



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

June 12, 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, Daniel Weigand, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Ryan Christianson, Matt Green, Ed Allison, Jennifer Wilhorn, Elizabeth Severson, Brian Oswald, Tracy Ginter, Steven Smith, Roxanne Filtz

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

President Krings presented special recognition to Kohl award winners Nicholas Sydorowicz, William Oswald, and Tracy Ginter.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to approve special closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of May 3, 2017; regular Board of Education meeting minutes of May 8, 2017; special open and closed session Board of Education meeting minutes of May 11, 2017; and special Board of Education facility workshop meeting minutes of May 24, 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from Citizens and Delegations

The following individuals addressed the Board to comment on the following topics:

- **Tricia Joosten** – to express concerns about WRPS special education programming, including a lack of summer school programming for special education students; and the offering of camps, swim lessons, and building/remodeling initiatives by the District without regard for what might be needed in special education.
- **Angela Olson** – to express concerns about the District not allowing the purchase of faith-based curriculum as an option for virtual program participants; and various training for teachers and students she believes is lacking.
- **Bill Winch** – to express concerns about the quotes provided by administration concerning the repairs needed at Vesper Community Academy; with his experience in commercial buildings he has secured less expensive quotes from local vendors as an option for the Board to consider; he also commented that the elimination of 4K, grade 6 and the virtual program at Vesper has significantly diminished enrollment, and the uncertainty about the fate of Vesper over the years has caused parents to enroll their students in other districts; if Vesper closes, parents will send their students to neighboring districts and the District will be losing property tax revenue and per pupil revenue; he implored the Board to wait until the new Superintendent is seated before making a decision on closure of the school.
- **Amy Ortner** – as a Vesper Community Academy parent, she spoke highly of the school and the “small town, family” feeling that only a school like Vesper can bring; she feels that had the District better promoted the school, enrollment would be up instead of down; she believes building repairs to Vesper should have been done over the years; Ms. Ortner expressed concern about the potential length of time students will be bused if Vesper closes and the students are moved to another building, and Ms. Ortner requested that the Board keep Vesper open.

Due to a loss of electrical power as a result of a storm occurring during the meeting, President Krings suspended the meeting at 6:25 p.m. in order to relocate it to the East Jr. High School cafeteria. Once Board members and others were situated in the cafeteria, the meeting continued as follows:

Committee Reports

- A. Business Services Committee – June 5, 2017. Report given by John Benbow.
Mr. Benbow and fellow Board members complimented the 2016-17 Building Construction Trades class and teacher Terry Bores for the outstanding job they did in constructing the building trades home.
- 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 resolution for dissolution of the School Insurance and Risk Management Cooperative (SIRMC).
- BS-2 Approval of the 66.0301 agreement for participation in the Wisconsin Education Risk Management Cooperative (WERMC).
- BS-3 Approval of the proposal for the purchase of 175 HP Chromebooks from PDS at a total cost of \$32,768.75, to be funded from the 2017-18 District Technology budget.
- BS-4 Approval of the proposal for the purchase of 250 ASUS monitors from CDW-G at a total cost of \$17,497.50, to be funded from the 2017-18 District Technology budget.
- BS-5 Approval of the proposal from American Asphalt to repair the THINK Academy parking lot at a cost of \$60,179.00.
- BS-6 Approval of proposed revisions to Board Policy 458 - Student Wellness Policy for first reading.
- BS-7 Approval of proposed revisions to Board Policy 458 Rule - Nutrition Guidelines for first reading.
- BS-8 Approval of proposed revisions to Board Policy 760 Rule - Food Service Management Guidelines for first reading.
- BS-9 Approval of the proposed Wisconsin School Nutrition Purchasing Cooperative (WiSNPC) 66.0301 Agreement.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item BS 1. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda item BS 2. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item BS 3. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda item BS 4. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item BS 5. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda item BS 6. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item BS 7. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve consent agenda item BS 8. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item BS 9. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Purchases of online library services and support staff time and attendance software.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the regular June 5, 2017, Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Personnel Services Committee – June 5, 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 2017 summer technology support staff appointments of Nue Thao and Sam Milkey.
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff appointments of Andre Shaurette (Maintenance – District) and Sandra Ashbeck (Noon Aide – THINK).
- PS-3 Approval of the support staff resignation request of Lynda Broschardt (Noon Aide – Mead), Ker Thao (Special Ed Aide/Noon Aide – Howe), Ge Thao (Instructional Aide – East/Lincoln), Tammy Mientke (Study Hall Aide – Lincoln), Christine Noie (Noon Aide – Grant), and Cheryl Schultz (Noon Aide – Grant).
- PS-4 Approval of the support staff early retirement request of Linda Bulloch (Supervisory Aide – WRAMS).
- PS-5 Approval of a benefit adjustment for school psychologists to take effect on July 1, 2017, to change the Early Retirement Health Insurance section of psychologists' Employee Benefit document as discussed in committee, including to provide psychologists the same early retirement health insurance as offered to teachers.
- PS-6 Approval of a 2016-17 wage increase of 0.12% for confidential secretaries retroactive to July 1, 2016.
- PS-7 Approval of a one-time wage payment for fiscal year 2016-17 to office/clerical and aide support staff employed with the District on June 1, 2017, to be calculated at 0.12% of each individual employee's wage rate, multiplied by the employee's total annual assigned position hours and rounded to the nearest dollar, and paid out as a flat, even dollar.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve consent agenda items PS 1-7. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Ms. Hett provided updates and reports on:

- Potential benefit adjustments and 2017-18 wage compensation for confidential employees will undergo additional consideration at a future meeting.
- Supplemental pay considerations for professional staff employees including the potential use of supplemental pay offerings when hiring new teachers or to retain currently employed teachers, as well as individual requests made by employees for a supplemental pay increase.
- Athletic co-curricular pay was reviewed, and recommendations for pay percentage rate adjustments to athletic co-curricular coaching positions beginning with the 2017-18 school year were shared. Discussion also included a potential increase to the base-wage calculator used with the pay percentage rates to calculate wages for District coaching positions. The current base wage calculator of \$35,400 has been in place since 2010-11, and a recommendation is under consideration to increase the amount to \$37,500. Additional discussion and possible action will occur at a future meeting.
- The Committee was updated on the administration's intent to no longer employ non-exempt staff in District co-curricular coaching and advisor positions due to overtime requirements associated with recent revisions to the Fair Labor Standards Act. The administration will be closely monitoring and limiting the use of non-exempt staff as event workers for after-school events in order to limit the occurrence of overtime.

Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve regular Personnel Services Committee meeting minutes of June 5, 2017. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Educational Services Committee – June 5, 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 the changes to the Co-Curricular Activities Code of Conduct as set out in Attachment A for the 2017-18 school year.
- ES-2 Approval of the changes to the 2017-18 Lincoln High School Agenda Planner as set out in Attachment B.
- ES-3 Approval of the Carl Perkins Grant for 2017-18 in the amount of \$47,163.
- ES-4 Approval of the renewal of the FuelEd contract at a cost of \$21,500 to be paid for from the following budgets: Virtual school, Lincoln High School, East Jr. High School, Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School, and WRPS Curriculum.
- ES-5 Approval of the proposed academic and career planning process for WRPS students to be implemented in 2017-18.

Motion by Anne Lee, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve consent agenda items ES 1-5. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Ms. Lee provided updates and reports on:

- The elementary Chinese exchange program to be hosted at Washington Elementary School
- Eighty-five music students will travel to Chicago, Illinois on June 14, 2017 to attend the Aladdin musical; and seven Lincoln High School students will be traveling to attend the International HOSA Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida from June 20-25, 2017

Ms. Lee noted that a correction is needed in the meeting minutes to reflect that the meeting began at 7:22 p.m. as opposed to 7:22 a.m.

Motion by Anne Lee, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the June 5, 2017 Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Mr. Benbow shared the following:

- A consolidated appropriations bill (H.R. 244) which runs through September 30, 2017 was passed to avoid a possible shutdown of the federal government. In the area of education, the bill makes net cuts of about \$1.1 billion, but provides more than a \$1 billion increase compared with comparable 2016 funding levels for Title I grants for disadvantaged students, special education, Impact Aid, and student support programs under Title IV (ESSA). Title II will be cut, which many Wisconsin school districts use to help hire and train teachers, as well as reduce class sizes.
- The U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill to repeal and replace the federal Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”) with new legislation known as the American Health Care Act (ACHA). Medicaid or Medical Assistance would be reduced by \$880 billion over the next 10 years, and the changes would significantly impact the ability of students with disabilities and students in poverty to receive critically necessary health services in public schools.
- The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is relaxing school meals nutrition rules.
- A recently introduced Assembly Bill 267 aims to call attention to the growing impact of Wisconsin voucher programs on school property taxes.
- The 2017-19 State Budget deadline for passage is June 30, 2017, and it remains to be seen if the \$200/\$204 increases in per pupil categorical aid will stay in the budget.

Mr. Davis expressed surprise that with all of the healthcare issues facing individuals across the country that the nutrition guideline standards related to obesity and wellness are being loosened by legislators.

Bills

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to note May, 2017 receipts in the amount of \$1,986,271.77 and approve May, 2017 disbursements in the amount of \$3,268,388.18. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

New Business

Employee Appointment, Resignation, Retirement Requests

Dr. Christianson presented a recommendation to approve of the following professional staff resignation requests:

Dawn Collins effective June 8, 2017 (1.0 FTE – Washington Elementary School)
Ann Warning effective June 8, 2017 (1.0 FTE – East Jr. High School)
Elizabeth Haupt effective June 12, 2017 (1.0 FTE – Woodside Elementary School)

A recommendation was also presented to approve of the following professional staff appointment:

Elizabeth Thomas effective at the beginning of the 2017-18 school year (1.0 FTE – East Jr. High School)
Salary: \$43,000

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Anne Lee to approve of the three professional staff resignation requests, and one professional staff appointment recommendation as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing Transfer of Funds, and Establishment of Escrow Account

Daniel Weigand, Director of Business Services, presented a proposed Resolution authorizing the Transfer of Funds, the establishment of an Escrow Account with respect to and the defeasance of certain of the General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2015, dated June 29, 2015. Mr. Weigand explained that passage of the Resolution would allow the defeasance for four years of debt payments, allowing room in the tax levy for an energy exemption project at Lincoln High School. District dollars would also be saved by paying off the debt early.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of a Resolution authorizing the Transfer of Funds, the establishment of an Escrow Account with respect to and the defeasance of certain of the General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2015 dated June 29, 2015. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Resolution Authorizing Borrowing Not to Exceed \$11,500,000

Mr. Weigand explained that neither the State Assembly nor Senate Budget Bill contains language that provides for the continuation of the energy exemption to fund conservation projects in the future. As a result, Mr. Weigand recommends that the Board preserve its authority under current law to run applicable portions of the upcoming Lincoln High School construction project under the energy exemption provision. A listing of projects has been developed for the Board to consider approving under the energy exemption. The Board could choose to do no projects in the future, if it believes that is in the best interest of the District. The recommendation is being made as a precautionary measure to give the Board latitude under current law to move ahead with energy exemption projects should it choose to do so.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of a Resolution authorizing the borrowing of not to exceed \$11,500,000; and providing for the issuance and sale of General Obligation promissory notes. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Vesper Community Academy Facility

Dr. Dickmann explained that the administration has no new information to provide concerning the options related to the Vesper Community Academy (VCA) facility, including an option to close the facility and move students to THINK Academy beginning in the 2018-19 school year. In previous workshops held, the Board has been made aware of the concerns and costs of keeping the VCA facility open in light of continued declining enrollment. The administration is interested in knowing if any further information is needed by the Board, or if there are questions that have not yet been answered in order for a decision to be made about the status of Vesper.

Board members discussed the possibility of closing the Vesper facility, expressing empathy for the families affected by closure. A few members of the Board and their families have personally experienced first-hand the emotional difficulties that come with building closures. When Children's Choice Elementary and Pitsch Elementary closed, some on the Board had their own children reassigned to a different school to attend. Even under these difficult circumstances, however, the Board has a responsibility to keep the best interests of the entire district in mind when making difficult decisions. The Board expressed appreciation for the input brought forth by

those speaking under the public comment item on the agenda, and for communication received from a number of parents and citizens from the Vesper area who have shared their thoughts, ideas, and concerns about the

possibility of the building being closed. Some on the Board expressed concern for a few disrespectful and derogatory comments made about the possibility of Vesper students attending Mead Elementary, and wanted to remind all involved that the District is responsible to educate all students residing in the community regardless of their socioeconomic status or learning ability.

With the restructuring plan approved to move ninth grade to Lincoln and eighth grade to the Middle School beginning in 2018-19, it is time for the Board to review other District facilities to continue aligning usage with Strategic Plan goals. Closing Vesper and moving students from VCA to THINK Academy in Rudolph, Wisconsin seems to be a viable option as it continues to provide families with the “small town” feel and atmosphere they desire in their school, and all students from VCA would fit into the building at this time. Additionally, THINK Academy staff members have set goals to support and incorporate Project Based Learning (which Vesper utilizes) into their curriculum as this was initially one of the pillars contained in their charter as it was developed. As a result, this component for learning would continue for Vesper students.

Discussion by the Board ensued about local contractor quotations and rates provided by Mr. Winch, continued declining revenue, the negative impact of the private school voucher expansion program putting additional financial stress on public schools, and prior engineering studies done on the condition of the HVAC system at Vesper as well as other roofing and structural concerns. When asked about whether a bus would continue to transport students from Mead to THINK as it currently does for Vesper, Mr. Weigand clarified that there would not be a similar transportation option for students attending THINK. He explained that the route to Vesper was allowed since it did not cost the District extra to run it because a route already existed to transport. A similar route does not run from Mead to THINK. Students on this route would still be able to attend THINK, but transportation would be the responsibility of the parent.

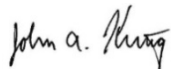
Following further discussion about class sizes, the ability to absorb any additional special education students at THINK, a review of the building capacity of THINK, and the transportation/routing of students on buses to be certain that length of rides and time on the bus for students is considered, the Board made a decision to close Vesper Community Academy at the end of the 2017-18 school year.

Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Anne Lee to approve of the closure of Vesper Community Academy at the end of the 2017-18 school year and to move Vesper students to THINK Academy, including all current Vesper students as well as all boundary exception students currently attending both THINK Academy and Vesper. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed. President Krings confirmed that Board Committee meetings for July will occur on Wednesday, July 5, 2017.

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



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk