

COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY #4

The Board of Control met on Wednesday, August 6, 2025 at Castle Hill Restaurant, Merrilan, Wisconsin. Chair Catherine Griffin called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Board Members Present: Jim Bagniewski, Micaela Conlon-Bue, Sara Cook, Larry Cyrus, Cindy George, Catherine Griffin, Julie Meyers, Lindsay O’Hair, Gerald Roethel and Ryan Stubrud

Excused: Kevin Bauman

Sarah Staff (former Blair-Taylor School District board member) was recognized with a clock before the meeting for her 7.5 years of service on the Board of Control.

Also present: Paul Fischer, Wayde Pollock, and Michelle Kotek

PUBLIC INPUT

None

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Julie Meyers moved to approve the agenda as distributed. Sara Cook seconded the motion. Motion carried.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Paul Fischer administered the Oaths of Office to Sara Cook and Micaela Conlon-Bue.

READING AND APPROVAL OF JUNE 4, 2025 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

Jim Bagniewski moved to approve the minutes of the June 4, 2025 meeting. Cindy George seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR JUNE AND JULY

Ryan Stubrud moved to approve the vouchers and financial statement for June and July. Cindy George seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Personnel Contracts

Julie Meyers moved to approve a contract for Jill Gorell – long term sub contract for La Crosse School District and a contract for Megan Sprague (180-day Instructional Service Director with a focus on Science for CESA 4. Lindsay O’Hair seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approve Resignation

Ryan Stubrud moved to approve the resignation of Kalli Rasmussen, WISH Center Communications/Project Coordinator effective the end of her 24-25 contract. Jim Bagniewski seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approve Neola Recommended Policy Changes

Micaela Conlon-Bue moved to approve the Neola Policy Revisions Volume 34, Number 2, June 2025. Ryan Stubrud seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD – PAUL FISCHER

CESA 4 Activities and Regional News

1. We recently held our first ever CESA 4 summer Agency Retreat on July 21-22. It was 1.5 days that was spent reviewing our mission, setting goals for the upcoming year, and networking with one another. We have found that the school year requires our directors to be out of the office and in districts a great deal, so we determined that it would be beneficial for us to gather to plan for next year's work prior to the month of August, when calendars get extremely busy. We found the retreat to be very beneficial in setting the ground work for the upcoming year, as well as identifying some action steps that need to be taken to make the agency more efficient and effective. It was a great use of 1.5 days of professional development. We plan to follow up with another meeting on Tuesday, September 2nd. This will lead to some additional work towards the actions steps we plan to take, and will assist in determining how to best utilize our time at CESA U.
2. The LIFTtoFFS project recently held a 2-day workshop for districts already involved in the project, as well as those that are new to the project. There were over 140 attendees from over 16 school districts and institutions of higher education. The 2 days of professional development allowed districts to share their insight and impact that the program had the previous year, as well as providing crucial feedback as to areas that exist for growth opportunities. It also allowed for attendees to gather in job or work alike groups to discuss the platforms each of the participating districts used, as well as reviewing student data to analyze the impact of the various platforms. Finally, districts were given the opportunity to gather to determine and develop goals and actions steps as they continue to move the work forward during the 2025-2026 school year. We are currently in the process of writing a grant that can be used towards this work that would have great financial impact on the agency if we are awarded the grant.
3. Earlier this spring, the WISH Center had 2 of their directors from various regions throughout Wisconsin, retire. The usual process involves the posting of these positions in order to get them filled. Each director worked with 3 CESA's as part of their work. Rather than hiring one director on each region, my CSN colleagues asked to explore the possibility of directors in their own organization taking on some of the work, resulting in

3 different directors in their region, rather than 1. They felt by each CESA having a director doing some of the work, it would keep their particular CESA better informed and involved in the work. This has led to a shift in the traditional way in which the WISH Center has operated, but we are currently working through some of the obstacles that this delivery model presents. Before any deliverables can be distributed, the WISH Center needs a budget in which to operate from. As of this writing, we still have not received any budget information from the Department of Public Instruction, so determining which CESA will be delivering the deliverables has still not been decided.

State and National News

1. Governor Evers announced last week that he will not be seeking re-election in the upcoming election cycle. The next election for Governor is in November, 2026. As you know, Governor Evers is a strong supporter of public education, so it will be vital to find a Governor who is a strong supporter of public education. As of now, there are 2 declared candidates, Sara Gonzalez, the Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin, and Zachary Roper, a student at Carthage College.
2. Earlier this summer, districts were made aware of the fact that Federal funds, totaling \$72 million for the state of Wisconsin, were being withheld from school districts across the state. This resulted in a very vocal outcry from school districts across the country. By not releasing these funds, districts were faced with very difficult decisions to make that would negatively impact districts, and more importantly, students. There was a great deal of reach out, locally and nationally, by our district leaders. They made our representatives aware of the impact that this would have on their district and students. It also would have a significant impact on CESA's across the state as well due to the fact that many districts rely on their federal funds to pay for Title Services in their districts.

I am sure that you are aware that those Federal funds have now been “released” to the various states and school districts, thanks to the significant reach out of our district leaders, board members, and staff. While that is great news, it doesn't mean the funding is there immediately. The Department of Public Instruction notified district leaders late last week that they had indeed received that grant award notification (GAN) letter from the Federal government, but also added that they are approaching this process with caution. DPI is currently conducting a careful review of the language within each GAN to fully understand the terms and conditions before releasing funds to local education agencies. At the same time, there is still litigation pending on USDE's actions related to federal funding and policy conditions on those funds. Be on the lookout for further information on the funding as well as the litigation.

Jim Bagniewski approved the Administrator's Report as presented. Micaela Conlon-Bue seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CRACKER BARREL

Discussion from today's WASB Capitol Chat regarding business insurance.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

ADJOURNMENT

Ryan Stubrud moved the meeting adjourn. Cindy George seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 3, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at The Golden Frog, 112 North Shore Drive, Fountain City.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Kotek