

# GRIFFITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS REGULAR BOARD MEETING

May 8, 2025

The Board of School Trustees of the Griffith Public Schools met in regular session at the Griffith High School LGI Room, 600 N. Wiggs St. on the eighth of May at the hour of 6:00 p.m. pursuant to the rules of the Board.

Mrs. Adams, of the Board of School Trustees, called the meeting to order.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, on call of the roll, members were shown to be present or absent as follows:

Present: Tina Adams, President  
Kathy Ruesken, 1st Vice President  
Emily Conner, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Jesse Adduci, Secretary  
Jason Jaques, Assistant Secretary

Absent:

Others Present: Leah Dumezich, Superintendent  
Terri Chance, Chief Financial Officer  
Joseph C. Svetanoff, Attorney

## **1.2 Moment of Silence:**

**2.1 Delegations and/or Communications:** Pastor Bill Jones with Griffith First United Methodist church said a prayer.

**2.2 Superintendent Update:** Mrs. Dumezich shared that this week is teacher appreciation week, and that she works with the best teachers who are known to be the best not only in the state but in the country. Mrs. Dumezich is thankful not only for her teachers but for the supportive staff and for everyone that works directly with our students, from cafeteria workers, transportation, or a paraprofessional. Mrs. Dumezich hopes they feel love and support. Mrs. Dumezich stated that the PTC does a phenomenal job of supporting our staff with amazing stuff from lunch served to soda bars. Mrs. Dumezich gave a shout out to the PTC and thanked them for all they do for the teachers and staff. Mrs. Dumezich had worked at Wadsworth and gave a shout out to all the teachers.

**2.3 Panther Spotlight:** Mrs. Dumezich welcomed Mrs. Hudsons class along with Mrs. Burk to play the ukulele. Tri-Kappa purchased the instruments with a teacher grant. In addition to teacher grants and scholarships, Tri-Kappa is very generous and supportive of our teachers and students. This year alone, they have already donated more than \$8,000.00 worth of supplies and materials to the classrooms. Mrs. Dumezich wanted to acknowledge Mr. Swisher and his student Natalie Edwards-Wadkins. Natalie presented her documentary in 504 which placed second in state. Natalie will be attending nationals June 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> at the university of Maryland. Mrs. Dumezich acknowledged Maureen Chavez-Reda who was selected by the STARTedUP foundation to join them in state finalists at the innovate DC 2025-nations capital June 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Smith shared that Robert McElmurry with precision tree stump and grinding reached out and asked if he could remove tree stumps behind Wadsworth free of charge.

**2.4 Strategic Planning Presentations:** Administrators from each department presented their strategic plan. Mrs. Ruesken thanked Mrs. Dumezich for everyone updating the strategic plan and presenting them.

**2.5 Finance:** Mrs. Dumezich presented the finance report April.

**2.6 Board Reports:** Mr. Jaques reported that the redevelopment Board will start the Sod program downtown. Mrs. Adams reported that the Park Board will have a handball tournament on June 7<sup>th</sup> at Cheever park. Mrs. Adams shared that the light pole retirement is completed for Cheever park and that the Spring town wide garage sale will be on May 15<sup>th</sup>- May 18<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Adams stated that the flower planting downtown will be on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Adams shared the DNR youth baseball grant that has been approved at the state level and the next step is to be approved at

the federal level. The funding for the tree Inventory has started. Mrs. Adams stressed if you see any graffiti at any of the parks or downtown, please call 911.

**Consent Agenda:** Mrs. Adams requested a motion to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Conner made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Mrs. Ruesken seconded the motion. The consent agenda contains the following items: Minutes, Agreements/Contracts, and Claims for Payroll 4/11/25-4/23/25. Accounts Payable 4/11/2025-5/8/2025, Professional Leaves, Fundraisers, Donations, Overnight request, and the following Personnel report:

<b>PERSONNEL REPORT</b>					
<b>May 8, 2025</b>					
<i>Name</i>	<i>Administrator</i>	<i>Replacing</i>	<i>Effective Date(s)</i>	<i>Pay Rate</i>	<i>Hourly, Daily, Seasonal, Yearly Contract</i>
	<b><i>Certified</i></b>				
Justine Ramirez	Resource Room K-2 Wadsworth	Roxann Liptak's Class For The Remainder Of The 2024-2025 School Year	5/5/25	\$56,000.00	Contract
Mollie Lelito	Occupational Therapist - District	New Position	8/13/25	\$78,000.00	Contract
Cara Curtis	Occupational Therapist - District	New Position	8/13/2025	\$80,500.00	Contract
Rebecca Starks	7th Grade LRE	Natalie Stork	2025-2026 School Year	\$52,500.00	Contract
	<b><i>Non- Certified</i></b>				
Kristin Sorensen	Playground Aide - Beiriger	Lelani Reiser	5/30/25	\$15.00	Hourly
	<b><i>Extra-Curricular/Athletics</i></b>				
Lauren Wise	JV Volleyball Head Coach	Mia Pataki's	5/12/25	\$4,200.00	Contract
Leah Scartozzi	H.S Co-Ed Cheerleading Head Coach	Shanna Gulley	5/12/25	\$4,200.00	Contract
Oscar Beecham	HS Assistant Varsity Track & Field Head Coach	George Tucker	5/9/25	\$4,580.00	Contract
Christopher Sojka	MS Cross Country Head Coach	Kristina Taylor	4/14/25	\$2,670.00	Contract
Cameron Ashley	Varsity Boys Basketball Head Coach	Joshua Belluomini	5/12/25	\$10,310.00	Contract
	<b><i>Clubs</i></b>				
Riley Hendron	Student Council Sponsor - Beiriger Splitting Position With Camille Schafer	Dana Luyster	8/11/25	\$667.50	contract
Camille Schafer	Student Council Sponsor - Beiriger Splitting Position With Riley Hendron	Dana Luyster	8/11/25	\$667.50	Contract
Amy Trezek	Best Buddies Sponsor MS/HS	Melissa Diekelmann	8/1/25	\$1,525.00	Contract
James Pickett	Academic Bowl Team Coordinator	Marilyn Brunk	8/1/25	\$3,820.00	Contract
Shannon Brand	MS Drama Costumer	Sara Jongsma resigned. Shannon Will Receive Full Stipend	7/1/25	\$400.00	Contract
Shannon Brand	HS Drama Costumer	Sara Jongsma resigned. Shannon Will Receive Full Stipend	7/1/25	\$1,910.00	Contract

	<b><i>Separations</i></b>				
Roxann Luptak	Intense Special Education Teacher - Wadsworth	Official Resignation	5/2/2025	\$52,700.00	Contract
Jaime Pondo	Recess Aide - Beiriger	Resignation	6/6/2025	\$15.00	Hourly
Lelani Reiser	Recess Aide - Beiriger	Resignation	6/23/2025	\$16.00	Hourly
Nancy Finnen	Recess Aide - Beiriger	Resignation	6/6/25	\$16.00	Hourly
Ann Marie Jaros	Principal -Wadsworth	Retirement	6/30/25	\$94,000.00	Contract
Demetri Blanco	6th Grade Spring Football Coach	Resignation	4/13/25	\$3,435.00	Contract
Matthew Thomas	Assistant Cross Country Coach	Resignation	4/22/25	\$4,200.00	Contract
Leah Scartozzi	Head MS Cheerleading Coach	Resignation	4/21/25	\$3,055.00	Contract
Dana Luyster	Student Council - Beiriger	Resignation	End Of The 2024-2025 School Year	\$1,335.00	Contract
Mia Patikas	JV Volleyball Coach	Resignation	End Of The 2024-2025 Season	\$4,200.00	Contract
Regina Abernathy	Custodian - Beiriger	Resignation	4/28/25	\$16.50	Hourly
Logan Starks	Assistant Boys Soccer Coach	Resignation	End Of The 2024-2025 Season	\$4,200.00	Contract
Sara Jongsma	Co-Costumer - MS/HS Drama Department	Resignation	End Of The 2024-2025 School Year	\$1,910.00	Contract
	<b><i>Other</i></b>				
Tessa Trueblood	Fourth & Fifth Grade Summer School Teacher - Beiriger	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Amanda Madison	K-5 Intense Summer School Teacher - Beiriger	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Camille Schafer	Third Grade Summer School Teacher - Beiriger	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Tracie Rivera	Intense Summer School Para - Beiriger	N/A	6/16/25	\$17.50	Hourly
Rachel Cervantes	Third Gade Summer School Teacher - Beiriger	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Sarah Smith	Second Grade Summer School Teacher - Wadsworth	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Ramona Dujmovic	LRE Floater Para Summer School - Wadsworth	N/A	6/16/25	\$17.00	Hourly
Morgan Tinsley-Childs	Second Grade Summer School Teacher - Wadsworth	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Stephanie Sexton	K-5 Intense Para Summer School - Wadsworth	N/A	6/16/25	\$16.50	Hourly
Jenna Berzy	Summer School Teacher - High School	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Melissa Diekelmann	Summer School Teacher - HS/MS	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Shannon Hassel	Summer School Teacher - High School	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly

Ellen Purkey	Summer School Tacher - High School	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Lisa Driscoll	Summer School Teacher - Middle School	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Marty Jarmula	Summer School Teacher - MS/HS	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Tiffany Mosely	Summer School Teacher - Middle School	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Leah Scartozzi	Summer School Teacher - Middle School	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Amy Skura	Summer School Teacher - Middle School	N/A	6/16/25	\$50.00	Hourly
Randy Vianello	Summer School Para - MS/HS	N/A	6/16/25	\$18.50	Hourly
Kristina Kostides	Transfer From Wadsworth 1st Grade High Ability To MS 6th Grade Writing Lab	Internal Transfer	For The 2025-2026 School Year	\$57,864.20	Contract
Jen Kocon	Summer School Nurse - Wadsworth	N/A	6/16/25	\$29.00	Hourly
Nikki Kinder	Summer School Nurse - MS/HS	N/A	6/16/25	\$31.00	Hourly
Katie Garvey	Principal -Wadsworth	Internal Transfer From Assistant Principal At Wadsworth	7/1/25	\$90,000.00	Contract
Robert Robinson	Alternative Education Middle School	Internal Transfer. Robert Will No Longer Be Teaching Study Skills.	8/1/25	\$70,609.84	Contract
Robert Lukowski	8th Grade Science Teacher	Internal Transfer. Robert Will No Longer Be Teaching PE	8/1/25	\$70,100.00	Contract
*	Backgrounds Pending Approval				

**4.1 Approval Of First Reading And Adoption Of Policy:** Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval of the first reading and adoption of policy. Mr. Jaques made a motion to approve the first reading and adoption of policy. Mrs. Ruesken seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**4.2 Approval And Adoption Of Exhibit A #2025-16 Resolution Approving Form Of Lease:** Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval and adoption of exhibit A #2025-16 resolution approving form of lease. Mr. Jaques made a motion for the approval and adoption of exhibit A # 2025-16 resolution approving form of lease. Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**4.3 Approval And Adoption Of Exhibit B #2025-17 Resolution Reapproving Building Corporation:** Mrs. Adams requested a motion for approval and adoption of exhibit B #2025-17 resolution reapproving building corporation. Mrs. Ruesken made a motion for the approval and adoption of exhibit B #2025-17 resolution reapproving building corporation. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**4.4 Approval Of Quote For Bus Garage Gutters:** Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval of quote for the bus garage gutters. Ms. Conner made a motion for the approval of the quote for the bus garage gutters. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**4.5 Approval Of The 2025-2026 Student/Parent Handbook:** Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for the approval of the 2025-2026 student/parent handbook. Mrs. Ruesken made a motion for the approval of the 2025-2026 student/parent handbook. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**4.6 2025-2026 Book Adoption:** Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval of the 2025-2026 book adoption. Mr. Jaques made a motion for the approval of the 2025-2026 book adoption Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**4.7 Approval Of The 2025-2026 Employee Handbook:** Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for the approval of the 2025-2026 Employees handbook. Mr. Adduci made a motion for the approval of the 2025-2026 employee handbook. Ms. Conner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**4.8 Approval Of Region Virtual Academy For The 2025-2026 School Year And Beyond:** Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for approval of the Region Virtual Academy for the 2025-2026 school year and beyond. Mr. Jaques made a motion for the approval of the Region Virtual Academy for the 2025-2026 school year and beyond. Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Audience Participation:** One audience member heard that students were not getting their dual credits. The audience member is glad that security is cracking down on the vaping and that the place on 45<sup>th</sup> will sell vapes to kids under eighteen. The audience member congratulated Mrs. Jaros on her retirement and wanted to know since Wadsworth had one hundred kids registering for kindergarten then how many second graders are leaving. The audience member wanted to know how the schools did with the Stracks receipts and the SPI apple program.

**Good Of The Corporation:** Mrs. Dumezich wanted to congratulate David Verta on becoming the new superintendent for the Whiting school district. Mrs. Dumezich stated that she was able to attend the top ten dinner and congratulated the top ten students. Mrs. Dumezich thanked Mrs. Jarmula and Mrs. Leber for putting on the top ten dinner for the students. In June we will be having a special needs prom. Mrs. Dumezich shared during our Board meeting two New Prairie mini school buses that were in an accident, and she asked to keep those students and families in our thoughts and prayers.

**Upcoming Board Meeting:** The next Regular School Board meeting will be on July 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the LGI room at the High School.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Jaques motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Conner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Tina Adams, President

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Kathy Ruesken, First Vice President

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Emily Conner, Second Vice President

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Jesse Adduci, Secretary

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Jason Jaques, Assistant Secretary