

School District of West Salem  
Regular Board Meeting Minutes  
February 23, 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 7:01 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 February 19, 2026.

*Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag*

Alex Hubing led everyone in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and Ben Wopat recited the District Mission Statement.

*Roll Call*

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

*Approval of Agenda*

C. Wilson moved, J. Hatz 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.

Construction Walk Through – Superintendent Rieber played a Behind the Scenes video of the Elementary and High School construction projects.

Teacher University – Superintendent Rieber and the administrative team reported on Teacher University professional development day.

**Connection with the Community**

*Lydia Jothen, Student Representative, reported on:*

Last week 35 seniors traveled to UW-La Crosse to compete in a Finance Bowl trivia competition. While none of the West Salem teams placed, students gained valuable financial knowledge and overall enjoyed the experience.

Show Choir recently hosted the annual Extravaganza and successfully put on a fantastic show despite many members being sick. Performers included the elementary group, the 5th grade, the middle school, and both high school groups. The high school groups also traveled to Hastings, Minnesota, for their final competition of the season, earning 7th place. While there, students also enjoyed a visit to Great Wolf Lodge and the Mall of America, making it a memorable trip to conclude their season.

As for FFA, Nadia Hurtz placed 2nd at the Regional Speaking Competition and will advance to the Sectional competition. This week is National FFA Week, so there are dress-up days throughout the week. Additionally, FFA is also spreading kindness through their “Fill Your Cup” initiative, delivering snacks such as trail mix and beef sticks to teachers in the teachers’ lounge.

DECA members are currently in Lake Geneva competing at the State competition. Bennett Reiber, Sam Macrogers, Adric Schmitz, and Anna Gross have already qualified for ICDC, the international competition. I will report next time if there are more international qualifiers, as the state competition goes through the 25th.

The ski and snowboard team competed in challenging conditions, as the warm weather required over 200 bags of salt to be spread to improve the course. The girls' Co-op earned an impressive 2nd-place finish overall, and the boys placed 3rd overall.

The boys’ and girls’ hockey teams both entered into the playoffs as the 7th seed, and unfortunately, both teams took losses in the first round, ending their season early.

The girls' wrestling team had three athletes qualify for sectionals: Jolie Meyers, Lily Kasinger, and Sophia Anderson. Sophia Anderson advanced from sectionals and qualified for State! She will compete this Thursday.

*Zeke Hyer, Student Representative, reported on:*

The boys' Wrestling team recently took 3rd at the sectional tournament in Black River Falls over the weekend, which will not qualify them for team state at the lacrosse center. But, looking on the bright side, the team has broken the school record for the most individual qualifiers in the state tournament with 5. These 5 are all seniors with Mason Chambers, Cayson Anderson, Teeghan Moore, Kaiden Stello, and Caden Anderson. Also, Teeghan Moore reached the 150-win milestone, with Caden Anderson reaching the 100-win milestone.

The boys' basketball team is coming off a tough home loss to Onalaska last week, but they got back into the win column on Saturday for senior night, when they were named conference champs for the 7th year in a row. The boys have another tough game this week against Central to end their regular season. They will then start playoffs with a home game against New London, with the team likely playing Onalaska in the second round.

The girls' basketball team ended its regular season last week with an unfortunate loss to Onalaska. But the team also won the conference for the 6th year in a row. They start the playoffs tomorrow with a home game.

The gymnastics team continues to have a dominant season, winning the Coulee Conference over the weekend. The team has sectionals just this weekend to qualify for state! Also, senior Camdyn Lyga was named Coulee Conference Gymnast of the year!

The Adapted sports league team is continuing their season with a win over Onalaska last week and a win against Central just today!

To end my section for tonight, the Outdoor Education class recently went on their ice fishing trip on Lake Onalaska. I was a part of this, but I can say we had lots of fun despite the limited fish being caught. The class is now going caving next week for their next trip!

*Correspondence*

A Department of Public Instruction Proclamation declaring Music, Art, Dance and Theater Month, March 1-31, 2026, was read.

A Department of Public Instruction Proclamation declaring National School Social Work Week, March 1-7, 2026, was read.

A Department of Public Instruction Proclamation declaring Social, Emotional Learning Day, March 2, 2026, was read.

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

*Public Comments* – None.

**Consent Agenda**

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

- a. the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of February 9, 2026;
- b. the invoices to be paid;
- c. to accept the resignation of Multilingual Teacher Terri Martinson; and to accept the retirement of High School Math Interventionist Tammy Bentzen;
- d. to accept the donations from Lynxx Networks donated \$500 to the West Salem/Bangor Adapted Sports league; La Crosse County Pork Producers donated a pig (\$175 for processing and pig) to the High School Family and Consumer Education department; from Our Savior’s Lutheran Church of West Salem donated \$1000.00 to the Random Acts of Kindness Fund.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Discussion/Action Items:**

Administrator, Ryan Rieber requested 3 volunteer board members to serve on the Future Ready (CCLR) video scholarship committee to watch, review and score the videos to award the scholarships. C. Wilson, B. Garbers and J. Hatz volunteered. C. Griffin will be an alternate if needed. No action was taken.

C. Griffin moved, J. Hatz seconded to amend Policy 0144.5, Under the Enforcement heading, in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, at the end of the paragraph add the wording “needs to be in writing.” Motion carried unanimously.

B. Garbers moved, J. Hatz seconded to approve the second reading of legal and recommended policy updates of Special Update and Vol 35 No 1. Motion carried unanimously.

**School Support Organizations - Special Update**

Po5830 – Copy of STUDENT FUND-RAISING

Po6605 – Revised Policy - Spec. Update-School Support Organizations - November 2025 - CROWDFUNDING

Po6608 – New Policy - Special Update - School Support Organizations - November 2025 - ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT OF FUNDRAISER AND CROWDFUNDING DISBURSEMENTS

Po7230 – Copy of GIFTS, GRANTS, BEQUESTS, AND MEMORIALS

Po9211 – Copy of DISTRICT-SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Po9215 – Renum/Replacement Policy - Spec. Update - School Support Organizations - November 2025 - SCHOOL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (SSO)

**Legal/Recommended Vol 35 No 1**

Po0100 – Copy of DEFINITIONS

Po0144.5 – Copy of BOARD MEMBER BEHAVIOR, COMMUNICATIONS, AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Po1210 – Copy of BOARD - SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

Po1230.01 – Copy of DEVELOPMENT OF HANDBOOKS AND ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

Po2131.01 – Copy of READING INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT

Po2261.01– Copy of PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN TITLE I PROGRAMS

Po2431– Copy of CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Po4140 - Copy of TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION

Po5112 – Copy of ENTRANCE AGE

Po5136 – Copy of PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Po5411 – Copy of THIRD GRADE PROMOTION AND RETENTION: AT-RISK STUDENTS

Po5505 – Copy of ACADEMIC HONESTY

Po5515 – Copy of STUDENT USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND/OR BICYCLES

Po5895 – Copy of STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Po6320 – Copy of PURCHASING

Po7540.02– Vol. 35, No. 1 - November 2025 Replacement DIGITAL CONTENT AND ACCESSIBILITY

Po7540.08 – Vol. 35, No. 1 - November 2025 Replacement ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

**The list of to do items / information requests was reviewed.** The Superintendent stated he will add development of a suggested AI policy to his to-do list and bring a draft to the Policy Committee for discussion. **No action was taken.**

**Adjournment**

C. Griffin moved, J. Hatz seconded to adjourn at 7:46 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Caitlin Wilson, Clerk