



Wisconsin Rapids Board of Education

510 Peach Street · Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494 · (715) 424-6701

MINUTES

John A. Krings, President
John Benbow, Jr.
Larry Davis
Sandra K. Hett
Anne Lee
Katie Medina
Mary E. Rayome

February 13, 2017

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

LOCATION: Thomas A. Lenk Educational Center, 510 Peach Street, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494
Conf. Rm. A/B

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Krings, Sandra Hett, Mary Rayome, John Benbow, Anne Lee, Larry Davis, Katie Medina

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Colleen Dickmann, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Ryan Christianson, Matt Green, Ed Allison, Phil Bickelhaupt

MEDIA PRESENT: Jesse Austin – River Cities Community Access; Jonathan Anderson – *Daily Tribune*

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Student Representative’s Report

Drake Blossfield reported on the following:

- Success in swimming sectionals held recently
- Fire and Ice week activities, including a record number of students attending the dance
- Sportainment Night is scheduled for Friday, February 17, 2017
- A variety of fundraising activities occurring to assist the needy in our community
- Students are getting involved in scholarship competitions
- DECA will be competing at state competition in March at Lake Geneva to hopefully qualify for nationals in California
- The last girls basketball game of the season is being played February 13, 2017

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of January 9, 2017; and special closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of January 9, 24, and 30, 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from Citizens and Delegations

Kaycee Marks, special education teacher and member of the WREA negotiation committee, spoke on the topic of WREA negotiations with the Board. In light of Act 10 and the “no rules state of mind” brought about through this law, Ms. Marks expressed disappointment with the Board’s proposed inverse distribution method of the \$22,000 amount available to be distributed. Ms. Marks expressed concerns about negotiation comparables used by the Board, and the Board’s unwillingness to agree to an alternative proposal that would not be divisive or further lower staff morale. The WREA waited for a significant period of time for the Board to reconvene a meeting to continue negotiation discussions, all while collecting significant savings from revisions made to the employee health care insurance plan and through graduate credit surpluses not utilized by teachers. Additionally, a \$23 million building project was rolled out with key

aspects of the plan able to be funded, yet the Board claimed to have its hands tied financially. Ms. Marks respectfully requested that the Board reject the proposed inverse distribution of salary dollars. She stated that WREA believes it is possible to meet the Board's expressed goal of increasing starting salary while at the same time ensuring that no employee comes up empty, and to do it without causing undue financial hardship to the District. Ms. Marks reminded the Board that while the teaching staff might be their biggest expense, they are also the District's greatest asset.

Melanie Kozlowski, English teacher and Educator Effectiveness coach, spoke on the topic of the WREA wage distribution and to advocate for a fair increase for all teachers. Ms. Kozlowski sees and meets with many new and veteran teachers throughout the course of a day, and stated that she knows teachers go above and beyond in their positions every day. However, people are tired and they do not feel valued. Ultimately, she believes this will affect how progress can continue to be made in the District. She believes the underlying message that the Board is sending with its proposal is that veteran teachers are not valued, and that what they do doesn't matter enough to be worth the \$65 increase they would get under an equally shared distribution proposal. She urged the Board to choose carefully in their decision making.

Bob Johannes, special education teacher, spoke on the topic of the Board's proposed wage distribution for WREA members, stating that he believes it pits senior teachers against first and second year teachers. Mr. Johannes is one of the 212 teachers that will be affected by the decision. After sharing his own experience and history relative to past negotiations, he explained that he is against the Board's proposal, and asked them to reconsider their decision to implement it.

Committee Reports

A. Business Services Committee – February 6, 2017. 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 extend the Skyward software license contract beginning July 1, 2017 and ending June 30, 2020 at a total cost of \$8.00 per pupil based upon third Friday count of the previous year.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item BS 1. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Memorial sign installation project at Lincoln High School
- Police Liaison Officer purchased services
- A review of 2015-16 audited financial statements by the Committee

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the regular February 6, 2017, Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Personnel Services Committee – February 6, 2017. 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 support staff appointments of Peri Carlson (Kitchen Helper – East), Kristeen Ratsch (Supervisory Aide – WRAMS), and Ryan Freeberg (Custodian – RCHS/Pitsch).

PS-2 Approval of the support staff resignation requests of Jamy Helke (Noon Aide – Mead), and Teani Doerrler (Custodian – RCHS).

PS-3 Approval of the professional staff early retirement request of Yu Kitamura-Schwartz (Teacher – East/Lincoln), and Randall Blom (Teacher – Lincoln).

PS-4 Approval of language changes in the Professional Staff handbook as documented in the February Agenda & Background, *Attachments A1-A23*.

Dr. Ryan Christianson, Director of Human Resources, provided a brief overview of each of the recommended language changes found in *Attachments A1-A23* being proposed for approval.

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Anne Lee to approve consent agenda items PS 1-4. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve regular Personnel Services Committee meeting minutes of February 6, 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Educational Services Committee – February 6, 2017. Report given by Anne Lee.

Ms. Lee 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 beginning fundraising and development of an Outdoor Learning Center at Mead Elementary Charter School.

ES-2 Approval to table a decision on eliminating Driver's Education and Japanese I-V from the WRPS curriculum beginning with the 2017-18 school year, until the Board of Education meeting.

Motion by Anne Lee, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda items ES 1-2. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Lee provided updates and reports on:

- Upcoming student travel plans, and the Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) report with mid-year information.

Motion by Anne Lee, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the February 6, 2017, Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

Mr. Benbow suggested that the Board hold a summer workshop on the topic of advocacy.

Legislative Agenda

Mr. Benbow shared the following information:

- Governor Walker's budget includes the elimination of the energy efficiency revenue limit exemption. The proposed budget also includes:
 - A reexamination of professional licensure and includes proposals to significantly change teacher and administrator licensure;
 - Categorical aid for school mental health programs;
 - A significant increase in per pupil categorical aid for school districts by adding \$200 in 2017-18 and an additional \$204 in 2018-19 with stipulations;
 - Youth Options and Course Options programs being combined into a new *Early College Credit* program, and restoration of the part-time open enrollment program;
 - An expansion in sparsity and high cost transportation aid;
 - Expanding broadband funding and access for rural schools and communities
- There is potential for a school start date to be introduced for the 2017-18 school year which would eliminate the September 1 start date requirement for schools.
- An item to be aware of and watching is the State Superintendent of Public Instruction election.

Bills

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to note January, 2017 receipts in the amount of \$9,505,005.56 and approve January, 2017 disbursements in the amount of \$4,604,014.87. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointment, Resignation, Retirement Requests

Dr. Christianson presented a retirement request by support staff member, Jody Gruber (Transportation Coordinator – District).

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of the early retirement request of Jody Gruber effective June 30, 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

Discontinuation of Japanese World Language Program Offering

Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Director of Instruction, explained that following the discussions held in the Educational Services Committee meeting of February 6, 2017, additional information has been gathered concerning enrollment numbers in the Japanese program for the 2017-18 school year. There were 80 students registered for the 2016-17 school year. For 2017-18, there are 52 registered which includes 21 students spread over the various levels of Japanese offered. The numbers are too low to continue the program, and in speaking with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), it would be extremely difficult to secure a Japanese teacher as there are very few working in this concentrated area. The Japanese program’s popularity began to decrease after a surge of interest in the 1990’s; however, the Chinese language has grown in popularity.

Should the Japanese program be discontinued, options are being explored to assist those students who have been enrolled in the study of this language and who wish to continue. UW-Oshkosh and UW-Stevens Point may offer potential alternatives. The World Language CII Committee is interested in studying the potential for other world language options, based upon current interest.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Mary Rayome to discontinue the Japanese world language program offering beginning with the 2017-18 school year, with the intent to assist currently enrolled students in completion of their Japanese language studies. Motion carried on a vote of 6-1. Katie Medina voted no.

Discontinuation of Driver’s Education Program

Ms. Stebbins-Hintz shared enrollment numbers for the driver’s education program for 2017-18. While 147 students enrolled in the program for 2016-17, there are 99 students interested in taking driver’s education in 2017-18. After considering potential options for students, the administration would like to explore the possibility of offering the course in the future through a local business using a request for proposal process. Again, the Department of Public Instruction has indicated that very few new teachers are studying to be driver’s education instructors so it may be difficult to find a licensed teacher to hire as a replacement. Should the program continue with a private contractor, students would be excused to take the course during their study hall, and no credit would be earned. The District would save an estimated \$32,937 per year by moving to the private instruction model, and classroom space at Lincoln would be freed up for other use.

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Anne Lee to discontinue the Driver’s Education program offering beginning with the 2017-18 school year, with the intent to pursue an alternative driver’s education option for students in collaboration with local providers. Motion carried on a vote of 6-1. Larry Davis voted no.

Employee Health Insurance Plan Contribution Amounts

Dr. Christianson explained that the topic of employee health insurance contribution rates came up in discussions with the Board in February, 2016. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires that employers offer health insurance to hourly employees working 30 or more hours per week. The District currently offers the same 85% health insurance employer contribution rate to employees working below the 30 hour per week threshold. After conducting some research, the administration suggested that it may be time for some consideration to be given to instead offer a three-tiered system of contribution rates for hourly school year employees as follows:

<u>Hours Worked Per Day</u>	<u>Contribution Percentage Rate</u>
7.5 hours per day	85% paid by District for <i>single or family plan</i> 15% paid by Employee
6.5 to 7.5 hours per day	80% paid by District for <i>single or family plan</i> 20% paid by Employee
< 6.5 hours per day	80% paid by District for <i>single plan</i> 20% paid by Employee

70% paid by District for *family plan*
30% paid by Employee

When reviewing this model a year ago, the anticipated savings to the District was around \$262,000. With budget discussions for 2017-18 beginning, the administration wanted to make the Board aware that this was again being studied as a potential area for savings. Any potential recommendations would be brought back for Board review and possible approval at a future date.

Wisconsin Rapids Education Association (WREA) Base Wage Increase

Mr. Davis expressed frustration and shame at the state government for having put school boards into the positions they find themselves in concerning teacher bargaining. He stated that there is no joy for district boards to be unable to provide teachers with what they expect and deserve. The Board echoed these sentiments.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Anne Lee to table the WREA base wage increase topic. Motion carried unanimously.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk