

Eau Claire School Board Retreat Minutes
Friday, February 6, 2026, 1:30 p.m.
ECASD Administration Building – Room 123C
Generated by Terri Grzyb

Members present

Lori Bica, Jasmine Case, Jarrett Dement, Stephanie Farrar, Tim Nordin, Pa Thao, Erica Zerr

Superintendent Mike Johnson was also present

The meeting started at 1:39 p.m.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

The Board of Education participated in their self-evaluation. To help with this process, Bryn Horton, a member of the Sun Prairie Area School District Board, was invited to help facilitate.

The group began by proposing and agreeing on the following working agreements:

- seek shared values
- demonstrate mutual respect
- employ skillful listening
- opportunities for clarification
- sufficient consensus

These agreements were written down and displayed to serve as a reference point throughout the meeting.

Board members reflected on whether Board priorities from the previous year had been achieved, identifying ongoing items such as the professional development calendar and communication plan, and noting completed activities like book studies and conference attendance.

The group discussed ongoing work on updating the equity statement, with plans to focus on this topic in the March work session, recognizing it as a preamble to all governance policies.

Board members engaged in a structured review of self-assessment results and administrative feedback, identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and recurring themes such as communication, preparedness, and the balance between policy and operations.

Board members explored ways to better integrate staff stories and gain first-hand knowledge of school environments without overstepping into operational territory with quantitative data in Board decision-making, considering structured opportunities for staff to share challenges and successes directly.

Board members examined the ongoing tension between governance and operational roles, particularly in high-stakes decisions like school closures, SRO programs, and boundary changes, and discussed the need for clear processes and adequate information.

Several Board members shared personal goals for the coming year, such as improving preparedness, being brave in discussions, and growing capacity to adapt strategies, with the intention of fostering accountability within the group.

Board members reflected on the impact of meeting logistics, such as room layout and timing of materials (Board packer), on communication and effectiveness, and considered adjustments to improve engagement and preparation.

Board members discussed the current Bboard debrief process, its timing, public sharing, and the introduction of a regular debrief report to improve accountability and communication among board members and with administrators.

- The Board decided to begin the new debrief reporting process at the March 16th meeting.

Board members discussed the need to revise and clarify the board's governing commitments (GCs), forming a subcommittee to refine language and ensure shared understanding before full implementation.

Board members, referencing feedback from administrators and Board members, examined the challenges in communication between the Board and administrators, including misunderstandings about resource allocation, staff time, and the impact of Board decisions on school operations.

The Board set the following goals for 2026:

- Refine the GC's
- Improve Board behavior, relationships, and communication with Administration, with an emphasis on teamwork and shared values

The meeting ended at 5:03 p.m.