APPROVED

Griffin School District #324

Minutes

Griffin School Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday December 17, 2025 at 6:00 PM

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

Board Meeting Zoom Link

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

Directors Absent
None

Guests Present
Alex Jones, Allison Adair, Amy Morgan, Ashley McCabe Herron, Erin Hagen, Jennifer Tomlin, Karen Lett, Kayleen Evans, Kim Ferra, Kirsten Rue, Members of the community supporting Paul Whitney, Members of the community supporting Suzanne Stottlemyre, Parents of HiCap students, Paul Whitney, Rebekah Keiser, Sherrie Hickam (remote), Suzanne Stottlemyre

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 Dec 17, 2025 at 6:01 PM.
Blair Baker made a motion to Approve the Agenda.
Trish Hefton seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
Director Frevert read the Land Acknowledgement statement.

C. Oath of Office of Re-Elected Board Directors

Superintendent Rue administered the Oath of Office to Trish Hefton.

Superintendent Rue administered the Oath of Office to Julie Osterberg.

D. Election of Board Chair

Tesa Frevert made a motion to Nominate Trish Hefton as Board Chair.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
Emma Rose	Aye
Blair Baker	Aye
Tesa Frevert	Aye
Julie Osterberg	Aye
Trish Hefton	Aye

E. Election of Board Vice Chair

Tesa Frevert made a motion to Nominate Julie Osterberg as Vice Chair.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

Roll Call	
Blair Baker	Aye
Julie Osterberg	Aye
Emma Rose	Aye
Tesa Frevert	Aye
Trish Hefton	Aye

F. Board Recognition

Superintendent Rue recognized Suzanne Stottlemyre:
In recognition for her dedicated service to Griffin students. We celebrate Suzanne’s meticulous, detail-oriented work ethic and unwavering professionalism, which consistently set a high standard for academic excellence and ethical conduct. Furthermore, we wish to acknowledge the energy and care she pours into her National

Junior Honor Society students, fostering their growth and leadership development. Suzanne enriches our entire school community.

Superintendent Rue recognized Paul Whitney, Griffin Archery Coach:
In recognition for his dedication to the Griffin Archery program over many years. His unwavering commitment has been a cornerstone of the team's success, creating a lasting legacy of dedication and sportsmanship. We commend his participation in the Griffin Archery Partners (GAP) booster club, which will provide vital support and resources, significantly enhancing the experience for all student-archers.
Paul noted: Archery began in 2013. They had 80+ archers last year.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Comments from the Public

No individuals signed up for or addressed the Board during the public comment session.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes - November 18, 2025

Blair Baker made a motion to approve the minutes from Griffin School Board Meeting on 11-18-25.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Approval of Study Session Minutes - December 3, 2025

Blair Baker made a motion to approve the minutes from Griffin School Board Study Session on 12-03-25.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. Approval of Warrants & Payroll

D. Approval of the Enrollment Report

E. Approval of the Personnel Report

F. Public Records Requests

G. Approval of All Consent Agenda Items

Blair Baker made a motion to Approval of all Consent Agenda Items.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Griffin School Highly Capable Program

Presentation from the HiCap Team

Kayleen Evans, Ashley Herron, and Jennifer Tomlin presented the 2025-2026 Highly Capable (HiCap) program plan. The presenters noted that the program's structure has evolved over time to better meet student needs.

Elementary Program Update

Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Tomlin reported that they met over the summer to develop a comprehensive scope and sequence across all grade levels. This curriculum focuses on accelerated and differentiated content, project-based learning, and critical thinking. The program also introduced a monthly Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) component specifically tailored to the needs of highly capable students.

The presenters highlighted the addition of Paraeducator Leslie Merchant to the team. Mrs. Evans acknowledged Mrs. Merchant's significant contributions and positive impact on the program.

Student Demonstrations

Mrs. Tomlin explained that the program addresses the "fixed mindset" often found in high-achieving students. Early in the year, students worked with Mrs. Merchant to explore different types of intelligence (e.g., logic, linguistics, interpersonal) and the value of making mistakes.
Three students shared their "Wonder Projects," which involved independent research and creative synthesis:

- Nicholas presented a storyboard and script investigating whether dinosaurs ever exceeded 800 feet in height.
-Santi shared research regarding the Big Bang theory, explaining the expansion of the universe from a microscopic point.
-Lori presented her findings on the purpose of dreams, explaining REM sleep and how dreaming aids in problem-solving and creativity.

Additionally, students completed a real-world math project focused on creating and managing a budget for a Thanksgiving dinner. Superintendent Rue noted that these hands-on projects directly align with the district's strategic plan.

Middle School Program & Inclusion Model

Dr. Ashley Herron provided an update on the Middle School HiCap program:
6th and 7th Grade: Students are served through an enrichment course titled "Elevated Thinking," taught by Mrs. Stottlemyre. The course emphasizes financial literacy and community partnerships.
8th Grade: Dr. Herron is piloting an inclusion-based model inspired by International Baccalaureate (IB) frameworks. While HiCap-qualified students are automatically enrolled, any student wishing to engage in higher-level critical thinking may "opt-in."

Dr. Herron explained that while creating dual assignments (general education and "elevated") is labor-intensive, it has fostered high levels of student engagement and meaningful classroom discourse. She also shared that her participation in an ASU symposium on "action research" has informed the program's data collection and iterative design.

Director Frevert inquired about the "opt-in" statistics and whether students could "opt-out" if the workload became too difficult. Dr. Herron clarified that students commit for a full semester. Currently, 36 students are enrolled in Elevated ELA (including 7 or 8 HiCap-qualified students). No non-HiCap students have requested to opt-out, while one HiCap student who opted out initially has requested to return for the second semester.

Director Rose asked for evidence regarding the impact of the new models. Dr. Herron noted that formal evidence for the inclusion model would be available by February. Mrs. Tomlin added that the SEL component has already shown a positive impact by helping students view mistakes as learning opportunities.

Director Rose also inquired about the status of Gifted Education Plans (GEPs). Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Tomlin acknowledged that while GEPs were initiated two years ago, they were not completed last year due to scheduling challenges. The team expressed a goal to refine the GEP process so the documents follow students as they transition through grade levels.

Director Rose emphasized the importance of communication during the transition from elementary to middle school and suggested that if GEPs are too time-intensive to maintain, the district should evaluate their place in the formal plan, noting that state funding for HiCap is minimal.

A HiCap parent shared a testimonial regarding her son's positive experience. She thanked the teachers for being responsive to feedback by breaking up the testing sessions to make them less overwhelming for younger students and praised the work of Mrs. Merchant.

Director Hefton concluded the session by thanking the teachers and students for their presentation and dedication to the program.
Julie Osterberg made a motion to approve HiCap program.

Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

V. POLICY - NEW

A. 1821 Standards for Individual School Directors

Julie Osterberg made a motion to approve Policy 1821.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. 4001 Public Information Program

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve Policy 4001.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. 4060 Distribution of Information

Julie Osterberg made a motion to approve Policy 4060.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. 5254 Staff Expression

Julie Osterberg made a motion to approve Policy 5254.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
Director Rose opened a discussion regarding the complexities of social media usage, noting that while she appreciated the policy's current language, the intersection of the First Amendment and social media often presents a "gray area." She expressed concern that the public often struggles to distinguish between an individual's status as a private citizen and their role as a district employee.

Director Osterberg concurred, noting the difficulty in navigating the boundaries between district time and personal time, particularly when content may be deemed offensive or in violation of district policy.
Director Frevert highlighted the specific verbiage of the policy, noting that the phrase "encouraged to remember" clarifies that the district is not actively monitoring personal accounts. She emphasized that in a small community, employees must remain mindful of their professional visibility.

Superintendent Rue provided legal context to assist the Board's consideration of the policy. She outlined specific categories of speech not protected by the First Amendment, including defamation, incitement to lawless action, and true threats. She further detailed the three-part legal test used to determine if employee speech is protected from disciplinary action:
1. The employee spoke as a private citizen.

2. The speech addressed a matter of public concern.
3. The employee's interest in the speech outweighed the district's interest in maintaining efficient school management and operations.

To illustrate this, Superintendent Rue cited a case where an employee was terminated after making disparaging remarks about immigrant students and the district. While the speech involved a national conversation, the district's interest in maintaining a trusted environment prevailed.

Superintendent Rue read the WSSDA Procedure: 5254P
This policy is a "discretionary" procedure.

Director Rose acknowledged that the procedure provided necessary clarity, and Director Frevert agreed, reiterating that the district's primary focus remains on the best interests of the students.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VI. POLICY - UPDATES

A. 1005 Key Functions of the Board

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve updated Policy 1005.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. 1210 Annual Organizational Meeting

Emma Rose made a motion to approve updated Policy 1210.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. 1220 Board Officers and Duties of Board Members

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve updated Policy 1220.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. 1630 Evaluation of the Superintendent

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve updated Policy 1630.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

E. 4200 Parent Access and Safe and Orderly Learning Environment

Emma Rose made a motion to approve updated Policy 4200.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VII. POLICY - REVIEW

A. 2106 Program Compliance

Will review and vote at January 28, 2026 Board meeting.

B. 6030 Financial Reports

Will review and vote at January 28, 2026 Board meeting.

C. 6040 Expenditures in Excess of Budget

Will review and vote at January 28, 2026 Board meeting.

D. 6213 Reimbursement for Travel Expenses

Will review and vote at January 28, 2026 Board meeting.

VIII. POLICY - REMOVAL

A. 4000 Public Information Program

Tesa Frevert made a motion to remove Policy 400.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. 6023 Post Issuance Compliance

Tesa Frevert made a motion to remove Policy 6023.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IX. BOARD ROLES AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. Election of the Board's Legislative Representative

Tesa Frevert made a motion to nominate Director Rose as Legislated Representative.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Other Board Roles or Assignments

The Board discussed the creation of two new leadership roles: Tribal Liaison and Community Outreach Liaison.

Director Frevert emphasized the importance of maintaining clear lines of communication with the Board Chair and the Superintendent. She noted that Directors must "stay in their

lanes" to ensure roles remain distinct, adding that while the current Board communicates effectively, clear protocols are necessary to set a successful precedent for future boards. Director Rose agreed, noting that the Board-Superintendent relationship is vital and that the workload of individual members must be carefully considered.

Superintendent Rue reminded the Board that no single Director has the authority to speak on behalf of the entire Board or the District. She clarified that the role of a liaison is to act as a representative who listens and brings information back to the Board and Superintendent, rather than managing district operations.

Director Hefton asked the Board to affirm if these roles were still desired. Director Frevert responded that these positions are essential to meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan, noting that the model can be adjusted in the future if it proves ineffective. Director Hefton added that these "point persons" help carry work forward while respecting established professional boundaries. Director Baker noted that the Board should remain open to constructive feedback and recognize that what works for the current body may need to evolve for future boards.

Following the discussion, Director Hefton called for volunteers:
Director Frevert volunteered to serve as the Tribal Liaison.
Director Baker volunteered to serve as the Community Outreach Liaison.

It was noted that these assignments are representative roles and do not require a formal vote.

X. GRIFFIN LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2026 SESSION

A. Draft Priorities for Board Consideration

Director Rose reported on her attendance at the WSSDA General Assembly this past fall, where statewide priorities were established through a voting process. Following the assembly, Griffin School District Directors were asked to identify their top three choices from a list of 141 priorities.

Director Rose synthesized the feedback, identifying topics supported by three or more Directors. She then collaborated with Superintendent Rue to refine a list of 10–12 items into four final priorities that are most urgent for the Griffin community.

Superintendent Rue explained that they developed concise descriptions for each priority to ensure the district's advocacy goals are clear and accessible to the public.

Director Rose noted that while three of the priorities align directly with WSSDA’s broader platform, the Board felt it was necessary to specifically "call out" Transitional Kindergarten due to its local importance. She also highlighted the critical nature of Materials, Supplies,

and Operating Costs (MSOC), specifically citing the impact of rising insurance premiums on the district budget.

In response to a clarifying question from Director Frevert regarding specific data points, it was confirmed that the figure in the priority description should be 47%, not 53%.

Superintendent Rue stated that, upon Board approval, these priorities will be posted immediately to the district website and will be a key topic of discussion during the upcoming State of the District community meeting.

Director Hefton commended the team for completing this complex task within a tight timeline.
Julie Osterberg made a motion to approve legislative priorites.
Blair Baker seconded the motion.
Griffin School District Legislative Priorities 2026
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

XI. DISTRICT REPORTS

A. Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Kim Ferra presented the Budget Status Report through November 2025, noting that the district's financial trajectory is trending positively. She advised that while the General Fund remains stable, the Board should continue to monitor it closely in the coming months.

Ms. Ferra reported that all other district funds are performing well. She specifically commended the ASB for their diligent work and highlighted the efforts of Anneka Brown in facilitating the growth and management of ASB funds.

Regarding Capital Projects, Ms. Ferra shared that she met with Superintendent Rue and Alex Jones to discuss next steps for the district's facilities plan. With the boiler installation project now complete, the team is identifying future priorities.

The formal budgeting process for the upcoming year is slated to begin in February or March. Ms. Ferra noted that the timeline and projections will be heavily influenced by the outcomes of the current legislative session.

In an update on enrollment, Ms. Ferra stated that numbers remain steady, though the district is currently a few students below the initial projections.

B. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Rue reported on her recent attendance at the ESD Superintendent meeting, where she was accompanied by two Griffin students. She expressed her

appreciation for the students' engagement and their attentive participation during discussions. Superintendent Rue noted that following conversations with legislators, superintendents are being advised to prepare for potential further budget cuts at the state level. She extended her thanks to Director Rose for her ongoing legislative advocacy and expressed pride in the district's initiative to include student voices in these high-level conversations.

Looking ahead, Superintendent Rue announced a joint study session with the Olympia School District (OSD) scheduled for January 14, 2026. She met with OSD leadership to develop a draft agenda, which is set to include:
-The transition process for students moving from Griffin to Capital High School.
-Academic data regarding Griffin graduates.
-Updates on OSD capital projects.
-Curriculum alignment between the two districts.
-The role of student representatives.
-A shared review of legislative priorities.

Superintendent Rue invited the Board to submit any additional agenda items to either herself or Trish for consideration.

XII. Closing Items

A. For the Good of the Order

Director Osterberg would like to add that the President of the the OSD board has reached out to her. They ask if there area any questions they have for the OSD student rep, they would like them ahead of time.

Superintendent Rue suggested they can come up with a handful of questions. And they can be a resource for recommendations for bringing middle school students a part of our board. Please send specific questions to Trish and cc Kirsten.

Director Rose thanked Julie for serving at the Board chair and for Trish serving this next year. She is confident in the leadership of this board.

Director Frevert shared there is a band concert tomorrow at 7. Come early!

B. Executive Session

C. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Trish Hefton

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