APPROVED

# Griffin School District #324

# Minutes

## Griffin School Board Meeting

**Date and Time**
Wednesday April 29, 2026 at 6:00 PM

**Location**
Griffin Cafeteria

Join via Zoom

Board Meeting Zoom Link

**Directors Present**
Emma Rose, Julie Osterberg, Tesa Frevert, Trish Hefton

**Directors Absent**
Blair Baker

**Guests Present**
Aisha Tanaka (remote), Ali Daugherty, Allison Adair, Amy Morgan, Ashley Herron (remote), Bonnie Duncan, Calla Zambas, Camie McGregor (remote), Frank Ehresmann, Jenna Anderson, Jennifer (remote), Jessica Shattuck, Johanna Dowler, Justine Oestreich, Katie Hardy, Kirsten Rue, Kyle Nixon, Scott Sagerser, Tanisha Smith (remote)

### I. Opening Items

#### A. Record Attendance

## B. Call the Meeting to Order

Trish Hefton called a meeting of the board of directors of Griffin School District #324 to order on Wednesday Apr 29, 2026 at 6:00 PM.
Julie Osterberg made a motion to Approve the Agenda.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## C. Restorative Center Presentation

Bonnie Duncan, the Restorative Practices Paraeducator at Griffin School District #324, presented an update on the Restorative Center (RC). She introduced herself as the advisor to the seventh and eighth-grade student advocates and provided a foundational overview of the program's philosophy.

Ms. Duncan explained that restorative practices are rooted in Indigenous culture and focus on resolving community conflicts by recognizing that harm to one individual affects the entire community. She noted that:
-The program shifted away from punitive discipline to address the root causes of conflict.
-The process allowed involved parties to be heard, held accountable, and work collaboratively to repair relationships.
-The program utilized trained seventh and eighth-grade students who served as peer advocates.

Ms. Duncan highlighted the rigorous expectations for these students:
-Code of Conduct: Advocates adhered to a strict code of conduct and served as role models both inside and outside the center.
-Confidentiality: Students were held to high standards regarding the privacy of matters brought to the RC.
-Peer Support: Advocates assisted students in grades 1 through 8 with resolving lower-level conflicts.

Since the Restorative Center opened on January 29, 2026, it recorded 399 student visits. These sessions provided students with the opportunity to reflect or engage in restorative conversations.
Ms. Duncan expressed her strong confidence in the program, noting that advocates were not only gaining lifelong interpersonal skills but were also actively teaching those skills to their peers.

Student advocates Mikey and Leiliana detailed the core functions and ethical standards of the Restorative Center (RC):
-Conflict Resolution: The RC utilized "Reflections" for individual processing and "Restorative Conversations" for group mediation to find collaborative solutions.

-Confidentiality: Advocates maintained strict privacy and a "no-gossip" policy, with exceptions only for threats of harm to self, others, or the school.
-Code of Conduct: The team adhered to principles of honesty, equal respect ("Clean Slate"), and leading by example. They also practiced internal accountability to maintain program integrity.
-Methodology: Advocates facilitated sessions by listening without judgment and using guided questions to help peers repair harm and prevent future conflict.

The presentation concluded with a recognition of the student advocates serving in the 3rd, 4th, and 6th periods.

**D. Science Fair Presentations**

5th grade teacher Wendy Potkonjak introduced three students who completed outstanding projects for the PTO-sponsored Science Fair. She commended the students for their courage in presenting their scientific findings to the Board and the Superintendent.

**Project 1: Plant Hydration and Pigmentation**
**Presenter:** Miss Pernula (Kindergarten)
The student investigated how flowers absorb nutrients and color through their stems using food coloring and water.
**-Findings:** She observed that hydrangeas remained softer than other flowers during the experiment because their stems were less woody, allowing for better hydration.
**-Observation:** The student noted that the blue food coloring was particularly effective in transporting visible color through the petals.

**Project 2: Magnetic Slime (The "Symbiote")**
**Presenter:** Legend McCarthy (2nd Grade)
Inspired by a similar experiment performed by his older brother, Maverick, the student demonstrated the creation of magnetic slime.
**-Process:** The "goo" was created by mixing water, baking soda, and a solution containing boric acid.
**-Mechanism:** By adding iron filings to the mixture, the slime became responsive to strong magnets.
**-Conclusion:** The student successfully demonstrated how the slime could be manipulated and "woken up" through magnetism.

**Project 3: The Tea Leaf Paradox**
**Presenter:** Santiago (Santi) Houston (5th Grade)
Santi presented a sophisticated study on fluid dynamics titled "The Tea Leaf Paradox." He investigated why stirred tea leaves gather in the center of a cup rather than being pushed to the edges by centrifugal force.

**-Hypothesis:** He hypothesized that at low speeds, secondary flow—a loop-like current moving down the sides and up the center—would push leaves inward. At higher speeds, he predicted centrifugal force would spread them outward.
**-Testing:** Using both manual stirring and a magnetic stirrer, he confirmed his hypothesis.
**-Findings:** The experiment showed that heavier leaves at the bottom of the cup were more susceptible to the secondary flow, effectively gathering in the center, while lighter leaves on the surface remained spread out.

The Board and the Superintendent thanked the students for their hard work and impressive technical knowledge. The session concluded with a commemorative photo of the young scientists with the Board members.

## II. Public Comment

### A. Comments from the Public

**TK Teacher Cami McGregor**
Mrs. McGregor spoke on behalf of herself and fellow TK teacher Janelle Hutnik, advocated for the preservation of the Transitional Kindergarten program. She described TK as a vital pipeline for district enrollment, citing the following statistics for the upcoming school year:
-Without TK: Only six in-district students were currently slated to enter kindergarten.
-With TK: The program had already secured 18 students moving into kindergarten, with an additional seven out-of-district families expressing interest in continuing at Griffin.

Mrs. McGregor stated that cutting the program would be short-sighted during a period of widespread enrollment challenges. She noted that families seeking TK elsewhere were unlikely to return to the district in later years.

Beyond enrollment, Mrs. McGregor highlighted data showing that TK students enter kindergarten with significantly higher levels of confidence and academic readiness. She concluded by emphasizing the staff's dedication to the program, including their efforts in community outreach and personal advocacy to ensure the school's future growth.

**TK Teacher Jenelle Hutnik**
Mrs. Hutnik addressed the Board to reinforce the critical role Transitional Kindergarten played in the district’s viability. She noted that while legislative advocacy for TK had faced significant hurdles at the state level, she felt it was imperative to advocate locally for the program’s future. She expressed concern over the potential reduction from two TK classrooms to one, stating that such a cut would negatively impact both staffing and long-term enrollment.

Mrs. Hutnik highlighted a stark shift in enrollment data:
-The district currently maintained three full kindergarten sections.

-Projections for the following year indicated that even with two full TK classes, the district would barely fill two kindergarten sections.
-She emphasized that TK served as a primary "draw" for both in-district and out-of-district families who sought early academic preparation.

She shared that many out-of-district families specifically utilized the TK program as a pathway to remain at Griffin long-term. Ms. Hutnik cautioned that if the district reduced these opportunities, families would seek placement elsewhere and likely would not return.

To demonstrate the program's long-term efficacy, Mrs. Hutnik pointed out that two of the students who presented science fair projects earlier in the meeting were former TK students. She cited this as a "full-circle" example of how early intervention fostered the confidence and academic skills seen in older grades. She concluded by formally requesting that the district maintain full support for two TK classrooms.

**5th Grade Teacher & GEA President, Johanna Dowler**
Ms. Dowler, speaking as the President of the Griffin Education Association (GEA), expressed deep concern regarding the potential elimination of three teaching positions. She noted that since joining the district in 2002, Griffin had never faced cuts of this magnitude that resulted in teacher displacement.

Ms. Dowler raised questions regarding the transparency of the district's budget projections. She pointed out a significant discrepancy between the previous year's projected ending balance of $20,000 and the actual September balance of approximately $1.5 million.
While acknowledging the challenges of declining enrollment and rising costs, she urged the Board to evaluate administrative overhead. Specifically, she questioned:
-The necessity of maintaining four front-office assistants and a full-time superintendent as student enrollment dropped from 650 to 580.
-The equity of cutting frontline teachers and paraeducators while administrative staffing levels remained unchanged.

Ms. Dowler emphasized that maintaining a robust TK program was the most effective way to address the enrollment crisis. She warned that state regulations might prevent the district from expanding the program in the future if a classroom were cut now.

She suggested that Griffin should capitalize on the closure of TK programs in neighboring Olympia to recruit new families. To assist with district costs, she proposed:
-Spreading tuition costs across non-exempt students to increase affordability.
-Implementing modern payment systems, such as autopay or upfront payment discounts, to ensure consistent revenue.

Ms. Dowler concluded by urging the Board to be proactive and "think outside the box" rather than allowing fear to dictate budgetary decisions. She advocated for a forward-thinking approach to protect the long-term future of the students and the community.

**Kindergarten Teacher, Ali Daugherty**
Mrs. Daugherty spoke as both a kindergarten teacher and a prospective parent of an incoming TK student. While acknowledging the difficulty of the district's budgetary situation, she urged the Board to consider the varying long-term impacts of specific cuts. She noted that since the implementation of TK at Griffin, she had observed a significant improvement in student outcomes, particularly for those requiring more support.

Drawing on her professional experience, Mrs. Daugherty highlighted several key benefits of the program:
-Acclimation: TK allowed students to build relationships with trusted adults and become familiar with the school environment a year before entering kindergarten.
-Stronger Foundations: Students entered her classroom with better-developed foundational skills, both socially and academically.
-Efficiency of Resources: She argued that TK functioned as a research-backed investment, providing early interventions that reduced the long-term need for special education services and student retentions.

Mrs. Daugherty encouraged the Board to think creatively to preserve the program, emphasizing that early intervention was the most effective way to support students' long-term success. She concluded by reiterating the widespread staff and community support for the program’s continuation.

**5th Grade Teacher, Wendy Potkonjak**
Mrs. Potkonjak, speaking as a former student, parent, and current teacher within the district, emphasized the long-standing reputation of Griffin School District as a "sought-after" community. She noted that real estate listings frequently highlight the school as a primary selling point for the area. She cautioned the Board that cutting foundational programs like Transitional Kindergarten (TK) would damage this reputation and hinder the district's ability to attract and retain families.

Mrs. Potkonjak raised concerns regarding the loss of in-district students at the upper elementary and middle school levels. She reported that:
-Coordination with 4th-grade staff indicated a projected loss of nearly seven in-district students moving into the 5th and 6th grades next year.
-The district currently lacked an exit survey or formal process to determine why local families were choosing to leave (e.g., relocation, financial reasons, or dissatisfaction).

She urged the Board to investigate the root causes of student attrition to prevent further population loss. Regarding the budget, Mrs. Potkonjak echoed previous sentiments that:

-Equity in Reductions: If cuts were necessary, they should be applied across the board rather than targeting specific grade levels or programs.
-Creative Problem Solving: The district should "think outside the box" to find alternative funding solutions to maintain the programs that make the school a desirable destination for families.

## III. CONSENT AGENDA

### A. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes - March 25, 2026

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve the minutes from Griffin School Board Meeting on 03-25-26.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### B. Approval of Study Session Minutes - April 15, 2026

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve the minutes from Griffin School Board Study Session on 04-15-26.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### C. Approval of Payroll & Warrants

### D. Approval of the Enrollment Report

### E. Approval of the Personnel Report

### F. Review of Public Records Requests

### G. Approval of All Consent Agenda Items

Tesa Frevert made a motion to Approve all Consent Agenda items.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## IV. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Student Representative Process

Superintendent Kirsten Rue presented a draft proposal for a new policy and procedure aimed at bringing student representatives onto the School Board beginning in the 2026–2027 school year. She noted that this draft incorporated feedback from the Board's previous study session.

The proposed timeline for the policy is as follows:
**-First Reading:** Presented during the current meeting for initial review.

**-Study Session:** To be discussed in detail at the next scheduled study session.
**-Potential Adoption:** Slated for formal adoption by the end of May 2026.

The Board expressed unanimous support for the proposal, noting that incorporating student voices had been a long-standing goal of the members. They thanked the Superintendent for moving the initiative forward and indicated they would review the draft in preparation for the upcoming study session.

## V. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Resolution 25-26-03

Superintendent Rue requested Board approval for a formal resolution to be submitted to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The resolution seeks a waiver to allow two days dedicated to Family Connection Meetings to be counted as official school days within the instructional calendar.

The Superintendent noted that the previous year marked the inaugural implementation of these meetings, which yielded the following results:
**-Positive Parent Feedback:** Families responded well to the initiative, and the district is currently incorporating community suggestions for further improvement.
**-Student Success:** Staff reported a smoother transition on the first day of school, specifically noting "fewer tears" as students felt more comfortable with their teachers and classrooms prior to the official start.

The Superintendent recommended approval of the resolution to ensure the district can continue this process, which has proven effective in fostering a supportive start to the academic year for students and families.
Tesa Frevert made a motion to Approve Resolution 25-26-03.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## VI. POLICY - NEW

### A. 3411 Accommodating Students with Seizure Disorders or Epilepsy

Superintendent Rue introduced agenda items A through E, which consisted of new policies regarding student health and wellness. She explained that these additions were necessary to address gaps in the district's current policy manual and would provide formal guidelines for health room operations and general student well-being.
Julie Osterberg made a motion to Approve Policy 3411.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### B. 3419 Self Administration of Asthma and Anaphylaxis

Emma Rose made a motion to Approve Policy 3419.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### C. 3420 Anaphylaxis Prevention and Response

Tesa Frevert made a motion to Approve Policy 3420.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### D. 3422 Student Sports: Concussion, Head Injury and Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Emma Rose made a motion to Approve Policy 3422.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### E. 3424 Opioid Related Overdose Reversal

Emma Rose made a motion to Approve Policy 3424.
Julie Osterberg seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### F. 4129 Family Involvement

Superintendent Rue presented Policy 4129 (Family Involvement), noting that while the policy is discretionary rather than legally mandated, it directly aligns with the district's Strategic Plan. She emphasized that adopting the policy would formally reinforce the district's commitment to prioritizing family connections and community relations. The Board reviewed the policy as a proactive step to ensure operational consistency with their stated strategic goals.
Emma Rose made a motion to Approve Policy 4129.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## VII. POLICY - UPDATES

### A. 3124 Removal-Release of Student During School Hours

Superintendent Rue presented updates to an existing district policy that had not been revised in several years. She noted that the current draft included minor language adjustments to ensure the policy remains current and accurate. These updates were proposed to modernize the policy manual and reflect contemporary terminology.
Julie Osterberg made a motion to Approve Policy 3124.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

### B. 3413 Student Immunization and Life Threatening Conditions

Superintendent Rue informed the Board that the Educational Service District (ESD) conducted its annual review of the district's health room operations. The audit focused on analyzing internal processes to ensure high standards of student care. The Superintendent noted that the district's health room Nurse, Chelsea, received excellent performance marks during this evaluation.

As part of the audit, the ESD reviewed the district's health-related policies for legal compliance. Policy 3413 was identified as requiring an update to meet current standards. The Superintendent provided the Board with the following for review:
-Current Version: The existing policy for comparison.
-Proposed Version: The updated draft reflecting the ESD's recommendations for immunization and health condition protocols.
Julie Osterberg made a motion to Approve Policy 3413.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

## VIII. DISTRICT REPORTS

### A. Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Kim Ferra presented the budget status reports for all district funds, reflecting data through **March 2026**. She noted that the April reports would be finalized following the reconciliation of state apportionment, which is distributed at the end of each month based on OSPI enrollment data.

**Budget Development for 2026-2027**
Ms. Ferra provided an update on the ongoing budget development process, highlighting several key factors:
**-Timeline:** Per OSPI regulations, the formal budget must be adopted by **July 1st**. Ms. Ferra noted that while the budget is a legally required document, it remains a fluid plan throughout the fiscal year.
**-Priorities:** The finance department is focused on maximizing resources to maintain as much district programming and staffing as possible.
**-Pending Data:** The district is still awaiting final federal funding allocations. Program-specific allocations are currently being finalized.

**Revenue and Expenditure Projections**
The preliminary budget process involves utilizing the state's revenue projection tool. Ms. Ferra explained that the final proposal will integrate:
**-Enrollment Data:** Analyzed and projected to determine state funding levels.
**-Expenditures:** Comprehensive accounting of salaries, benefits, and **MSOCs** (Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs).
**-Fund Balance:** Balancing projected revenues against the anticipated beginning fund balance.

Ms. Ferra concluded by stating that the process remains in its preliminary stages as OSPI continues to release updated data. She committed to providing regular updates as the July adoption deadline approaches.

### B. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Rue highlighted a successful community event held earlier that day involving Mrs. Stottlemeyer's class. Local seniors, who serve as pen pals for the students throughout the year, visited the building to meet their student counterparts in person. The Superintendent noted the value of the intergenerational conversations and the positive energy the visitors brought to the school.

Superintendent Rue invited the community to the upcoming **Senior Luncheon** scheduled for **May 19th**. The event will feature:
**-Student Performances:** Highlights include a performance by the kindergarten classes and a presentation by the school band.
**-RSVP Information:** Interested residents can find details on the district website or RSVP directly through the district office via Allison.

The Superintendent encouraged everyone to spread the word to local seniors to ensure a strong turnout for this annual community celebration.

## IX. Closing Items

### A. For the Good of the Order

### B. Executive Session

The Board entered Executive Session at **6:56 PM**.

The session was initially anticipated to last 45 minutes; however, the Board subsequently moved to extend the session by an additional 30 minutes.

### C. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Trish Hefton

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