

School District of Rhinelander
Board of Education

Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, February 17, 2025

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on Monday, February 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., in the Superior Diesel Advanced Learning Center – Rhinelander High School, 665 Coolidge Ave., Rhinelander, WI.

Ronald Counter, Board President, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Judy Conlin, Mary Peterson, Doug Artus, Duane Frey, Patricia Townsend, Ronald Lueneburg, Merlin Van Buren, and Ronald Counter

Board Members Absent: Mike Roberts

Others present at this meeting were: Superintendent, Eric Burke; Director of Business Services, Robert Thom; Director of Human Resources, Michele Cornelius; Director of Learning Support, Richard Gretzinger; Director of Instruction, Ryan Ourda; Secretary/Deputy Clerk, Shelley Anderson; Principal – Rhinelander High School, Shane Dornfled; Associate Principal – Rhinelander High School, Matt Knott; Principal – James Williams Middle School, Kyle Raleigh; Principal – Crescent Elementary School, Alex Bontz; Dean of Students – Crescent Elementary School, Jeff Welk; School Psychologist, Stephanie Pittman; Instructional Coach, Jenny Prom; Math Specialist, Lori Linsmeyer; School Counselor/Program Support, Jessica Scholtes; Taylor Kloehn, Mark Jacobson, Attorney Tess O'Brien-Heinzen, and Heather Schaefer of the Northwoods River News. Five other people were also present.

Declaration of Public Notice

President Counter indicated that the 'Declaration of Public Notice' was printed with the meeting agenda. This notice identifies the public places where the meeting agenda was posted and/or shared.

Citizens/Delegations

- No citizens/delegations wished to address the Board.

Report Topics

President's Report

- President Ron Counter had no report.

Vice-President's Report

- Vice-President Judy Conlin had no report.

Training provided by Attorney Tess O'Brien-Heinzen regarding board member responsibilities

Attorney Tess O'Brien-Heinzen provided an overview of key topics to enhance Board members' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The topics covered included:

1. Primary responsibilities of the School Board
2. Roles and duties of Board members
3. Ethical obligations
4. General expectations for all Board members
5. Effective communication practices
6. Board member and staff interactions
7. Curriculum development
8. Grading policies
9. Access to records and public records requirements
10. Wisconsin Open Meetings Law
11. Guidelines for referendum advocacy

Rhineland Education Association Representatives Report(s)

- A handout providing information regarding the upcoming referendum was given to all present.

Crescent School – Building Blocks of Success: Systems that Stick

- Crescent Support Squad (Alex Bontz, Principal; Jeff Welk, Dean of Students, Stephanie Pittman, School Psychologist; Jessica Scholtes, School Counselor/Program Support; Jenny Prom, Instructional Coach, and Lori Linsmeyer, Math Specialist) presented clarity on roles and the tiers of support they provide to help all students.
- Staff shared the behavior flow chart that is followed by all staff.
- Top four strategies in response to behavior were shared.
- Data on reducing behaviors and staff satisfaction in a positive trend was also shared.

Jump Start Summer School Class – Matt Knott

- Jump Start Program will be run by Link Crew Leaders.
- Counselors at the middle and high school will recruit and spread the word during the spring scheduling.
- Perspective students will fill out a form and describe what they want to learn about high school.
- Link Leaders will build a curriculum based on student interest and basic "Getting To Know High School. “
- The program will run for two days in August and three hours each day (dates TBD).
- Topics will include navigating high school, navigating social situations, time management, credits/grading, and stress management.

Target-Based Grading (TBG) Update – Ryan Ourada, Shane Dornfled, Kyle Raleigh, Mark Jacobson, and Taylor Kloehn

Purpose of TBG: Transitioned nearly four years ago to a grading system emphasizing comprehension of specific learning targets rather than just completing work.

Benefits of TBG:

- Provides a deeper understanding of learning strengths and weaknesses.
- Offers direct, timely feedback for improvement.
- Encourages mastery learning through reassessments.
- Ensures grades reflect current understanding, not just effort.

Hodag Score: Measures personal responsibility, work habits, and social skills, which are essential for student development but separate from academic achievement.

Reassessment Approach:

- Focuses on mastery and continuous learning.
- Ensures transparency, accountability, and individualized student growth.

Semester GPA & Failing Grades:

- RHS had 24 % of students having one or more F's at the end of the first semester in 23-24 and 24-25.
- JWMS saw a slight increase in students with one or more F's from 23-24 (19%) to 24-25 (24%).
- Both RHS and JWMS saw fewer students ineligible for sports due to grades.

Teacher Perspectives: Insights from RHS educators on the implementation and challenges of TBG.

- Mark Jacobson and Taylor Kloehn have both experienced student improvement in mastering understanding.

Committee Chair Reports**Instruction and Accountability Committee**

- Judy Conlin, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee recommended agenda item i to the full Board for approval.

Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

- Merlin Van Buren reported that the Committee recommended agenda items f, g, and h to the full Board for approval.

Employee Relations Committee

- Duane Frey, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee did not meet.

Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee

- Merlin Van Buren reported that the Committee did not meet.

CESA 9 Representative Report

- Merlin Van Buren, the Board's Representative to CESA 9, reported that Teri Phalin presented the non-teacher professional learning options being provided for various positions through CESA 9.

Discussion, Reports/Updates, and/or Action Topics**Minutes of January 20, 2025, Regular Board Meeting**

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by M. Peterson.

Approve the minutes of the January 20, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as printed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Minutes of February 10, 2025, Special Board Meeting

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by J. Conlin.

Approve the minutes of the February 10, 2025, Special Board Meeting as printed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

January Payment of Claims and Contracted Services

MOTION: M. Van Buren, seconded by R. Lueneburg.

Consider the Approval of the January 2025 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$1,069,845.32 and the January 2025 Payment of Contracted Services in the amount of \$565,409.05 as printed.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, D. Artus, D. Frey, R. Lueneburg., P. Townsend,
M. Van Buren, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Consider Acceptance of Various Gifts/Donations Contributed to the District

MOTION: M. Peterson, seconded by D. Frey.

Accept with sincere gratitude the following gifts/donations:

- \$600.00 from David and Julie Holperin
- Leggings, socks, underwear, and deodorant valued at \$235.52 from Heather Collins
- \$5,000.00 from CNG - Charter Next Generation
- Milling work by Robert Grefe valued at \$1,945.00
- Rainbow net with rainbow cones valued at \$313.44 from Geralyn Karl

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on April 2025 Committee and full Board Meeting Date Changes

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by D. Artus.

Move the committee meetings to April 7, 2025, and the regular monthly meeting of the full board to April 14, 2025, respectively.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Revised Policies Relating to Administration, Program, Professional Staff, Support Staff, Students, Finance, Property, Operations, and Relations

MOTION: M. Van Buren, seconded by D. Frey.

Board approve the revisions to the following policies:

- (1) Policy 1100 - District Organization
- (2) Policy 1130 - Ethics and Conflict of Interest
- (3) Policy 2266 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or

Activities

- (4) Policy 3230 - Ethics and Conflict of Interest
- (5) Policy 4230 - Ethics and Conflict of Interest
- (6) Policy 1241 - Non-Renewal or Termination of the Superintendent
- (7) Policy 2210 - Curriculum Development
- (8) Policy 2270 - Religion in the Curriculum
- (9) Policy 2271.01 - Start College Now Program
- (10) Policy 2416 - Student Privacy and Parental Access to Information
- (11) Policy 2464 - Advanced Learning Instruction ("Gifted and Talented")

- (12) Policy 3281 - Personal Property of Staff Members
- (13) Policy 5113 - Open Enrollment Program (Inter-District)
- (14) Policy 5330 - Administration of Medication/Emergency Care
- (15) Policy 5512 - Use of Tobacco and Nicotine by Students
- (16) Policy 6231 - Budget Implementation
- (17) Policy 6235 - Fund Balance
- (18) Policy 6620 - Petty Cash
- (19) Policy 7410 - Maintenance
- (20) Policy 7430 - Safety Standards
- (21) Policy 7440 - Facility Security
- (22) Policy 7440.02 - Smart Sensor and Monitoring Technology
- (23) Policy 7540.03 - Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety
- (24) Policy 7540.04 - Staff Technology Acceptable Use and Safety
- (25) Policy 8120 - Volunteers
- (26) Policy 8330 - Student Records
- (27) Policy 8395 - Student Mental and Physical Health Services
- (28) Policy 8531 - Free and Reduced-Price Meals
- (29) Policy 8600 - Transportation
- (30) Policy 9150 - School Visitors

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Rescinding Policies Relating to Program and Students

MOTION: M. Van Buren, seconded by P. Townsend.

Board approve to rescind the following policies:

- Policy 2264 - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs or Activities
- Policy 5341 - Emergency Medical Authorization
- Policy 5710 - Student Complaints

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on New Policies Relating to Program, Support Staff, Property, and Operations

MOTION: M. Van Buren, seconded by M. Peterson.

Board approve the first reading of :

- Policy 2440.01 - Summer or Interim School Attendance
- Policy 4124 - Notice of Reasonable Assurance of Employment
- Policy 7540.07 - District-Issued Student E-Mail Account
- Policy 8125 - Consultants
- Policy 8305 - Information Security
- Policy 8315 - Information Management

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on New Rhinelander High School Courses

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by D. Artus.

Board approve the new courses for the 2025-2026 school year at Rhinelander High School as submitted.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Part 2 Bids for Construction Project as a Whole

MOTION: D. Artus, seconded by M. Van Buren.

Board approve the Part 2 bid recommendations for the Rhinelander High School and James Williams Middle School remodel project as outlined by C.D. Smith.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Eric Burke provided the following update to the board:

- We will host two community meetings to share information about the April 1st operational referendum:
 - February 19th at 9:30 a.m. in the Hodag Dome
 - March 12th at 6:00 p.m. in the RHS Commons
- Additional presentations will be held in February and March for various groups, including the Retired Teachers Group, Women's Club, Rotary, Kiwanis, Rhinelander Booster Club, PIE Meeting, and staff meetings at all schools.
- We recently received results from our anonymous annual staff survey, conducted this year via School Perceptions, a nationally recognized survey platform.
 - 94% staff response rate – an exceptional participation level
 - 8 areas of strength with scores above 75%.
 - No areas fell below 25%.
- Key Insights:
 - Staff expressed strong confidence in the School Board's commitment to success, marking the highest percentage recorded by School Perceptions for this question.
 - Staff rated district pay practices as fair, significantly outperforming comparable districts.

Enter Closed Session

MOTION: R. Counter, seconded by D. Artus.

Enter closed session pursuant to

- a. Wis. Stats. 19.85 (1) (c), to consider employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility.
- b. Wis. Stats. 19.85 (1) (f) to consider financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations.

More specifically, to address matters related to staff contracts, including the hiring of staff, staff layoffs, and/or resignations, and retirements, as well as to review an agreement concerning a specific individual and/or contracted service and/or to consider the histories

and/or disciplinary data of specific individuals. Additionally, the elements of the superintendent evaluation will be discussed.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, D. Artus, D. Frey, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend,
M. Van Buren, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0 at 7:55 p.m.

Closed Session

Closed-session topics were discussed.

Return to Open Session

MOTION: D. Frey, seconded by D. Artus.

Return to open session.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, D. Artus, D. Frey, R. Lueneburg, P. Townsend,
M. Van Buren, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0.

Open Session

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by D. Frey.

Approve the hire of Carrie Calhoun as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by D. Artus.

Approve the retirement of Dawn Jacobson, Tami Salzer, Jean Hodkiewicz, and JoEllen Lieck as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by D. Artus.

Approve the retirement of Christopher Schotz effective the end of the 1st semester 2025-2026 school year as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

MOTION: R. Counter, seconded by D. Frey.

Board approve the renewal to the employment contract for Eric Burke, Superintendent, as proposed beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027, with renewal on each anniversary date thereafter unless otherwise stated in writing by the Board of Education for the School District of Rhinelander. Compensation to be based on the Board's approval for Administrative increases.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Adjournment

MOTION: D. Frey, seconded by R. Lueneburg.

Move to adjourn.

Motion passed with a voice vote at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Peterson, Board of Education Clerk