

WEM BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

Monday, August 24, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

The WEM Board of Education met in regular session on Monday, August 24, 2026, at the Waterville Building. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair June Rezac at 6:30 p.m.

Board members June Rezac, Gary Michael, Jeff Stangler, Brenda Heuss, Troy Tolzman, Jon Bakken, Jay Schneider, Grace Bartz and Miley Anderson attended the meeting. Also present at the meeting were Superintendent Mark Winter and Business Manager Margaret Jewison.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to approve the agenda. Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Michael and seconded by Rezac to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from July 27, 2026. 6 members voted in favor – Schneider abstained - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Schneider to approve the July 18 through August 14, 2026 Financial Report. The bills and payroll from the report were \$2,513,289.90, deposits \$772,938.14, and transfers of \$1,314,426.10. Bills discussed included a payment of \$10,295.71 to BSN Sports for football helmets and a payment of \$68,005.41 to ISD #829 for 2nd half of the special education contract.

Seven members voted in favor – motion declared passed.

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Michael to approve the consent agenda which included the following items:

Approve the following r2026-2027 coaches:

- Volleyball - Tatum Richards, Co-1st assistant varsity coach, \$2,205.50 and Kyeria Morris, Co-1st assistant varsity coach, \$2,205.50
- Football - Paul Eich, volunteer assistant.

Approve the following resignations:

- Kelci Halvorson, Student Success Coordinator and Social Media Coordinator, effective August 21, 2026
- Lisa Karsten, Head Cook, effective September 4, 2026.

Seven members voted in favor – motion declared passed.

REPORTS

Principal Reports: Sara Ertl, Pre-K – 5 Principal and Brandon Tagg, Grades 6-12 Principal.
August Updates

I was able to meet with 27 staff members in 1:1 conversations connecting about their personal lives, what makes them proud of WEM, what could make us even stronger, and ways that I could support them. This time was both meaningful and rewarding.

Myself and two of our certified staff members were trained in the Catalyst Approach on August 3rd.

Catalyst prioritizes proactive adult self-regulation, human connection, and nonverbal communication over rigid compliance, helping teachers build calm, predictable, and inclusive learning environments. Myself and 5 teachers who are confident in using the foundational skills will deliver a professional development refresher to staff on Wednesday, September 2nd.

Popsicles with the Principals held on August 20th 5-7.

Offered digital sign up option to families for signing up for the annual Back to School conference/Meet Your Teacher Day. In previous years, families needed to physically come to school which meant taking time off of work and taking more time off to meet with teachers.

Website Updates:

 Tabs for WEM Schools

 Principal's Welcome and contact information

 MDE Recognition for the work of PBIS in the district.

Sarah Ertl, WEM Elementary Principal

9-12 August 2026 Board Minutes

Well, we are only a few weeks away from the start of our school year. Construction is moving slow, but hopefully we will be fully functional by the end of next week. For now, we continue to jump over supplies, move away from noise, and hope that the air conditioning is still on in the building as we set up things for the start of Workshop Week starting on August 31st.

Since we last spoke, we have been hard at work to put the final touches on the master schedule. With the middle school moving over to our location, we have a lot of shared staff and only certain ways for classes to be created and set up in a particular space. It has been a challenge to bring all these teachers together, but we have the making of a really good plan that not only shows the greatness of our Secondary School, but the connection we will have with the Elementary School on more levels than just seeing them at lunch or as they pop out to recess. We will truly be a K-12 building sharing more than just teachers, spaces and the building itself. It will be a time of flexibility and grace as we all come together in this manner.

Ms. Ertl and I completed the Workshop Week Schedule and sent it out to the staff this week. We have some professional days set up discussing CAPTI testing for the READ Act legislation, Highly Reliable Schools presentations that the Elementary will also be a part of this year, and some time dedicated to learning our new schedules and how the building will flow on a daily basis. It looks to be a good week for all.

WE have a lot of moving pieces still in play and hopefully as the staff comes back in a few weeks, it all starts to fall into place. We are excited about the changes coming our way and the union of all levels. it is an exciting time to be a Buccaneer.

Brandon Tagg

WEM Secondary (6-1) Principal

Activities/ Community Education Director, Crystal Lamont

WEM School Board Report

August 2026

Activities

- The 2026-2027 WEM Activities Workers Pay/Admissions Schedule is attached.
 - There were minimal adjustments.
 - I adjusted a few to create consistency between like sports.
 - I added a student worker pay for C-squad and Junior High events.
 - Activities Events Ticket passes stayed the same.
- Our new "Bound" program for WEM activities and the calendar has been a work in progress. There have been a few kinks to work through but overall it is going well.
- High School Sports started August 17th. We have 7 WEM students registered for 7-12 Cross

Country, 34 for high school volleyball, 46 for high school football, and 5 for Cheerleading.

- Junior High Volleyball and Football starts August 24th.
- The first volleyball game is August 31st and first home volleyball game is September 1st.

The first football game is home September 3rd. The first cross country meet is September 28th.
Community Education

- I am getting our Bucs Little Preschool organized with Alyssa Gavin our preschool coordinator. I sent out another flyer to try and get additional registrations and am working on some additional ways to communicate with potential families.

- Jennifer Holicky, SACC coordinator is getting the school year SACC program organized. For the first time we are offering wrap around care for our preschool students which means they are allowed to attend SACC Fridays and before and after school.

- I am making connections with community members and will increase our community education offerings this school year.

WEM Superintendent Mark Winter presented the following:

Phase 2 construction is winding down, school start Sept 8 and Sept. 9, and open house for students and parents is Sept. 2.

WEM Board Member Brenda Heuss about pre-school numbers for the upcoming year and she was told there is one class full and there will be between 30 and 40 students.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

An enrollment update was presented and it looked like the enrollment would be increased from 2025-2026. Numbers will be finalized following the start of school in early September.

The board had the first readings of the following policies:

- 507.5 School Resources Officers redline
- 509 Enrollment of Nonresident Students redline
- 520 Student Survey redline
- 524.5 Personal Electronic Communication Devices - new policy

ACTION

Motion by Michael and seconded by Schneider to approve the Foster Care Transportation Services Agreement between Rice County and WEM Public Schools. See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Tolzman to approve Partnership Agreement Between Owatonna Public Schools and WEM Public Schools Regarding Online Education. Four students used this offering last year. See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Michael to approve the Business Associate Agreement and Memo of Understanding Between Counseling Services (Covered Entity) of Southern Minnesota and WEM Public Schools (Business Associate). See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and seconded by Michael to approve the following policies:

208 Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Policies.

503 Student Attendance

504 Student Dress and Appearance

524 Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety.

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and second by Tolzman to approve the July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2027 Bus Driver Contract. See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Bakken to approve three handbooks. They included the 2026-2027 Elementary Handbook with minor changes, the 2026-2027 Middle School Handbook (no changes), and the 2026-2027 High School Student Handbook with minor changes. See attachments

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Bakken and seconded by Michael to approve the Following Special Education Agreement between South Central Service Cooperative and WEM Public Schools for Fiscal Year 2027 for Vision, Audiology, and Orientation and Mobility. See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Tolzman to approve the 2026-2027 Membership Agreement with South Central Service Cooperative, \$1,345.50. See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to approve the 2026-2027 WEM Activities Workers Pay/Admissions Schedule. See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Rezac and second by Heuss to approve the 2026-2027 Concurrent Enrollment Program Agreement Between Southwest Minnesota State University and WEM Public Schools. See attachment

Seven members voted in favor - motion declared passed.

Motion by Schneider and seconded by Stangler to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 p.m.. Seven members voted in favor – motion declared passed.

June Rezac, Attest

Jay Schneider, Attest