



# 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 10, 2014

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

EXCUSED: John Krings

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Dr. Colleen Dickmann, Daniel Weigand, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Amy Ryan, Leslie Lewison, Ryan Christianson, Trudy DeSimons, Phil Bickelhaupt, Ed Allison

MEDIA PRESENT: Jesse Austin – River Cities Community Access

Vice President Mary Rayome called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

#### Student Representative Report

Emily Morzewski provided updates and reports to the Board on the following topics concerning Lincoln:

- Success of the recent Winter dance event
- Spirit Week activities shortened to a 3-day week due to snow days; good support for the “Orange Day” basketball game to promote bullying awareness and prevention
- Registration for next school year is underway for juniors and sophomores
- Woodlands Church will host a project to beautify the school on the Sunday after prom
- Student Council has begun a new service project for second semester to assist the local non-profit *Hope’s Door* organization where needed
- Lincoln faculty will be sponsoring the Neighborhood Table event on February 25, 2014
- Eleven students and Assistant Principal Adam Spiegel participated in the Polar Plunge event held on February 7, 2014 to benefit Special Olympics

#### Approval of Minutes

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of January 13, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Comments from Citizens and Delegations

Brenda Challoner, a parent of children attending Immanuel Lutheran School, commented on busing problems she has been experiencing. She explained her attempts at communication with the bus company involved have resulted in no resolution to her concerns. She requested to have her transportation issue placed on the March, 2014 Board agenda if the situation does not get resolved by then.

#### Committee Reports

A. Business Services Committee – February 3, 2014 – Report given by John Benbow.

Mr. Benbow stated there were no consent agenda items brought forward for Board approval for February, and went on to provide updates and reports on purchases related to police liaison services and library software licensing.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Katie Medina to approve the balance of the regular Business Services Committee report and minutes of the regular February 3, 2014 Business Services Committee meeting as well as special closed session Committee minutes of February 3, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. Personnel Services Committee – February 3, 2014 – 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 professional staff early retirement request of Lynda Blomberg (Instructional Technology/Staff Development – WR Middle).
- PS-2 Approval of the support staff early retirement request of Joyce Zarecki (Classification I & II – Grove/Lincoln).
- PS-3 Approval of the support staff resignation request of Christine Halverson (Classification V – Mead).
- PS-4 Approval of the professional staff appointment of Danielle Wilke (Special Ed – Vesper).
- PS-5 Approval of the support staff appointments of Karleen Hilgers (Kitchen Helper – Woodside) and Yvonne Pagels (Classification II – Grove).

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Anne Lee to approve consent agenda items PS 1-5. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Hett provided updates and reports on the Committee's review of District class sizes and sections at both the elementary and secondary levels for the 2013-14 school year. Board members discussed the report.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Anne Lee to approve the regular Personnel Services Committee meeting minutes of February 3, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. Educational Services Committee – February 3, 2014 – 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 implementation of keyboarding in the elementary schools beginning in the 2014-15 school year, with an additional .447 FTEs for the 2014-15 school year only.

**Motion by Anne Lee, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item ES 1. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Lee provided updates and reports on the following:

Elementary iPad® Update – Phil Bickelhaupt, Director of Technology, provided an update on the implementation of iPad® devices in the elementary buildings. To date there are a total of 744 devices in the elementary buildings, including classroom, special education, and those issued to staff. These devices are also being used for staff collaboration, Google Drive, reading and math apps, keyboarding, grades four and five technology projects, Renaissance Learning products, online blogging, Skyping, Facetime, Hangouts, and various apps related to the curricula. Several professional development opportunities have been made available to staff surrounding the iPad®, including numerous DEU courses, Summer Tech Splash class, Summer iPad® Workshop, and through the WRPS technology site. Purchases are coming in under budget due to less being spent on apps than anticipated.

**Motion by Anne Lee, seconded by John Benbow to approve the regular Educational Services Committee meeting minutes of February 3, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.**

Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

Legislative Agenda

Vice President Rayome explained that Representative Scott Krug called earlier in the day to cancel his attendance at the Board meeting, requesting to be rescheduled. The Board will invite Rep. Krug to attend a future meeting.

Ms. Rayome updated the Board on correspondence that she received from Representative Amy Sue Vruwink which explained why Rep. Vruwink did not vote in favor of the 2013-15 State biennial budget. Rep. Vruwink believes the proposed budget would negatively impact public education through the expansion of the unaccountable school voucher program statewide, and continue the inequitable and inadequate funding of local public schools. Ms. Rayome stated that Rep. Vruwink will also be invited to attend a future meeting in person.

Bills

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to note January, 2014 receipts in the amount of \$8,769,649.81 and approve January, 2014 disbursements in the amount of \$3,279,400.20. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

New Business2014-15 District Budget Reductions

Superintendent Dickmann explained that the District is facing a \$2.2 million shortfall for the 2014-15 fiscal year due to declining enrollment and anticipated increases in health insurance expenses. Areas being explored to meet the deficit include:

- Savings from retirements
- Savings from utility expenses associated with the Pitsch rental agreement
- Savings in transportation and salaries from not making up the first two snow days this school year
- Staff cuts in all employee groups
- Savings from health insurance benefit program modifications
- Across the board percentage cuts in all departments

While more specific, detailed information about exactly where the cuts will occur is unable to be shared at this time, the administration continues to focus on maintaining student programming to the extent possible. Eighty percent of the budget comes from employee salary and benefit payments, so this area will be the primary place where savings can occur. Health insurance program design changes are being considered as well since it is anticipated that the renewal rate will come in at the 12% cap, with an additional 1-1.5% increase for the implementation of the Affordable Care Act program. Currently the District loss ratio is quite high, yet the District pays less for insurance than surrounding districts due to favorable negotiations when the change to WEA occurred. More accurate information about what actual insurance increases will be for next year should be available in the next week.

Dr. Dickmann went on to explain that as budget discussions continue, a facilities group has also been meeting to review potential restructuring and/or school closure options that might be plausible to implement for the 2015-16 school year. Closing deficit gaps by negatively affecting employee pay and benefits every year is not something she believes should continue. Studying the options now and allowing a year before implementing any approved changes will provide ample time needed for a successful outcome. She anticipates bringing a facilities recommendation to the Board for their consideration this spring.

Dr. Dickmann would like the Board to advise whether they believe the administration is heading in the right direction with regard to 2014-15 budget reductions. The Board discussed the 2014-15 budget reductions being considered, and requested that the SAGE program continue to be a part of those discussions as in years past. The Board expressed concern that programs do get affected already through higher class sizes because of staff cuts, classes being cut more frequently due to increased minimum enrollment requirements necessary for classes to run, and doubling up of World Language classes to ensure the offerings at all levels. As budget discussions continue, the administration is also reviewing what coursework the Department of Public Instruction requires school districts to teach.

The Board considered other budget related topics such as the inequity of the state funding formula for education, potential tax levy increases should a referendum be considered in the future, and the expense districts absorb from state mandates as well as initiatives like the state school choice/voucher program which diverts dollars away from public education.

**Motion by Katie Medina, seconded by Anne Lee to have administration continue on the path they are headed with respect to 2014-15 budget reduction recommendations. The Board requested that updates concerning the budget reduction process continue to occur, and that any items needing Board approval and action be brought forward as necessary. Motion carried unanimously.**

Health Retirement Benefits for Professional Staff

Dr. Dickmann explained that after reviewing the health retirement benefit for professional staff, the administration recommends a change to the plan which would affect staff retiring at the conclusion of the 2014-15 school year. The current HRA plan covers a portion of the employee's deductible. The current deductible for employees covered by a single plan is \$2,000 while the family plan deductible is \$4,000. The employees pay \$300 out-of-pocket to meet the deductible for a single plan, and \$600 out-of-pocket to meet the deductible

for a family plan. The difference of \$1,700 single deductible expense, and \$3,400 family deductible expense gets paid through the HRA plan.

Professional staff retirees are also included in the HRA deductible plan. The administration has been discussing the possibility of having employees who retire after 2013-14 pay the entire \$2,000/\$4,000 deductible out-of-pocket expense. Any future deductible modification amounts in the plan would apply to retirees, with the full deductible amount being the responsibility of the retiree. The Board expressed interest in postponing any decisions regarding the benefit change until more solid information is known about insurance increases for the coming year. Additionally, the Board would like to be provided with projected dollar figures depicting the potential savings. Wellness activities in relationship to healthcare expenses were discussed.

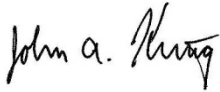
Mr. Christianson suggested the Board consider taking action to push the retirement notification deadline for professional staff to March 28, 2014, rather than the current requirement of February 28, 2014, so that staff members have more time to consider their options based upon the direction the Board takes in the future.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve of moving the required retirement notification deadline for professional staff employees considering retirement at the end of the 2013-14 school year from February 28, 2014 to March 28, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.**

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

Mary Rayome adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Sandra K. Hett – Clerk