

School District of Rhinelander
Board of Education

Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, December 15, 2025

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on Monday, December 15, 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, Merlin Van Buren, Ronald Lueneburg, Kurt Helke, and Ronald Counter

Board Members Absent: Duane Frey, Mike Roberts, and Patricia Townsend

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; Carlie Pudlowski, Rod Olson, Secretary/Deputy Clerk, Shelley Anderson, and Beckie Gaskill of the Northwoods River News. 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

- No citizens/delegations wished to address the Board.

Report Topics/Updates

President's Report – Ron Counter – reported on the fall school violence/lockdown conducted at each school.

Vice-President's Report – Judy Conlin – thanked the band and choir students and all staff for bringing the community together for the Veterans Day ceremony and the holiday concerts.

Rhinelander Education Association Representative Shari Wendland was not present at the meeting; no update was provided.

Rod Olson – Update on Project SEARCH, a nine-month internship program supporting students with disabilities from the School District of Rhinelander and neighboring districts.

- Project SEARCH is a nine-month internship program for individuals with disabilities.

- It is targeted for individuals whose goal is competitive employment
- This year, Project SEARCH has eight interns, which is comprised of three students from the School District of Rhinelander and the remaining students are from the Tomahawk, Lakeland, and Antigo School Districts.
- Having eight interns is a record number for the Northwoods program and the state, except for large districts like Milwaukee.
- A tour was offered to any board members to see the offering at the host site – Aspirus Hospital in Rhinelander at 10:00 am on Wednesday, January 14, 2026.
- For the first time, the program already has three prospective interns for next year.
- Graduation for Project SEARCH is scheduled for May 27, 2026, at 5:30 pm in the James Williams Middle School Auditorium.

Rhinelander High School Student Council – Carlie Pudlowski – Angel Tree Review.

- On December 3, approximately 900 students from across the state attended the Milwaukee Bucks Leadership Day in Milwaukee. DJ Shauna spoke to students about authentic leadership.
- Student Council also participated in the Angel Tree program at Rhinelander High School during December. Through this effort, four families in the district received support, and more than 80 gifts were donated.
- Additionally, on November 18, Student Council members attended a Leadership Conference in Stevens Point alongside participants from 12 school districts. The keynote speaker, Jenn DeWall, presented on building confidence and leadership skills.

Referendum Construction Project Update on Budget Status and Funding – Bob Thom.

- Director of Business Services, Bob Thom, reported that James Williams Middle School renovations will be completed by March, with the ribbon-cutting ceremony anticipated for April 20, 2026.
- The automotive and construction labs at Rhinelander High School are close to completion and are anticipated to be used sometime during the second semester by students.
- The welding, fabrication, and wood classrooms are scheduled next.
- The ribbon-cutting ceremony for Rhinelander High School is anticipated for September 2026.

Revenue:

- **Interest:** \$1,188,816.80
 - **Bond Proceeds:** \$26,000,000.00
 - **Donations:** \$414,158.00
- Total Revenue:** \$27,602,974.80

Expenses:

- **Construction Services:** \$17,060,802.65
 - **Supplies:** \$278,992.64
 - **Equipment:** \$544,288.74
 - **Insurance:** \$34,899.00
 - **Fees, Permits, etc.:** \$55,177.69
- Total Expenses:** \$17,974,160.72

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

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

Employee Relations Committee

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee

- No report was given as the Committee did not meet.

CESA 9 Representative Report

- No report was given.

Discussion, Reports/Updates, and/or Action Topics

Consider Approval of the Minutes from the November 17, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.

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

Approve the minutes of the November 17, 2025, Regular Board Meeting as printed.

M. Peterson abstained.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Consider the Approval of the November 2025 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$874,640.01 and the November 2025 Payment of Contracted Services in the Amount of \$299,108.87.

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

Approve the November 2025 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$874,640.01 and the November 2025 Payment of Contracted Services in the Amount of \$299,108.87.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, K. Helke, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 6/0

Review of the November Budget Status Report.

Bob Thom, Director of Business, reported that the November 2025 period included one fewer payroll than November 2024 and anticipates that payroll totals will balance out by the end of December. He also noted that special education funding is expected to be lower than initially projected by the state, with each 1% decrease resulting in approximately \$70,000 less in funding for the District.

Consider Acceptance of Various Gifts/Donations Contributed to the District.

MOTION: M. Peterson, seconded by K. Helke.

Accept with sincere gratitude the following gifts/donations:

- \$250 from David Holperin

- Gift certificates valued at \$116 from Dairy Queen
- Cups valued at \$80 from Starbucks
- Gift certificates valued at \$100 from Kwik Trip
- Scoop coins valued at \$184 from Culvers
- Dessert coupons valued at \$120 from McDonalds
- \$1000 from Aspirus, Inc., Amanda Lange
- Gift certificates valued at \$50 from Caribou Coffee, Julie Luedtke
- Gift certificates valued at \$40 from Crimson Café, Kelsey Bontz
- Gift certificates valued at \$100 from Northern Grounds, Jen Tucci
- Gift certificates valued at \$20 from Kwik Trip, Candice
- \$100 from Brian Bart
- \$634.71 from True North Energy, LLC—The Giving Pump
- Two Sum Swamp math games valued at \$40, 36 count Expo Markers valued at \$25, 18 pack white out valued at \$20, and 12 pack Paper Mate Flair pens valued at \$12 from Donors Choose

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Rescinding Policy 3430.05

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

The Board approve to rescind Policy 3430.05 Lactation in the Workplace.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on 2026 State Convention – WI Association of School Boards (WASB) Delegate Assembly Resolutions

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

Authorize Ronald Counter, Delegate to the 2026 State Education Convention WASB

Delegate Assembly, or Judy Conlin, Alternate Delegate, to vote on the proposed resolutions as directed by and on behalf of the school board.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Superintendent’s Report – Eric Burke – School Year Updates and Celebrations

Superintendent Eric Burke reported that the spirit of giving remains strong throughout the School District.

- The Key Club organized a food drive that provided winter break food boxes to 29 families across the District.
- The Student Council Angel Tree supported four families, with more than 80 gifts donated.
- The FBLA/DECA club held its annual Jeans for Teens drive.
- School District of Rhinelander staff and students were the primary supporters of all three initiatives.
- Superintendent Burke noted that the current generation of students demonstrates a strong commitment to helping others and giving back to the community.

Enter Closed Session

MOTION: R. Counter, seconded by R. Lueneburg.

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.

More specifically, consider staff resignation.

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, K. Helke, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 6/0

Closed Session

The Board moved to closed session and discussed staff resignation.

Return to Open Session

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

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Peterson, M. Van Buren, R. Lueneburg, K. Helke, R. Counter

Nay: None

Motion passed 6/0

Return to open session.

Open Session

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

Approve the resignation of Peggy Sanderfoot as proposed.

The motion passed with a voice vote.

Adjournment

MOTION: R. Lueneburg, seconded by K. Helke.

Move to adjourn.

The motion passed with a voice vote at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Peterson, Board of Education Clerk