



BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

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

February 10, 2025

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

LOCATION: District Board Office, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494
Conf Rm A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Brian Oswald, Ronald Rasmussen, Kelly Schaeffer, Teri Thomas, Jennifer Wilhorn

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

School Showcase Presentation

Principal Teri Thomas and a student from Pitsch Early Learning Center presented a poster to the Board on behalf of all 4K students as a token of gratitude for the Board's support of early learning.

Public Comment

Alica Guldán - As a parent, she expressed concern about the issue of bullying in schools being out of control and its effect on both those directly involved and those who witness it. Ms. Guldán stated students need to be held accountable, particularly at Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS), and she believes further action is needed to address the issue so that students can feel safe while attending.

Amanda LaBarge - As a parent, she expressed concerns about student safety after her child was injured in a school altercation for which she did not receive immediate notification. She stated that the situation rose to the level of needing involvement from law enforcement, and this didn't happen in a timely manner due to the delay in notification. She noted that the administration contacted "Family 1" as listed in Skyward, but since she is listed under "Family 2," she did not receive the information until after school had ended. Ms. LaBarge believes both families should be informed simultaneously in split-home situations, and feels school communication policies in this regard should be revised.

Lisa Lee-Oswald - As a parent, Ms. Oswald requested that the safety of all students be considered in relation to ICE agent and law enforcement interview policies and interactions. She believes the District's policies in use from 2009 need to be reviewed and updated in light of the threats of ICE raids and deportations in order to ensure a safe and uninterrupted learning environment exists for all students. She offered her assistance and support wherever needed to accomplish this. President Krings stated that the Board has received new legal updates and guidance on this policy topic, and he requested that Superintendent Rasmussen provide copies of this information to Ms. Lee-Oswald. She encouraged communication to be sent to all District parents concerning these updates.

Jessica Montag - As the parent of a middle and high school student in the District, Ms. Montag spoke on the issue of bullying in schools. She shared specific information with Board members from Salt Lake City School District Board Policy S-3 on student conduct and discipline which she believes is much more comprehensive than current WRPS policy. She mentioned that her daughter was injured while in a bathroom at school, and her son was injured on a school bus as a result of bullying. She recommends that there be an increase in staff to focus on school safety and that stronger consequences for students involved in bullying be implemented.

Jasmine Montag - As a student at Lincoln High School, Ms. Montag shared that she was assaulted and harassed by multiple individuals at school, resulting in traumatization, and her brother was assaulted on a school bus. She expressed that it is

challenging for her to attend school due to a fear for her safety and ongoing harassment. Ms. Montag suggested that the District consider hiring veterans seeking employment as a safety measure to help monitor schools.

School Showcase

Teri Thomas, Principal of Pitsch Early Learning Center, provided information to the Board about the value of late start Mondays. She shared insights on how teachers from the four WRPS 4K sites collaborate to implement common instructional strategies, use unified curriculum and materials, and maintain inclusive practices with students. This shared professional development time has been valuable in maintaining consistent learning and expectations across all WRPS 4K classrooms. Ms. Thomas explained that online enrollment registration is new for 4K families this year, with an option for in-person registration at the District enrollment center as needed.

Special Recognition

President John Krings presented special recognition on behalf of the Board to Maurine Hodgson, retiring Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Board Secretary.

Student Representative Report

Student Representative Delainey Morrison shared updates on the following:

- Winter sports season is finishing
- Fire on Ice Dance and weekly activities were successful
- The LHS Band concert is scheduled for February 10, 2025
- The LHS Orchestra concert is scheduled for February 18, 2025
- The LHS Choir concert is scheduled for February 24, 2025
- The Interact Club will be holding a Youth Summit on February 24, 2025
- DECA plans to send over 50 students to State on February 24-26, 2025
- Trimester 2 ends on February 28, 2025 and Trimester 3 begins on March 3, 2025
- State Gymnastics will be held at LHS on March 7-8, 2025
- LHS Juniors will take the ACT on March 11, 2025

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Julie Timm to approve regular Board meeting minutes of January 13, 2025, special Board meeting minutes and Neola policies of January 13, 2025, special closed/open Board meeting minutes of January 13, 2025; and special Board meeting minutes and Neola policies of February 3, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Educational Services Committee – February 3, 2025. Report given by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz reviewed the following consent agenda item brought before the Board through the Educational Services Committee, and asked if there were any motions to be held:

ES-1 Approval of the 2025-2026 Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools' Strategic Framework as presented.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda item ES 1. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz provided updates and reports on:

- The Achievement Gap Reductions (AGR) Mid-Year Report.

Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, seconded by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the February 3, 2025 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Business Services Committee – February 3, 2025. 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 the lease agreement with CESA 5 for space at East JR. High for the 2025-26 school year for a fee of \$27,000.00.
- BS-2 Approval of the proposals for floor finishes from Nassco, Inc. for \$24,554.34, Schilling for \$4677.04, and Hillyard Floor Care Supply for \$3,942.53, for a total cost of \$33,173.91 to be paid from the 2024-25 Buildings and Grounds budget.

- BS-3 Approval of Skyward's Time Tracking software and Red Rover's Sub Management System, which will cost \$64,140.70 over three years and be funded from the School Business Office budget.
- BS-4 Approval of the WRAMS tennis court quote from Holbrook Tennis Court Services for \$94,600.00, to be paid from the 2025-26 capital projects and community service budgets.
- BS-5 Approval of 45 Bytespeed Performance Mini-Desktops from Bytespeed at a total cost of \$32,175.00 to be funded from a combination of the 2024-25 Technology Support and Technology Referendum Budgets.
- BS-6 Approval of the purchase of 900 HP Chromebooks and managing them from PDS at a total cost of \$224,550.00, to be funded from a combination of the 2024-25 WRPS Common School Fund Budget and the Technology Referendum Budget.
- BS-7 Approval of entering a 3-year contract with Solarus to provide 10 Gbps of internet access to the District at an annual cost of \$55,200.00 to be funded 80% by the Federal E-rate program and 20% to be funded from the annual Technology Budget.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items BS 1-7. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made were reviewed by the Committee
- Monthly budget report will follow Neola policy, po6231, and will be placed on the agenda for the Regular Board meetings.
- First Bank OPEB Investment Report was reviewed.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the February 3, 2025 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Personnel Services Committee – February 3, 2025. Report given by Troy Bier.

Mr. Bier 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 appointment of Weston Spencer (Teacher Intern - Math - LHS).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Dawn Wayerski (Accounts Payable Specialist - Central Office), Nicole Fitch (Supervisory Aide - WRAMS), Miranda Murphy (Administrative Assistant to the Principal - LHS), Jada Panko (Behavior Interventionist - Howe), Jazmine McGrath (ELL Aide - WRAMS), and Katrina Jabbi (Administrative Assistant to the Associate Principal - WRAMS).
- PS-3 Approval of the professional staff resignation of Maloree Beste (Kindergarten Teacher - Grant).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff resignations of Maddie Harper (Supervisory Aide - LHS), Nicole Fitch (Supervisory Aide - WRAMS), and Brenda Greene (Administrative Assistant to the Social Workers - District).
- PS-5 Approval of the professional staff retirement of Jane Overfelt (Second Grade Teacher - Washington).

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Elizabeth St.Myers to approve consent agenda items PS 1-5. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bier provided updates and reports on:

- The status of District Substitutes fill rates.

Motion by Troy Bier, seconded by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and minutes of the February 3, 2025. Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

A Board Member requested to set up a committee to discuss the types of discipline consequences given in the District. The committee would discuss the effectiveness of current discipline, the impact of students and social media, be sure Strategic Framework strategies are followed, and explore whether more can be done.

Superintendent Rasmussen noted that 93% of students at WRAMS do not have discipline referrals and indicated that the Neola policies are coming regarding bullying and harassment. Board Members requested that are consistency in posting the positives at the District on social media and addressing the Skyward family contact issues.

Legislative Agenda

Mr. Bier shared the following legislative updates:

- The Legislative Fiscal Bureau projected the state will now finish the 2023-2025 budget with a \$4.3 billion surplus, but now expects tax revenues to be \$894.3 million higher than what the administration had excepted in November; this is driven largely by revised estimates for sales tax collections through mid-2025. Governor Evers is scheduled to introduce his budget on February 18, 2025.
- The 2025 spring election begins with the primary on February 18, 2025. The State Superintendent race will see two challengers, Jeff Wright and Brittany Kinser, along with incumbent Jill Underly on the ballot. With three candidates in the race, a primary will be held to narrow the field to the top two candidates. The primary election will see five school districts go to the ballot with five referendum questions. The April 1, 2025 ballot will include the Supreme Court, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and School Board elections. There will also be 89 referendum questions on the ballot, encompassing 81 districts; 58 of the districts will ask for temporary authority to increase the district's revenue limit, while five will ask for permanent authority to increase the district's revenue limit. In addition, there will be 31 borrowing referenda on the ballot across the state; borrowing referenda asks voters for approval to issue bonds for major construction, remodeling or maintenance projects for school facilities.
- The Assembly Committee on Education, chaired by Representative Joel Kitchens, had a public hearing at the capitol which featured five bills regarding K-12 education ranging in topic from regulating the ability of DPI to alter state assessment standards (cut scores), curriculum mandates for cursive writing and civics instruction, school material inspections by district residents, and mandating an arbitrary percentage of school funds be spent in the classroom.
- Resolutions that were adopted by the Delegate Assembly on January 22, 2025 are now posted on the WASB legislative website. Ten resolutions were adopted, and two were struck down.
- Representative Joel Kitchens introduced AB-2, a bill requiring K-12 school boards to adopt a policy by July 1, 2026 that would generally prohibit pupils from using wireless communication devices during instructional time.
- Legislators are focused on referendums and have introduced three bills that would place restrictions and requirements to the ability of school board to pass referenda, including eliminating recurring referenda, requiring information on the estimated interest and average increase of property taxes to be posted on the ballot, and eliminating funds raised by referenda of more than \$50 million from a school district's shared cost. Last year saw a record set for both the number of referenda posed and passed.

Bills

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Troy Bier to note January 2025 receipts in the amount of \$10,197,654.63 and disbursements in the amount of \$4,582,347.44. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

None.

Action on Board Policies

Superintendent Rasmussen explained that in light of recent federal administration changes, the District has been advised by Neola, its policy services consultant, to rescind Board Policies 411.24 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities and 411.24 Rule – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Program or Activities, and revert back to the implementation of Board Policies 411.11 – Sexual Harassment and Non-Discrimination in District Programs, Activities, and Operations; 411.11 Rule 1 – Procedure for District Response to Alleged Sexual Harassment under Title IX; and 411.11 Rule 2 – Expectations for Employees to Report Discrimination and Harassment. The Board considered the recommendation.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Julie Timm to rescind Board Policies 411.24 and 411.24 Rule and approved of recommended changes to Board Policies 411.11, 411.11 Rule 1, and 411.11 Rule 2 related to sexual harassment and nondiscrimination. Motion carried unanimously.

School Perceptions Survey Draft

Superintendent Rasmussen presented a survey developed in collaboration with School Perceptions for families and staff members, explaining that parents will receive climate and culture questions specific to each of the schools their children attend. The survey will include questions about a graduate profile, school start and end times, financial challenges, facility needs, and the appropriate size of the District. A Board member requested clarification around the question, "The school has high expectations of my student." Mr. Rasmussen explained that this question is being asked to gather comparative data from other schools. The survey is anonymous, with all results processed through School Perceptions.

The staff survey is similar to the parent survey, with additional questions about the workday, work environment, and perspectives on the District's Beliefs Statement. Board members were provided an opportunity to provide feedback concerning the drafts. In terms of timelines, the survey is scheduled to go out during the second week of April, 2025. Survey results will be shared when they become available.

District Budget Update

Aaron Nelson, Director of Business Services, presented an update on the status of the 2024-25 District budget as well as the development of the 2025-26 District budget. He provided the following information:

Budget Update	
2024-25 Budget	
Beginning Deficit	\$ (994,882.75)
Estimated Ending Deficit	\$ (259,216)
2025-26 Budget	
New Revenue	
Revenue Cap Increase – All In - \$325	\$ 1,555,173.00
Per Pupil Categorical Aid	\$ (17,066.00)
Final ESSER Rev. with No Offsetting Exp.	\$ (618,031.00)
Reduction in Interest Revenue	\$ (200,000.00)
Open Enrollment In	\$ 43,282.00
US Junior Army – ROTC	\$ (46,910.00)
Fund 27 Categorical Aid – 29.16%	\$ (116,135.29)
Estimated Revenue Increase	\$ 600,312.71
New Expenditure	
Salary Increases – Less Grants	\$ 1,054,592.00
FICA, WRS, LTD, Life – Less Grants	\$ (84,565.00)
Health Insurance Increase – Less Grants	\$ 211,877.00
H.S.A. Increase – Less Grants	\$ 612,711.00
Building and Department Budgets	\$ (136,658.00)
Parent Choice	\$ 372,604.32
Open Enrollment Out	\$ 97,927.00
School Based Mental Health	\$ (107,381.00)
US Junior Army – ROTC	\$ (94,919.00)
Other Miscellaneous	\$ 19,246.00
Estimated Increased Expenses	\$ 1,945,434.00
Ending Deficit	\$ (2,340,004.00)

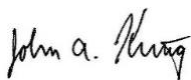
2025-26 Budget Assumptions	
Salary Increase	2.95%
Health Insurance Increase	7.00%
Building & Department Budget Increase	2.00%
Declining Enrollment	2.00%
Federal Funds will Cont. at Same Allocations	45 Students
Federal Fund Budgets – Fund 10 & 27	
2024-25 Federal Grants	\$ 4,111,443.00
Medicaid	\$ 643,822.00
E-Rate	\$ 310,000.00
Total	\$ 5,065,265.00
Food Service – Fund 50	
2024-25 Federal Funds	\$ 2,614,710.00
Around \$180,000.00 custodian expense applied to Fund 50 may eventually need to be transferred to Fund 10	

Summary

- The 2025-26 spending plan continues to be adjusted as data is received.
- Reduction in positions will take place through attrition.
- Grant dollars will be leveraged where possible.
- A drawdown of fund balance may need to take place.
- Budgets include the \$2,000,000 non-recurring referendum (2025-26 will be year 5 of 5).
- Declining enrollment will impact current year and future budgets.
- Expense reductions will need to occur beyond the 2025-26 fiscal year.

The Board had an opportunity to ask questions concerning the budget information.

Mr. Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Christine Wefel – Secretary

Julie Timm – Clerk