



## **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

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

August 11, 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, Jaime Sparkes, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Elizabeth St. Myers

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ed Allison, Roxanne Filtz, Steve Hepp, Aaron Nelson, Bill Oswald, Brian Oswald, Ronald Rasmussen, Rod Watson

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

#### Public Comment

None.

#### School Showcase

Dr. Rodrick Watson, Principal at Lincoln High School (LHS), shared that LHS students exceeded the Wisconsin state average on Advanced Placement (AP) exams taken during the 2024-2025 school year. LHS currently offers 10 AP courses, providing students with rigorous, college-level learning opportunities. Of all AP exams taken at LHS, an impressive 88% of scores were 3 or higher, qualifying students for college credit. This achievement highlights the strength of LHS's AP program, the dedication of its students, and the high-quality instruction they receive from WRPS educators.

#### Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve regular Board meeting minutes of July 14, 2025; and special closed session Board meeting minutes of July 14, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Committee Reports

Educational Services Committee – August 4, 2025. Report given by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz.

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz 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 accepting the Title VI Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Indian Education Formula Grant in the amount of \$18,395.00.
- ES-2 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.

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve consent agenda items ES 1-2. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz provided updates and reports on:

- A report was provided on seclusions and restraints. It was noted that 89 staff members were trained in 2024-2025, bringing the District-wide total to 111 trained staff. The District reported 22 incidents in 2024-2025 which was a decrease from the previous year. A tracking system will be implemented in 2025-2026 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.

- An update was provided on the Multi-Level System of Supports (MLSS). The system supports 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. This system is used to identify areas where students need support as well as opportunities to celebrate successes.

**Motion by Kathi Stebbins-Hintz to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and revised minutes of the August 4, 2025 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Business Services Committee – August 4, 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 to accept the Scope Summary and Fee Proposal from Miron Construction.

**Motion by John Benbow to approve consent agenda item BS 1. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Invoices, bid specs, and purchases made was reviewed.
- RASI, Rapids Area Soccer, Inc., was present to share updates on the Washington Soccer Complex improvements.
- Wisconsin Retirement System rates will increase by 0.5% as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. This increase will be split between the employer and the employee. The total annual cost increase for the district is estimated to be approximately \$88,324.00.
- The District's most recent Moody's credit rating is Aa3, which is a high quality and very low credit risk rating.
- Donations update.
  - McCain Foods - \$5,000.00 – Scoreboard Donation.
  - The Dental Suite - \$5,000.00 – Scoreboard Donation.
  - Spranger & Sach Real Estate - \$500.00 – Scoreboard Donation.
  - Pinnacle Performance Therapy - \$500.00 – Scoreboard Donation.
  - Legacy Foundation - \$56,661.00 – Addressing Period Poverty.

**Motion by John Benbow to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the August 4, 2025 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. Personnel Services Committee – August 4, 2025. Report given by Troy Bier.**

Mr. Bier reviewed the following consent agenda items brought before the Board through the Personnel Services Committee, and indicated that PS-6 will be held out for further discussion.

- PS-1 Approval of the professional staff appointments of Ryan Truttschel (Language Arts – WRAMS), and Hayley Bird (Cross Categorical – Mead).
- PS-2 Approval of the following support staff appointments of Brittany Barritt (Special Ed Aide – Mead), Hannah Brillowski (Cleaner – THINK), and Rachel Teeselink (Administrative Assistant to Technology – Central Office).
- PS-3 Approval of the following support staff resignation of Linda Nelson (Noon Aide – LHS).
- PS-4 Approval to eliminate the second and third shift differential for all new Custodial and Maintenance employees, effective August 11, 2025.
- PS-5 Approval of substitute teacher bonus pay as follows: \$300 bonus after 30 assignments, \$550 bonus after 50 assignments, \$900 bonus after 75 assignments, \$1,500 bonus after 100 assignments, and \$2,380 bonus after 140 assignments, \$3,300 bonus after 165 assignments, and free lunch for substitute teachers on Mondays and Fridays.

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda items PS 1-5. Motion carried unanimously.**

- PS-6 Mr. Bier noted that there are additional expectations for Lincoln High School (LHS) teachers teaching dual credit courses. Those teaching UW-Green Bay (UWGB) courses receive a stipend directly from UWGB as the students pay tuition fees. Those teaching Mid-State Technical College (MSTC) courses do not receive a stipend as those students do not pay tuition. It was proposed that a stipend be given to the LHS teachers teaching the MSTC courses with the funds being paid from a \$5,000.00 CTE grant, and the remainder \$7,000.00 out of the District budget. There is concern that other teachers are taking on additional work without receiving stipends, and that the District is already facing a deficit for the 2025-2026 school year.

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve consent agenda item PS-6. Roll call vote: Motion failed on a vote of 2 - 5. John Benbow, Christopher Inda, Jaime Sparkes, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, and Elizabeth St. Myers voted no.**

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve the balance of the Personnel Services Committee report and revised minutes of the August 4, 2025 Personnel Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

A Board Member requested information on student fees. Mr. Rasmussen indicated additional information will be provided in the next Business Services Meeting.

#### Legislative Agenda

Mr. Bier shared the following legislative updates:

- The 2025-27 state budget has been signed into law. Committee hearing and votes will continue, bills will be introduced, and legislators will tour their districts. It is likely we will see numerous bills on staffing shortage solutions, referenda restrictions, private/charter school funding, and mandates both curricular and policy focused. Senate Bill 170 is being tracked closely which would allow a WRS annuitant to return to work without suspending their annuity.
- A new study was released by the Wisconsin Policy Forum that found Wisconsin has fallen further in the national rankings when it comes to per-pupil education spending. Wisconsin ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in the country for per-pupil spending. The primary reason listed is that general state aid increases (if any) in recent years have failed to meet the rate of inflation.
- A new bill aims to repeal the changes made to the 2023-25 state budget by Governor Evers' use of his partial veto authority, to raise revenue limits by \$325/pupil annually until the 2425 school year. The bill comes after the WI Supreme Court sided with Governor Evers in a case brought by the legislature which sought to rule the move unconstitutional.
- The state budget included the release of funds for early literacy initiatives, questions were raised about the implementation of these programs and whether funds spent in the last school year will now be eligible for reimbursement. More information will be coming in the next few weeks.
- WASB issued a resource comparing actual per-pupil revenue limit changes to prior inflationary indexing. One of the metrics that was tracked, based on the member-approved resolutions, is how increased (if any) to school districts revenue authority compares with the rate of inflation.

#### Bills

**Motion by John Benbow to note July, 2025 receipts in the amount of \$538,635.32 and approve July, 2025 disbursements in the amount of \$4,855,600.19. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

#### New Business

##### Employee Appointments, Resignations, and Retirement Requests

Brian Oswall, Director of Human Resources, presented the following employee appointment recommendation:

##### Professional Staff Appointment

|             |              |                                              |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Lisa Butzen | Location:    | Wisconsin Rapids Are Middle School           |
|             | Position:    | Teacher – Math (1.0 FTE)                     |
|             | Education:   | Bachelor's – Lakeland College – January 2006 |
|             | Major/Minor: | Education                                    |
|             | Salary:      | \$56,137.00                                  |

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve of the professional staff appointment of Lisa Butzen. Motion carried unanimously.**

Support Staff Appointments

|                     |                 |                              |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Hannah Brillowski   | Location:       | River Cities High School     |
|                     | Position:       | Custodian                    |
|                     | Effective Date: | August 11, 2025              |
|                     | Hourly Rate:    | \$23.00                      |
| Aydon Birge         | Location:       | Central Office - Technology  |
|                     | Position:       | Student Webmaster            |
|                     | Effective Date: | August 18, 2025              |
|                     | Hourly Rate:    | \$13.50                      |
| Preston Engelbright | Location:       | Central Office - Technology  |
|                     | Position:       | Chromebook Repair Technician |
|                     | Effective Date: | August 18, 2025              |
|                     | Hourly Rate:    | \$13.50                      |
| David Lynn          | Location:       | THINK Academy                |
|                     | Position:       | Cleaner                      |
|                     | Effective Date: | August 18, 2025              |
|                     | Hourly Rate:    | \$19.13                      |
| Gunner Ringer       | Location:       | District                     |
|                     | Position:       | Custodian                    |
|                     | Effective Date: | August 11, 2025              |
|                     | Hourly Rate:    | \$24.00                      |
| Cindy Tork          | Location:       | Washington Elementary School |
|                     | Position:       | Noon Aide                    |
|                     | Effective Date: | September 2, 2025            |
|                     | Hourly Rate:    | \$17.68                      |

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve the support staff assignments of Hannah Brillowski, Aydon Birge, Preston Engelbright, David Lynn, Gunner Ringer, and Cindy Tork. Motion carried unanimously.**

Professional Staff Resignation, pending receipt of \$2,000 liquidated damages.

|               |                 |                                           |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Chelsea Kelly | Location:       | Grove Elementary School                   |
|               | Position:       | Teacher – 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade (1.0 FTE) |
|               | Effective Date: | August 7, 2025                            |
|               | Date of Hire:   | August 29, 2022                           |

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve of the professional staff resignation of Chelsea Kelly pending receipt of \$2,000 liquidated damages. Motion carried unanimously.**

Support Staff Resignations

|                  |                 |                                |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Bonnie Edholm    | Location:       | Woodside Elementary School     |
|                  | Position:       | Special Education (2.25 hrs)   |
|                  | Effective Date: | August 3, 2025                 |
|                  | Date of Hire:   | September 3, 2024              |
| David Wittenberg | Location:       | Wisconsin Rapids Middle School |
|                  | Position:       | Special Ed Aide (7.0 hrs)      |
|                  | Effective Date: | August 7, 2025                 |
|                  | Date of Hire:   | September 26, 2022             |

|                 |                 |                           |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Rachel Charette | Location:       | Mead Elementary School    |
|                 | Position:       | Special Ed Aide (7.0 hrs) |
|                 | Effective Date: | August 5, 2025            |
|                 | Date of Hire:   | October 9, 2023           |

|              |                 |                           |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Casey Saeger | Location:       | Mead Elementary School    |
|              | Position:       | Special Ed Aide (7.0 hrs) |
|              | Effective Date: | August 4, 2025            |
|              | Date of Hire:   | March 8, 2021             |

**Motion by Troy Bier to approve of the support staff resignations of Bonnie Edholm, David Wittenberg, Rachel Charette, and Casey Saeger. Motion carried unanimously.**

Presentation from M3Direct on Direct Primary Care (DPC)

Ms. Jen Cordy, M3 Insurance Broker, along with Ken Strmiska and Lori Allman from Anovia Health, shared information about Anovia Health Care. This model offers direct primary medical care, giving members unlimited access to their primary care team through in-office visits, telehealth, and messaging, without the use of commercial insurance. Patients are typically seen the same or next day, with appointments averaging 30–60 minutes and can be seen in any of their clinics.

In July 2025, Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools (WRPS) staff had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Cordy for a presentation on Anovia Health. Employees had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussion with the representatives. Following the session, staff were surveyed, and results indicated strong support for moving forward with an Anovia Health membership option. WRPS requested four bids from direct primary care providers and determined that Anovia was the best option for our employees.

WRPS is currently fully insured through Aspirus Health Plan, the goal is to eventually become self-funded. Benefits of being self-funded include cost savings of paying high premiums to insurance carriers, having more control, plan flexibility, and long-term savings.

Ms. Allman gave an overview of Anovia. There are currently 10 shared sites and they are looking to add an additional site in Wisconsin Rapids. Team members on staff include seven MDs/Dos and 17 Nurse Practitioners/Physician Assistants. They build strong patient/provider relationships to ensure each individual receives the highest quality care. They have a physician lead in a clinic and practice in the clinic 1 - 2 days per week. The rest of the time is covered by APCs (Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants). RNs and Medical Assistants escort patients to the exam room, record vitals, and ensure the provider is available within minutes. Patients are not limited to discussing only one concern and may address multiple topics during a single visit. There is no restriction on the number of visits per person. Patients can be seen for many medical issues, for more complex care, a referral will be made to partner specialists along with working with the current insurance plan to help keep costs down. Upon request, medical records can be forwarded to primary care providers. Employees can continue to see their regular provider and use Anovia as needed.

Lab services conducted at Anovia typically have a 24–48 hour turnaround time. If a provider determines that a patient requires care from a specialist or the ER, this recommendation will be clearly communicated to the patient. It does not replace traditional healthcare; rather, it works in conjunction with it. Routine infant care is recommended to be managed by a pediatrician, as Anovia does not provide immunizations.

The cost of Anovia Health is \$34.50 per member per month covered on the WRPS health plan. There are currently 1,249 WRPS adult members enrolled at an estimated cost for October – December 2025 of \$129,271.50. The cost for 2026 would be \$680,616.00, making the projected cost for the first 15 months of \$809,887.50. As other Wisconsin Rapids businesses sign up to become Anovia members, the per member cost may decrease for WRPS. A target date to open the Wisconsin Rapids clinic is November 1, 2025. An MD has been contracted by Anovia to open the Wisconsin Rapids clinic.

The WRPS medical loss ratio with Aspirus Health Care is currently 121.4%, while the ideal range is 85–90%. Health Insurance premiums continue to increase, a cap of 9.5% was negotiated with Aspirus for this year, but not for the future and could be unsustainable by the District. By shifting costs that would typically be paid to Aspirus, expenses can be lowered and bring the medical loss ratio closer to the target range when members use Anovia. There is no guarantee the District will maintain the same health plan in the future, which may require switching to a different plan with different physician networks. This does not prevent employees from continuing to see their current doctor; however, the amount covered or paid may vary depending on the plan selected. Incentives are being explored in

conjunction with HSA contributions to employees. When HSA contributions were initially introduced, it was noted that they were not guaranteed; currently, various options are being considered.

**Motion by John Benbow, to approve the proposed contract with Anovia Health for District staff to participate in their Direct Primary Care (DPC) clinic services at a cost of \$34.50 per member per month, as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote.**

Sale of 0.5 acres at 1801-16<sup>th</sup> Street South

Mr. Rasmussen explained that the Wisconsin Rapids Water and Lighting Commission (WWLC) currently has a substation on 0.3 acres on District property at 1801-16<sup>th</sup> Street South. They have requested that 0.5 acres of property be transferred to them at no cost to accommodate the construction of a larger substation. WWLC has been a valued partner with WRPS, having donated extensive services to lighting projects at South Wood County Field Stadium and the Quadplex. Any surveying of the land would be at WWLC's expense.

**Motion by John Benbow, to approve the transfer of 0.5 acres at 1801-16<sup>th</sup> Street South to Wisconsin Rapids Water and Lighting Commission. Motion carried on a roll call vote.**

Mr. Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Christine Wefel – Secretary

Elizabeth St.Myers – Clerk