

COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY #4

The Board of Control met on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at CESA 4, 923 East Garland Street, West Salem. Chair Catherine Griffin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Jim Bagniewski, Kevin Bauman, Micaela Conlon-Bue, Larry Cyrus, Catherine Griffin, Julie Meyers, Lindsay O'Hair, Gerald Roethel and Ryan Stubrud.

Excused: Cindy George and Sara Cook

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. Ryan Stubrud seconded the motion. Motion carried.

READING AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY 7, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Lindsay O'Hair moved to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2026 meeting. Kevin Bauman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR JANUARY

Ryan Stubrud moved to approve the vouchers and financial statement for January. Micaela Conlon-Bue seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

BOARD DISCUSSION ON WASB CONVENTION

- Key take away that students need a sense of belonging in the school building
- CESA 4 was well represented by employees giving presentations
- Good connections with vendors

REVIEW SERVICES INCLUDED IN THE CESA 4 PROGRAM AND SERVICES CATALOG

The emails have gone out to the school district superintendents and related staff on the catalog of services earlier this week. Site visits will be scheduled following the February 13 superintendents' meeting.

APPROVAL OF RETIREMENT

Ryan Stubrud moved to approve the retirement of Kaye Henrickson, part-time Library Media Services Director effective at the end of her 2025-26 contract. Julie Meyers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD – PAUL FISCHER

CESA 4 Activities and Regional News

1. The spring elections will be taking place on Tuesday, April 7, 2026. Once again, this election cycle finds several area school districts going to referendum. In the CESA 4 region, there are 4 school districts going to non-recurring operational referendums. Blair-Taylor is seeking \$3.3 million over 3 years, Holmen is seeking \$4.525 per year over 5 years, Melrose-Mindoro is seeking \$1 million per year over 3 years, and finally Sparta is seeking \$1.8 million per year over a 3-year period. If we look back over the past 2 spring elections, there have been 13 school districts in the CESA 4 region that have gone to either an operational or capital referendum over the past year. Statewide this spring, there are 73 school districts, which is just under 205 of the state districts, going to some type of referendum this spring. Keep in mind that there was no fall election in 2025, so it is anticipated that there will be several school districts going to referendum in the fall of 2026.

The spring election also includes school board elections. There are several districts in which the candidates are running unopposed, but there are other districts that will have new board members elected. With that being said, Jerry Roethel has informed me that this is his last term for the Westby Area School District and he will not be running again. We would like to thank Jerry for his dedication and commitment, not only to the Westby School District, but also the CESA 4 Board of Control.

2. The Kickapoo Conversations public forum that took place on Tuesday, January 27th, was deemed a success. Even though it was a cold January evening, 75 people attended the public forum that focused on School Finance. Steve Michaels, the Superintendent from Westby, Ryan Alderson, the Superintendent from Cashton, Dr. Jeremy Hill, from the Viroqua Area School District, Jeff Eide, the Executive Director from the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance, Michelle Engh from the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Westby, and myself, all were part of the panel that briefly shared information on specific topics related to school finance and then answered questions from the audience on the information shared.
3. Sally Weber and Michelle Kotek have been working diligently to put the finishing touches on the CESA 4 catalog pages. The initial information regarding the catalog of services was emailed earlier this week and will be shared with our Superintendents at our PAC meeting next Friday. The Superintendents are very appreciative of Sally's efforts as it makes the process much more manageable for them. District visits will begin in late February and continue through the month of March.

4. I attended a workshop at CESA 10 that focused on the impact declining enrollment is having on our school districts. The workshop was meant for district leaders and their admin team to come together to take a deeper dive into how their districts are going to be impacted financially if the declining enrollment trends continue. The information was presented by a team from WASBO and included planning time for districts to develop a plan as to how they might address the financial impacts their districts may be seeing. While we don't have student enrollment to consider at CESA 4, obviously the districts we support continue to be impacted by declining enrollment, so I felt it was beneficial for me to attend and be a part of the conversation.

State News

1. Wisconsin ACT 42 was signed into law by Governor Evers in October of 2025. This new law requires school districts in Wisconsin to adopt a policy by July 1, 2026 that prohibits the use of cell phones during instructional time. While this law was put into place in October, more recently, conversation in the legislature looks to potentially expand this law to include "bell-to-bell," meaning students would not be allowed to use their cell phones from the start of day with the first bell, through the end of the day, or final bell. The new bill would like to ban cell phones during passing time, lunch, and recess as well. Currently, 90% of school districts ban cell phones during instructional time, while only 21% ban them for the entire day.

Larry Cyrus approved the Administrator's Report as presented. Ryan Stubrud seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ADJOURN INTO CLOSED SESSION UNDER WI STATUTE 19.85 1 [c] TO CONSIDER AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION

Ryan Stubrud moved to go into closed session. Kevin Bauman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Jim Bagniewski - aye; Kevin Bauman - aye; Micaela Conlon-Bue - aye; Sara Cook - excused; Larry Cyrus - aye; Cindy George - excused; Catherine Griffin - aye; Julie Meyers - aye; Lindsay O'Hair - aye; Gerald Roethel - aye; Ryan Stubrud - aye. Adjourned into closed session at 7:21 p.m.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Ryan Stubrud moved to return to open session. Kevin Bauman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Jim Bagniewski - aye; Kevin Bauman - aye; Micaela Conlon-Bue - aye; Sara Cook - excused; Larry Cyrus - aye; Cindy George - excused; Catherine Griffin - aye; Julie Meyers - aye; Lindsay O'Hair - aye; Gerald Roethel - aye; Ryan Stubrud - aye. Returned to open session at 8:25 p.m.

CRACKER BARREL

Watch for WASB New Board member gathering date at CESA 4

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Health Insurance

ADJOURNMENT

Kevin Bauman moved the meeting adjourn. Ryan Stubrud seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at Badger Crossing Restaurant, Cashton.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Kotek