

School District of Rhinelander  
Board of Education

Regular Monthly Meeting  
Monday, November 18, 2024

**MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on Monday, November 18, 2024, 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, Mike Roberts, Doug Artus, Duane Frey, Patricia Townsend, Ronald Lueneburg, Merlin Van Buren, and Ronald Counter

Board Members Absent: Mary Peterson

Others present at this meeting were: Superintendent, Eric Burke; Director of Business Services, Robert Thom; Director of Human Resources, Michele Cornelius; Director of Instruction, Ryan Ourada; Director of Learning Support, Richard Gretzinger; Secretary/Deputy Clerk, Shelley Anderson; Associate Principal – Rhinelander High School, Matt Knott; Amy Vanney, Brandon Karaba, Tarsie Goes, Miranda Gavrilescu, Sean Moore, Shari Wendland, Heather Schaefer of the Northwoods River News, and Eileen Persike of the Northwoods Star Journal. Four 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

- Charlotte Shurtleff addressed the Board regarding target-based grading.

Report Topics

President’s Report

- President Ron Counter shared the following updates:
  - The District’s School Violence/Lockdown Drills were reviewed.
  - Procedures for the violence/lockdown drills are developed in coordination with the Oneida County Sheriff’s Department.
  - President Counter reviewed Board Policy and State Statute regarding grading.

Vice-President’s Report

- Vice-President Judy Conlin had no report.

Wisconsin Association of School Boards Business Honor Roll – Certificates Presented to Nicolet National Bank – Amy Vanney, Peoples State Bank – Brandon Karaba, and Rhinelander GM by Associate Principal – Rhinelander High School, Matt Knott

- Mr. Knott expressed his gratitude to each recipient for their outstanding support of the District.
- These businesses and their representatives have made a meaningful and positive impact on the students and families within the District.
- Amy Vanney graciously accepted the recognition on behalf of Nicolet National Bank.
- Brandon Karaba proudly accepted the honor on behalf of Peoples State Bank.
- Tarsie Goes and Miranda Gavrilescu enthusiastically accepted on behalf of Rhinelander GM.

Celebration ACT Scores and Storylines Across All Sciences at RHS – Sean Moore

- Mr. Moore explained that a storyline is a sequence of lessons driven by students' questions stemming from interactions with phenomena, aiming to solve a problem or explain an occurrence. Unlike traditional methods where teachers dictate the content, storylines put students in the driver's seat, making learning more relevant, engaging, and effective. It builds deeper understanding because students aren't just memorizing facts—they're figuring things out for themselves, just like real scientists and engineers.

Review of the October Budget Status Report – Done at this Meeting as the Operations and Strategic Planning Committee Did Not Meet this Month

- Report Highlights by Director of Business Services, Robert Thom:
  - District expenditures to date are lower compared to the same period last year.
  - The district's financial performance aligns well with the approved budget.

Rhinelander Education Association Representatives Report(s)

- Shari Wendland provided the Board with an update on the In-Touch Group, highlighting the following:
  - The group consists of representatives from the professional staff within the District who are members of the Rhinelander Education Association.
  - She outlined the purpose and objectives behind the formation of the group.
  - Shari extended an open invitation to all Board members to visit her classroom or any other classroom in the District to observe daily activities and gain firsthand insight into the educational environment.

Committee Chair Reports

Instruction and Accountability Committee

- Judy Conlin, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee met before this meeting and recommended agenda item g to the Board for approval.

Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

- Mike Roberts, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee did not meet.

Employee Relations Committee

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

#### Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee

- Mike Roberts, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee did not meet.

#### CESA 9 Representative Report

- Merlin Van Buren, the Board's Representative to CESA 9, reported that the CESA 9 business office provided an update to all member districts. He noted that CESA 9 continues to experience growth and progress.

#### Update on Target-Based Grading

- Why Target-based Grading
  - Encourages consistent and transparent communication between school and home with clear and more meaningful feedback focused on student learning. The focus is on mastery and growth over time.
- Review of the Process
  - The STAGR and REAL V process supported our work in prioritizing learning into learning targets and success criteria.
- Why 3 Point Scale
  - Clarity and Simplicity in Mastery Levels
  - Emphasis on Growth and Improvement
  - Consistent, Reliable Assessment Across Teachers and Subjects
- Feedback from Schools
  - High School - Experiencing fewer F's than the previous year by 15%, students are taking advantage of reassessment options more frequently
  - Middle School - Allowed for staff to collaborate on student achievement and growth more frequently; students are taking advantage of reassessment towards more learning

#### Discussion, Reports/Updates, and/or Action Topics

Minutes of October 21, 2024, Regular Board Meeting

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

Approve the minutes of the October 21, 2024, Regular Board Meeting as printed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Minutes of October 28, 2024, Special Board Meeting

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

Approve the minutes of the October 28, 2024, Special Board Meeting as printed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Minutes of October 28, 2024, Annual Meeting of the Electors

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

Approve the minutes of the October 28, 2024, Annual Meeting of the Electors as printed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

October Payment of Claims and Contracted Services

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

Consider the Approval of the October 2024 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$1,014,068.18 and the October 2024 Payment of Contracted Services in the amount of \$544,968.01 as printed.

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

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0

Consider Acceptance of Various Gifts/Donations Contributed to the District

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

Accept with sincere gratitude the following gifts/donations:

- \$500.00 from Rhinelander GM, Tarsie Goes
- \$150.00 from Plane Parts, Inc.
- \$150.00 from Park City Credit Union, Mandy Clark
- \$50.00 from Joe and Judy Conlin
- \$500.00 from Mark B. Senoraske
- Materials valued at \$150.00 for Little Library from Daniel's Distinctive Designs, Steve Daniel
- Drawing and painting classroom supplies at Northwoods Community Elementary School valued at \$100.00 from Thom and Dawn Kluever
- Fisker scissors valued at \$300.00 from Jessica Jung
- \$12,000.00 from the Little League Organization
- \$10,000.00 from the Athletic Booster Club
- \$1,500.00 from Luke Durkee

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Second Reading of Policy 8395 - Student Mental Health Services

**MOTION:** M. Roberts, seconded by D. Artus.

Board approve the second reading of Policy 8395 - Student Mental Health Services.

Motion passed with voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action Regarding the 2025-2026 School Calendar

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

Board approve the 2025-2026 school year calendar as proposed.

Motion passed with voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action for Appointment of Board Clerk Duties Regarding April 2025 Election.

**MOTION:** R. Counter, seconded by M. Roberts.

Board appoint Merlin Van Buren as the Board Clerk to handle all duties/responsibilities for the 2025 Election.

Motion passed with voice vote.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Eric Burke provided the following update to the board:

- On November 19th, he will travel to Madison with Al Betry, Agency Administrator from CESA 9, and three other superintendents to meet with Senator Mary Felzkowski.
  - Senator Felzkowski represents Wisconsin's Senate
  - The group will advocate for additional school funding pertaining to:
    - Special Education funding
    - Act 20
    - General school funding
- The Rhinelander High School Girls' Swim Team achieved 3rd place at the State Swim Meet. Congratulations to all the swimmers and their coach, Jenny Heck.
- The State Report Card for all public schools in Wisconsin will be released tomorrow.
- On December 3, 2024, Superintendent Burke, along with Merlin Van Buren, Duane Frey, and Ron Counter, will attend the bid opening at CD Smith in Fond du Lac.
- CD Smith will present bid details and recommendations on December 16th during the Capital Project Committee meeting before the Full Board meeting later that evening.
- Once semester grades have been finalized, Superintendent Burke will provide additional information regarding grading. This update will also be shared at the end of the school year. The administration and staff continuously explore ways to enhance practices supporting student success.

Enter Closed Session

**MOTION:** R. Counter, seconded by M. Roberts.

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.
- c. Wis. Stats 19.85 (1) (g) to confer with legal counsel as may be necessary with respect to litigation in which the District is involved or is likely to become involved.

More specifically, consider staff contracts and/or contract renewals or non-renewals for professional personnel; staff hires, layoffs, and/or resignations/retirements; an agreement regarding a specific individual and/or contracted service; and/or the histories and/or disciplinary data of specific persons.

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

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0 at 7:45 p.m.

#### Closed Session

Closed-session topics were discussed.

#### Return to Open Session

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

Return to open session.

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

Nay: None

Motion passed 8/0.

#### Open Session

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

Approve the hire of Brianna Olds as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

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

Approve posting/hire of unbudgeted Teaching Assistant, as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

#### Adjournment

**MOTION:** J. Conlin, second by D. Artus.

Move to adjourn.

Motion passed with a voice vote at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Anderson, Secretary/Deputy Clerk