APPROVED

Griffin School District #324

Minutes

Griffin School Board Meeting

Date and Time
Wednesday May 27, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Location
Griffin Cafeteria

Attend via Zoom

Board Meeting Zoom Link

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

Directors Absent
Trish Hefton

Guests Present
Alex Jones, Allison Adair, Amy Morgan (remote), Anneka Brown, Becky Ehresmann, Dan & Noelle LeRolland, Erin Hagen, Frank Ehresmann, Girl Scout Troop 41785, Hayden Milligan (remote), Jennifer Palmer, Jennifer Tomlin, Jessica Shattuck (remote), Johanna Dowler, Justin Poland, Justine Oestreich, Karen Singleton, Kim Ferra, Kirsten Rue, Kyler Mower, Lacey DeGagne (remote), Michelle Poland, Rebekah Keiser, Sherrie Hickam (remote), Tanisha Smith (remote), Tawnya White, Wendy Potkonjak

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 May 27, 2026 at 6:00 PM.
Board Vice Chair Julie Osterberg stated that Board Chair Trish Gregory and Director Blair Baker were excused from the meeting.
Emma Rose made a motion to approve the agenda.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. Middle School Band Performance

Jennifer Palmer, the Band Director and Music Specialist at Griffin, introduced a series of short student performances. She highlighted that the participating students spanned from fifth through eighth grade. Ms. Palmer noted that the fifth-grade students met twice a week for approximately 30 minutes, representing less than a full year of musical training. The students introduced themselves, shared their favorite aspects of the music program, and performed selected pieces.

Mrs. Palmer expressed her gratitude to the School Board and the community for their unwavering support of music education. She emphasized that access to the arts is vital for student development and commended the district for ensuring the music program remained uncompromised. She noted that the music program offers a unique, inclusive space where any student can belong and participate, regardless of background.

To conclude the presentation, Mrs. Palmer highlighted two eighth-grade percussionists who joined the band this year with no prior musical experience. The entire student group then concluded the presentation with a final ensemble performance of a universally recognized piece.

D. Girl Scout Troop 41785

Ella, a sixth-grade student at Griffin and a first-year Cadet, opened the presentation by thanking the School Board for the financial and facility support that allowed the troop to utilize the school space for their regular meetings.

Several attending members introduced themselves and shared their school affiliations and experiences. The presenters noted that while only 13 members were in attendance for the meeting, they brought a display board showcasing the various activities and projects the troop had accomplished.

In response to an inquiry regarding the age requirements for joining the organization, the troop representatives explained the structural levels of Girl Scouts:

-Daisies: Kindergarten through 1st grade
-Brownies: 2nd through 3rd grade
-Juniors: 4th through 5th grade
-Cadets: 6th through 8th grade
-Seniors: 9th through 10th grade
-Ambassadors: 11th through 12th grade

Following graduation, scouts have the option to transition into adult members, troop leaders, or assistant leaders. The troop leadership expressed a strong interest in seeing a new generation of scouts begin at the school and offered mentorship, district training resources, and monthly curated curriculum materials ("meeting in a box") to any adults interested in establishing a new Daisy or Brownie troop.

The presentation concluded with an announcement regarding an upcoming community service project. A member of the troop shared details about her Girl Scout Silver Award project focused on safe battery disposal. The community was invited to attend an interactive trailer event the following day from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., where a specialized "one-drop" collection bin would be available for residents to safely discard batteries and mitigate fire hazards.

E. School Board Recognition

The School Board formally recognized Tawnya White, Griffin's Child Nutrition Supervisor, for her exceptional leadership and dedication at the Grizzly Grill. The Board commended Ms. White for her proactive approach to securing grants and her commitment to continuous learning. Through active collaboration with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), she consistently pursued professional development opportunities statewide to enhance the variety and nutritional value of the meals served to students.

Superintendent Kirsten Rue presented Ms. White with an official certificate of recognition for her dedicated efforts throughout the school year in improving kitchen efficiency and providing students with well-rounded nutrition. Under her leadership, the Grizzly Grill transformed its school nutrition program, earning the prestigious *Rooted in Excellence Scratch Cooking Award* from OSPI Child Nutrition Services.

Ms. Rue emphasized that this state-level honor directly reflected Ms. White's deep dedication to student health, regional ingredients, and culinary excellence. On behalf of the district, the Board expressed sincere gratitude for her passion and hard work in ensuring that students remained fueled for academic success every day.

II. Public Comment

A.

Comments from the Public

Public Comment 1:
Johanna Dowler opened her remarks by acknowledging her tenure with the district since 2002 and commended Child Nutrition Supervisor Tawnya White. Ms. Dowler noted that her fifth-grade students thoroughly enjoyed participating in taste-testing initiatives and actively sharing their feedback on the meal selections.

Ms. Dowler shared a alternative perspective regarding the district's current budget trajectory, drawing on her experience in union bargaining since 2010. She reported that the Washington Education Association (WEA) UniServ representative had conducted a thorough analysis of the district's financial data and presented a different outlook on the budget than the district's administration.

Expressing deep concern over the pace of the proposed staffing cuts, Ms. Dowler emphasized the profound impact these decisions have on employee livelihoods. She questioned the necessity of rushing into position eliminations given the remaining economic uncertainties, and suggested that the district delay implementation for a year to more accurately assess financial trends.

Ms. Dowler requested clarification regarding the implications of the district entering "binding conditions" with the state, questioning what that status would entail for the community.
In closing, she urged the School Board to prioritize student impact and staff support in their decision-making processes, asking whether leadership had directly consulted with the current faculty to gauge staff morale and perspectives during this transition.

Public Comment 2:
Wendy Potkonjak opened her comments by praising Child Nutrition Supervisor Tawnya White for her classroom engagement, noting how much her fifth-grade students enjoyed testing healthy foods and developing their own recipes.

Mrs. Potkonjak stated that she was completing her 11th year at Griffin and her 34th year in teaching. She thanked the School Board and administration for their efforts since the previous meeting to protect instructional staffing, specifically expressing gratitude for the configuration that allowed two Transitional Kindergarten (TK) classrooms to remain intact.

While appreciative of the saved teaching position, Mrs. Potkonjak expressed deep concern regarding the extensive cuts made to nearly every school department, emphasizing that these reductions directly impacted students:

-Kitchen Staff: Reductions slowed the efficiency of lunch preparation and service.
-Custodial Staff: Decreased staffing threatened school cleanliness, as well as student and staff health.

-Secretarial Staff: Reductions directly reduced the front-line assistance available to families and visitors entering the building.
-Administration: Staffing cuts hindered the school's capacity to address student behaviors, coordinate testing, and conduct effective teacher evaluations.
-Paraeducators: Reduced hours compromised overall classroom support. Furthermore, the total elimination of two paraeducator positions resulted in the loss of the district's primary English Language Learner (ELL) provider and a key coordinator who managed daily student behaviors in the Restorative Center.

Mrs. Potkonjak urged the Board to evaluate all departments equitably when making fiscal decisions, noting that the district office had not sustained comparable personnel cuts. She observed that the only central office modifications involved redistributed responsibilities and a salary reduction resulting from a new hire.

She shared that superintendents in similarly sized districts were leading by example by taking on dual roles—such as serving as a part-time superintendent and part-time principal. She noted that similar executive sacrifices at Griffin would send a powerful message of solidarity to the staff and community during a painful budget cycle.

Mrs. Potkonjak raised concerns regarding the growing number of district-resident students choosing to enroll elsewhere. She noted that at least 10 families, many with highly capable students, were leaving the elementary school for the upcoming school year due to a perceived increase in disruptive classroom behaviors, a lack of clear disciplinary consequences, and insufficient student support.

She concluded her remarks by reminding the Board of Griffin's long-standing reputation for academic excellence. She urged leadership to protect the unique, engaging programs that prepare students for high school—such as the Cispus Outdoor Camp, the Spelling Bee, Geography Bowl, and Math Olympiad—and pleaded with the Board to think outside the box to ensure all final decisions truly prioritized the best interests of the children.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes - April 29, 2026

Emma Rose made a motion to approve the minutes from Griffin School Board Meeting on 04-29-26.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. Approval of Study Session Minutes - May 13, 2026

Emma Rose made a motion to approve the minutes from Griffin School Board Study Session on 05-13-26.
Tesa Frevert 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

Emma Rose made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
Vice Chair Julie Osterberg provided clarification regarding the board's voting procedures on the multi-item agenda section. She noted that while the board often navigates and approves these items quickly via a single omnibus vote, a substantial amount of preparatory work and review occurs behind the scenes prior to the meeting. She requested that the record formally acknowledge the extensive effort invested by staff and administration in compiling these materials.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Tiered Fidelity Inventory Presentation (Commitment #2: Welcome & Supportive Learning Environments)

PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory Updates

Assistant Principal Erin Hagen provided an update on the district's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system, a framework used to promote positive student behavior and build consistent, school-wide structures.

To evaluate the program's effectiveness, the district utilized the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), a comprehensive assessment tool that measures how accurately and consistently a school implements PBIS practices. Mrs. Hagen noted that initial evaluations were conducted during the 2024–2025 school year in partnership with the Educational Service District (ESD), using a multi-member scoring system (scaled 0–2) to build team consensus across Tier 1 (universal), Tier 2 (targeted), and Tier 3 (intensive) student supports.

For the 2025–2026 school year, the district focused its efforts on strengthening Tier 1 universal systems. A volunteer Tier 1 PBIS Discipline Team—composed of Alli Doherty, Jenna Anderson, Grace Conley, Sarina Schreck, Suzanne Stottlemyre, and Amy Morgan

—was formed to review student data, establish predictable learning environments, and reinforce school-wide behavioral expectations.

The team transitioned from quarterly to monthly meetings to handle the high volume of cumulative behavior and discipline data. The team analyzed behavioral trends by the day of the week, time of day, and location to implement precise preventative strategies while remaining focused on universal, system-wide solutions.

An end-of-year TFI evaluation conducted between late April and early May 2026 demonstrated significant growth in Tier 1 implementation. This represents an overall 11-point increase and a 37% gain in system fidelity. Mrs. Hagen noted that while most evaluated areas showed measurable improvement, two specific indicators decreased slightly due to stricter, more realistic scoring consensus by the new evaluation team.

Administrative efforts over the preceding summer focused on aligning discipline procedures with updated state laws and OSPI regulations, which were subsequently presented to faculty during the August professional development sessions. Looking ahead, the team collaborated with the Griffin Education Association (GEA) to incorporate these data-driven policies into the upcoming student and staff handbooks.

Mrs. Hagen outlined the strategic objectives for the 2026–2027 school year:
-Increase the Tier 1 TFI score to 80% or higher.
-Maintain monthly discipline data reviews and recruit additional staff volunteers for the PBIS committee.
-Implement targeted professional development and mini-training sessions for staff regarding behavior management.
-Begin systematically strengthening Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention systems.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. ASB Student Leadership Club Constitution & Bylaws

Anneka Brown presented several key updates to the ASB Constitution, noting that all proposed modifications originated directly from the student members to address participation challenges experienced during the school year.

The first amendment officially updated the organization's name to the ASB Student Leadership Club. Additionally, Article 3 (Membership) was revised to require interested students to complete a short application process prior to joining the club.

To address issues regarding passive membership and absenteeism, the constitutional requirements were updated to mandate attendance at all club meetings. While the ASB Advisor retains the authority to excuse specific absences, a strict, tiered disciplinary system was introduced for unexcused absences:

-First Unexcused Absence: Submission of a verbal warning to the student.
-Second Unexcused Absence: Issuance of a formal written warning to both the student and their parent or guardian.
-Third Unexcused Absence: Placement of the student on disciplinary probation for a period of one month.
-Fourth Unexcused Absence: A formal vote by the executive ASB officers to determine whether the student may continue as a club member.

The updated constitution also established a mandatory service requirement, dictating that all members must volunteer for at least two school-related functions per semester to maintain active status.

Finally, the document was amended to officially integrate the School Board Student Representatives as permanent members of the ASB Student Leadership Club.
Emma Rose made a motion to approve the ASB Student Leadership Club Constitution & Bylaws.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VI. POLICY - NEW

A. 1250 Students On Governing Boards

Superintendent Rue presented a new policy for board consideration regarding the inclusion of Student Representatives on the School Board for the upcoming school year. She noted that this policy aligns directly with the newly approved updates to the ASB Constitution, which structurally integrated these student representative roles into the club's framework.

Superintendent Rue expressed her appreciation to ASB Advisor Anneka Brown for her dedicated leadership in managing the ASB Student Leadership Club and fostering increased student engagement.

She emphasized that the adoption of this policy would significantly amplify student voice within district governance and provide a meaningful, high-level leadership avenue for active ASB club members.
Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve Policy 1250.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
Vice Chair Julie Osterberg expressed strong enthusiasm for the student representative policy, noting that establishing these positions has been a top board priority for several years. She shared that the initiative was inspired by the unique, valuable insights demonstrated by student board members in neighboring districts like Olympia and at recent statewide conferences. Ms. Osterberg emphasized that the policy serves a dual purpose: it provides the board with a vital opportunity to listen to the student body while

offering a premier leadership development experience for the participants. On behalf of the board, she thanked everyone who brought the policy to fruition.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. 2140 Comprehensive School Counseling Program

Superintendent Rue presented Policy 2140 regarding the Comprehensive School Counseling Program for its second reading. She explained that the new policy formally outlined the essential work performed by district counselors and defined the overall scope of counseling services and behavioral supports intended for the students.
Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve Policy 2140.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VII. POLICY - UPDATES

A. 5011 Sexual Harassment of District Staff Prohibited

Superintendent Rue presented Policy 5011, which prohibits the sexual harassment of district staff, for its second reading. She noted that this update incorporated a minor legal language edit that was previously reviewed and discussed by the board during their last planning session.
Emma Rose made a motion to approve Policy 5011.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. 6100 Revenues from Local, State & Federal Sources

Superintendent Rue presented Policies 6100, 6112, and 6500 for their second readings, noting that they contained minor updates. She explained that the district's previous versions of these policies dated back to 1999, and the current revisions were part of an ongoing effort to modernize the language in the board policy handbook.
Emma Rose made a motion to approve Policy 6100.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. 6112 Rental or Lease of District Real Property

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve Policy 6112.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. 6500 Risk Management

Emma Rose made a motion to approve Policy 6500.
Tesa Frevert seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

VIII. POLICY - REVIEW

A. 6120 Investment Funds

Superintendent Rue presented Policies 6120, 6216, and 6513 to the board, noting that while the language remained unchanged, the policies had not been formally reviewed since 1999. She stated that this review was a necessary step in the ongoing process of updating the board's 6000 policy series.
Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve the review of Policy 6120.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

B. 6216 Reimbursement for Goods & Services: Warrants

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve the review of Policy 6216.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

C. 6513 Workplace Violence Prevention

Tesa Frevert made a motion to approve the review of Poliy 6513.
Emma Rose seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

IX. DISTRICT REPORTS

A. Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Kim Ferra presented the updated budget statuses through the end of April, reminding the board that state apportionment funding fluctuated based on actual student enrollment.

She reported that development of the budget for the upcoming school year was underway. As a Class 2 district—an OSPI classification for districts with 2,000 students or fewer—the final budget had to be approved on or before August 1st. Ms. Ferra indicated that the district aimed to adopt the budget at the late July board meeting.

She noted that the budget remained a work in progress, as the administration was still awaiting definitive federal revenue projections and gathering necessary financial data. Ms. Ferra invited board members to meet with her directly for any specific questions and stated that regular updates, a formal presentation, and final adoption proceedings would follow over the coming months.

B. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Rue presented a comparative analysis of Thurston County school districts, noting that Griffin's total tax rate remained significantly lower than almost all surrounding districts. Aside from a neighboring district experiencing consecutive levy failures, Griffin offered the most cost-effective tax rate per thousand while maintaining high-quality services. Superintendent Rue expressed gratitude for the community's continuous support of the Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) and capital levies, emphasizing the administration's commitment to responsible taxpayer stewardship.

The Superintendent clarified that the district operates five separate budgets with strict statutory barriers preventing inter-fund transfers. While the Capital Projects Fund remains robust, it cannot legally subsidize the General Fund, which directly handles personnel, curriculum, and operational costs under state funding constraints.

To address critical general fund challenges, the district implemented the following staffing and structural reductions:
-Two teaching positions and one office professional role.
-A 0.2 reduction of an assistant principal position.
-Two paraeducator positions, alongside a schedule adjustment reducing remaining paraeducator hours from 7 to 6.5 hours daily.
-One food service assistant and one custodial position.
-A restructuring of the Fiscal Director model and the partial reallocation of several district office salaries to the Capital Projects Fund to maximize alternative funding streams.

Superintendent Rue explained that state apportionment funding and local levy caps are tied directly to student headcount. The district faced a mandatory down-sizing of staff to match a declining student enrollment projection, driven heavily by a historically low incoming kindergarten class.

Data showed this trend was not unique to Griffin; statewide public school enrollment dropped sharply during the 2020 pandemic and has experienced a slow global recovery. Furthermore, the incoming kindergarten cohort represents children born during the pandemic, a period marked by worldwide declines in birth rates. This macroeconomic shift has reduced the regional pool of both resident and transfer students.

The Superintendent reviewed the district's long-term monthly cash flow. While acknowledging that historical 30% cash balances were excessive, she expressed caution regarding the steady, multi-year decline in reserves. The district experiences significant funding drops in January, February, and March, causing cash flow to dip below the critical 8% threshold required to comfortably cover operations and payroll.

Conversely, cash reserves predictably spike in October and April due to taxpayer levy distributions. April balances were further bolstered by a major Title grant reimbursement, strategic salary shifts to capital budgets, and savings from a recent staff resignation. The

current fiscal measures were deemed necessary to prepare the district for the upcoming low-enrollment cycle.

The report concluded with a summary of upcoming year-end school community events:
-May 28: Girl Scout Silver Award interactive battery recycling drop-off.
-June 5: Annual All-School Barbecue (assisted by volunteer firefighters) and Middle School Field Day.
-June 5–6: Spring musical performance of *The Music Man Jr.*
-June 8: All-School Talent Show at 10:00 a.m.
-June 9: High School Graduation Legacy Walk at 12:45 p.m., followed by the 5th–8th Grade Band Concert at 7:00 p.m.
-June 10: Kindergarten Graduation at 12:15 p.m.
-June 11: Elementary Field Day and the 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony at 6:30 p.m.
-June 12: Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Graduation at 11:00 a.m. on the final day of school, coinciding with the Capital High School graduation evening.

X. Closing Items

A. For the Good of the Order

Vice Chair Julie Osterberg welcomed Griffin's new Business Manager Kyler Mower.

B. Executive Session

Vice Chair Julie Osterberg announced that the board would recess the regular meeting to enter into an executive session for the purpose of evaluating a district employee. She estimated the session would last approximately 45 minutes, noting that if discussions ran past that timeframe, the board would briefly reconvene to provide a public update before continuing.

C. Adjourn Meeting

Vice Chair Julie Osterberg announced that the board had concluded its executive session and reconvened the regular board meeting. She noted for the record that no official decisions were made during the closed session. Vice Chair Osterberg then adjourned the regular meeting at 8:01 p.m.
There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Julie Osterberg

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