

School District of Rhinelander
Employee Relations Committee

Meeting Notes
Monday, December 18, 2017

The Employee Relations Committee meeting was called to order on Monday, December 18, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. in the Superior Diesel Advanced Learning Center-Rhinelander High School, located at 665 Coolidge Avenue, Rhinelander, WI.

Committee Members Present: Duane Frey, Judy Conlin, Dennis O'Brien
Committee Members Absent: None

Others present:

- Kelli Jacobi, Superintendent of Schools
- Marta Kwiatkowski, Administrator for Support Staff
- Board President Ron Counter as an Ex-Officio Committee Member
- Josh Skubal, UniServ Director
- Rhinelander Education Association Representatives

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Frey, Committee Chair.

Chair/Superintendent Reports/Comments (if any)

Mr. Frey and Superintendent Jacobi had nothing to report.

Citizens/Delegations

No citizens/delegations wished to address the Committee.

Report, Discussion and/or Action Topic(s)

Minutes of the August 8, 2017 Committee Meeting

The Minutes of the August 8, 2017 Committee meeting were accepted.

Presentation of Private School Voucher Program

Mr. Jeff Leverich, Senior Researcher for the WI Education Association Council, was present to provide the Committee with an update of the state's funding for the private school voucher program. Since the state has made it clear that the voucher program will continue and will expand rapidly over the next several years, area school districts and school districts throughout the state are asking that the state be open, honest, and transparent with taxpayers regarding the voucher program and its state funding; and to include on the property tax bills what the reduction in state aid is to the public school district due to the funding that is being provided to the private voucher schools.

The private school voucher program not only reduces aid to public schools in those districts with private school voucher programs, but aid is reduced to all school districts statewide due to the funds provided to the state's independent charter schools and the private voucher schools. School districts like Rhinelander with no voucher schools are the last to receive their state aid from what remains after funding independent charter schools, private voucher schools, and those public schools in districts with private voucher schools.

Resolution in Support of the Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill

Since the state has made it clear that the voucher program will expand rapidly over the next several years, a resolution was drafted for the Committee's consideration which asks that just as property tax bills show how much money goes to public schools and technical colleges, they should also show our taxpayers the cost of the expanding voucher program and what the net reduction in state aid is to our public schools as a result of the voucher program. The resolution as drafted is as follows:

**Resolution in Support
of the
"Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill"**
(Assembly Bill 267 and Senate Bill 183)

WHEREAS, the School District of Rhinelander Board of Education, administrators, professional and support personnel, parents, and community members are united in the efforts to provide all children with the highest quality educational opportunities possible; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education supports local control and makes conscientious decisions in support of high quality educational opportunities for students; and

WHEREAS, private school voucher advocates have consistently urged for expanding the use of taxpayer-funded vouchers to pay tuition for students in Wisconsin's private schools; and

WHEREAS, the Governor and members of the Wisconsin Legislature have proposed expanding voucher programs into many more Wisconsin communities, and have proposed increasing state payments to voucher schools; and

WHEREAS, the current voucher amount is \$7,530 for pupils in kindergarten through eighth grade and \$8,176 for pupils in grades 9-12; and,

WHEREAS, a memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau demonstrates that payments to voucher schools under Governor Walker's proposed budget would range from \$7,757 to \$8,403 per student by 2018 and with the inclusion of all of Governor Walker's proposed increases, some public schools might receive as much as \$1,700 less per student; and

WHEREAS, the memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau also shows that tax dollars for voucher operations are increasing twelve (12) times faster than total public school aids, and voucher payments would more than double over eight years; and

WHEREAS, the increase in statewide property taxes due to school boards levying to offset lost aid due to the voucher system was over \$25 million in 2016-17, with the statewide property tax impact estimated to grow to \$37 million in 2017-18 and to \$47 million in 2018-19; and

WHEREAS, with tax dollars for voucher operations increasing twelve (12) times faster than total public school aids and voucher payments doubling over eight years, net general aids that support public schools and reduce property taxes would decrease by 1.3%; and

WHEREAS, if private school voucher programs expand to the Rhinelander community, the School District of Rhinelander will lose state aid to the voucher schools, and the Board of Education will be required to raise additional property taxes to replace the aid lost to the voucher schools or lose that funding permanently under the state-imposed revenue limits; and

WHEREAS, if private school voucher programs do expand to the Rhinelander community and the School District of Rhinelander is then required to levy taxpayer dollars to be allocated to the statewide voucher program, just as property tax bills show how much money goes to public schools and technical colleges, taxpayers deserve to be informed of the cost of expanding the voucher program; and

WHEREAS, the *Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill* (Assembly Bill 267 and Senate Bill 183), authored by Rep. Dana Wachs (D-Eau Claire), would require property tax bills to include information from the school district where the property is located regarding the amount of any net reduction in state aid to the district as a result of pupils enrolled in the statewide voucher program, the Racine voucher program, or the Milwaukee voucher program; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education appeals to Governor Walker, the Wisconsin State Assembly, and the Wisconsin Senate to support the *Wisconsin Voucher Taxpayer Transparency Bill* in an effort to be open, honest, and transparent with the taxpayers of the School District of Rhinelander and the State of Wisconsin.

The Committee recommended Board approval of the resolution. If Board-approved, the resolution will be shared with local and state legislators, as well as public school organizations (WI Association of School Boards, WI Association of School District Administrators, WI Association of School Business Officials, WI School Alliance Association, etc.).

Consider the Proposed 2018-2019 School Year Calendar

Due to a question about the February 2019 parent/teacher conference dates, this topic will be brought to the Operations and Strategic Planning Committee in January.

Consider the Addition of Language to the Support Staff Handbook

Recently, it came to the Administration's attention that there was some discrepancy in the process for filling vacancies or making transfers and/or reassignments to support staff positions, particularly since the passing of Act 10. To clarify the

District's intent of how vacancies should be filled, and how the administration may make decisions to transfer or reassign support staff (at-will employees) from one position to another, the following revision to Section 3.12 of the Support Staff Handbook was recommended for change:

Section 3.12, Vacancies, Transfers and Reassignments

All new postings can be found on WECAN, the internet hiring system used by the District. Such posting shall show qualifications and assignment.

Appointment and promotion to positions in the District shall be based upon merit, qualifications, and the needs of the District. When possible, the District shall endeavor to fill job vacancies and new positions by promotion with qualified employees with successful job performance histories from within the organization. Any employee wishing to be considered for transfer from one position to another will notify the Director of Personnel or his/her designee in writing within the time limits outlined on the job posting form. A present employee applying for a position **may be interviewed based on qualifications.**

Employees who do not give the District at least two (2) weeks advance notice of intent to quit will have three (3) days' pay deducted from their last paycheck.

The Committee recommended Board approval of the changes to the handbook as proposed.

Consider Changes to Language in the Professional Employee Handbook

Due to the change by the WI Department of Public Instruction regarding licensure and required earned credits, the following changes were recommended for approval to Article V, Professional Licensure, of the 'Professional Employee Handbook':

ARTICLE V PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

A. Requirements

Professional employees are required to hold a valid Wisconsin Department of Public Education (DPI) license(s) in their area(s) of teaching ~~by successfully completing the Professional Development Plan (PDP) process or by earning six (6) credits every five (5) years.~~ Each professional employee will be responsible for his/her own license requirements and for keeping the District current by providing the Human Resource Office with a copy of his/her license. ~~Those Professional Employees with a life licensure must earn at least six (6) credits every five years.~~ Professional development will be addressed through the District's Professional Development Plans (PDPs) and District initiatives.

Failure to meet the above-stated requirement(s) will prevent the professional employee from receiving any salary increase until he/she has obtained a valid Wisconsin DPI-approved license and a subsequent District contract has been provided to him/her.

Professional employees who do not hold a license(s) as required ~~herein or have not earned 6 credits for those holding a life license,~~ may, ~~at the discretion of the Board,~~ be laid off **or non-renewed.**

B. Definition of Credits

In addition to the PDP process, the following means of accumulating credit(s) will fulfill the requirements of provision A. above, and is meant to serve as a guideline to determine applicable credits:

1. Graduate Credits:

- a. Graduate credits are those credits defined as such by accredited colleges and universities. These credits must be approved in advance by the Administration and prior to the professional employee beginning to earn such credits.
- b. Beginning July 1, 2017, payment for graduate courses will be made by the District up to an amount of \$5,000 per calendar year with a lifetime limit of \$20,000 (beginning 2/20/2017). All courses are to be approved by administration in advance of beginning the course. The rate of reimbursement will be based on the current cost of tuition at the university that the employee attends, but shall not exceed the University of Wisconsin (Madison) rate. Failure to complete the course will result in repayment of all costs to the District.

The professional employee who leaves the District or is no longer employed by the District after completion of the course shall repay the District as follows.

Employment for:

3 full-time equivalent (FTE) years	No re-payment to District
2 FTE years	1/3 re-payment of total costs to District
1 FTE year	2/3 re-payment of total costs to District
Less than 1 FTE year	Full re-payment of total costs to District

Costs owed must be paid back to the District within 30 days of submitting a letter of resignation.

- c. Graduate credits earned prior to the start of the 2011-2012 school year, will continue to be recognized and compensated at the rate applied when they were earned. Part-time professional employees will continue to have their earned credits prorated based on their FTE.
 - d. There will be no reimbursement for credits or courses outlined in Section B or C above that have not been pre-approved by the Superintendent/designee as outlined on the District's 'Application for Approval of Credits' form.
2. Undergraduate Credits: Credits earned under this provision may be earned through accredited colleges or universities. No remuneration or payment will be made for these courses or credits.
 3. Simple In-service Credits (SIC): Professional employees may earn in-service credits in lieu of college credits through work for the District, such as curriculum development or approved workshops based on mutual agreement between the professional employee and the Superintendent/designee. Fifteen (15) hours of such work shall be equal to one (1) college credit. No remuneration will be made for these credits. However, the District may pay for the costs of the course provided it is outside the normal workday. Costs for courses taken during the workday shall be the responsibility of the professional employee.

SICs are awarded for actual hours of participation, which means those hours when the professional employee is with the presenter or in an activity resulting from and under the presenter's direction. It is not meant to include such things as registration, breaks, and meals, unless there is a program or presentation going on as part of the meal.

SICs are generally not earned when there is a cost to the District in fees, travel expense, or loss of normal working hours. Proof of attendance is always required in order to receive the credit. SICs are awarded for the following actual hours of participation:

Actual Hours of Participation	Credits
0-2.0	1/8
2.1-4.0	1/4
4.1-6.0	3/8
6.1 - 8.0	1/2
8.1 - 10.0	5/8
10.1 - 12.0	3/4
12.1 - 14.0	7/8
14.1 - 15.0	1.0

Any fraction beyond the above hours will be prorated accordingly (i.e. 20 hours - 1.375 credits).

4. Approval for Remuneration: Prior to enrollment, all graduate coursework or SICs must receive approval in advance and in writing by the Superintendent/designee as outlined on the District's 'Application for Approval of Credits' form. Approvals will be based on Section B and (B) (1) (a, b, and d) of this Article. Should an approved graduate course not be available, a professional employee may inform the Superintendent/designee, in writing, of a proposed substitution, and payment, for this will be considered at the beginning of the next term, if approved by the Superintendent/designee.

The Committee recommended Board approval of the changes to the handbook as proposed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.