

School District of West Salem  
Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
January 12, 2026  
Marie Heider Meeting Room – 7:00 p.m.

As noted on the Public Meeting Notice: Live streaming of this meeting was available on our District's YouTube page.

**Convene**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Catherine Griffin. The meeting was noticed to the Coulee Courier, La Crosse Tribune, WLSU Radio 89 FM, WXOW TV-19, WKBT-TV, WKTY, Union State Bank, First Community Credit Union, Village of West Salem, posted at each school, district website, and district office on January 8, 2026.

*Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag*

Erik Peterson led everyone in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and Caitlin Wilson recited the District Mission Statement.

*Roll Call*

Present: Bob Minard, Trish Harman, Catherine Griffin, Erik Peterson, Caitlin Wilson, Ben Garbers and Jennifer Hatz. Also in attendance – Administration: Ryan Rieber, Justin Juhn, Alex Hubing, Ben Wopat, Alyssa Harlan, Heidi Horton, and Shawn Handland; Student representative: Lydia Jotheren and Zeke Hyer. Recording secretary: Jennifer Larson.

*Approval of Agenda*

J. Hatz moved, T. Harman seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**Written and Oral Reports**

District Strategic Initiative updates from the Superintendent's Collaborative and the Superintendent were reviewed.

**Connection with the Community**

*Lydia Jotheren, Student Representative, reported on:*

After the winter break, classes were right back in action, finishing everything up before the semester ended. One cool class our school offers is the Outdoor Ed class, and I was thrilled to be a part of it this semester. After a few weather cancellations, we finally we just fished our last 2 field trips! For the caving trip, we headed to Eagle Cave in Blue River where we got to explore a cave with no tour guide. We got into some tight areas, having to army crawl through water, and people's true fears came out. Overall, though, everyone had a ton of fun as it was such a unique experience! Today we went on our ice fishing trip on lake Onalaska. A few fish were caught, all were pretty small, but the group had tons of fun grilling out and chatting with classmates.

The clubs at West Salem have also been busy like the HS Robotics team who kicked off their season this last weekend and finalized a design for their robot today. Tomorrow, they plan to begin building it.

This past weekend, the show choir had a competition, where both the all-girls group Vivace and the mixed group Singsations performed. Vivace placed 2nd in their division, and Singsations placed 6th overall. Additionally, there were 4 showstopper awards given to West Salem students, including Senior Addie Jehn, Senior Breanna Smith, Junior Mya Peterson, and Junior Kahlan Davidson.

As for drama, the roles for the upcoming play Too Many Detectives at the Murder Mansion have been cast. There are many leads with several people cast who are not in the choir, and many act as famous characters, such as Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery Gang. Everyone is preparing their roles, and they practice 2-3 days a week for their show in February.

Additionally, many clubs have been giving back to the community like NHS who wrapped up the giving tree donating 192 gift cards for a total of \$7200 for families in need within our community. Additionally, the band spread holiday cheer at the rotary lights, and many members also assisted in the rotary lights tear down. Senior Jamin Growth was even interviewed by news 8 during the clean-up. Joining in, interact hosted food drives at Hanson's and rang bells to raise money for the Salvation Army.

As for our winter sports teams, our ski and snowboard team kicked off the season strong. Even though we were a co-op with Aquinas and Onalaska, 2 West Salem students led both the boys and girls' teams to a first-place finish. The meet at Mt. La Crosse, junior John Gerke led the boys, finishing first in all three races, and senior London Vaderhorst also took first in all three races. Their next meeting is this Wednesday.

Gymnastics is also continuing their season strong with a VJ and Varsity first place finish at the Wisconsin Rapids invites. Additionally, Senior, Olivia Maki was nominated and won the News 8 player of the week for her amazing performance and her recent school record on vault.

*Zeke Hyer, Student Representative, reported on:*

The wrestling team is having a great season, having yet to lose a dual. Wrestlers are also having a great season for individuals, with Mason Chambers getting 3rd at Bi-State, along with Kaiden Stello placing 8th, Caden Anderson placing 9th, Teghan Moore placing 10th, and then Justice Elam placing 11th. For the girls, Sophia Anderson placed 3rd with Ihlee Schniepp Duffy placing 12th. For those who do not know, Bi-State is all the top teams in Minnesota and Wisconsin across all divisions. So our Panthers did exceptionally well.

Girls' basketball is having a solid season with a 5-4 record, with their next game being tomorrow at home against Arcadia, who is also undefeated within the conference.

The boys' basketball is having a great season with a 7-1 record, with their only loss coming from DC Everest, a D1 team.

Boys' Hockey is having a slow start to the season with the team having yet to score in the win column, but the team did have a unique opportunity over the weekend that the team will remember as a highlight of their season. This past Friday, the boys played Amery at an outdoor hockey rink in St. Croix for the first-ever Wisconsin Hockey Day. Senior team captain Terryn Boland said, "It was a really cool experience, and it was awesome to be able to be a part of something like that. I think overall the whole team enjoyed it and would love to do it again."

The girls' hockey team is doing slightly better than the boys, with a 2-9-1 record, with their next game being on Friday.

Over this past Weekend Mr. Holter and DECA competed at the 54th annual DECA districts at UW-Stout. Multiple students did exceptionally well in their select competitions. Notable performances came from Junior AJ Holter, placing 3rd in Accounting Applications, and Senior Nadya Sandwick, placing 2nd in Business Services, and lastly, Kynzley Holicky took 1st in Principles of Hospitality and Tourism! These 3 competitors, along with 12 others, will advance to the state in February with hopes of then advancing to internationals in Atlanta, Georgia!

Lastly, the Senior class has recently voted on multiple decisions for graduation. The class speaker is Social Studies teacher Britney Jones, the class song is Good Riddance by Green Day, and the class motto is "Sometimes you will never know the true value of a moment until it becomes a memory." - Dr. Seuss

*Correspondence*

None.

*Public Comments* – None.

**Consent Agenda**

B. Minard moved, B. Garbers seconded to approve the following Consent Agenda items:

- a. the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of December 8, 2025 and the Closed session meeting minutes of December 8, 2025;
- b. the invoices to be paid;
- c. to accept the administration's co-curricular recommendations for assistant girls wrestling coaches-Reid Rasmussen and Ian McBride, volunteer wrestling coaches-Tyler Shrake and Cody Peterson, volunteer ASL coach-Jack Reader, head baseball coach-Jamie Olson, head softball coach-Brian Babiash, head girls track coach-Stacy Mitchell, head boys track coach-Justin Stakston, head boys tennis coach-Julie Kamla and head boys golf coach-Tyler Shrake;
- d. to approve WIAA co-op agreements for boys' hockey, gymnastics and lacrosse;
- e. to accept the donations from Julie Kamla to the Jane Doe Fund, Union State Bank to Jane Doe Fund, Whitney Westbrook to 2 separate elementary families, Ana & Duane Schaper to the Angela Labres Memorial Scholarship, Kelli, Kerri, Patrick & Michael Moran to the Horace and Gladys Moran Memorial Scholarship Fund, Stephen & Deborah Kraus to the Horace Moran Memorial Fund, Cynthia & William Innes to the Random Acts of Kindness Fund, James Michelson to Scholarship funds, Kish & Sons Electric to the Unsung Hero Scholarship, Kwik Trip to West Salem/Bangor Wrestling, GoMacro, Viola, WI to West Salem/Bangor Wrestling and Shane Glynn to West Salem/Bangor Wrestling.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion/Action Items:**

Administrator Heidi Horton presented information on the Open Enrollment limits for the 2026-2027 school year for special education.

E. Peterson moved. C. Griffin seconded to approve 13 Open Enrollment seats in special education for the 2026-2027 school year based on the criteria outlined in the Board's Open Enrollment Policy #5113 Open Enrollment Program (Inter-District).

PROGRAM	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
Early Childhood Program	0	NA	NA
Cross Categorical Program	K-1: 0 2:1 3:0 4:2	5:0 6:2 7:0 8: 0	2
Emotional Behavioral Disability Program	0	NA	NA
Intellectual Disability Program	2	2	0
Speech and Language Program 3 year old - grade 1		0	
Speech and Language Program Grade 2 - 5		2	
Speech and Language Program Grade 6 - 12		0	
Occupational Therapy		0	

Motion carried unanimously.

Administrators Ryan Rieber, Alex Hubing and Ben Wopat presented information on the Open Enrollment limits for the 2026-2027 school year for regular education. No action was taken.

C. Wilson moved. B. Minard seconded to allow Ben Garbers to make recommendations and vote as he sees fit at the Delegate Assembly for the 2026 proposals. Motion carried unanimously.

**The list of to do items / information requests was reviewed. No action was taken.**

*Live Streaming of the Board Meeting ended, as noted on the Public Meeting Notice.*

**Live Stream Ends at 8:15 p.m.**

#### **Closed Session**

C. Griffin welcomed the motion for closed session: The Board will discuss, consider and, if appropriate, take action pursuant to Wis. Stats §19.85(1) (c) Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility regarding nonrenewal/renewal, nonextension/extension, and employment of administrators. The discussion will focus on administrator contract nonextension or extension decisions and related employment terms.

C. Griffin moved, B. Garbers seconded that the board convene in closed session at 8:23 p.m. A roll call vote was taken: B. Minard, Aye; T. Harman, Aye; C. Griffin, Aye; E. Peterson, Aye; C. Willson, Aye; B. Garbers, Aye; and J. Hatz, Aye. Motion carried unanimously.

*Closed Session*

**Adjournment**

C. Griffin moved, B. Garbers seconded to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Caitlin Wilson, Clerk