

## W-E-M BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Monday, January 26, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

The WEM Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, January 26, 2026 at the Waterville Building. The meeting was called to order by Board Vice Chairman Gary Michael at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Michael, Jon Bakken, Jeff Stangler, June Rezac (arrived 7:13 p.m.), Troy Tolzman (arrived 6:55 p.m.), Jay Schneider, Brenda Heuss, and Grace Bartz, attended the meeting. Also present at the meeting were Superintendent Mark Winter, Principal Brandon Tagg, and Business Manager Margaret Jewison.

Motion by Stangler and seconded by Heuss to approve the agenda. Five members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Stangler to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from Dec. 15. Five members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Schneider to approve the Dec. 6-Jan 26 Financial Report. The bills and payroll from the report were \$3,346,523.38, deposits were \$1,394,549, and transfers of \$2,650,000. There were three pay periods on this financial report. Items discussed included a payment of \$3,822 to South Central Service Cooperative for PSEO Tuition, a payment of \$7,178.83 to ABDO, Inc. for Auditor Services, a payment of \$9362.50 to Safetyfirst Playground Maintenance for Playground Wood Chips, and a payment of \$12,753 to Timm's Trucking and Excavating for Long-Term Facilities Maintenance.

Five members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

### RECOGNITION

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Bakken to approve the following monetary donation.

- The Class of 1958 donated \$125 to the WEM Elementary.
- Post #311 American Legion Auxiliary donated \$100 to WEM Elementary.
- St. Peter "Bell" Lutheran Church donated \$100 to WEM Elementary.
- WEM Football Booster Club donated \$2,500 to WEM Football.
- Buccaneer Softball Booster Club donated \$1,995 to WEM Softball.
- Waterville Lions Club donated \$10,000 to Scholarship Donation.
- Waterville Lions Club donated \$1,125.00 to Travis' Trades Donation.
- Waterville Lions Club donated \$150.00 to Clay Target Donation.
- Waterville Lions Club donated \$450.00 to Band & Choir Donation.
- Waterville Lions Club donated \$75.00 to Eagle Bluff Donation.
- Mayo Clinic Foundation donated \$162.02 to Career Fair Donation.
- Partners In Education donated \$4,175.00 to Skate Time Donation.
- Partners In Education donated \$1,825.00 to Mount Kato Donation.

Five members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

### PRESENTATION

WEM High School Principal Brandon Tagg gave a presentation on high school course catalog options for the upcoming year.

### VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Bakken to approve the consent agenda which included the following items:

Approve the following new hires.

- Nolan Grose - Volunteer supervisor for baseball open gym.
- Patty Pettis - FCLA, \$837 (for half of the school year).

Approve the following 2025-2026 coach.

- Tauston Taylor - Varsity boys basketball volunteer.

Approve the following resignation.

- Tricia Slayton - Paraprofessional, effective January 16, 2026.

Approve the following land change.

- Cameron Jensen, BS10 to MS20 (corrected from MS30 to MS20) effective January 15, 2026.

Approve the revised additional assignment roster for the 2025-2026 school year - see attachment.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

## REPORTS

WEM K-4 and Junior High Principal Myles Knutson submitted the following reports:

Greetings School Board Members,

Here are a few updates from the Middle School:

- **Thank You Crisis Response Team:** With the recent tragic loss of 7th grader Brady Kessler, our school community has been mourning together while supporting one another through this difficult time. We are deeply grateful to the South Central Service Cooperative for providing a Crisis Response Team to guide and support our students and staff through this unthinkable tragedy. The team included dedicated counselors and professionals from Le Sueur County, LCWM, Madelia, and Jordan. Our thoughts and hearts remain with the Kessler and Pumper families as we continue to grieve this loss together.

- **One Site Planning:** As we plan the transition to a single site next year, our teachers and administrators have done an exceptional job working collaboratively to develop a strong and thoughtful plan for next year's course offerings. Staff have shown remarkable flexibility as we navigate course adjustments and new teaching assignments, always keeping students at the center of the conversation. It has been both refreshing and rewarding to work alongside such a dedicated team, united in our efforts to make next year's middle school experience the very best it can be for our students.

- **Positive Student Behavior:** We have been incredibly proud of how our students have returned from break, demonstrating resilience, knowing their limits, and supporting one another while continuing to show strong BUCS Pride. Their ability to adjust and re-engage has been impressive. Throughout the months of January and February, we will be intentionally reteaching BUCS Pride expectations through targeted lessons and activities to reinforce positive behaviors and ensure the second half of the school year is the best it can possibly be for all students.

Thank you,

Myles Knutson

Greetings School Board Members,

Here are a few updates from the Elementary School:

- **Elementary PBIS Update:** Our elementary PBIS team has truly impressed me this year through their

creativity, dedication, and commitment to students. The engaging events they have organized such as assemblies, Frosty Bingo, and themed dress up days have brought joy, connection, and a strong sense of community to our school. Beyond these celebrations, the team meets regularly to review behavior data and thoughtfully plan supports for students who need them most. This team is among the most important in our school, as their work is foundational to the positive climate and culture we strive to build and sustain year after year.

- Catalyst Approach: All three sites are excited to partner once again with The Catalyst Approach to provide professional development focused on classroom management and effective behavioral strategies. We are especially looking forward to our elementary teachers working closely with our trainer, Nicole, and to a small group of staff visiting another school to observe these strategies being successfully implemented in classrooms across other districts.

- The Buzz of Learning: I continue to be impressed by the fun, interactive learning experiences taking place across our school. From students heading to the wrestling room to play Gaga Ball or bowling during physical education, to Reader's Theater performances that build confidence and fluency, learning is active and engaging. Our phonics lessons are both interactive and intentional, strengthened by the READ Act training our staff has been completing. Add to that the countless art projects and hands on science lessons, and it is clear that students are learning by doing. If you take a walk through our halls at any time of the day, you will hear the buzz of learning and see students engaged in experiences that truly bring a smile to your face.

Thank you,

Myles Knutson

9-12 January Board Minutes

WEM Senior High Principal Brandon Tagg submitted the following reports:

Well after a stellar 16 day Winter break, we came back to school on January 5th with two weeks left in the quarter for students to complete their first semester classes. Most students were already on a great path to make sure grades were in a good position, but some students needed to get a last quiz/test/paper turned in to make the class complete. We were proud of the low number of students who failed only one class this semester. Second semester started on January 20th, with a whole new set of classes for students to choose from. It has been a good start of the quarter so far.

Mr. Tagg, accompanied by Ms. Brown, checked out the JA Finance event on January 21st to see if it is a possible field trip to take 9th graders on in a future Careers class (see presentation later). Students were using I-Pads to walk around a simulation of life's issues (Child Care/Credit Cards/Student Loans, etc...), and deciding the best options on what to do next in their simulated lives. It is a company that started the Biz Town event, and they are now trying to get middle/high school students to do a system as well. It could be something we consider doing this year, but may be a better option for classes we offer next year.

Juniors will look over ASVAB Test results on the 28th this month to see what possible careers they could be interested in for the future. Members of the Army Reserve will walk them through the process to assist them in deciding possible opportunities to try out in college after next year.

Sports has been up and down all season for our basketball teams, wrestling teams and other joint programs we share with neighboring districts/towns. We hope our support continues to show and give these teams the love they deserve for being a Buccaneer. As always, the true spirit of our school is shown each and every day.

Brandon Tagg

WEM High School Principal

WEM Activities Director Jeff Boran submitted the following reports:

Activities :

The 2025-2026 WEM ExCEL Award winners are juniors, Alix Velzke & Gavin Atherton. This MSHSL Awards recognizes Juniors for Excellence in Community, Education and Leadership.

The 2025-2026 WEM Triple A Award (Arts, Athletics, Academics) winner are seniors, Addison Condon & Auston Holicky. This MSHSL special multi-level recognition award recognizes high school seniors active in league sponsored fine arts and athletic activities and show success in the classroom. Late last week we also learned Addison was selected as the Female Subsection 5 winner and now will be considered for the Region 2A Triple A Award.

Congratulations Addison and Good Luck!

WEM One-Act Play Team: Sub-Section 5 meet was this past Saturday 1/24/2026 hosted by WEM High School. This year's play was entitled "Nellie", by Robby Steltz. The Director is Andrew Velishek. The Gopher Conference event was this past Saturday 1/17/26 at Blooming Prairie HS. This event is not scored and teams are not ranked. Teams receive input from judges and is a very good lead up to the Subsection meet!

The Gopher Conference Honors Music (Band & Choir) Concert and Visual Arts Display will be hosted by NRHEG HS on Saturday February 7, 2026. The Concert will begin at 1:30 p.m. Conference student artwork will be on display beginning around 12:30 pm. Anyone is invited and welcome to attend. There will be an admission charge of \$8 adults and \$5 for students (K-12). Students from all conference schools have been selected and have begun practicing. All Conference schools will have a combined practice on Friday February 6, during the day. Directors and Instructors have been working with students in preparation for months.

Section Tourney time just around the corner!

Wrestling (Coop w/ JWP) gets started February 12 with Team Wrestling. WEM is hosting the Team Semifinals and Championship Saturday Feb. 14. The Section Individual Tournament is Saturday Feb. 21 in Janesville.

Girls Gymnastics will begin February 12 in Mankato. (Waseca Coop)

Girls Hockey Team will begin February 4. (Waseca Coop)

Boys Hockey team will begin February 17. (Waseca Coop)

Girls Basketball will begin February 23 or 26.

Large Group Choir March 2 (at NRHEG HS) & Band March 16 (at Maple River HS).

Boys Basketball will begin March 3.

Spring Activities Registration will be opening soon with practices beginning in March 9. Clay Targets, Baseball, Softball, Boys & Girls Track Coop with JWP. Speech has already begun practicing and look to start competitions Feb. 7.

Community Education:

ECFE night classes will be getting started again in March.

School Age Childcare continues to operate safely. Summer 2026 Registration will begin soon. School year 2026-2027 registrations in March. The plan is to include Wrap Around care for Preschool students beginning in 2026-2027.

Little Bucs Preschool registrations for the 2026-2027 school year will begin in mid to late February.

Driver Education Classrooms for 2026 dates are being planned for June and October 2026. Specific dates TBD. Most Behind the wheel occurs in June, July & August. When road conditions are favorable we are able to continue to complete Behind the Wheel Training.

WEM Board Member Reports

Board members Bakken, Michael, and Rezac gave reports on the MSBA Convention they attended.

WEM Board Committee Reports

There were no Board Committee reports.

WEM Superintendent Mark Winter presented the following:

- Superintendent Winter spoke about the following items: MSBA Convention, (AI Breakout Session, MSHSL, MCA Reports), video mapping at the school, having an auction for extra items, and reporting the Morristown building sale is on hold.

#### INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

The board had the first readings of the following policies (See attachments):

511 Student Fundraising.

612.1 Development of Parent and Family Engagement Policies for Title 1 programs redline.

615 Testing Accommodations, Modifications, and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and LEP Students redline.

619 Staff Development for Standards redline.

A work session has been scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss budget items and the sale of the Morristown School building.

#### ACTION

Motion by Michael and seconded by Stangler to approve the following policies:

423 Employee-Student Relationships

525 Violence Prevention (Applicable to Students and Staff)

526 Hazing Prohibition

610 Field Trips

See attachments on these four policies.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Michael to approve the proposal for human resources and payroll services - see attachment.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Michael and seconded by Heuss to approve the HVAC Renovation Phase II Asbestos Removal Bid Results - see attachment.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Six members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

June Rezac, Attest

Jay Schneider, Attest