

**GRIFFITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

August 14, 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 fourteenth of August 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, 2nd 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 shared a prayer. Patty Stovall CEO/President of Sounds of Sarah would like to partner with parents keeping teens safe with substance use awareness and healthy choices. Patty would like to give a presentation on August 26, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium to parents and the community of her personal story of loss. Daniel Petersen with the VFW spoke regarding the different scholarships that the VFW has to offer students,

2.2 Superintendent Update: Mrs. Dumezich wanted to thank Georgia Smith and her team building and grounds for all their hard work they did to prepare for the new school year. Mrs. Dumezich also wanted to acknowledge the transportation department Danielle Azcona she is a one-person team, and she does a fantastic job, and our drivers work hard. Mrs. Dumezich also recognized all the secretaries, Technology team and Food Service, and our Nursing staff for all their hard work during the first week of school. We have thirty-seven students with and IEP in our special Ed department. We have twelve students enrolled in the RVA region Virtual Academy the online school.

2.3 Panther Spotlight: Mrs. Dumezich and Mr. Chance wanted to acknowledged Shannon Brand. Shannon Brand had the Cross-Country MVP award renamed for her on May 9, 2025. Mr. Chance will acknowledge Shannon on August 29th at the home football game.

2.5 Finance: Ms. Chance presented the finance report for the month of July.

2.6 Board Reports: None

Consent Agenda: Mrs. Adams requested a motion to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Jaques made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. The consent agenda contains the following items: Minutes, Agreements/Contracts, Grants, Donations, Overnight Request and Claims for Payroll 7/1/25-8/1/25. Accounts Payable 7/11/25-8/14/25 Professional Leaves, Fundraisers, and the following Personnel report:

PERSONNEL REPORT

August, 14 2025

<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>
	<i>Certified</i>				
Cody Michniewicz	Special Education LRE Teacher	Matt Bliss	8/7/2025	\$68,200.00	Contract
Lizbeth Ibarra	Cafeteria Matron High School	Nevenka Spehar	8/13/2025	\$16.00	Hourly
	<i>Non- Certified</i>				
Christopher Camarena	Special Education Paraprofessional - Intense Middle School	Brittany Degand	8/13/2025	\$15.50	Hourly
Devin Johnson	Intense Paraprofessional - Wadsworth	Tracie Rivera	8/13/2025	\$18.00	Hourly
Tina Weir	Paraprofessional - Intense High School	Brittany Degand	8/13/2025	\$19.00	Hourly
Stepanie Cortez	Intense Paraprofessional - MS/HS	New Hire	8/13/2025	\$21.50	Hourly
Michelle Gutierrez	Playground Aide - Beiriger	Kristin Sorensen	8/25/2025	\$15.50	Hourly
	<i>Extra-Curricular/Athletics</i>				
Devin Haris	High School JV Basketball Head Coach	Eric Klocek	7/11/2025	\$6,490.00	Contract
Stephen Thompson	Assistant Varsity Girls Soccer Coach	New Position - Was Not Board Approved in August	8/9/2024	\$4,200.00	Contract
Sierra Vanhorenbeck	Co-Best Buddies Sponsor	Amore-Cielo Monjes Splitting Position with L. Kleffman	8/11/2025	\$762.50	Contract

Vincenzo DeRosa	Spring Football 6th Grade Boys Coach	Vincenzo Served as the 6th Grade Football Coach During the Spring Of 2025. This Was Not on Board in January.	1/6/2025	\$3435.00	Contract
Vincenzo DeRosa	Fall JV Boys Football Coach	Kyle Iwinski & Luke Neidy	8/14/2025	\$6,110.00	Contract
Norberto Nunez	Fall Freshman Football Assistant Coach	Vincenzo Derosa	8/14/2025	\$3,820.00	Contract
Andrew Braddy	Fall 8th Grade Head Football Coach	Split Position with Devin Johnson	8/14/2025	\$2,672.50	Contract
Devin Johnson	Fall 8th Grade Head Football Coach	Split Position with Andrew Braddy	8/14/2025	\$2,672.50	Contract
Zachary Butkus	Fall 8th Grade Assistant Football Coach	Split Position with Brett Kenny	8/14/2025	\$1,717.50	Contract
Brett Kenney	Fall 8th Grade Assistant Football Coach	Split Position with Zachary Butkus	8/14/2025	\$1,717.50	Contract
	<i>Clubs</i>				
Nicholas Sanchez	Vocal Music Club Sponsor - Beiriger	Laura Polise	8/11/2025	\$2,020.00	Contract
Michelle Brown	Art Fair Club Sponsor- Beiriger	Kit McGuire	8/11/2025	\$195.00	Contract
Katherine Crozier	Book Worm Club Sponsor - Beiriger	Kit McGuire	8/11/2025	\$1,525.00	Contract
Laurie Perez	Art Fair Club Sponsor- Wadsworth	Shelly Zahorsky	8/13/2025	\$195.00	Contract
	<i>Separations</i>				
Mishaela Johnson	Elementary Counselor - Wadsworth	Resignation	7/30/2025	\$57,883.06	Contract
Andrew Davenport	8th Grade Assistant Football Coach	Resignation	7/25/2025	\$3,435.00	Contract
Brittany Degand	Paraprofessional High Schools	Resignation	7/29/2025	\$20.00	Hourly
Andrew Braddy	Middle School Football Coach	Resignation	7/28/2025	\$5,345.00	Contract
Holly Kwiatkowski	Paraprofessional- Wadsworth	Resignation	6/6/2025	\$16.00	Hourly

Kristen Butkus	Beiriger Cafeteria	Resignation	7/14/2025	\$16.00	Hourly
Paul Esquivel	6th Grade Girls Basketball Coach	Resignation	7/12/2025	\$2,290.00	Contract
Kristin Sorensen	Recess Aide - Beiriger	Resignation	7/26/2025	\$15.50	Hourly
Christopher Tomcsi	High School Varsity Girls Basketball Head Coach	Resignation	7/24/2025	\$9,310.00	Contract
Bryce Hayman	9th Grade Head Football Coach	Resignation	7/31/2025	\$5,725.00	Contract
Luke Neidy	Junior Varsity Football Coach	Resignation Split Position with Kyle Iwinski	7/31/2025	\$3,055.00	Contract
Shelley Zahorsky	Art Fair Sponsor - Wadsworth	Resignation	8/5/2025	\$195.00	Contract
Demetri Blanco	Varsity Boys Head Track Coach	Resignation	8/5/2025	\$6,870.00	Contract
Rob Lukowski	Health & PE Teacher Middle School	Resignation	8/7/2025	\$70,100.00	Contract
Kelly Greer	Athletic Director	Resignation	8/22/2025	\$86,500.00	Contract
	Other				
Shelley Zahorsky	Student And Family Coordinator - Wadsworth	Title Change from Student Support Advisor to Student and Family Coordinator	7/21/2025	\$85,000.00	Contract
Rebecca Starkes	LRE Teacher - High School Teacher	Rebecca Is Moving from The Middle School to The High School to Replace Krystal Kalk	8/13/2025	\$52,500.00	Hourly
Melissa Glosa	Intense Interventions- Beiriger	Rescinded her Position with Griffith Public Schools - Beiriger	8/5/2025	\$58,000.00	Contract
Matt Bliss	7th Grade LRE MS Teacher	Matt will Replace Rebecca Starks.	8/6/2025	\$61,700.00	Contract



Karen Augustyn	8th Grade Science Teacher - MS	Karen Is Temporarily Moving from Para Position. Once A Replacement Is Hired For 8th Grade Science She Will Move Back as A Para.	8/12/2025	\$55,000.00	Contract
Tiffanie Green	Food Service Cook - Beiriger	Kristin Butkus	8/13/2025	\$16.00	Hourly
Olimpia Tienstra	Interim Athletic Director	Kelly Greer	8/14/2025	\$82,000.00	Contract
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Backgrounds Pending Approval					

4.1 Approval of Second Reading and Adoption of Policies and Rescind Polices: Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval and adoption of the second reading of policies and rescind polices. Mrs. Ruesken made a motion to approve the second reading and adoption of policies and rescind policies. Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.2 Approval of First Reading of Policies and Rescind Policies: Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval of the first reading of policies and rescind policies. Mr. Jaques made a motion for the approval of the first reading of policies and rescind policies. Mr. Jaques seconded the motion. All in Favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.3 Approval of Sounds of Sarah: Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval of sounds of Sarah. Ms. Conner made a motion for the approval of sounds of Sarah. Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.4 Approval of the 2025-2026 Middle School Book Synopsis: Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval of the 2025-2026 Middle School book synopsis. Mr. Adduci made a motion for the approval of the 225-2026 Middle School book synopsis. Ms. Connor seconded the motion. Mrs. Ruesken stated that we need to expect more from our eighth graders. Mrs. Ruesken also stated we need to tackle literature better and this is not the best literature. Mrs. Dumezich shared that these are for students struggling and that need mediation. Ms. Conner appreciates that we are trying to find books for kids that may need mediation. Mrs. Adams, Ms. Conner, Mr. Jaques and Mr. Adduci were all in favor while Mrs. Ruesken was opposed.

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

4.6 Approval of Resolution 2025-28 Student Consumable Fees: Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for approval of resolution # 2025-28 student consumable fees. Mr. Adduci made a motion for the approval of resolution # 2025-28 student consumable fees. Mrs. Ruesken seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.7 Approval of Resolution 2025-29 Establishing an Attendance Incentive Program for Teachers and Staff on Teachers Contracts.: Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for approval of resolution # 2025-29 establishing an attendance incentive program for teachers and staff on teachers contracts. Ms. Conner made a motion for the approval of resolution # 2025-29 establishing an attendance incentive program for teachers and staff on a teacher's contracts. Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.8 Administration Approval for SRO To Carry a Firearm.: Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for administration approval for SRO to carry a firearm. Mr. Jaques made a motion for the administration approval for SRO to carry a firearm. Mr. Adduci seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.9 Approval of Department Handbooks.: Ms. Chance presented and asked the Board for approval of the department handbooks. Mr. Jaques made a motion for the approval of the department handbooks. Mrs. Ruesken second the motion. All in Favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.10 Approval of Interim Assistant Athletic Director Job Description.: Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for approval of the interim assistant athletic director job description. Mr. Jaques made a motion for the approval of the interim assistant athletic Director Job Description. Ms. Conner seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.11 Approval of Grade Span for Middle School/High School 4th-13th Grade.: Mrs. Dumezich presented and asked the Board for approval of the grade span for the Middle School/High School 4th-13th grade. Ms. Conner made a motion for the approval of the grade span for the Middle School/High School 4th-13th. Mrs. Ruesken seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4.12 Approval of Central Towers Buyout.: Mrs. Adams requested a motion for the approval of the Central Towers Buyout. Mrs. Ruesken made a motion for the approval of the Central Towers buyout. Ms. Conner seconded the motion. Mr. Adduci stated he thinks they could get more money at least 50%. More. With change of mind Mrs. Ruesken agreed with Mr. Adduci. Mr. Joseph C. Svetanoff, school Attorney stated he will go back to them with a new request. Kathy Ruesken, Jason Jaques and Jesse Adduci voted No while Emily Conner and Tina Adams voted yes. Vote was 3 to 2.

Audience Participation: Mrs. Dumezich wanted to make a correction that Kristina Taylor is teaching Honors 6th, 7th and 8th grade with additional 6th grade classes. And not intellectual English, Mrs. Dumezich did not realize there was a change in courses. Mrs. Dumezich will ask Kristina Taylor to come do a presentation if the Board would like. Mrs. Dumezich wanted to know if that would change the Boards vote. Mrs. Adams said that it already passed and that its fine.

Good of the Corporation: Mr. Jaques stated that there is a scrimmage game against Hobart and our first game is scheduled next Friday against Highland, He also stated that the marching band sounds great.

Upcoming Board Meeting: The next Regular School Board meeting will be on September 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the LGI room at the High School.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mrs. Ruesken motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Conner seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.



Tina Adams, President



Kathy Ruesken, First Vice President



Jesse Adduci, Secretary

