

School District of Rhinelander
Board of Education

Regular Monthly Meeting
Monday, December 16, 2024

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on Monday, December 16, 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; Principal – Central Elementary School, Paul Johnson; Dani Witter, Maria Lokemoen, Abby Beyerl, Jeremy Mayo of the Northwoods River News, and Eileen Persike of the Northwoods Star Journal. Twelve 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.

Rhinelander Education Association Representatives Report(s)

- No report was given.

Connecting and Creating Supports that Expand the Joy of Reading Central Elementary School
– Principal Paul Johnson, Dani Witter, Maria Lokemoen, Abby Beyerl and Students

- Principal Paul Johnson highlighted that a key objective at Central Elementary School is to enhance the school's climate and culture through the integration of social and emotional learning (SEL) and literacy, specifically fostering a greater interest in reading among students.
- Mr. Johnson emphasized the importance of the school's partnership with the Rhinelander District Library in achieving this goal.
- Fourth-grade teacher Maria Lokemoen noted that a significant milestone for students this year is to complete and visually track books they have finished reading, building both confidence and engagement in reading.
- School Counselor Dani Witter explained how setting both short-term and long-term goals empowers students to reach their reading objectives.
- Library Media Specialist Abby Beyerl provided an overview of the statewide online "Battle of the Books" competition and its role in promoting reading engagement. This is the first year of "Battle of the Books" at Central. Participation numbers and student sustained interest are very encouraging.
- Fifth-grade students Averie Conroy, Mason Paulson, Avery Verbist, and Easton Sieker each shared with the Board how the reading goals have positively impacted their learning experiences.

Update on the School Report Card – Ryan Ourada

- Data-Driven Practices and Tools
 - **Item Analysis Tools:** Assessment data is being analyzed to identify instructional strengths and areas for growth, guiding adjustments, and targeted interventions.
 - **PreACT Implementation:** Results provide actionable insights to support student growth, inform academic planning, and enhance college and career readiness skills.
- Alignment with Learning Targets
 - Instructional practices are aligned with clear learning targets and success criteria to improve clarity for students and foster higher engagement and achievement.
- School Rankings
 - **Northwoods Community Elementary School (NCES):** Ranked in the top 32% of Wisconsin schools.
 - **Central Elementary School:** Ranked in the top 37%.
 - **Rhinelander High School:** Ranked in the top 35%.
- Forward Testing Trends (3rd-8th Grade)
 - **Math:** Increased from 29.5% proficient/advanced in 2016-17 to 50.2% in 2023-24 (7-year high).
 - **ELA:** Increased from 29.3% proficient/advanced in 2016-17 to 42.9% in 2023-24 (7-year high).
 - The consistent upward trend demonstrates the impact of collaborative efforts in instruction and assessment practices.

- Overall Impact
 - The use of assessment tools, targeted interventions, and alignment with success criteria is driving measurable academic improvement across the district.
 - These efforts ensure that instructional strategies are data-informed and responsive to student needs.

Committee Chair Reports

Instruction and Accountability Committee

- Judy Conlin, Committee Chair, reported that the Committee did not meet.

Operations and Strategic Planning Committee

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

Employee Relations Committee

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

Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee

- Ronald Counter, School Board President, reported that he, along with Merlin Van Buren, Bob Thom, and Eric Burke, traveled to CD Smith's headquarters in Fond du Lac to observe the bid opening for the project.

CESA 9 Representative Report

- Merlin Van Buren, the Board's Representative to CESA 9, provided a report highlighting the presentation of the Excellence in Teaching program during the meeting.
 - Over the past eight years, 250 participants have successfully completed the program.
 - Notably, 90% of these participants remain active in the teaching profession.
- Additionally, the CESA 9 Board of Control approved the costs associated with shared services at this meeting.

Discussion, Reports/Updates, and/or Action Topics

Minutes of November 18, 2024, Regular Board Meeting

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

Approve the minutes of the November 18, 2024, Regular Board Meeting as printed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

November Payment of Claims and Contracted Services

MOTION: M. Roberts, seconded by P. Townsend.

Consider the Approval of the November 2024 Payment of Claims in the Amount of \$1,108,158.63 and the November 2024 Payment of Contracted Services in the amount of \$817,370.25 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:

- \$106,977.45 in stocks from Kris Krause and Scott Patulski
- \$21,250.00 from the Athletic Booster Club
- \$680.00 from the Northwoods Nordic Ski Club
- \$440.00 from the Rhinelander Police Department
- Fifteen thousand popsicle sticks valued at \$750.00 from Barry Eckardt
- \$210.00 from Jim and Margaret Barnes
- \$100.00 from Brian Bart
- \$500.00 from Robert and Susan Vig

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Resolution Authorizing the School District Budget to Exceed Revenue Limit for Four Years for Non-Recurring Purposes

MOTION: J. Conlin, seconded by M. Van Buren.

Move to adopt the 'Resolution Authorizing the School District Budget to Exceed Revenue Limit for Four Years for Non-Recurring Purposes.'

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Roberts, D. Artus, D. Frey, P. Townsend, R. Lueneburg,
M. Van Buren, R. Counter
Nay: None
Motion passed 8/0

Discussion and/or Action on Resolution Providing for a Referendum Election on the Question of the Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the School District Budget to Exceed Revenue Limit for Four Years for Non-Recurring Purposes

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

Move to adopt the 'Resolution Providing for a Referendum Election on the Question of the Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the School District Budget to Exceed Revenue Limit for Four Years for Non-Recurring Purposes.'

Aye: J. Conlin, M. Roberts, D. Artus, D. Frey, P. Townsend, R. Lueneburg,
M. Van Buren, R. Counter
Nay: None
Motion passed 8/0

Discussion and/or Action on Boys' Cooperative Hockey Team Application Renewal

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

Board approve of the application for the renewal for the Boys' Cooperative Hockey Team for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Girls' Cooperative Hockey Team Application Renewal

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

Board approve the application for the renewal of the Girls' Cooperative Hockey Team for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on 2025 State Education Convention – WI Association of School Boards (WASB) Recommended Delegate Assembly Resolutions

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

Authorize Ronald Counter, Delegate to the 2025 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.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Discussion and/or Action on Revised Policies Relating to Professional Staff, Support Staff, Finance, and Property

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

Board approve the revisions to the following policies:

- Policy 3440 - Job-Related Expenses
- Policy 4440 - Job-Related Expenses
- Policy 6110 - Grant Funds
- Policy 6111 - Internal Controls
- Policy 6112 - Cash Management of Grants
- Policy 6114 - Cost Principles - Spending Federal Funds
- Policy 6325 - Procurement - Federal Grants/Funds
- Policy 7310 - Disposition of Personal Property
- Policy 7450 - Property Inventory

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

Nay: P. Townsend

Motion passed 7/1

Discussion and/or Action on Renewal Agreement with Rural Virtual Academy

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

Board approve the five-year renewal agreement with the Rural Virtual Academy as presented.

Motion passed with voice vote

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Eric Burke provided the following update to the board:

- CD Smith is actively ensuring that all components of the project align with the established budget.
- Superintendent Burke and Michele Cornelius met with Leah Luke to discuss Educators Rising.
 - The district currently offers both a class and a club for students interested in participating.

- Richard Gretzinger, Ryan Ourada, and Superintendent Burke are actively participating in the district's PLC meetings to provide support and coaching for administrators and teachers.

Enter Closed Session

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

Enter closed session pursuant to

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 6:55 p.m.

Closed Session

Closed-session topics were discussed.

Return to Open Session

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

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 P. Townsend.

Approve the resignation of Adam Utingzer and Jared Adams as proposed.

Motion passed with a voice vote.

Adjournment

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

Move to adjourn.

Motion passed with a voice vote at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelley Anderson, Secretary/Deputy Clerk