



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
Mary E. Rayome
Anne Lee
Katie Medina

April 24, 2017

SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING BOARD WORKSHOP

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

TIME: Immediately Following Board Organizational Meeting Scheduled at 6:00 p.m.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Colleen Dickmann, Daniel Weigand, Ryan Christianson, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Matt Green, Phil Bickelhaupt, Ed Allison, Patti Ritchay, Tracy Ginter, Ronald Rasmussen, Steve Smith, Roxanne Filtz, Jennifer Wilhorn, Elizabeth Severson, Kelly Schaeffer

President John Krings called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Roll Call

Community Locker Room Addition – Lincoln High School

Superintendent Dickmann presented a proposal for an addition to the Phase 1 construction project which would add community locker rooms to the north side of the pool area at a cost of \$830,202.00. An architectural drawing of what the locker room could potentially look like was shared, although a final drawing would be drafted if the Board were to approve the addition to the project. Due to the fact that the addition would be utilized primarily by community members for community programs, Fund 80 can be used to pay for the addition with the exception of mechanical and storage area expenses, which would need to be paid for using construction project funds. Parking spaces to be developed in the circular drive north of the addition would also be able to be paid for using Fund 80 dollars. The separate parking lot and building entry point to the pool area would allow community members to enter and exit for programs such as early morning swim without having to mingle with students or be present in unauthorized areas of the building. The Board discussed the recommendation.

Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of a community locker room addition to the Phase 1 construction project at Lincoln High School at a cost of \$830,202.00 with the understanding that the locker room portion will be paid from Community Fund 80, and the storage/maintenance space will be paid from construction project funds. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.

Realignment of Grades 6-8 and 9-12

Dr. Dickmann explained that while it is obvious the Board supports the realignment of grades 9-12 and 6-8 through recent approval of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 construction projects, the administration is requesting formal approval of moving grade 9 to Lincoln High School and grade 8 to the Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School beginning with the 2018-19 school year. Discussion was held on what might be done if the projects do not finish up on time, and in a worse-case scenario, the students would remain at East Jr. High for one additional year if necessary.

The Board requested the administration to explain, for the benefit of those present at the meeting and who may not understand, how the District is able to spend dollars on construction under tight budget constraints. Daniel Weigand, Director of Business Services, explained that the District had an opportunity a few years ago to begin

paying down debt. Last year, the District completely eliminated the retirement debt that the State imposed on the District many years ago. The money that had previously been earmarked for debt payment is now freed up inside the General Fund to utilize on the projects, along with dollars typically allocated toward Fund balance. Once the projects are done, some of the money will still be available for other uses, but not all of it since the revenue limit goes down each year with declining enrollment. Projects such as the pool and girl's locker room expansion and upgrade have been deferred many years, so the timing is right to take care of these needs at the same time the freshman class moves to Lincoln. The Board is pleased that 9th grade will finally fit at Lincoln so that students can experience and take advantage of the full high school experience beginning in their freshman year.

The 8th grade class will also benefit from a grades 6-8 middle school environment. Also, the WRAMS location will better serve students since the available outdoor area around East Jr. High is diminishing with the City of Wisconsin Rapids developing their aquatic project in much of the greenspace area currently utilized by East for physical education and co-curricular activities.

Motion by Anne Lee, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of moving the 9th grade class to Lincoln High School making it a grades 9-12 school, and the 8th grade class to the Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School making it a grades 6-8 school, beginning with the 2018-19 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Concerning District Facilities and Potential Future Options

Dr. Dickmann clarified that while no action by the Board is being requested, conversation about the future use of District facilities would be helpful in order to develop a plan since East Jr. High will only house the District's administrative offices once the 8th and 9th grade classes move in 2018-19. A discussion was held by the Board concerning facility usage and items needed to continue the conversation. Following are highlights of the discussion:

- Elementary attendance boundaries have not been reviewed in a long time – areas changed when Children's Choice and Pitsch Elementary Schools closed, but an updated review should likely occur
- Potential inequities exist between buildings, such as having a free/reduced student population of 80% in one building versus another – inequities should be part of the conversation moving forward
- The Board expressed interest in the possibility of hiring a consultant in the future, and to also involve District bus contractors in an attendance boundary study to determine whether it is beneficial to redraw boundaries at the present time
- The Board requested a report on the number of students living in each boundary area, which Phil Bickelhaupt will generate
- A report on the use of boundary exceptions by parents at the elementary level may be beneficial
- Options for East Jr. High could involve selling it, renting it out, having a developer present a proposal for future usage – with the administrative offices still housed at East, a plan would need to be determined for relocating these offices should East no longer be available for use
- The administration has been exploring options relative to a K-5 alternative elementary school to offer services for at-risk students – perhaps such a program could be housed at East
- River Cities High School could move into East, and the River Cities facility sold – Principal Matt Green stated that a move for the 2019-20 school year would be best for the River Cities student body so that proper planning and transitional time is allowed for this unique group of students
- The Pitsch facility will be vacated by the Boys & Girls Club at the end of their lease in June, 2018 when they partner with the YMCA, so options for this facility could include moving the Vesper project-based program intact to Pitsch
- A Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) magnet school might be considered for development at Pitsch – this would likely take an investment of dollars to develop and implement; charter or grant dollars might have covered the start-up of a school like this in the past, but those dollars are not likely available any longer
- Vesper Community Academy has a population of 62 students, of which 42 are *resident* students attending while 20 students are being bused in from other areas of the District – the Vesper facility is aging and in need of \$863,000 in repairs
- Should the Board decide to close Vesper, all Vesper students could potentially be moved to the Pitsch facility; or the boundaries could be redrawn to have the students absorbed by either Mead Elementary or

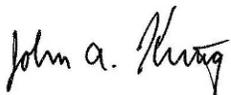
THINK Academy – THINK Academy is also designated as the District’s disaster back-up / recovery site, and would not be able to accommodate the entire student body from Vesper

- Ed Allison, Director of Buildings & Grounds provided a 2017 Building Assessment Report which contained a summary of building maintenance needs at each facility:
 - River Cities High School - \$210,890
 - Grant Elementary - \$126,000
 - Grove Elementary - \$115,000
 - Howe Elementary - \$95,950
 - Mead Elementary - \$90,000
 - THINK Academy - \$127,500
 - Vesper Community Academy - \$863,000
 - Washington Elementary - \$300,000
 - Woodside Elementary - \$475,500
 - East Jr. High - \$685,000
 - Lincoln High - \$3,333,900 (*this estimate includes some work being taken care of through the Phase 1 construction process, so the number is inflated*)
 - Wisc. Rapids Area Middle School - \$195,800
 - Buildings & Grounds Facility (Central Storage) - \$465,000 (*this cost estimate also factors in a District-wide keying/security system at each building at a total cost of \$300,000*)
 - Mr. Allison noted that certain buildings such as Grant, Grove, Mead, and Woodside have asbestos abatement included in the projected cost, which tends to inflate the numbers since the asbestos would be left intact and not disturbed as long as it presents no hazard and there is no reason to remove it
- The Board requested a report on the efficiency of District HVAC systems
- The Board requested a report on the building capacity at Pitsch
- The Board requested a report on the building capacity at THINK, and what it would look like if Vesper students were directed there – Ryan Christianson, Director of Human Resources; and Roxanne Filtz, THINK Academy Principal stated the population at THINK has been as high as 175 in 2003-04, and the incoming 4K and Kindergarten classes at THINK are quite large
- The Board requested a report on what other communities have done with closed school buildings – they question what type of development might be plausible for East Jr. High
- Mr. Allison shared that there is not typically a big market for school buildings, but some communities have utilized them as business incubator locations
- Having a K-5 alternative program at East would require some demolition and remodeling to accommodate this age group
- A suggestion was made to perhaps explore the expansion of virtual programming/distance learning with a neighboring district, and potentially share the costs
- The Board could consider elementary centers housing certain elementary grade levels at each center, such as K-2, and 3-5

The Board acknowledged that conversations about school closure or program changes are not always comfortable, but must occur in order to continue to place the District in a positive position both financially and to maximize the educational benefits for all students.

A follow-up facility workshop to continue the discussion will be scheduled to occur sometime in May, 2017.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk