

Official Minutes
Wednesday, May 11, 2022
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Work Session

1. **Call to Order** by President Baumgartner at 6:32 p.m.
2. **Roll Call** Directors Baumgartner, Gustafson, Haffner, and Hayes were present. Director Jensen joined the meeting at 6:36 p.m. All directors participated in the meeting remotely.

3. **Review of Agenda**

4. **Discussion Items**

- 4.1 **Student/Parent Handbooks (1st Reading)**

Elementary principals collaborated to update the elementary student handbook. Middle school and high school handbooks have also been revised. Dr. Wakeman reviewed core components of each handbook confirming that current practice is being followed including current policy and statute. Principals and other department heads as listed under each handbook highlighted major changes to the handbooks. With a change to becoming an online school, the Innovations handbook has many additions. Only substantive changes were noted and highlighted during the presentation from principals/supervisors. Much of the additional language was added to make the handbooks more consistent at all levels and is consistent with administrative policy. Updated covers will be added to the handbooks following final approval.

- (a) **Elementary Handbook**

Meadow Ridge Elementary Principal, Jen Forbes, presented on behalf of the elementary principals. She noted that significant changes included clearer language regarding student conduct on buses, additions to the student dress code, information regarding suspension and expulsion for PK-2nd grade students, and language regarding instructional resources. The school safety information is not new but is being added to the handbook. The information regarding technology specifically includes Chromebook insurance.

- (b) **Middle School Handbook**

WCMS Principal, Justin McMillan, thanked Dr. Wakeman for her help with the updates to the handbook. Most changes are aligned with the additions to the elementary school handbook. Director Jensen noted that he has seen social media posts from parents that have felt that issues have not been addressed in the handbook. Dr. Rabenhorst explained that several sections, including the section regarding the teaching of controversial issues, have been added to provide clarity to parents. Specifically teachers are allowed to express personal viewpoints while remaining objective and impartial. As a common practice, many teachers only express these views when asked directly by students. Director Jensen thanked administration for adding that clarity. Director

Baumgartner asked for clarification regarding retention at the middle school level, and Mr. McMillan noted that the policy is consistent with elementary retention guidelines but that it is a rare circumstance.

(c) High School Handbook

WCHS Assistant Principal, Kelli Dwyer, presented changes for the high school handbook. Revisions included the deletion of a mission statement that is not currently in use and the addition of information regarding school visitors. One additional bullet point specific to the high school dress code has been added regarding capes and trench coats which can pose a safety concern. More extensive information regarding discipline has been included as a resource for parents and students to aid accountability. Graduation requirements and concurrent enrollment information will align with recent policy revisions, and information about the Pathways model has been included. Sections for Weld Central Online have been struck as they are outlined in the K12 Innovations handbook. Director Haffner asked if the handbook needs to include the language “district property” for specific sections, but Dr. Rabenhorst explained that “school grounds” is the statutory terminology used. The Board briefly discussed types of awards given at ceremonies.

(d) Weld Re-3J Online Innovations Handbook

Innovations Principal, Ryan Witzel, explained that much of the information in the handbook is consistent with that of the high school handbook. Director Jensen asked for clarification for the 24-48 hour time requirement for assignments. Online instructor, Melissa Lovato, had joined the meeting and was able to provide further clarification. Director Hayes asked if there will be more check-ins for struggling students including issues of social emotional needs. Ms. Lovato explained how the current student load does not allow for much of that, but that an improvement in that area will be made for next year. Mr. Witzel also explained a program called Rebel United which would allow older online students to interact with younger students in an effort to help students feel more connected.

(e) WCMS/WCHS Activities & Athletics Handbook

Athletic Director, Ryan Witzel, presented minimal changes to the handbook. The Board discussed fees and how equity could be achieved for all students.

(f) Transportation Handbook

Transportation Coordinator, Nathan Forbes, informed the Board that bus registration will still be required and the process is opening on Monday, May 16. Communication has already been sent. Dr. Rabenhorst reminded Board members that he included them in this communication in case they receive feedback regarding the process. Mr. Forbes noted that changes to the handbook included a new process for students to ride different buses and including specific items (i.e. balloons, skateboards, etc.) that will no longer be allowed on the buses as a safety concern. Director Baumgartner asked about the current

number of bus drivers. Current drivers are not resigning, and Mr. Forbes is working on recruiting some bus drivers that are new to the area. He is also looking forward to using new routing software which will hopefully make routes more efficient.

4.2 2022-2023 Tentative Budget Presentation

Ms. Clark provided a budget summary document prior to the meeting as close to the end of the legislative session as possible. At the regular meeting in April, Ms. Clark outlined estimates for revenue based on Joint Budget Committee information and what was known about the School Finance Act. Ms. Clark covered major aspects of the revenue and expenditure assumptions. Salary and wage schedules as recommended later in the agenda have been used to develop these major expenditures within the budget. Ms. Clark is developing a balanced budget in the general fund; however, numbers will continue to be adjusted prior to approval of the budget. A new grant for mentoring was just secured and those funds will need to be added. In addition to the general fund revenue and expenditures, the district will budget revenue and expenditures pertaining to the federal stimulus funds (ESSER). ESSER funds will encompass the priorities established and presented at previous Board meetings as the funds are designed to be utilized in the same way for the three years they are available. Next fiscal year will be the second year of the spending plan prioritizing intervention, mental health, and technology primarily. The budget must be advertised/posted for public review, and Ms. Clark also reviewed those timeline requirements. Director Baumgartner asked Ms. Clark to explain how budgeting for potential retirees is forecasted.

4.3 2022-2023 Licensed Salary Schedule

The Joint Committee met on April 20 and May 4 and discussed the licensed salary schedule. The group agreed on a step and lane increase recommendation which has been built into expenditure scenarios. The members also recommended a \$1500 (3.7%) increase to the base which would take the base (starting) salary to \$42,000. Based on comparable district salaries in the current year, district administration believes this base would remain competitive within the group, and Dr. Rabenhorst drew a comparison to the recently published base salary in District 6. Some changes were made in the salary index to increase percentages in Steps 2 - 5 after the earning of the Master's degree. This change helped push the bottom salary in the schedule past \$80,000. The increase can be accommodated by the anticipated revenue increase in the School Finance Act. For those on the salary schedule, the average increase is 6.6% from the previous year including step advancement and the base increase. The approximate cost increase is \$780,000.

4.4 2022-2023 Classified Pay Range Schedules

The Joint Committee prioritized work on the Classified Pay Range Schedule due to the need to increase wages for classified employees. The district continues to struggle with filling positions although that is common for other regional school districts. Wages are not necessarily out of line with other school districts but more with other regional industries with the understanding that it is not always easy to compare due to schedule and working conditions. In addition to increasing the starting rate in each pay range, Human Resources

conducted another audit on all classified employees to ensure proper placement within the ranges. With the proposed rates, the overall increase is approximately \$530,000. There are also a small number of titles and/or placement of positions within the schedule which were highlighted. The Bus Driver pay schedule was also recommended to increase from a starting rate of \$18.00 to \$20.00 per hour in order to remain competitive. Both proposed schedules are recommended by the Joint Committee. By consensus the Board agreed that Ms. Clark can move forward with budgeting using the proposed licensed and classified schedules.

4.5 2022-2023 Extra Duty Stipend Schedule

Due to the fairly sizable increases in the above schedules, the Joint Committee did not recommend a change/increase to the Extra Duty Stipend Schedule. The proposed schedule has no changes (other than previously approved positions) from the current year schedule. The Board had no discussion.

4.6 Calendar Discussion

Dr. Rabenhorst has received many inquiries and climate survey comments have revealed a desire by a number of staff members to have the district consider a four day school week. Administration does not desire a four day week; however, with the amount of inquiries and districts in the state moving to a four day week, Dr. Rabenhorst believed that the topic should be addressed. The topic was taken to the Superintendent's Advisory Council for initial discussion. There was no consensus in that group that the topic should even be brought to the Board for initial consideration. Given the split in opinions, Dr. Rabenhorst asked the Board to advise on whether the topic should be put to rest with a decision that a four day week will not be investigated or whether the Board would like a process to be developed to investigate a four day week. A mock four day week calendar was developed to demonstrate what a four day week would look like (including student attendance time and teacher work hours). The investigatory process would be lengthy and include many components a significant research would need to be completed. If there is no desire to have it investigated, Dr. Rabenhorst would formally communicate that with staff members to hopefully end the questions. He further explained that districts can be labeled as a district on a 4-day schedule if one school is on that schedule. Since CCA is on that schedule, Re-3J is labeled as such. He cautions Board members to take that into consideration if research would be done into how many districts currently run such a schedule. The Board discussed financial considerations, transportation needs, athletics, and groups of employees that would be most affected along with best addressing the needs of the students.

- Director Jensen sees the longer hours as a detriment to younger students and that teachers would still likely be working on the non-attendance day.
- Director Gustafson noted that teacher absences are still problematic even though staff is encouraged to arrange health and other appointments for the non-attendance day. She also noted the long days are difficult for elementary students.
- Director Baumgartner sees no benefit to the 4-day week and thinks teacher willingness to participate in extracurricular activities would decline.
- Director Hayes feels she would need more data to make a decision but that she

- also feels that a 4-day week does not currently fit the needs of our district even though some rural areas, farming families specifically, may benefit from it.
- Director Haffner is not in favor of the 4-day week schedule and does not believe it is beneficial to students.

By consensus, the Board agreed that no additional research is necessary and directed Dr. Rabenhorst to communicate that the Board is not interested in researching or pursuing a four day week. Dr. Rabenhorst indicated that he would share this information with SAC members first and then communicate the information with all staff in a subsequent newsletter.


Director Baumgartner asked if Board members had any other questions or comments.

Director Haffner asked for more information regarding graduation. Dr. Rabenhorst noted that the Board members will receive information via email next week.

Director Jensen asked if the names of District Office staff are still available on the website. Ms. Wiener gave the location of the page and confirmed that it is current.

Director Hayes noted that the one act plays at the high school were successful.

5. Adjournment at 8:10 p.m.

Two handwritten signatures are displayed side-by-side. The signature on the left is 'Cynthia Baumgartner' in a cursive script. The signature on the right is 'Paul Jensen' in a cursive script.