

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF WEST ALLIS-WEST MILWAUKEE, ET AL.
1205 S. 70th Street, West Allis, WI 53214 (Board Meeting Room 6th Floor)
9333 W. Lincoln Ave., West Allis, WI 53227 (District Administration Office)

**Regular Board of Education Meeting
February 24, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order

President Leigh called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on February 24, 2025, at 1205 S. 70th Street, West Allis.

2. Becker led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Roll Call

Roll was called with the following members present: Joe Becker, Brendan Burns, Jane Carr, Amy Deal, Brian Keller, Kristen Keyser, Rebecca Lee, Noah Leigh, and Jeff Sikich.

4. Declaration of Public Notice

5. Modifications to Agenda

None

6. James E. Dottke Project-Based Learning High School Student Showcase

James E. Dottke Project-Based Learning High School Principal Goelz briefly reviewed the District's Theory of Action and how it connects to the learning that the students will be sharing. Principal Goelz also recognized math teacher Ms. Brunette and social studies teacher Mr. Dederling. Freshman Nikolas Rodriguez, a student of Ms. Brunette, detailed how he incorporated algebra while creating a steampunk-themed clock. Freshmen Shane Jafuta and Lorenzo Allen, who are both students of Mr. Dederling, presented their project entitled "The History of U.S. Aviation", which included a detailed poster with hand drawn plane replicas, as well as handmade model plan. President Leigh and Dr. Robinson thanked parents, students, and staff for attending.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.1 Legislative Update:

Governor Evers introduces state budget:

Governor Evers introduced his fourth state budget to the Wisconsin State Legislature, proposing over \$3.15 billion in new K-12 education investments. The operating budget is nearly \$119 billion over the biennium, an over \$10 billion increase compared to the current fiscal year. The budget focuses on equitable funding, mental health support, literacy improvement, and reducing financial burdens on families. Key initiatives include general equalization aid, targeted categorical aids, and sparsity aid. The budget also includes \$300 million for expanding comprehensive mental health services, \$84.6 million for improving early literacy, and \$154.8 million for free school meals for all students.

Money allocation for early literacy initiatives will likely revert to the surplus:

Wisconsin's state Rep. Joel Kitchens is drafting a bill to release \$50 million in early literacy funding from the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) to avoid it reverting to the surplus when the deadline passes on June 30. The Wisconsin Supreme Court agreed to hear a case to review the Governor's partial veto of the appropriation bill and determine whether the Joint Finance Committee is improperly holding onto the money. However, the court has yet to schedule oral arguments in the case, and with the upcoming Supreme Court election, it appears less likely the court will reach a decision before the deadline for the lapse of funds. The \$50 million was allocated to fund the mandated changes to how Wisconsin children learn to read in 2023. The money is tied up as the Legislature awaits oral arguments and a decision by the state Supreme Court over whether the governor had the authority to strike funding for school boards and charter school compliance from the law.

7.2 District Recognitions:

2024 Sportsmanship Award - West Allis Dogs Boys Volleyball:

Congratulations to the West Allis Dogs Co-Op Boys Volleyball Team for being named the 2024 Sportsmanship Award recipient by the Wisconsin High School Volleyball Officials Association. The award recognizes teams that stand out for their respect, integrity, and positive impact on the game. Congratulations to coach Marcus Meier and the team!

Nathan Hale Wrestling State Qualifier:

Congratulations to the Nathan Hale Wrestling Team who defeated Wauwatosa CO-OP and Wisconsin Lutheran to claim the Sectional Championship! Their hard work, determination, and teamwork have earned them a spot in the WIAA Team State Wrestling Tournament. Good luck at State!

Nathan Hale Wrestling State Qualifier:

Congratulations to Nathan Hale's Kya Krueger on making history as the school's first-ever female wrestling state qualifier! Her dedication, perseverance, and hard work have paved the way for this incredible achievement. Congratulations and good luck at State!

West Allis Central Wrestling State Qualifiers:

Congratulations to wrestlers: Deuce Sharp, Amadi Cameron, Anthony Galvez and Caleb Huber who qualified for the WIAA state tournament. They will compete in Madison later this week! Congratulations and good luck!

West Allis Central Wrestling:

Congratulations to West Allis Central junior wrestler Deuce Sharp on achieving his 100th varsity win during the sectional finals! This remarkable milestone is a testament to his dedication, hard work, and consistency throughout his wrestling career.

Nathan Hale Cheerleading:

Congratulations to the Nathan Hale Cheerleading team on an incredible performance at the State Championship! Competing in the Small All-Girl Non-Tumble division, they finished strong, earning an impressive 3rd place overall. This achievement is a testament to their hard work, dedication, and commitment throughout the season. Way to go, Huskies!

West Allis Central Cheerleading:

Congratulations to the West Allis Central Cheerleading team on qualifying for and competing at the State Championship in just their third season as a competition team! Their dedication, growth, and hard work have led to an incredible accomplishment. Way to go, Bulldogs!

Strategic Planning - School Perceptions:

The Strategic Plan survey sent out by School Perceptions will be emailed to staff this week and received via mail and email by families next week. This survey includes important questions to help us gather insights about our district and guide future planning and priorities.

Steering Committee Sign Up:

Sign up for the Strategic Planning Steering Committee will close on Friday, February 28th. If you are interested in joining the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, please complete the form and indicate your interest.

7.3 Other Updates & Information Items:

Community Visits and Meetings:

Dr. Robinson gave an update on his recent meetings and community visits since February 10, 2025, which included the following meetings: Monthly City/ Schools, West Allis Rotary Club, and State Representative Tenorio. Dr. Robinson also noted the following school visits: Instructional Rounds at Hale, West Milwaukee, Central, Irving, and Dottke; Superintendent Connections Visits shadowing staff and providing side-by-side coaching; and visited Hoover, Wilson, Irving, and Franklin Elementary Schools during District-wide Professional Development Days.

“The Voice”- Student Advisory Committee:

Dr. Robinson introduced Student Advisory Committee “The Voice” representative John Gruichich, a senior at Nathan Hale. Mr. Gruichich is a member of the core team for Renaissance (student leadership team), cross country and track teams, National Honor Society, and Rotary. Additionally, Mr. Gruichich is enrolled in multiple AP classes. Mr. Gruichich stated that for the first time in twenty years, Hale’s wrestling team took first place at sectionals and noted Kya Krueger is the team’s first-ever female wrestling state qualifier. Additionally, four members of the varsity wrestling team, Jay Krueger, Tristan North, Thomas Medley, and Brody Sardina, have each achieved over 100 career wins this season. Varsity boys basketball player Wilson Scherer recently joined the 1,000 points club and is the fifth person in the history of the school ever to do so. Rehearsals for Les Miserables are underway and performances will run April 24-27, 2025. Lastly, track season starts March 10, 2025.

Detachment:

At the close of business on January 31, 2025, there were three detachment petitions filed, and they are as follows:

- Petition 1 was filed on November 15, 2024- Includes 1 parcel and 2 signatures;
- Petition 2 was filed on January 27, 2025, at 9:00 AM- includes 134 parcels and 116 signatures;
- Petition 3 was filed on January 27, 2025, at 10:00 AM- includes 1 parcel and 1 signature.

- During the review of the petitions, it was determined that Petitions 1 and 3 met the statutory requirements and would be forwarded to the board for consideration.
- According to 117.12 (3), “During the month of February, each affected school board must give the petitioners an opportunity to meet with the board to present reasons for the proposed reorganization before adopting a resolution either granting or denying the detachment.”
- Petitions 1 and 3 were heard during the WAWM Board meeting on 2/10/25, which included presentations from the petitioners and questions from the board. Tonight, the district will provide a specific response to Petitions 1 and 3.
- Upon further examination of Petition 2 we noticed it contained a parcel and signature of the petitioner from Petition 1.
- Upon further review by our legal counsel, and in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Attorney, we have determined that Petition 2 filed on January 27, 2025, is void under Wis. Stat. 117.05(4)(b), as it contains territory proposed to be detached that is already pending in another proceeding.
- The rules prohibit multiple petitions from homeowners during the same review cycle.
- DPI has determined that once a petition has been deemed as “void” then it is unrevivable.

8. Public Comment(s):

- Emelie Fearson, district resident.
- Jeff Borrelli, district resident.
- Torin Misko, district resident.
- Jessica Gentile, district resident.

9. Board Reports:

9.1 Review of Board Calendar

President Leigh reviewed the Board calendar.

9.2 Board Committee Reports:

9.2.1 Employee Engagement & Culture – Keller

Committee Chair Keller reported that the Committee met on February 18, 2025. The Committee discussed the Substitute Program and agreed that once an additional Cabinet-level discussion takes place, the Committee will revisit the topic at its next meeting. The Committee reviewed the vacancy report, which is just a bit over 0.5%. The Committee also discussed the exit interview process and how to better correlate the data.

9.2.2 Financial Stability & Efficiency – Burns

Committee Chair Burns reported that the Committee met on February 17, 2025. The Committee reviewed the booklet and presentation for the 2023-24 Audit Workshop. The Committee discussed the compensation model and next steps, housing for All WHEDA Bid for the Longfellow property, Committed Fund Balance (\$3 million - Retiree Benefits, \$2.75 million - Comp Model, \$700,000 - Teacher Computer Refresh). The Committee also received a referendum update, which included financial services, the project manager position, and bids for construction management and owner’s representative.

9.2.3 Recreation & Community Services – Becker

Committee Member Lee reported that the Committee met on February 17, 2025. The Committee discussed construction and project updates. A “Save the Date” for the Activity and Fitness Center (AFC) and groundbreaking, which will take place on Monday, April 7, 2025. The Committee has also continued work on the Athletic Strategic Plan, which included a date to review the plan with athletic directors, coaches, youth programs, etc. and determine a timeline for an upcoming Board Workshop. President Leigh requested that the Committee consider investigating opportunities for potentially adding flag football for girls.

9.3 Board Member Reports of Community Events:

- President Leigh, Mr. Burns, Ms. Carr, and Ms. Keyser attended the WAWM PTA Council’s Annual Founder’s Day Carnival at Central on February 23, 2025. A special thank you to the WAWM PTA for all they do!
- Ms. Keyser encouraged people to attend Peter Pan Jr. at West Milwaukee Intermediate, which has performances February 27-28 and March 1-2, 2025.
- President Leigh and Ms. Lee attended the Nathan Hale Unified Basketball game against Cedarburg and noted it was a wonderful time and a great turnout.
- Mr. Becker attended Frank Lloyd Wright’s 8th grade girls volleyball games and commented the sport is drawing a lot of interest and has two full teams.
- President Leigh and Mr. Burns attended the girls Battle of Dogs basketball game and commended them on their hard work.

- President Leigh has attended several wrestling tournaments and noted that the Hale and Central Wrestling Teams compete not only as a whole but individually in their respective weight classes. Mr. Leigh also noted that the Nathan Hale boys wrestling team qualified 9 athletes for individual state in addition to the team qualifying for team state.

9.4 Other Updates & Information Items – Leigh

None

10. Consent Agenda:

Motion by Ms. Carr, second by Mr. Burns to approve the following:

10.1 Approval of Board Minutes

The minutes of the February 10, 2025, Regular Board Meeting and the minutes of the February 17, 2025, Board of Education Workshop Meeting.

10.2 Employment Summary:

Appointments:

Full Name	Title	Location	Hire Status	Contract Type	Effective Date
Bell, Brenda	EA (SPED)	Franklin	New	EA	2/24/2025
Hopkins, Nichelle	EA (SPED)	W. Milw	New	EA	2/24/2025
Semb, Kelsey	Teacher (SPED)	Central	New	Renewing	2/20/2025

Resignations/Retirements:

Full Name	Title	Location	Type	Effective Date
DeBenedetto, Kirsti	Teacher (Gr 1/2)	Franklin	Rescinded Resignation	2/14/2025
Jones, Ted	Custodian	FLW	Resignation	2/18/2025
Kempen, Jeffrey	Facility Support	Rec Dept	Rescinded Acceptance	2/17/2025
Miller, Allison	SSW	Franklin	Rescinded Resignation	2/14/2025
Moore, Shaprice	Teacher (SPED)	Central	Resignation	2/19/2025
Voelker, Katrine	Teacher (Art)	W Milw	Resignation	2/06/2025

10.3 Supplementary Contracts

Supplementary contracts as listed on the February 24, 2025, report.

10.4 Financial Summary

The Financial Report Summary for the Month of January 2025 including Receipts #7255 through #7305 in the amount of \$25,973,670.50 and Vouchers Payable #374610 through #374947, wire transfers, and payroll disbursements in the amount of \$12,946,750.87 and Statement of Revenue and Expenditures for Seven Months Ending January 31, 2025.

Motion carried unanimously.

11. Action Item(s):

11.1 Pat Connaughton Foundation Grant Acceptance – Norris & Strasser

Accept the grant donation from the Pat Connaughton Foundation, in the amount of \$125,000, for the purpose of installing a Connaughton Court to replace the main basketball court at West Allis Central Fieldhouse.

Motion by Ms. Keyser, second by Ms. Carr to accept the Pat Connaughton Foundation Grant.

Motion carried unanimously.

11.2 2023-2024 Annual Financial Statements and Audit Report – Norris

Approval of the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended June 30, 2024.

Motion by Ms. Keyser, second by Ms. Lee to approve the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended June 30, 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

11.3 Request to Alter School District Boundaries – Dr. Robinson & Norris

11.3.1 New Berlin Resident - JWJ

1. Approve a resolution denying the petition to detach one land parcel from the School District of West Allis-West Milwaukee, et al. and attach the property to the New Berlin School District, for the reasons presented.
2. Authorize the Board President to prepare and include with the Resolution, a summary of the rationale for the Board's denial of the Petition as discussed by the Board at the February 24, 2025, meeting.

Motion by Ms. Keyser, second by Mr. Burns to (1) Approve a resolution denying the petition to detach one land parcel from the School District of West Allis-West Milwaukee, et al. and attach the property to the New Berlin School District, for the reasons presented. (2) Authorize the Board President to prepare and include with the Resolution, a summary of the rationale for the Board's denial of the Petition as discussed by the Board at the February 24, 2025, meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

11.3.2 New Berlin Resident – JKM

1. Approve a resolution denying the petition to detach one land parcel from the School District of West Allis-West Milwaukee, et al. and attach the property to the New Berlin School District, for the reasons presented.
2. Authorize the Board President to prepare and include with the Resolution, a summary of the rationale for the Board's denial of the Petition as discussed by the Board at the February 24, 2025, meeting.

Motion by Ms. Keyser, second by Mr. Becker to (1) Approve a resolution denying the petition to detach one land parcel from the School District of West Allis-West Milwaukee, et al. and attach the property to the New Berlin School District, for the reasons presented. (2) Authorize the Board President to prepare and include with the Resolution, a summary of the rationale for the Board's denial of the Petition as discussed by the Board at the February 24, 2025, meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

12. Workshop(s):

12.1 AGR Data Review – Ruffolo

Keith Ruffolo, Coordinator of Elementary Education, led the Achievement Gap Reduction (AGR) Data Review Workshop. Mr. Ruffolo reviewed the AGR timeline, allocated funds, classes by school and grade, current steps, and FastBridge performance goal, which is to reduce the number of students in the high-risk category by 10% according to the FastBridge aReading & aMath assessments. Mr. Ruffolo reviewed fall through winter K-3 district data and provided immediate next steps for reading (personal reading plans) and math (professional learning around HMH Into Math). Long-term next steps include master schedule updates, teacher collaboration time, leadership capacity building, and a universal screening process. The Board will receive its next update in July 2025.

12.2 Financial Stability & Efficiency – Norris

Aaron Norris, Assistant Superintendent, led the Financial Stability & Efficiency Workshop, which detailed enrollment (actual students) and membership (resident students who live in District boundaries) trends and a combined presentation of the below agenda items:

12.2.1 Second Friday in January 2025 Pupil Count (6,618)

12.2.2 2025-26 Enrollment Projections (6,464)

12.2.3 2025-26 Estimated Revenue Limit Calculation (3-year Average Membership of 7,418 x Per Pupil Allocation of \$11,763 = Total Revenue Limit Authority of \$87,258,973)

12.2.4 2025-26 Preliminary Budget Projections (2025-2026 is Year 1 in the State's biennial budget (2025-2027), which means the District's preliminary budget is in flux until State Budget Approval. Typically, the District will have some preliminary information by mid-April/early-May. State budget factors based on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Governor's Ask, WASB and WASDA, District's Ask were considered when determining the financial impact. Revenue and expense assumptions projected a [balanced] projected 2024-26 budget of \$8,873,090.)

To meet District priorities, several strategies and next steps were presented, including a proposed Advocacy Resolution for 2025-27 Biennial Budget.

13. Reconvene as a Committee of the Whole:

Motion by Ms. Deal, second by Mr. Burns to reconvene as a Committee of the Whole at 8:58 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

13.1 Roll Call

Roll was called with the following members present: Joe Becker, Brendan Burns, Jane Carr, Amy Deal, Brian Keller, Kristen Keyser, Rebecca Lee, Noah Leigh, and Jeff Sikich.

13.2 Approve Advocacy Resolution for 2025-27 Biennial Budget – Norris

Approval of the Advocacy Resolution for the 2025-27 Biennial Budget as detailed on pages 7-9 immediately following the February 24, 2025, minutes.

Motion by Mr. Sikich, second by Mr. Keller to approve the [Advocacy Resolution for the 2025-27 Biennial Budget](#).

Motion carried unanimously.

14. End of Recording & Adjournment:

Motion by Ms. Keyser, second by Mr. Keller, to adjourn the meeting at 9:02 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Carr, Board Clerk



WEST ALLIS–WEST MILWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Learning That Works

Esteemed Senators and Representatives,

Attached is a resolution passed by our Board of Education, urging you to support a variety of critical measures in the 2025-2027 Biennial State Budget. This resolution includes advocacy for a 90% reimbursement for special education, an increase in the low-revenue ceiling to \$12,500 for the 2025-26 school year, a \$425 per pupil increase each year of the biennial to address spendable revenue, and other key financial supports designed to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students. These measures are vital for the sustainability and success of our district and the broader community.

One of our primary requests is an increase in the low-revenue ceiling to \$12,500 for the 2025-26 school year. This increase is essential for districts like ours, where financial constraints severely limit our ability to provide adequate resources for students. Currently, 72.9% of all school districts in Wisconsin receive funding below the state average revenue limit per student. Raising the ceiling would allow us to better meet the needs of our students and continue offering high-quality education. Moreover, the stark disparities between school districts in Wisconsin create an environment where some districts thrive, while others struggle to meet basic needs. The gap between "have" and "have-not" districts only widens without the necessary financial adjustments, further entrenching inequities in education across the state.

In addition, we strongly urge you to address the issue of spendable revenue by implementing a \$425 per pupil increase each year of the biennial. This increase is essential for ensuring that all districts can provide the necessary services and opportunities to their students, regardless of local wealth. The current funding levels have not kept pace with the growing demands of our schools, and this increase would help ensure that each student receives the educational experience they deserve.

Like many districts across the state, we have repeatedly had to turn to referendums to secure the resources we need. This burden disproportionately affects communities with lower-income constituents. It is imperative that we have fair, equitable reimbursement for students with disabilities and that we secure the financial flexibility necessary to sustain our educational programs.

We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to public education, and we encourage a collaborative approach to addressing these critical issues. Please feel free to reach out if you'd like to discuss any of these points further.

Thank you for your consideration of our resolution as we continue our work to advocate for all of Wisconsin's children.

Warm regards,

Dr. Tarrynce Robinson
Superintendent

Aaron Norris
Assistant Superintendent

Noah Leigh
Board President

Amy Deal
Board Vice-President



West Allis-West Milwaukee Board of Education 2025 Legislative Advocacy Resolution

Whereas, The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) estimates the state of Wisconsin will have a gross general fund balance of approximately \$4.0 billion at the end of the current fiscal year and *this figure does not include the \$1.9 billion plus balance* in the state's budget stabilization ("rainy day") fund, which continues to be at a record-high level; and

Whereas, The school property tax levy as a percentage of personal income (tax burden) is at 1.5%, a record low level, down from the peak of 2.81% in 1993; and

Whereas, According to the Wisconsin Public Policy Forum, the state's ranking for spending on K-12 schools totaled 3.8% of personal income in 2022, which was down from 3.9% in 2021 and 5.2% in 2000; and

Whereas, The state's ranking in special education spending in 2022 was 31st, down from 24th-highest in 2021 and 8th-highest in 2000, representing a major shift in the single largest area of state and local spending; and

Whereas, Approximately 1,293 students of the 6,654 total student population (19.4%) in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District is identified in need of Special Education services; and

Whereas, School districts in high-poverty areas are hit the hardest by special education costs and state government has reimbursed districts for less than one-third of their total special education costs over the last decade; and

Whereas, Students receiving Special Education services in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District should not be treated differently than students who attend Private School Choice Programs in relation to the reimbursement for services received; and

Whereas, The West Allis-West Milwaukee School District needs adequate resources to support students with disabilities to reduce the amount currently transferred from the general funds to cover the gap between mandated special education costs and state funding; and

Whereas, Increases in special education funding provide more predictable, stable funding that supports all students due to less of a transfer from the district's general fund; and

Whereas, Increasing the low-revenue ceiling will provide a more sustainable and fair distribution of state funds, addressing disparities in per-pupil funding across districts; and

Whereas, nearly 73% of all school districts in Wisconsin receive funding below the state average Revenue per Member; and

Whereas, Spendable dollars for schools are crucial for ensuring equitable access to quality education and enabling districts to meet the diverse needs of their students.

Let It Be Resolved that the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District Board of Education strongly endorses and advocates for the Wisconsin State Legislature to:

- Increase Special Education funding to 90%,
- Raise the low-revenue ceiling to \$12,500, and
- Provide all public school districts with spendable dollars in the form of \$425 per student in the first year of the 2025-26 State Biennial Budget.

This resolution reflects the Board’s commitment to securing equitable and sustainable funding to support the needs of all students and ensure the continued success of public education in Wisconsin.

Mr. Noah Leigh, Board President

Date

Ms. Amy Deal, Vice President

Date

Ms. Kristen Keyser, Board Treasurer

Date

Ms. Jane Carr, Board Clerk

Date

Mr. Joe Becker, Board Member

Date

Mr. Brendan Burns, Board Member

Date

Mr. Brian Keller, Board Member

Date

Ms. Rebecca Lee, Board Member

Date

Mr. Jeff Sikich, Board Member

Date

Dr. Tarrynce Robinson, Superintendent

Date

Mr. Aaron Norris, Assistant Superintendent

Date