APPROVED

Griffin School District #324

Minutes

Griffin School Board Study Session

Date and Time
Wednesday October 8, 2025 at 6:00 PM

Location
Griffin School Library
6530 33rd Way NW
Olympia, WA 98502

Directors Present
Blair Baker, Emma Rose, Julie Osterberg, Tesa Frevert, Trish Hefton (remote)

Directors Absent
None

Guests Present
Allison Adair, Erin Hagen, Kirsten Rue, Rebekah Keiser

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

Julie Osterberg called a meeting of the board of directors of Griffin School District #324 to order on Wednesday Oct 8, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

C.

Pledge of Allegiance & Land Acknowledgement

D. Approval of Agenda

Blair Baker made a motion to Approve the Agenda.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
Addendum: Policy 2121 - Substance Abuse Program. Old policy was accidently added to the packet. Most recent policy has been uploaded to the online agenda and hard copies were given to the Board.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. Board Member Committee Updates

A. Personnel

Superintendent Rue requested a meeting with the **Personnel Committee** and asked that a date be scheduled.

B. Policy

Superintendent Rue requested a meeting with the **Policy Committee** and asked that a date be scheduled.

C. Budget

Director Baker met with **Kim Ferra** a few weeks prior to set a monthly time for a financial review.
Allison was tasked with sending a calendar invitation to **Directors Baker and Frevert** to participate in a "spot audit" before the regular board meeting.

D. Facilities

There were **no Facilities updates**.

E. Legislative

Director Rose announced that he would discuss this topic further during the regular agenda.
Director Hefton expressed appreciation for the work that Director Rose contributed to this process.

III. New Business

A. 2025-26 School Improvement Plan Presentation

CORRECTION NOTED IN OCT. 22, 2025 BOARD MEETING:
Addendum to the Study Session Minutes from October 8, 2025:
2025-26 School Improvement Plan Presentation

"Principal Keiser reported that Griffin was notified that it was a 'school in improvement' in the Spring of ***2024***."
Julie Osterberg made a motion to approve the minutes from Griffin School Board Study Session on 10-08-25.
Trish Hefton seconded the motion.
The board VOTED to approve the motion.

Principal Keiser reported that **Griffin** was notified that it was a **"school in improvement"** in the Spring of 2023. Her presentation included graphs from the previous year, as well as an overall view from 2022. The school was labeled a **Tier 3 school of improvement**. While the school had previously received funding, it no longer had funding but was still required to follow the guidelines. She noted that the school had the potential to move out of this status by 2027.

Director Frevert asked why Asian students only appeared on the 2022 graph. **Principal Keiser** and **Superintendent Rue** explained that this was based on the school's population data.

Following discussions over the summer, the staff was better prepared with their goals.
Goals:
1. Effective and Engaging Instruction
2. Welcoming and Supportive Learning Environments
-Climate
-Belonging
3. Family & Community Engagement

Principal Keiser explained that **Superintendent Rue** was forming a **Grizzly Compass Crew** of students who would discuss the school climate. The **Panorama survey** is scheduled to take place in the Fall and Spring. The team hoped for increased numbers of survey completions by families.
The Fall Panorama survey would be scaled back to be shorter, with the full survey administered in the Spring. The Principal stated that the team now has excellent, measurable goals.

Director Osterberg shared that she appreciated how the goals tied into the **Strategic Plan**.
Director Frevert acknowledged that she had already noticed an improvement in communication.

Director Rose asked if there was any data on the **cell phone policy** now that it had been in place for a year. **Principal Hagen** stated that there had been a significant change, and students were not questioning it. Students were keeping their backpacks and phones in their lockers, and there were fewer discipline referrals as a result.

Superintendent Rue thought it would be interesting to look at **cyber-bullying data** from before the cell phone policy was implemented. **Director Osterberg** suggested this could be a task for the **Compass Crew**.

B. Reflections from Family Meetings & Open House

Principal Keiser distributed a survey via QR codes and flyers and initially received 13 responses. She sent it out again and received 41 responses to questions regarding:
- Benefits
- Should we do this again?

The majority of families found the meetings meaningful and felt they were a great way to start the school year. **80% would like to do this again**. Only seven elementary students did not attend, three of whom had students in different grades. Families were able to walk the lunch line, visit the playground, and drop off supplies. The team contemplated providing childcare.

The biggest challenge was for families who had both middle school and elementary students. The team would strategize ideas to accommodate childcare.

Director Frevert asked if there was feedback from Middle School families. There was no formal survey, but informal feedback indicated that the meeting time with teachers was too short.

Director Rose asked if Elementary teachers had feedback. **Principal Keiser** stated the teachers loved it and appreciated meeting the families and having time to get to know them before Fall conferences.

Superintendent Rue felt the event was a success from her perspective. She appreciated the intentionality of these meetings and the information teachers were able to provide to families.

For the Middle School, **Principal Keiser** noted feedback that there was repeat information on expectations, so streamlining that would be helpful.

For the new family orientation, she suggested it might be nice to host an **ice cream social** after the tours were given.

Director Rose asked when the decision would be made to hold the event again the following year. **Principal Keiser** shared that Griffin would need to submit a **waiver to OSPI** in the Spring.

C. Griffin School Board Legislative Priorities

Director Rose explained that the Board would be having a discussion about **Legislative priorities**. She noted that the **Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA)** compiles a large list of priorities and asks districts to identify their top ten. Each district in Washington State was expected to submit its top ten priorities based on the WSSDA list.

Director Rose asked the Board members to **email her their list of top ten** so that she could compile them into an overall top ten list for the Griffin School Board.

The Board engaged in a discussion and provided feedback regarding the priorities they felt were the most relevant and pressing for **Griffin** in particular.

Director Frevert observed that there was a lot of overlap in the provided list.

Director Rose felt that **Transition to Kindergarten (TK)** was important but noted that it was **not fully funded**. **Superintendent Rue** explained that TK originated after the pandemic and was not considered **Basic Education**, therefore it was on a year-to-year timeline.

Director Rose also mentioned the priority regarding **Funding for Early Learning Co-Curricular Enrichment and Unique Programs**, which also mentioned TK. She felt that the **Transition to Kindergarten** priority was more specific to TK than the broader Early Learning priority. **Director Baker** also noted both priorities and acknowledged that she and Director Rose were aligned on the issue.

Director Osterberg noted that some priorities were more detailed and provided bullet points, with **budget-related priorities** standing out to her.

Director Frevert pointed out that **Insurance Premiums** represented a huge expense.

Director Osterberg mentioned **Graduation Requirements & Pathways**, stating that while it was important, it wasn't directly relevant to Griffin.

Superintendent Rue questioned the priority related to **Salaries** and wondered if there was a discussion at WSSDA regarding the salary schedule. She explained that Griffin's average teacher salary was nearing six figures, and the district only received funding for 70% of that amount. The higher salary was due to many experienced teachers with Masters degrees, and the district did not receive full funding for their entire salaries. Director Rose did not feel this priority was pushing for a change in the salary schedule but thought it related to salary comparables to State employees.

Director Frevert asked for a discussion on **Levy Authority**, feeling it was pertinent to Griffin and allowed the district to employ so many well-qualified teachers. Director Rose clarified that this priority related to **access to Levy funds**.

Director Frevert asked about the **Government to Government Constitution** priority, as she was unclear about its exact process. Director Rose explained that it was adopted in 2020 and that WSSDA supported legislation that backed **Tribal Consultation**.

Director Rose reminded everyone that **all of these priorities were supported by WSSDA**, and the organization was simply asking districts to submit their top ten.

Superintendent Rue had questions regarding the **Consolidation of School Districts**. Director Rose explained that consolidation should only occur by a **vote of citizens** and not by a Legislative vote. Superintendent Rue shared that there was a study from **WASA** about the value of small school districts, and she expressed her interest in getting involved in that study. Director Rose stated that she was available to help support the Superintendent in this effort.

Director Baker asked if the **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** priority was about creating policy. Director Rose believed it was in support of the **creative use of AI**, viewing it as a positive effort managed in an ethical manner.

Director Hefton stated that **Early Learning priorities** were very important to her. She also highlighted **MSOCs** (Maintenance, Supplies, and Operating Costs), as it was a great, current need for Griffin, and she felt funding should be provided to do the work the district was asked to do. Another important item was the **Open Meeting** priority, which she felt was vital to their Executive Sessions. Another important topic to her is **stabilizing budgets**. She noted that the district was not fully funded and had to dip into reserves for ongoing operations, which was not sustainable forever. Finally, she stressed the importance of **mental health**, prioritizing mental health support within schools. She felt schools were expected to care for kids but were not fully funded to do all of this.

Director Osterberg mentioned **Expanding Access to Re-engagement** but was unclear what Re-engagement programs were. Superintendent Rue explained that it likely referred to **re-engagement after a student's life had taken them away from being involved in school**, which could be for various reasons. She noted that it could take a lot of support to get a student fully back into the school environment.

Director Rose addressed **Fiscal Notes and Unfunded Mandates**. She noted that during the discussion at WSSDA, there was hesitancy around implementing programs when there was no funding to back them up, leaving schools to fund mandates on their own. **Director Hefton** agreed, stating that **Unfunded Mandates** needed to be reduced in general.

Director Rose acknowledged that the Board could discuss these priorities all evening. **Director Osterberg** acknowledged Director Rose's efforts in coordinating all of this and noted that the Board had ample time to discuss and ask questions.

IV. New Policy

A. Policy 6217 - Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

Superintendent Rue explained that the State Auditor recommended two new policies to Griffin following the most recent audit in the spring. Griffin currently only utilizes **Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)** for payroll and payroll taxes. This policy would allow for future EFT processes. The Superintendent explained that if Griffin were to use EFT for Accounts Payable, the process would mirror warrant payments: the Board would approve payments, and they would be sent out the next day.

Director Rose acknowledged that the policy was straightforward and included good parameters.

B. Policy 6550: Capitalization Threshold for Leases & Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs)

Superintendent Rue explained that the portion highlighted in yellow would be changed to **$30,000** (instead of 1% of prior year expenditures). This change aligned with what other similar-sized districts were doing. He explained that a **Subscription-based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA)** was a long-term tech arrangement, and while Griffin did not currently have one, the closest example was the contract for the copy machines, which was an "over time" lease. This policy would require the district to report a fiscal liability at year-end if the contract exceeded the $30,000 threshold and could not be terminated at the end of the year, thereby acknowledging a large, locked-in fiscal expenditure.

Director Hefton appreciated the policy verbiage and the **$30,000** amount.

V. Policy Updates

A. Policy 3241 - Student Discipline

Superintendent Rue emphasized the importance of this policy, as administrators had to refer to it. **Assistant Principal Hagen** would provide discipline updates at the next board meeting. The policy acknowledged that some events at school required **non-discretionary discipline** (such as a physical assault). **Discretionary discipline** relied on the decision of the teacher and/or administrator, who had to use discretion based on the issue. The Superintendent stated that this was the fundamental vocabulary change in the updated policy and that it was important to understand. He noted that, by and large, this was not a major shift for Griffin and that Assistant Principal Hagen had taken great steps to ensure Griffin’s practices were current. The procedure protected parents' rights to be informed and involved before discipline decisions were made. Assistant Principal

Hagen would provide more detail on the Procedure, which was longer than the WSSDA updated policy.

Director Hefton acknowledged the differences in teachers' disciplinary actions. She stressed that it was important to streamline the Procedure to set clear expectations for teachers.

Superintendent Rue looked forward to walking through the Procedure with the Board at the next meeting. She stated that the change in law had placed the judgment onto the teachers and also required the Board to adopt the options of responses for teachers. Although Procedures were not typically in the hands of the Board, he felt this was important for the Board to be aware of. The district would align **Restorative Practices** with discipline, noting that a disciplinary response did not have to be the traditional model. The Superintendent expressed optimism and hope.

VI. Policy Review

A. Policy 2121 - Substance Abuse Program

Superintendent Rue reminded the Board that this Policy was required to be reviewed annually. Since the Policy was adopted in November 2024, she asked if it raised any questions or concerns based on the previous school year. She noted that there were **vaping issues** last year, which were addressed, and that there had been no issues this year.

B. Policy 3115 - Students Experiencing Homelessness - Enrollment Rights & Services

Superintendent Rue explained that the Counselors presented on this policy the previous year, and she suggested reviewing it every other year, as it was important for the Board to be aware of **homelessness**. The bulleted list in the policy provided a description of homelessness. Students experiencing housing insecurity identified through **McKinney-Vento** were allowed to remain students at Griffin, regardless of the district they relocated to, and Griffin would provide transportation. The counselors worked closely with McKinney-Vento families.
Director Hefton offered support if input was needed for the Procedure for this policy.

VII. Policy Removal

A. Policy 6119 - Uncollected Non-Tax Revenue

Superintendent Rue announced that at the next meeting, she would ask for a vote to **remove this policy** as it was no longer part of WSSDA's policy. The removal was necessary because it conflicted with the district's current policy on fines and fees.

VIII. Superintendent Updates

A. Superintendent Kirsten Rue

Updated photos of each board member were requested on **November 14th**, which was picture makeup day at Griffin. Superintendent Rue expressed hope that all members would be able to attend and asked them to coordinate with Allison.

The district is working on **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. The use of AI had been restricted on student iPads until staff could work with students to use it appropriately for creativity and expanding knowledge. Specific classes (e.g., future tech) had access, and this would be an ongoing conversation.

At the next meeting, **Director Ferra** will discuss **Payroll** and how it is encumbered. The district would not encumber Payroll this year to have a better idea of the remaining funds and how money was being spent. Director Ferra would provide further explanation. She felt this would be helpful for looking at the actual spending instead of what was budgeted.

IX. Closing Items

A. For the Good of the Order

Director Osterberg reported that the first **staff/student/community recognition** was held at the last meeting and would continue monthly. The **PTO and GSF** would be recognized next month. She asked the Board to think of other ideas for future meetings.

She and **Superintendent Rue** were working on **guidelines regarding Public Comment**. More specific details were needed to be prepared if issues arose.

Director Rose will not be at the next meeting.

There would be an open spot on the **South Sound Reading Foundation**. **Director Hefton** expressed interest in joining.

B. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie Osterberg

"Where students thrive, feel valued, and shape a better world."