question to enhance safety updates to all school entrances at a cost of \$12.74 million, the data shows good overall support of 52.5%
- ♦ Renovations at Lincoln High School to update science classrooms and labs along with the construction of a student resource center at a cost of \$16.66 million had a showing of 48.25% in support – if one-third of the undecided responders were to also vote yes, the passage rate would increase to over 50%
- ♦ The addition of a gymnasium at Rudolph Elementary (THINK Academy) at a cost of \$4.6 million had a showing of only 34% in support, and received the least support of all of the planned capital improvements. The

Board will likely need to give further consideration to this portion of the project in the capital referendum question.

- ♦ In terms of the overall question in the survey asking whether or not there is support for both the \$2 million annual operating referendum and a \$34 million capital referendum, 48% of respondents indicated they would support both questions, and if one-third of undecided respondents voted yes, it raises the potential for passage to 52.75%

Mr. Broeren suggested that in light of the information presented, it might be beneficial for the Board to digest the data and reconvene to have a work session on December 21, 2020 around the topic of which referendum questions, if any, should be asked. School Perceptions is categorizing the comments data submitted with each survey, and the administration should have the information available for the Board to also consider prior to the meeting. The Board held a brief discussion around the survey results and agreed that additional conversation at a special meeting to make a decision would be preferred. A meeting was scheduled for December 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. for this purpose.

Selection of Construction Management Firm

Mr. Broeren explained that the Business Services Committee met on December 8, 2020 to interview construction management firms. After interviewing four firms, the Committee recommends the selection of Miron Construction as the construction management firm to be utilized by the District for anticipated projects tied to the passage of a referendum in the upcoming Spring election. Plunkett Raysich Architects would work closely together with Miron to assist the District with referendum engagement activities.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the Business Services Committee recommendation to select Miron Construction as the construction management firm in the event the Board approves of moving forward with a referendum in April 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations and Retirement Requests

None.

Update on District Energy Efficiency Projects

Mr. Broeren introduced Jeff Mangan, Account Executive with Nexus Solutions. Mr. Mangan provided an overview of the school building improvements made over a period of time from Summer 2017 through Summer 2020. Projects included the pool, wrestling, and gymnastic area additions at Lincoln High School; classroom and gymnasium addition and expansion at the Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School; numerous deferred maintenance and energy upgrades district-wide with LED lighting, solar energy, electrical upgrades, HVAC controls and equipment replacement, steam conversion, tuck pointing and precast corrections, window replacements, and exterior door replacement and refurbishments. Mr. Broeren stated the completed projects have allowed for significant energy and operational savings, and with the projects often completed under budget and on time, additional work was able to be accomplished with the energy efficiency initiative. The Board thanked Mr. Mangan for his presentation.

Annual School Violence Event Drills

The Board reviewed the required annual school violence event drills which were conducted by each building and as reported by each building principal. The annual reporting piece is a requirement under Wisconsin Act 143.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the annual school violence event drill reports submitted by each building principal for drills conducted in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 118.07(4)(cp). Motion carried unanimously.

Tentative Agreement with Custodial/Maintenance Employee Group

Mr. Broeren explained that a tentative agreement was reached in bargaining with the AFSCME Local 1075 Custodial and Maintenance group on November 16, 2020. Since that time, the District has learned that the group is no longer represented by AFSCME since they failed to recertify. The administration recommends approval of the 1.8% wage increase effective July 1, 2020 as discussed and agreed to in the initial bargaining sessions with the custodial and maintenance employee group.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Katie Medina to approve of the tentative agreement reached with the custodial and maintenance employee group. Motion carried unanimously.

Tentative Agreement with Wisconsin Rapids Education Association (WREA)

Mr. Broeren explained that a tentative agreement has been reached with WREA. The agreement represents a 1.8% base wage increase for the 2020-21 contract year which will be distributed in an equalized fashion. The increase equates to \$870.00 per employee and will be pro-rated based upon each employee's Full Time Equivalent (FTE) status. Employees hired for 2020-21 are exempt from this increase since the new-hire base received an increase adjustment in the recent past. The administration recommends approval of the tentative agreement reached with WREA.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Katie Medina to approve of the tentative agreement reached with the Wisconsin Rapids Education Association (WREA) collective bargaining group. Motion carried unanimously.Legacy Foundation Grant for Wisconsin Rapids Quadplex Project and Affiliated Fundraising

Mr. Broeren explained that prior to his arrival there were conversations around multiple athletic upgrades in and around the Lincoln High School campus that were being considered for completion in multiple phases, if feasible. One of the upgrades included the renovation of the pool and addition of gymnastics/wrestling space, which has been completed. Other projects which have also been considered include a baseball/softball quadplex, the addition of a domed turf practice facility, and a rework of the South Wood County 2000 complex to renovate the track and install artificial turf on the football field. Through conversations had with various community groups about the potential \$18 million upgrades being considered, a number of collaborative partnerships began to develop, particularly with a group of baseball and softball supporters. Through community partnerships and engagement, the Legacy Foundation was also brought into the conversation. At some point it was determined that the entire \$18 million project was not feasible, and the focus turned to developing the baseball/softball quadplex project due to the amount of interest from stakeholders involved, at a cost of around \$6.8 million. The scope of this project would be to construct two baseball diamonds and two softball diamonds with synthetic turf infields, natural surface outfields, a concession/restroom building, stadium style seating, press boxes and other infrastructure. The intent is to develop a community facility to be used not only by WRPS, but also by many community groups. While WRPS would manage and operate the facility, policies, procedures, and memorandums of understanding with local groups would need to be established if the project is successfully built. Any dollars generated by the facility from user groups could be used to sustain the facility. The facility has the potential to draw visitors to the area for tournaments and events which would provide an economic boost locally.

The Legacy Foundation provided a grant last summer to partner with the District to perform some site testing where the quadplex would be built. Additional interest has grown since community groups have become more involved and committed to fundraising efforts around the project. Due to the level of community collaboration around the project, a grant was written to the Legacy Foundation which resulted in a grant offer being made to the District in the amount of \$5.6 million which would fund over two-thirds of the cost. Should the Board accept this generous grant, an additional \$1.2 million would still need to be raised for the project to be fully funded. It is possible that the cost of the project will come in under the projected \$6.8 million, and that a number of in-kind donations could be offered as the bidding process unfolds. The City of Wisconsin Rapids has been contacted to gauge their interest and see if it is possible for them to become involved to offer support for the project. Mr. Broeren is hopeful that around \$700,000 can be realized through in-kind contributions and cost avoidance measures. Should the \$700,000 be realized through this process, approximately \$500,000 would be left to raise in order to complete the project. Mr. Broeren is hopeful that the final amount needed can be covered through additional fundraising dollars raised through individual contributions and naming rights and/or advertising/marketing opportunities.

The South Wood County track is also being considered for renovation at the present time. For some time, the District has been anticipating the need to either mill and overlay or replace the track due to its deteriorating condition. The estimated cost to renovate the track is \$800,000. Should the District replace the track, the timing would be optimal to consider replacing the natural grass on the football field with synthetic turf. The cost to do so would be \$1 million, and through the community conversations that have been occurring around the athletic upgrades, an anonymous donor has pledged \$500,000 toward upgrading the football field turf. The quadplex project and potential track/football upgrades are coming together in simultaneous fashion, and it makes the most sense to attempt to have all of the projects done at the same time. If the remainder needing to be raised to complete the football turf project doesn't come to fruition, this project would not occur since it is not necessary, but would certainly be a nice upgrade for the site. Mr. Broeren explained some of the advantages of having synthetic turf fields as opposed to natural grass, as well as cost differences.

The administration recommends approval of the Legacy Foundation Grant agreement and affiliated fundraising campaign to upgrade existing athletic facilities at Lincoln High School as described.

The Board discussed the recommendation, paying deference to the grass roots effort by the user groups who appear to be very engaged and eager to see the project come to fruition as well as the generosity of the Legacy Foundation in their willingness to underwrite a significant amount of the project. Timing with regard to the projects getting done simultaneously was also considered, and the fact that the track replacement is necessary for District programs to continue in a safe manner. Questions around the timelines of the matching portion of the Legacy Foundation Grant were raised, which Mr. Broeren explained are flexible in terms of how the grant disbursement will work.

The football field upgrade was discussed. Some concern was raised about the ability to secure enough through fundraising to cover project costs which the District could end up shouldering, and Mr. Broeren stated there is a great deal of passion and will from the user groups involved to successfully raise what is needed. A question was raised about whether or not the project could fall through if the District is unable to cover the cost of repairing or replacing the track, and Mr. Broeren stated that the potential does exist for that to happen since conversations around the entire athletic upgrades have developed with a vision for the multi-faceted use that the complex would offer. Mr. Broeren stated that either way, track upgrades need to occur sooner than later due to the safety concerns involved. Ms. Hett requested data around the cost of maintaining grass versus synthetic turf, as well as research and statistics on the possibility for injury in each scenario. Mr. Broeren will gather the information requested for the Board.

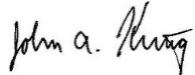
In final discussions, Mr. Broeren explained how messaging and communication surrounding the LHS facilities upgrades and referendum (if the Board approves of one) would be coordinated to avoid any confusion about cost impact to taxpayers.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve of the proposed Legacy Foundation Grant agreement and the affiliated fundraising campaign to upgrade existing athletic facilities at Lincoln High School by constructing two baseball diamonds, two softball diamonds, and a concession stand with restrooms (quadplex). Motion carried unanimously.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk