



# 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

December 8, 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: John Krings, Larry Davis, Sandra Hett, Mary Rayome, John Benbow, Anne Lee, Katie Medina

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Colleen Dickmann, Daniel Weigand, Kathi Stebbins-Hintz, Ryan Christianson, Julie Marie, Phil Bickelhaupt, Ed Allison

MEDIA PRESENT: Jesse Austin – River Cities Community Access

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call (*Ms. Medina arrived after roll call was taken.*)

#### Student Representative Report

Carissa Vruwink provided updates and reports to the Board on the following topics concerning Lincoln:

- Winter sports are in full swing
- Forensics activities have begun
- Students are making decisions about which college they plan to attend

#### Approval of Minutes

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to approve regular Board of Education meeting minutes of November 10, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Comments from Citizens and Delegations

None.

#### Committee Reports

A. Business Services Committee – December 1, 2014. Report given by John Benbow.

Mr. Benbow reported that there are no consent agenda items being recommended for approval. Mr. Benbow provided updates and reports on:

- Technology purchase of 30 Apple iPads
- 2014-15 Audited Financial Statements

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Business Services Committee report and minutes of the regular December 1, 2014 Business Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. Personnel Services Committee – December 1, 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 resignation request of Jacqueline Rusch (CDS Teacher – Lincoln).
- PS-2 Approval of the professional staff early retirement request of Cynthia Borski (Staff Development Coordinator/World Language Teacher – Lincoln).
- PS-3 Approval of the support staff assignments of Lisa Gamboa (Kitchen Helper – East Jr. High) and Judy Fuller (Kitchen Helper – Washington).
- PS-4 Approval of Policy 522.8 – Cell Phone Usage for second reading.
- PS-5 Approval of Policy 221.1 – Recruitment/Appointment of Superintendent for second reading.
- PS-6 Approval of Policy 323.2 – Special Observance Days for second reading.
- PS-7 Approval of Policy 323.2 Rule – Special Observance Days for second reading.
- PS-8 Approval of proposed language changes regarding vacation benefits found under the “Vacation” section of the Employee Handbook for custodians and maintenance staff.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda items PS 1-8. Motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Hett shared updates and reports on open enrollment transfer out data for the 2014-15 school year as well as Committee discussion and review of the 2015-16 District group health insurance plan. Utilization data and current health insurance trends were presented by John Preuss, an account broker for M3 Insurance Solutions. The current 12-month loss ratio with WEA is down to 105% from 118% in the previous year.

**Motion by Sandra Hett, seconded by Mary Rayome to approve regular Personnel Services Committee meeting minutes of December 1, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.**

**C. Educational Services Committee – December 1, 2014. Report given by Mary Rayome.**

Ms. Rayome 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 increasing high school graduation requirements for Lincoln High School (LHS) students from 22.5 to 24 credits beginning with the class of 2017.
- ES-2 Approval of making the Global Education Achievement Certificate Diploma Endorsement available to WRPS students beginning with the class of 2015.
- ES-3 Approval to require that all students successfully complete or test out of IT Fundamentals I in order to graduate from LHS beginning with the class of 2018.
- ES-4 Approval to add Engineering Design and Development as an elective course option in the technology education department for students at LHS, for one credit, beginning in 2015-16.
- ES-5 Approval to add Mobility, Fitness and Nutrition as a one-half credit physical education course that students may take in place of the required Physical Education I and II for students at LHS beginning in 2015-16.
- ES-6 Approval to add English 250 as a .5 elective language arts course for students at LHS beginning in 2015-16.
- ES-7 Approval to add Exploratory Business as a nine week rotation course required of all seventh grade students, moving the current Computer Applications 7, nine week rotation course to grade 6, thus eliminating a one-quarter study hall for all sixth grade students effective in 2016-17.
- ES-8 Approval of Principles of Economics to be taught utilizing a blended/on-line format beginning in 2015-16.
- ES-9 Approval of English 101, 102, and 250 to be taught utilizing a blended/on-line format beginning in 2015-16.

- ES-10 Approval of Digital Electronics, an LHS technology education elective, to be offered as a one equivalency course for credit in either mathematics or technology education beginning in 2015-16, pending Department of Public Instruction (DPI) approval.
- ES-11 Approval of offering Advanced Placement Psychology, an LHS social studies elective, for one credit instead of one-half credit, beginning in 2015-16.
- ES-12 Approval to offer Advanced Placement Calculus BC, an LHS math elective, for one and one-half credits instead of one credit beginning in 2015-16.
- ES-13 Approval of Board Policy 343.2 – Class Size for first reading.
- ES-14 Approval of Board Policy 345.11 – Procedures for Academic Excellence Scholarships for first reading.
- ES-15 Approval of Board Policy 345.12 – Procedures for Wisconsin Technical Excellence Scholarships for first reading.
- ES-16 Approval of Board Policy 422 – Admission of Nonresident Pupils for first reading.
- ES-17 Approval of Board Policy 423 – Public School Open Enrollment and Board Policy 423 Rule – Procedures for Processing Public School Open Enrollment Applications for first reading.
- ES-18 Approval of Board Policy 424 – Participation of Non-Public School Students in Programs and District Services for first reading, and use of the Part Time Enrollment Application form.
- ES-19 Approval of modification of the Supplemental Pay Plan for Professional Development effective with the 2014-15 school year.
- ES-20 Approval of utilizing curriculum referendum dollars to purchase the Math Expressions consumable workbooks for grades K-4 for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school year at a cost of \$91,212.45.

Ms. Hett requested to have Consent Agenda Item ES-18 held out.

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by John Benbow to approve consent agenda items ES 1-17 and ES 19-20. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

With regard to Consent Agenda Item ES-18, Ms. Hett is concerned about the funding implications for potential private voucher students who may apply to attend Lincoln High School for up to two courses. Ms. Hett is interested in knowing how much the District gets reimbursed for educating the student, and whether or not the private school has funding reduced for the time the voucher student is attending public school.

**Motion by John Benbow, seconded by Larry Davis to approve consent agenda item ES 18. Motion carried on a vote of 5-1. Sandra Hett voted no. (Katie Medina arrived after this vote was taken.)**

Ms. Rayome provided updates and reports on:

- The Committee was updated on how funds from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) are being used in WRPS, including Title I, II, and III.

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to approve the balance of the Educational Services Committee report and minutes of the December 1, 2014, Educational Services Committee meeting. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Agenda Referrals/Information Requests

None.

#### Legislative Agenda

Ms. Rayome provided the following updates:

- Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau) recently announced state Senate committee assignments. Senator Luther Olsen (R-Ripon) is once again Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and a new

Committee on Education Reform and Government Operations will be chaired by Senator Paul Farrow (R-Pewaukee). Last session Olsen and Farrow were often in disagreement on issues like school accountability, Common Core Standards, and voucher expansion. Senator Olsen has stated publicly that while he wants to work with colleagues on these issues, it was likely that the more conservative Senate elected in November would attempt to go around him.

### Bills

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to note November, 2014 receipts in the amount of \$1,332,858.55 and approve November, 2014 disbursements in the amount of \$3,121,545.74. Motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote.**

### New Business

#### Employee Health Insurance Contribution Amounts for Food Service Employee Group

Dr. Dickmann explained that the Board currently contributes 85% toward the premium for a single health insurance plan, and 50% toward a family health insurance plan for food service employees who participate in the group health plan. The dollars for the premium come out of the Fund 50 budget. This employee group is the only one that has this type of contribution percentage benefit – other employee groups have 85% of either a single or family plan paid for by the Board. One food service employee is currently enrolled in a family plan, paying 50% toward the premium. The contribution amount set up for the food service group has been carried forward from the time when the group was covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement. The topic has been brought to the Board to gauge whether or not there is interest in moving the food service group toward the same contribution levels currently in effect for other employee groups.

Director of Human Resources Ryan Christianson explained that there are currently 34 employees in the food service group. Twenty-one employees would be eligible for health insurance, based upon their status of working 30 hours or more per week. Of these 21 employees, 16 have elected to take single health insurance plans while one individual is participating in a family plan. Four employees have declined the coverage. If the contribution amount paid by the Board for a family plan moves to 85%, it is possible that the employees who have elected single coverage, or have no coverage, will have renewed interest in electing family coverage. Mr. Christianson explained that if 12 employees switched from single to family coverage, the increased cost to the District moves from approximately \$600.00 per month to \$1,350.00 per month per employee at a yearly cost of around \$108,000.00. The cost would grow for each additional employee who elects family coverage.

The Board questioned how the Food Service Fund would absorb the additional expense. Dr. Dickmann explained that Fund Balance in Fund 50 would be utilized. Without knowing how many employees might enroll in a family health insurance plan, it is difficult to gauge the impact to the Fund. The Board discussed the potential impact to the budget, and the future impact that the Affordable Care Act will have on the current contribution level of the food service group. While there will likely be a negative budgetary impact by changing the Board's contribution amount, the Board does favor treating employee groups fairly by being consistent.

**Motion by Mary Rayome, seconded by Larry Davis to modify the Board's contribution for family insurance for food service personnel from a 50% contribution rate to 85% contribution rate effective January 1, 2015 to bring the group in line with other employee groups, with the payment to be made from Fund 50. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### Board Communication and Public Education Advocacy Efforts

Mr. Benbow explained that he and fellow Board members Mary Rayome, Anne Lee, and Sandra Hett attended a Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) Legislative Advocacy Conference held in November, 2014. Each found the conference to be very informative, and the main message taken from the conference is how important it is for school boards to step up efforts to advocate for public education. A number of legislators who have been strong supporters of public education are leaving office. Key points and suggestions from the conference include:

- Public education is under attack
- School boards should adopt resolutions which take a stance on issues
- Boards should work closely with organizations such as WASB to blend and bolster advocacy efforts
- Attendance in groups at Joint Finance Committee meetings to speak to one specific topic sends a clear, strong message
- Dialogue and communication with local legislators is important in venues such as the Central Wisconsin Board Consortium meetings held between local neighboring school districts
- Develop and offer solutions while advocating

- A few talking points to consider are Common Core Standards (myths vs. truth), advantages of public school education, equal accountability in public vs. private schools, testing mandates and opt-outs by voucher schools, having the same rules in place for both public and private schools when using public money, utilizing research based information to demonstrate the success of public school performance over private schools

Points generated from the Board's discussion include:


- Public relations dollars at WRPS are always put on the back burner due to dollars being funneled toward direct instruction – perhaps WRPS needs to do more to publicize the successes that occur regularly in our schools and with students
- Powerful influences by individuals outside of the public education arena have infinite sources of wealth to promote their goal of privatizing education – local control and public school funding continues to be eroded by these efforts
- Public school parents and the local community need to be engaged and involved in order to make a difference – they need to be educated about the issues threatening public education and become more vocal and proactive in their support of public schools
- Board members expressed frustration about legislators not working on issues brought to their attention, even when educational topics and concerns are brought up face to face with them in a meeting or at visits at the State Capitol
- Legislators should perhaps visit classrooms in the district to get a feel for the positive instruction that occurs every day in public education
- A meeting which involves parents and legislators might be helpful – or even to have parents in attendance at meetings where legislators are invited to attend so that parents have an opportunity to show their support just by their presence
- Communication efforts through school newsletters, the District webpage, and social media are important
- A “My View” article written by Board members and submitted to the local newspaper on a routine basis to speak about issues facing public education may be beneficial
- Public education advocates need to “Be Proud – Be Loud”
  - *Public schools outperform private schools*
  - *Public schools outperform charter schools*
  - *Public schools having poverty rates under 10% scored the highest among the highest in the world*
  - *Public schools having 10-25% poverty rates scored among the top few nations of the world*
  - *The public school advantage is why public schools outperform private schools*
- A handbook/brochure may be developed as a public informational piece to address topics such as Common Core, state testing requirements, accountability differences between public and private, etc.
- Public education is a \$500 billion enterprise that the private sector has an interest in
- Dedicated school employees continue to silently do more, for less – as budgets continually erode and money is diverted toward private education, it will be more and more difficult to sustain strong programs and opportunities for students
- The District has cut counselors, librarians, class sizes are higher and some courses aren't running due to budget constraints
- Attempts have been made to try to keep the message positive with legislators during their visits – perhaps it is time to show some impatience and frustration with the direction that public education is headed
- A listing of specific negative impacts experienced by the District would be helpful to develop
- Private sector businesses need to understand the impact that defunding and erosion of the public education system could have on them
- Staff recruitment, retention, and a potential educator shortage in the future is concerning
- Senator Olson pointed out Article X, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution which states: “The legislature shall provide by law for the establishment of district schools, which shall be as nearly uniform as practicable; and such schools shall be free and without charge for tuition to all children between the ages of 4 and 20 years;...” (uniformity clause) Funding two educational systems (public and private) moves outside original intent and would be difficult, at best, to accomplish
- A public relations person could be considered for the future – however; if we can't afford librarians, how can we afford such a position
- Perhaps an expert like Julie Mead (*Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison*) should be brought in at a future Consortium meeting, or just to speak in general to parents and the community about: 1) the challenges public education is facing, and 2) strong public school performance
- Possible agenda items for the upcoming Consortium meeting could be:
  - Gauge each district's interest in sharing any expenses to bring in and promote an expert like Julie Mead in the future;

- Discuss ways districts can band together to educate the public and send a common message which strengthens support and advocacy for public education
- Ask the legislators how they believe it is best to have the Consortium's joint voice heard and listened to down in Madison
- Would the legislators be interested in attending a quarterly Consortium meeting to stay abreast of educational issues facing the school districts they represent

Calendar

Calendar items were reviewed.

President Krings adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.



John A. Krings – President

Maurine Hodgson – Secretary

Larry Davis – Clerk