



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 7, 2025

SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING Board Retreat

LOCATION: McMillan Memorial Library, 490 East Grand Avenue, Wisc. Rapids, WI 54494
2nd Floor Meeting/Training Room

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Ronald Rasmussen

President John Krings called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Mr. Krings turned the meeting over to Superintendent Ronald Rasmussen.

Mr. Rasmussen explained the purpose of the meeting is a continuation of the July 1, 2025, Board Retreat. The Board discussed the feedback points from the first session, which are summarized below.

Board Agenda Postings – Attachments and Updates

It was noted that the IT department has been receiving scam phone calls in which callers impersonate staff to place fraudulent orders. Many attachments to Board Agendas contain quotes with vendor customer order numbers, which are accessible to anyone reviewing the documents. It was decided that this sensitive information will be redacted before including the attachments with the Board Agendas or Open Records Requests. The original, unredacted copies of the quotes will be forwarded separately with the Board updates.

WRAMS – New Schedule

Mr. Rasmussen indicated that CESA 5 recommended changes to the school schedule at Wisconsin Rapids Area Middle School (WRAMS). Concerns have been raised that there is insufficient time for students to participate in science labs, limited time for recess and lunch, and that the double-block schedule has not resulted in measurable improvements in math and English language scores. Recommendations will be made for the 2026-2027 school year.

Additional classrooms are needed at WRAMS to accommodate growing special education enrollment, which could be considered as a potential referendum item. Positive initiatives at WRAMS should be shared with the community, and it suggested that a parent volunteer group could help support available opportunities, allowing staff to focus on other responsibilities.

Class Sizes and Right-Sizing the District

Mr. Rasmussen discussed the elementary student numbers per grade with the Board. It was noted that additional space is needed at THINK and that some elementary schools require air conditioning, both of which could be considered as potential referendum items. Requests for a full-day 4K program within the district are currently under evaluation. In addition, the district continues to prioritize maintaining manageable class sizes.

Student Behavior, Public Image of Bullying and Discipline

The 7 Mindsets program is currently being used in schools to help students build skills for personal growth, resilience, and success. It focuses on teaching mindsets, behaviors, and life skills that contribute to academic, social, and emotional well-being. In regards to student behavior, the program encourages students to adopt positive beliefs about themselves and their potential, as well as builds the ability to manage stress, overcome challenges, and make good choices. Behavior discipline needs to be consistent throughout the district, and scenarios will be presented at administrative meetings to support this effort.

Collecting and reporting more measurable data will help better monitor student behavior trends. Additionally, sharing positive reports highlighting students' accomplishments and successes is important.

Potential Health Insurance and OPEB Changes

Mr. Rasmussen indicated that M3 is scheduled to present information regarding Anovia, a Direct Patient Care clinic option, at the regular Board meeting on August 11, 2025. The District is currently facing a 9.5% premium increase for the Signature plan and a 14% increase for the Freedom plan. The WRPS medical loss ratio with Aspirus Health Care for the month of June was 170%, while the ideal range is 85-90%. 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 if members use Anovia.

The District continues to evaluate the OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) plan, as the current plan is not sustainable. The District also needs to remain competitive with salaries and benefits along with attracting first year teachers. Potential recommendations will be reviewed and, once evaluated, presented to the Board for consideration.

How can we communicate better with the community? Budget shortfalls? Possible Referendum.

The Superintendent's office will continue to issue the *Rapids Wrap* community newsletter highlighting celebrations, events, and awards. The District has moved to one district-wide social media account to make it easier for families to stay informed and celebrate all of our schools. Mr. Rasmussen will continue to work on developing a community survey in preparation for a potential referendum.

Board Welcome Backs in Buildings (In-Service, September/October)

The Board has expressed interest in spending more time in the schools to participate in staff meetings, student award celebrations, welcome-back events, school fairs, and similar activities. They would like to be assigned to specific buildings to build relationships with staff while also being invited to events at other schools to remain engaged. All invitations and communications for Board members should be coordinated through Chris Wefel to ensure awareness of potential quorums. Mr. Rasmussen will communicate with the administrators and assign Board members to specific schools. Board listening sessions will occur in February or March 2026.

Public Comment and When Approached as a Board Member

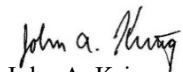
Mr. Rasmussen explained that all emails or correspondence sent to Board members should be forwarded to Mr. Rasmussen and Ms. Wefel and copied to all Board Members. The Board does not respond directly to these messages, other than acknowledging receipt and indicating that a response will come from Central Office. The Board will receive follow-up regarding any correspondence. Mr. Rasmussen will be proactive in responding to social media comments while encouraging parents to meet with him rather than going directly to the Board. Parents often have valuable suggestions that can be addressed effectively through this process. All information discussed in closed session is strictly confidential and will not be shared outside of the Board.

Strategic Framework

Mr. Rasmussen presented an example of Menasha School District's Strategic Framework that has measurable goals. It is important to establish additional measurable goals within the WRPS Strategic Framework. The Board desires to pursue this initiative, as such goals promote accountability and provide a clear means of evaluating both student and staff success.

Mr. Rasmussen presented information from the City Committee Meeting. A feasibility study is to be done regarding an athletic dome at Lincoln High School. The cost of \$11,000 for the study will be split three ways with one-third being paid out of the State Cross Country Activities Account. The Quadplex has proven to be a valuable asset to the community by drawing in business and contributing to local economic growth, and the dome is anticipated to provide similar benefits, strengthening both the schools and the local economy.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Christine Wefel – Secretary

Elizabeth St. Myers – Clerk