

School District of West Salem  
Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
January 26, 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 7:03 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 22, 2026.

*Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag*

Trish Haman led everyone in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and Bob Minard 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 Jehn, Alex Hubing, Ben Wopat, Alyssa Harlan, and Shawn Handland; Student representatives: Lydia Jothen and Zeke Hyer. Recording secretary: Jennifer Larson. Excused: Heidi Horton.

*Approval of Agenda*

B. Garbers 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 Management team and the Superintendent were reviewed.

2026 Education Convention highlights by attendees – B. Garbers, J. Hatz and R. Rieber reported on the 2026 Education Convention.

Business Operations Committee – E. Peterson reported on the agenda item, Department 5-year plans.

Policy Committee – C. Wilson reported legal and recommended policies were reviewed by the committee.

**Connection with the Community**

*Lydia Jothen, Student Representative, reported on:*

One of our foreign exchange students, Fiona, left at semester and headed back home to Germany. Fiona was a ton of fun to have in class and was the sweetest girl with a bubbly personality. She left with an American flag signed by many students across the school and will definitely be missed!

A class West Salem offers that gives students amazing opportunities is our CNA class. The class consists of online videos, along with in-person lesson days. 2 days a week, they have 6 am skills labs. In the end, 11 students received their CNA certification, and almost everyone has applied to jobs in our area.

Moving to sports, the boy's hockey team played recently, took some tough losses as they played Tomah/Sparta, and lost 2-1, and lost again to Viroqua 5-4. On a better note, the Hockey girls team recently took 2 wins against Viroqua and a tie this last Saturday vs Vanesville and are playing in Rochester tomorrow.

The Ski and snowboard recently defied the below zero temps and finished 1st at their meet at Mt. La Crosse. Some notable finishes were Kinsley who placed 3rd, 4th and London 4th, 1st in her races. As for the boys, Jon placed 1st in both, helping to lead his team to the win.

Show choir had a competition this last weekend. Even with several tech difficulties like the keyboard going out the rest of the band and show choir kept going. Singsationas placed 11th and Vivace placed 1st in the single gender division. Additionally Vivace won best dressed band with their chef hats, and the group won best vocals.

*Zeke Hyer, Student Representative, reported on:*

The girls' basketball team is continuing its season with a recent win against Luther. Not only are the girls doing well as a group, but individuals are doing exceptionally well, as Senior Josie Brudos reached the 1,000 points milestone!

The boys' basketball team is also continuing to have a good season with only 2 losses in the year. The boys had a tough loss against Fox Valley Lutheran over the long weekend but are hoping to get back in the win column tomorrow.

The West Salem and Bangor Adaptive Sports League have started their floor hockey season. I have had the privilege of referring home ASL games for the past year, and I can confidently say the team is in good hands with Ms. Serres and Mr. Reader. These coaches both present the highest quality of support to their players every game. As a result, I always see the players with smiles on their faces, whether they win or lose. I am very proud of the ASL program at West Salem.

The wrestling team is currently in the heat of their season after defeating Sparta in a dual last week, with a conference matchup against GET this week. GET is regarded as the only other team capable of beating us in our conference. Not only will this be the meet to decide conference but also GET is viewed as the team to beat to get to the team state. But as far as individuals go, I am happy to say Senior Teghan Moore has recently broken the school record for career takedown record with 409.

And lastly, to end my section for tonight, I will be touching on the first day of the second semester, last Tuesday. The morning had 2 unique parts, with a College Career Life Ready Day for seniors. The first being an introduction to insurance with local insurance agent Jason Lassen, not only was the info provided useful, but also, with the senior class about to enter the real world, it is very important info to know! The senior class was also introduced to scholarships that they can apply for in the community. Also, later in the week, the senior class was introduced to the College Career Life Ready Scholarship!

#### *Correspondence*

A Department of Public Instruction Proclamation declaring Career and Technical Education Month, February 1-28, 2026, was read.

A Department of Public Instruction Proclamation declaring National School Counseling Week, February 2-6, 2026, was read.

A Department of Public Instruction Proclamation declaring FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) Week, February 8-14, 2026, was read.

*Public Comments* – None.

#### **Consent Agenda**

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

- a. the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 12, 2026 and the Closed session meeting minutes of January 12, 2026;
- b. the invoices to be paid;

- c. to accept the donations from Jon and Heidi Knudson 2 flutes to the West Salem High School band and Cynthia & William Innes to the Random Acts of Kindness Fund.  
Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion/Action Items:**

Administrator R. Rieber presented 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in January Enrollment Count. No action was taken.

T. Harman moved. J. Hatz seconded to approve the following open enrollment seats for the Elementary School in regular education seats for the 2026-2027 school year based on the criteria outlined in the Board's Open Enrollment Policy #5113 Open Enrollment Program (Inter-District).

**Regular Education Spaces by Grade Level – Elementary**

Pre-Kindergarten	10
Kindergarten	No Cap
Grade 1	10
Grade 2	10
Grade 3	8
Grade 4	7

Motion carried unanimously.

C. Wilson moved. B. Minard seconded to approve the following open enrollment seats for the Middle School in regular education seats for the 2026-2027 school year based on the criteria outlined in the Board's Open Enrollment Policy #5113 Open Enrollment Program (Inter-District).

**Regular Education Spaces by Grade Level – Middle School**

Grade 5	17
Grade 6	3
Grade 7	No Cap
Grade 8	11

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 7:41 p.m.*

**Board Development**

Charlotte Peters worked with the board and administrative team on the Strategic Plan update. No action was taken.

**Adjournment**

B. Garbers moved, T. Harman seconded to adjourn at 9:03 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Caitlin Wilson, Clerk