

WAUSAU SCHOOL DISTRICT
Education Committee Minutes

Submitted by: Julie Mieska

The EDUCATION COMMITTEE met at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 21, 2011, in the Nicholson Board Room at the Longfellow Administration Center. The meeting had been properly posted in compliance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law.

PRESENT: Dr. Keith Montgomery, Chairperson; Michael Hartkopf, John Ostertag and Jane Rusch

ALSO PRESENT: Michelle Schaefer, President, Board of Education; Theresa Miles and Robb Shepherd, Board Members; Dr. Kathleen Williams, Superintendent of Schools; Cherna Gorder, Assistant Superintendent for Business; Nell Anderson, Director of Education; Thom Hahn, Coordinator of Education; Jeff Joyce, Director of Pupil Services; Joel VerDuin, Director of Technology & Media Services; Dr. Karen Wendorf-Heldt, Director of Education; and Julie Mieska, Recording Secretary

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Dr. Montgomery called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ostertag moved to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2011 Education Committee meeting. Hartkopf seconded. Motion carried.

III. TECHNOLOGY PLAN UPDATE

Joel VerDuin, Director of Technology and Media Services, reported on the progress of the four goals of the District Information and Technology Plan. The first goal includes modification of the technology expectations for students at all levels. With the implementation of the Common Core State Standards that include technology-specific experiences within core areas such as language arts, the revision of technology expectations will need to compliment the implementation of the standards work. The second goal of building a better system of professional development is currently being discussed under the larger umbrella of necessary teacher leadership. The third goal of alignment is being advanced through a process of trying to tie together the work of district technology leadership and the leadership of other content areas. Lastly, the goal of expanding access is being addressed through expansion of wireless capabilities and revision of board policy to consider allowing personally owned devices to be used in the schools.

IV. CORE CONTENT TEAM UPDATE

Dr. Karen Wendorf-Heldt reported that the Core Content Team's work has focused this year on the new state standards, state assessment, the Wausau School District Education Plan, and a self-assessment related to progress on identified priority work from last April. Nell Anderson noted that an 8-member subcommittee has distributed a survey to all teachers in the district, and will use the results to assist in defining the focus and structure of future Professional Growth and Development days.

V. GIRLS HOCKEY CO-OP

Thom Hahn, Coordinator of Education, presented for approval a Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) *Application For Cooperative Team Sponsorship* in Girls Hockey for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. The school districts involved in the

cooperative team sponsorship are D. C. Everest Area School District, Mosinee School District, and the Wausau School District. Each district will contribute \$5,000 to share the cost of this cooperative program. Hahn noted that this money has been budgeted.

Hartkopf moved to recommend to the Board of Education the approval of the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Application For Cooperative Team Sponsorship in Girls Hockey for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. Montgomery seconded. Motion carried 3-2 with Ostertag and Rusch voting nay.

VI. MONTESSORI CHARTER UPDATE

Thom Hahn, Director of Education, and Kelly Halvorsen, Principal at Wausau Area Montessori Charter School (WAMCS), presented an overview of the program. Hahn reviewed the history of WAMCS and its collaborative relationship with Rib Mountain Montessori and Montessori Children's Village. He explained that with both of these schools announcing that they will be closing at the end of the school year, along with the need to bring teacher/student ratios at WAMCS more in line with other schools in the District, discussions began on how to best meet the needs of the Montessori community while remaining fiscally and programmatically viable. The Education Committee was asked to consider three options (A, B and C) that were explained in detail by Hahn and Halvorsen, including the impact each option would have on students, budget, and staffing.

Leah Bjerke, who plans to open Mountain View Montessori, spoke in favor of continuing the same collaborative arrangement between the Wausau School District and the new Mountain View Montessori. Bjerke emphasized the importance of the Montessori three-year cycle of education, and that Montessori parents are strongly in favor of keeping true to the traditional Montessori philosophy.

Hahn stated that the Wausau School District has a strong interest in meeting the needs of the Montessori community in a manner that is fiscally responsible and does not negatively impact, or draw funds away from, District programs supporting the remaining students. With the current fiscal realities being experienced by the District, and with the assurance that five-year-old students attending WAMCS will be able to receive a high quality Montessori education, administration recommended Option C to the Board.

Ostertag moved to recommend to the Board of Education the approval of Option C—financially support the Montessori five-year-old program only at the Wausau Area Montessori Charter School. Hartkopf seconded. Motion carried 3-1 with Rusch voting nay.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Rusch moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. Ostertag seconded. Motion carried.