

**WATERFORD UNION HIGH SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 17, 2025
Regular Meeting - 6:30 PM**

The regular meeting was called to order by President Schoenfeld at 6:35 p.m. Board members present at the meeting were: Gary Beck, Kelly Datka, Dennis Purtell, Mike Schoenfeld, and Doug Schwartz.

Official notice of the meeting was made by way of publication in the *Waterford Post* on Thursday, November 13, 2025, was posted at the District Office (Door #7) and at Entrance #19, and was published on the District's website. Minutes from the regular board meeting of September 25, 2025 are posted on the District's website.

President Schoenfeld led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were presented to the Board for approval under the consent agenda:

- A. Review of Paid Bills
- B. Minutes – September 25, 2025 Executive Session [amended]
- C. Minutes – October 27, 2025 Regular Meeting
- D. Minutes – October 31, 2025 Special Meeting
- E. Staffing Updates
 - 1) Letter of Retirement – Sally Knurr, Math Teacher
 - 2) Letter of Retirement – Patti Herda, Driver Education Teacher
 - 3) New Hire – Jurnee Engle, Special Education Paraprofessional
- F. Overnight Field Trip Request – Theatre Production Class to U.W. Stevens Point for state theatre festival
- G. New Student Activity Account – Disc Golf

There was a motion by Purtell, seconded by Schwartz, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Roll call vote taken; all ayes. The motion carried.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

Community member Karen Alexander addressed the board regarding the recent election in New York City and expressed her belief that there is a lack of patriotic education in America. Mrs. Alexander urged the board and administration to ensure that WUHS students are knowledgeable about government, understand the significance of the Pledge of Allegiance and national anthem, and develop a sense of gratitude and respect for this nation's founders. She distributed a quiz regarding the Boston Tea Party and a sample of tea for each board member and administrator present at the meeting

INFORMATION ITEMS

Leader in Me Lighthouse Team Presentation

WUHS staff members Ehren Klebenow, Joel Molitor, and Karlie Seidl, along with students Grayson Kossov and Andrew Willet, introduced the Lighthouse Team members and spoke about the Leader in Me initiative. The students noted that the program is in its second year at WUHS. Currently, 9th-grade students are focusing on the "7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens," while 10-12 graders are studying lessons from the text, "Inspire Others." Due to limited time during weekly advisory meetings, the Lighthouse Team curates a selection of essential lessons aimed at developing leadership readiness among all students. The team anticipates that within two years, each grade level will have its own defined scope and sequence for the program. Students then presented the team's mission statements and strategic plans, which focus on leadership skills, school culture, and academics at WUHS. They highlighted that academics are done well, and students feel teachers consistently go above and beyond to guarantee their success. Areas identified for growth include cultivating a more positive culture of empathy, acceptance, and confidence for everyone; further honing leadership skills; and prioritizing self-care for mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

Unite Academy Update / Competency-Based Diplomas Consideration

Director of Alternative Education Ehren Klebenow provided a general overview of the Unite Academy's competency-based education (CBE) structure, which is tailored to meet students' individual needs. Ms. Klebenow defined CBE as well as the core concept of a competency, and explained the disadvantage of using standard rubrics for assessment. She noted that the Unite Academy uses a continuum of skills to define the varying levels of a competency, ranging from novice to mastery. Students in the program seek support and resources as needed, and develop critical-thinking skills by considering continua and determining necessary steps to reach the next level and meet specific evidence requirements. Some Unite students have a hybrid schedule, enrolling in the Unite Academy while also taking academic-based classes, such as AP courses. The blend of traditional and CBE classes helps students achieve social and emotional balance.

Unite Academy instructor Joel Molitor stressed that students must learn to express their ideas clearly as their grades are based on performance assessment, which measures cognitive thinking, reasoning skills, and the ability to apply knowledge to solve realistic, meaningful problems. Mr. Molitor spoke about a recent botany project, which started with growing seeds in the greenhouse and has expanded into coordinating with Racine County on land restoration.

Ms. Klebenow went on to explain that in addition to working with a Building21 coach from Waukesha-East, the Unite Academy staff uses the Beacon platform for entering grade conversions, translating competency-based learning to standard grades for student transcripts. Beacon aligns students' competency-based work with the standard grading system to track growth and goal attainment. The evidence requirements align with Wisconsin state standards. Discussion covered the process of performing norming and the issuance of competency-based diplomas. It was noted that students awarded a competency-based diploma often initially enroll in a two-year college following high school before transferring to a four-year institution. Only two students currently enrolled Unite Academy are projected to require a 17-credit competency-based diploma, whereas others enrolled in the program are expected to meet the 24-credit requirement of a typical WUHS diploma.

Board member Datka asked if Unite Academy students are aligning with students following the traditional pathway. Ms. Datka expressed concern about how a standard WUHS diploma issued to Unite Academy students reflects on the District if the student is unable to perform basic skills. Ms. Klebenow reiterated the belief that all students can learn at high levels, as stated in the District's mission statement, and asked the board members to trust the process. The Unite Academy is tailored to each student individually to help them grow academically as well as develop their career skills. Ms. Klebenow noted there is the same rigor in the Unite Academy as in a traditional classroom setting, as evidenced by students' level of mastery in the various competencies. Students in the program are currently outperforming what they would have scored had they stayed in a traditional academic setting.

Board member Purtell commented that he feels the Unite Academy is a highly valuable program and is necessary for students who are unable to learn successfully in traditional classroom settings. Board member Schoenfeld concurred and asked how students measure benchmarks of their growth. Ms. Klebenow noted that the Beacon platform allows for competencies to translate to standard grades at regular and quarterly intervals, and noted that students meet regularly with the Unite staff to monitor their individual progress.

The Board thanked Ms. Klebenow and Mr. Molitor for their presentation.

Follow-up Analysis of Baird Report for Waterford Union

Ms. Klebenow spoke about an analytical report that she prepared as part of an assignment for the final course she is taking in pursuit of her superintendent's license. Ms. Klebenow's overall analysis of the Baird report and supporting data indicates Waterford Union continues to be a financially strong district. The district maintains a strong fund balance, low mill rates, and financial transparency, which contribute to its financial integrity. Declining enrollment, limited state aid growth, and revenue limits present key considerations in the fiscal management of district funds. Superintendent Francois noted that the district has kept the mill rate at \$4.15 per \$1,000 in property value or lower since 2016. In comparison to other Southern Lakes Conference

schools, WUHS has not used recurring or non-recurring referenda to sustain operations. The district also maintains strong student retention and program competitiveness. President Schoenfeld thanked Ms. Klebenow for sharing insights from her report.

Review Building Project Bids

Project Manager Kyle Robers of Nexus Solutions reported that approximately 80 bids were received in response to RFPs solicited for twenty various work scopes of the referendum building project. Following the November 4 bid deadline, Nexus reviewed the bids and will award contracts to all but one of the bid packages. Each of the work scopes had more than one bid submitted, with the exception of #12 Fire Protection, #18 Commercial Refrigeration, and #20 Conveying Equipment-Elevator. Mr. Robers noted that Nexus did not award a bid for #12 –Fire Protection, which was more than a million dollars over the cost projection. Nexus will continue to solicit contractors for a bid and work to find a suitable solution for ensuring the building's fire suppression system provides the necessary water pressure throughout the entire building.

Mr. Robers noted that Nexus has worked with all but one of the contractors in the past, but has references for that contractor's work. When asked about whether the contractors are local union shops, it was noted that the few who are not union (electrical, HVAC) do pay union scale to their employees. Mr. Robers also shared that Nexus attempted to solicit more local bids by breaking up the work into several work scopes. Awarded contractors are primarily located in Southeast Wisconsin and the Milwaukee area, with a few from near the Madison area. Scherrer Construction Company, who in the past oversaw the District's referendum building projects in their entirety, was awarded the bids for masonry and general trades. Chad Dorschner of Nexus Solutions will be the site manager who will oversee all contractors.

Board member Beck asked if the crawl space discovered near the location of the former Mapleview kitchen will be addressed. Mr. Robers indicated that the area will be filled in with excavation in preparation for the installation of the new elevator. Board member Datka asked if Nexus could share a side-by-side comparison of the work scopes in relation to the FIM summary from the start of the project. Mr. Robers responded that the information could be compiled and provided after the awarding of the bids is completed. There being no further questions, Superintendent Francois thanked Andrew Carter for recording the livestream of this portion of the meeting.

District Report Card

Principal Foster reported on the District's 2024-25 state report card data, which was released by the WI Department of Public Instruction earlier this month. Waterford Union's overall score of 78.6 exceeds expectations and indicates a substantial increase from a 70.5 score in 2023-24. The district ranked higher than 86% of high schools across the state and is third among all union high schools, behind Arrowhead and Nicolet. Principal Foster noted that the goal is to become the premier or highest ranking union high school in the state, and it is anticipated that the district will see a pronounced increase of scores in ELA in 2025-26.

Mr. Foster spoke about the four priority score areas of achievement, growth, target groups, and students on track to graduation. An overview of student data and growth in each of these areas was followed by a discussion about how the professional learning community culture at WUHS has contributed to student achievement. It was further noted that the District continues to rank high in the percentage of students who take one or more advanced placement courses, as well as in students who earn dual credit for college-level courses taken while in high school. Student surveys indicate they appreciate and value the continuous improvement mindset of staff. Enrichment opportunities for talented and gifted students challenge them to increase their own rigor of courses.

Mr. Foster noted that all credit for the marked improvement in the school report card scores should go to the teachers, teacher aides, and students. Dr. Francois echoed that sentiment and thanked the Board for their faith in allowing the change to an 8 period/drop 2 schedule. Staff are embracing the shift to providing additional support to students by way of resource time where concepts are retaught, embedding vocabulary into advisory periods as well as into the class lessons, embedding ACT-style questions in exams, etc. Next year's goal is to significantly exceed expectations.

District Administrator Annual Performance Evaluation - Preparation for Annual Performance Review

As part of the District Administrator Performance Evaluation timeline, the Board discussed whether changes were needed to the Performance Assessment Tool (PAT) and the Colleague Assessment Questionnaire (CAQ). No changes were noted. The main discussion centered on who should receive the CAQ, specifically whether to include administrators from the feeder schools. President Schoenfeld opposed including feeder schools this year, citing the lateness in the school term and the need to revise several CAQ questions if the elementary schools were to be included. Member Datka noted that Whitefish Bay (the source of the evaluation tool) sends the CAQ to all professional staff and aides. Following the discussion, the Board reached a consensus to distribute the CAQ only to WUHS board members, the WUHS administration, and the Guiding Coalition team members.

Member Datka requested that the Guiding Coalition team present their work on district advancement at a future board meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

There were no items presented for Board action.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Francois reminded board members that early bird registration for the 2026 WI State Education Convention ends December 15. Any board member interested in attending the convention, which will be at the Baird Center in Milwaukee from January 21-23, 2026, should contact the District Office.

This year, the WUHS Board will have one seat, currently held by Doug Schwartz, open for the April 7, 2026 Spring Election of School Board Members. Notice of the annual school board election will be published as a Type A notice in the *Waterford Post* on Thursday, November 20, 2025. The candidate deadline for filing all ballot access documents is no later than 5:00 PM on January 6, 2026, at the District Office. If a primary is necessary, the primary election will be held on February 17, 2026.

Plans are in place to recognize the semiquincentennial or 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence after the start of the new year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Schoenfeld had nothing further to report.

Board member Datka noted that because she was not included in the design team meetings held prior to obtaining bids, she was interested in seeing how the building project bid packages/work scopes presented align with the project selection worksheet of Facility Improvement Measures (FIMs) dated March 3, 2025. Specifically, Ms. Datka asked if Educational Adequacy Improvements EDA-4 in the Tech Ed area, which included new auto lift and scissor jacks, re-epoxy of the auto shop floor, a new table sander, Engineering PCs, CNC router and table, and 3D printer were being addressed. Superintendent Francois noted that he will ask Project Manager Kyle Robers to address Member Datka's inquiry.

There was a motion by Beck, seconded by Schwartz, to adjourn the meeting. All ayes; motion carried. This was done at 9:20 p.m.

The next regular board meeting will be held on Monday, December 15, 2025. The meeting will be held in the Large Group Instruction Room beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas P. Schwartz, Board Clerk