

School District of Rhinelander
Board of Education

Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, October 20, 2025

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on Monday, October 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Superior Diesel Advanced Learning Center at Rhinelander High School, 665 Coolidge Avenue, Rhinelander, WI.

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

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Judy Conlin, Mary Peterson, Mike Roberts, Duane Frey, Merlin Van Buren, Ronald Lueneburg, Patricia Townsend, Kurt Helke, and Ronald Counter

Board Members Absent: None

Others present at this meeting were: Superintendent, Eric Burke; Director of Human Resources, Michele Cornelius; Director of Learning Support, Richard Gretzinger; Director of Business Services, Bob Thom; Director of Instruction, Ryan Ourada; Shari Wendland, Sadie Adamski, Peggy Billing, Dylan Shefveland, Lorelai Aylesworth, Charlotte Shurtleff; Secretary/Deputy Clerk, Shelley Anderson, and Heather Schaefer of the Northwoods Star Journal. Six 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/Updates

President's Report – Ron Counter – no report/comment was given.

Vice-President's Report – Information will be shared on the professional development provided to all staff by Dr. Shelly Moore and how it relates to current work in the district.

- Vice-President Judy Conlin summarized the "Supporting One, Supporting All: Collaborative classroom support models for inclusive classrooms" professional development day that Dr. Shelly Moore facilitated.
- The School District of Rhinelander already has many of the essential elements in place.

- The goals of inclusion are continuing to shift and evolve as we learn more about diversity and identity. The Inclusive Planning process aims to situate Disability as an identity, not a deficit, and so to determine what supports and strategies students require, teams are shifting to look at needs, rather than disabilities, as a reference point. In this way, planning for inclusive classes can be universal and anticipate the needs of everyone in a community.
- This session began by looking at what inclusion means and why it is essential in classrooms and schools today. It was then connected to Universal Design for Learning principles and looked at how plans are created for a student with a disability, in ways that can support many students in a classroom.

An invitation to 7th-grade math and the Districtwide In-Touch Group – Rhinelander Education Association Representative - Shari Wendland

- Shari Wendland led the Board in a hands-on math activity to illustrate various instructional strategies and demonstrate how teachers address diverse student learning needs.
- Shari also reported that the Rhinelander Education Association has officers.
- Shari invited the board members to come into her room anytime to see what is going on in the math world, and if they have any questions, to check things out.

Tasting Success: Presentation by Culinary Family & Consumer Science Teachers Peggy Billing and Sadie Adamski.

- Teachers Sadie Adamski and Peg Billing, along with students Lorelai Aylesworth and Charlotte Shurtleff, provided an overview of the Family and Consumer Sciences program. The presentation highlighted courses in Medical Careers, Culinary Arts, Child Development, Relationships, and Housing & Interior Design, as well as student opportunities through HOSA and FCCLA. The Board was shown how these programs prepare students with practical skills and leadership experiences for future careers.

Rhinelander High School Student Council – Dylan Shefveland - Homecoming Review and Upcoming Leadership Conferences.

- Student Council member, Dylan Shefveland, provided an update on recent and upcoming activities. Highlights included Homecoming Week events, such as the Powderpuff game, bonfire, Spike tournament, pep rally, parade, and dance. He also shared upcoming opportunities for leadership development, including attendance at the Leadership Convention in Minocqua (Oct. 22), the Student Council Convention in Wausau (Nov. 12), and the Leadership Conference in Stevens Point (Nov. 18).

Third Friday Student Enrollment Update

- Superintendent Burke reported a net decrease of thirty-six students compared to the 2024-2025 school year. The most significant enrollment changes were in the following grades:
 - Kindergarten: down seventeen students
 - 3rd grade: up twenty-four students
 - 7th grade: down twenty-six students
 - 8th grade: up twenty students
 - 10th grade: down twenty-one students
 - 11th grade: up sixteen students

Referendum Construction Project Update on Budget Status and Funding

Director of Business Services, Bob Thom, reviewed the summary of revenues and expenses through October 13, 2025. He reported that the overall project is more than halfway complete, with a little over half of the allocated funds expended.

Revenue:

- **Interest:** \$1,111,848.53
 - **Bond Proceeds:** \$26,000,000.00
 - **Donations:** \$414,158.00
- Total Revenue:** \$27,526,006.53

Expenses:

- **Construction Services:** \$13,327,949.45
 - **Supplies:** \$248,651.97
 - **Equipment:** \$244,582.09
 - **Insurance:** \$34,899.00
 - **Fees, Permits, etc.:** \$53,015.85
- Total Expenses:** \$13,909,098.36

The \$26M in bond proceeds is invested in CDs and Treasury Bills with Ehlers Investment Services. The return has been 4.12%.

Committee Chair Reports

Instruction and Accountability Committee

- Judy Conlin, the Committee Chair, reported that the Committee recommended agenda items h and i to the Board for approval.

Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

- Mike Roberts, the Committee Chair, reported that the Committee recommended agenda items f and g to the Board for approval

Employee Relations Committee

- The Committee did not meet in October.

Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee

- Mike Roberts, the Committee Chair, reported that the Committee recommended agenda item j to the Board for approval.

CESA 9 Representative Report

- Merlin Van Buren, Board Representative to CESA 9, reported that CESA 9 will now offer Superintendent Search services.

Discussion, Reports/Updates, and/or Action Topics

Consider Approval of the Minutes from the September 15, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by M. Roberts.

Approve the minutes of the September 15, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as printed.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Consider the Approval of the September 2025 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$9,679,462.33 and the September 2025 Payment of Contracted Services in the Amount of \$686,532.26.

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

Approve the September 2025 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$9,679,462.33 and the September 2025 Payment of Contracted Services in the Amount of \$686,532.26.

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

Nay: None

Motion passed 9/0

Consider Acceptance of Various Gifts/Donations Contributed to the District

MOTION: M. Peterson, seconded by M. Roberts.

Accept with sincere gratitude the following gifts/donations:

- \$500.00 from Michael Boyd, Boyd Financial Services, LLC.
- \$500.00 from Northwoods Nursery, LLC.
- \$50.00 from Andrew F. Davis, CPA
- \$150.00 from Kerber Rose S.C.
- Seven gallons of paint, valued at \$635.93, from Darian at Sherwin-Williams
- \$150.00 from Dahl Automotive (Honda Rhinelander)
- \$250.00 from People's State Bank
- \$500.00 from Rachel Amicungelo, Trident Maritime Systems
- \$150.00 from Bob Lueder, Plane Parts Inc.
- \$150.00 from Ben Young, Stein's Lincoln Street Liquor, Inc.
- Sensory bags valued at \$361.00 from Shannon Wadinski, Autism Society of Central WI
- \$250.00 from Tarsie Goes, Rhinelander Auto Group
- Twenty-four boxes of Crayola crayons, valued at \$35.00, from Felicia Hagen

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action to Appointment of Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the 2026 State Education Convention Delegate Assembly

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

Appoint Ronald Counter as Delegate to the 2026 State Education Convention Delegate Assembly.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

MOTION: R. Counter, seconded by M. Peterson.

Appoint Judy Conlin as Alternate Delegate to the 2026 State Education Convention Delegate Assembly.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Second Readings of New Proposed Policies Relating to Program, Property, and Operations.

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by R. Lueneburg.

The Board approve the first reading of :

- Policy 2431 - Interscholastic Athletics
- Policy 7440.03 - Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems

- Policy 7455 - Accounting System for Capital Assets
- Policy 8550 - Competitive Food

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on First Reading of Policies Relating to Professional and Support Staff.

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by R. Lueneburg.

The Board approve the first reading of:

- Policy 3419.01 - Privacy Protections of Self-Funded Group Health Plans and Related Benefits
- Policy 4419.01 - Privacy Protections of Self-Funded Group Health Plans and Related Benefits

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Rescinding Policies Relating to Programs

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by R. Lueneburg.

The Board approve to rescind the following policies:

- Policy 2700.02 - District and School Requirements for Title I Schools Identified for Improvement (SIFI)
- Policy 2700.03 - District and School Requirements for Title I Districts Identified for Improvement (DIFI)

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on High School Start College Now Requests for Spring 2026.

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

Board of Education approve the expenditure of up to \$30,000.00 for dual credit course work for the 2026 Spring semester at a technical college level as part of the Start College Now program.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on EL Plan.

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

The Board of Education approve the School District of Rhinelander English Learners (EL) Education Plan as presented to ensure compliance with Wisconsin statutes and federal requirements.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Naming the Lower Garage at CAVOC in Memory of Brian Hegge.

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

The Board of Education approve naming the lower garage at CAVOC in memory of Brian Hegge.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Superintendent's Report – Eric Burke – Beginning of the School Year Updates and Celebrations

Superintendent Burke reported the following:

- Superintendent Burke, Kyle Raleigh (Principal, James Williams Middle School), Shane Dornfeld (Principal, Rhinelander High School), Lexi Allen (College and Career Counselor), and Ryan Ourada (Director of Instruction) will present “*Hodag Readiness – Creation of Career Academies in Rural High Schools*” at the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) Conference in Stevens Point on October 30, 2025.
- Lexi Allen has been selected as the recipient of the 2025 WiRSA Advocacy Award. This award, established by the WiRSA Board of Directors, honors individuals who have made significant contributions toward strengthening and preserving rural schools in Wisconsin.
- The Hodag Schools Foundation has been reestablished. It will begin fundraising efforts for two significant projects: updates to the Rhinelander High School Fitness Center and the creation of an all-inclusive playground at Pelican Elementary School. The Foundation's fundraising goal is \$800,000.
- On Wednesday, October 22, Rhinelander High School students and staff will participate in the fifth annual Community Service Day. This event provides an opportunity for students to give back to the community and highlight the many positive contributions made by high school students.

Adjournment

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by M. Roberts.

Move to adjourn.

The motion passed with a voice vote at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Peterson, Board of Education Clerk