

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HOLMEN
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 14, 2023 7:00 p.m.
School Board Meeting Room
1019 McHugh Road
Holmen, Wisconsin 54636

01. CALL TO ORDER by J. Dieck, Board President

02. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

03. ROLL CALL by M. Smith, Board Clerk

Board members present were Krystal Lee (Student Representative), Jennifer Dieck, Khadijah Islam, Chris Lau, Lindsay Nied, Maggie Smith, Bridget Todd-Robbins, and Barb Wuensch.

04. NOTICE OF QUORUM by J. Dieck, Board President

With seven Board members present, J. Dieck declared a quorum.

05. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the agenda for the August 14, 2023 Board meeting. Motion made by C. Lau, seconded by K. Islam. Motion carried.

06. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Michelle Wuensch of W7871 Windmill Street in Holmen spoke regarding the proposed 2023-24 proposed base wage rates for educators.

Kristin Thompson-Lerberg of 112 Morris Street in Holmen addressed the Board regarding the proposed 2023-24 base wage rates for educators.

Tracy Dobkoski of W7704 Van Dunk in Holmen spoke regarding the proposed 2023-24 base wage rates for educators.

07. RECOGNITION/THANK YOU

7.1 Ashley Charitable Foundation and The Ronald & Joyce Wanek Foundation

District Administrator Dr. Kristin Mueller thanked the Ashley Charitable Foundation and The Ronald & Joyce Wanek Foundation for their combined donation of \$8,000 to help support the SkillsUSA program at Holmen High School. The funds were awarded through a grant applied for by SkillsUSA advisors Dan Lilla and Ryan Ziegler.

08. REPORTS/DISCUSSION

8.1 2023-24 School Meal Prices

Director of Nutrition Services Mike Gasper presented to the Board for approval on August 28 the 2023-24 school meal prices. The proposed prices would remain the same as 2022-23 meal prices and continue providing meals at no cost for students who qualify for reduced meals for the 23-24 school year.

8.2 Holmen Middle School Adaptive Sports League Positions

Holmen Middle School Activities Director Ben Tashner recommended for the Board's approval on August 28 the addition of a head coach and two assistant coach positions to implement the Adaptive Sports League at HMS.

8.3 2023-24 Base Wage Rates

- a. Hourly and Non-Affiliated
- b. Administrators/Directors
- c. Educators

Director of Human Resources Melissa Kaatz presented to the Board for approval on tonight's consent agenda the base wage rate recommendations for hourly and non-affiliated staff, administrators/directors, and educators. The recommendation uses the Board-approved base wage increase for 2023-24 of 4.0% distributed across all hourly and salaried pay staff groups. The distribution takes the form of an equal \$0.80/hour increase to the base wage rate for all hourly staff and 4.0% increase of base wages for administrators/directors. For educators, the distribution includes \$1,211 per cell of the salary schedule plus supplemental increases. Approved base wage rates would be effective July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

8.4 Peace of Mind Counseling, LLC MOU

Executive Director of Student Services Jill Mason shared with the Board the recommendation to continue the memorandum of understanding with Peace of Mind Counseling LLC, funded with ESSER dollars.

09. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

K. Islam asked that agenda item 9.6 2023-24 Base Wage Rates: a. Hourly and Non-Affiliated, b.

Administrators/Directors, c. Educators be pulled from the consent agenda and considered separately.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the August 14, 2023 Consent Agenda as presented (excluding item 9.6), which includes: July 10 and July 12, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes, Personnel Report, Financial Claims and Accounts, Physical Therapy 66.0301 Agreement, and 2024-25 Budget Development Process. Motion made by M. Smith and seconded by L. Nied. Motion carried.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board approves item 9.6 2023-24 Base Wage Rates: a. Hourly and Non-Affiliated, b. Administrators/Directors, c. Educators. Motion made by C. Lau and seconded by B. Wuensch. Motion carried. In response to questions from K. Islam, Dr. Mueller and Executive Director of Finance & Operations Julie Holman provided the following answers. Dr. Mueller shared comparable educator wages of neighboring and peer districts previously with the Board and educators. Some neighboring districts received additional state funding for 2023-24 and were able to offer greater wage increases. In Holmen, enrollment is decreasing, which reduces revenue. Dr. Mueller shared the educator retention rate in the District is 93%. The District planned for an increase in the CPI, but did not anticipate such a drastic increase to 8%, which would be extremely difficult to adjust for in one budget. Dr. Mueller furthered that it would be wonderful if state funding increased the same rate as the CPI to allow for the same increase to staff wages, but revenue is driven off enrollment, which is decreasing. As of today, there are 81 fewer students at the elementary level than last year. Declining enrollment is a nationwide trend. The State increased the revenue limit, but public funding is determined every two years. With declining enrollment and operating at a deficit, the District will have to make difficult decisions and prioritize what is most important to the District. Dr. Mueller added investing in people is important, which is why there was a mid-year wage increase last year. The District has been able to avoid making the difficult decisions because of the current fund balance and financial planning, but it is not sustainable. She said the District will engage educators in the upcoming discussions. Public schools are facing a fiscal cliff with ESSER dollars ending after 2023-24 and declining enrollment. Last year, the base wage rate increase was 4.7% plus the Board resolution passed for educators.

10. BOARD DEBRIEF

10.1 Board Member comments/reinforcement and committee reports

K. Islam stated seeing so many educators leave the meeting disappointed should paint a picture of how the Board should proceed. She added that she has read all the emails received and listened to stories. She stated that we need to be intentional and work together. She continued that she is hearing that educators do not feel part of the team and all need to be a part of creating a culture of showing teachers they are valued. She stated she would like to see more emphasis on including teacher voice on decisions and increasing communication channels. She stated this includes all staff and she would like to see more collaboration to set aside ourselves for the betterment of the District.

L. Nied stated that she was disappointed attendees left. She said she has read the emails received in the past few weeks, but many were hard to read because there were many misconceptions and misunderstandings. She continued that everyone here would approve large wage increases if it were possible, but the reality is working within a budget. L. Nied said that as a public worker, she knows many of us choose this field over others where we could get paid more because we want to help. She continued the budget is largely based on enrollment, which is decreasing, so funding is decreasing. She added low enrollment is a national concern. She said the Board was uncertain at the beginning of summer if any increase in pay would be possible, but is happy the proposed could be provided. L. Nied said she has asked a lot of questions of administration and can speak to administration doing whatever they can to provide as much as possible. She said some districts were able to give larger increases but either gave up things in other areas or had more revenue to use. She explained she is happy to hear the administration is considering lean studies to find ways to operate more efficiently. She encouraged all to show up to all Board meetings to hear the facts, share their opinions, and ask questions before they come to the table. She concluded that we can find ways to work together to be lean and increase enrollment. She will continue to advocate for all.

M. Smith thanked all for sharing their thoughts tonight, by email, and in person. She thanked administration for answering all of her questions so she could make an informed decision. She stated she knows educators are disappointed and knows it is disheartening when you feel compensation doesn't match your efforts. She

continued that she respects that the Board is in a difficult position of balancing staff expectations and the budget of limited funds. She said it is even tougher when neighboring districts are receiving additional dollars. She explained that it is frustrating that State funding does not keep up with the CPI and education is underfunded at the national level. She urged all to speak with legislators regarding education funding. She recognized the current salary structure creates or maintains inequities and wants to continue to work on addressing this. She said she hopes people will continue to share their thoughts and appreciates the solution-focused ideas she has received. She concluded that she reads every email received and appreciates all that staff do.

B. Todd-Robbins thanked all educators. She said the topic of wages has not been an easy topic for anyone. She continued that administration provided thorough information. She said the outcome is not what everyone wanted, but she is happy there is a solution that benefited all. She stated that she liked what K. Islam said regarding collaboration and building relationships. She stated she knows how much time and energy have been devoted to all of this and is hopeful we will come out stronger and more unified.

B. Wuensch echoed the comments of other Board members. She added that she is thankful especially to Julie Holman for all the work she does to keep the District from needing to make the difficult financial decisions that so many other districts already have. B. Wuensch continued that her appreciation of educators remains unchanged.

J. Dieck thanked all who attended. She stated that she knows not all were happy with the outcome, but she is glad the District could provide the increases it did within the budget constraints. She stated the Board listens and is dedicated to hearing concerns. She said staff are appreciated for all they do.

10.2 Correspondence received

10.3 Board Meeting Schedule

- a. August 28, 2023 Back to School Kickoff
- b. August 28, 2023 Board Meeting, 7pm
- c. September 11, 2023 Board Meeting, 7pm
- d. September 25, 2023 Board Meeting, 7pm

11. ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education adjourns the regular meeting of August 14, 2023 at 7:56 p.m. Moved by C. Lau. Seconded M. Smith. Motion carried.

Submitted by Maggie Smith, Board Clerk.

