

Wadena-Deer Creek School Board Meeting

Summary

Special Meeting - August 6, 2026

The Wadena-Deer Creek School Board held a special meeting on Thursday, August 6, 2026, at the Robertson Theatre. The special meeting was held in place of the previously scheduled Board work session because several action items required Board consideration, including decisions related to district vehicles damaged in the June hailstorm. The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Board members present were Dan Lawson, Brandon Kern, Barb Tumberg, Julie Bushinger, and Amanda Schmidt. Board member Melissa Seelhammer was absent.

Also in attendance were Superintendent Brad Johnson, Tyler Church, MS/HS Principal; Kevin Tumberg, Elementary Principal; and Robert Brostrom, Transportation Director.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Barb Tumberg and seconded by Brandon Kern to approve the agenda.

The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Personnel Recommendations

The Board approved the following personnel hires:

- Emma Bushinger - Elementary Special Education Teacher
- Myles Dziengel - Junior High Football Coach
- Drew Lorentz - Junior High Football Coach

A motion was made by Amanda Schmidt and seconded by Barb Tumberg to approve the personnel recommendations. Julie Bushinger abstained from the vote.

The motion passed 4-0.

Retirements/Resignations

The Board accepted the following resignations:

- Melissa Dosdall - Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
- Jenna Trantina - MS/HS Paraprofessional

A motion was made by Julie Bushinger and seconded by Brandon Kern to accept the resignations.

The motion passed 5-0.

Closed Session

At 5:32 p.m., the Board entered into closed session pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.05, Subdivision 3(b), under attorney-client privilege to consult with the School Board's attorney regarding pending litigation.

The Board reconvened in open session at 6:26 p.m.

Because the discussion was protected by attorney-client privilege, no additional information from the closed session was shared publicly.

District Vehicles and Hail Damage

The Board discussed the significant damage to the district's vehicle fleet resulting from the June hailstorm.

The district's insurance carrier determined that 16 district vehicles and two trailers were total losses. The initial settlement value for the vehicles previously identified totaled \$179,752.61. An additional two-place handicapped van was recently declared a total loss, with the final insurance settlement amount for that vehicle still to be determined.

After reviewing the condition of the fleet and the district's transportation needs for the upcoming school year, the Board agreed to retain five of the vehicles that had been declared total losses:

- 2009 Chevrolet Mini Bus #2
- 2011 International Bus #3
- 2012 Blue Bird Bus #41
- 2011 International Bus #42
- 2011 International Bus #51

The value of the five vehicles being retained is approximately \$66,718, resulting in a current net insurance settlement of approximately \$113,034, before the settlement for the recently totaled handicapped van is added.

Transportation Director Robert Brostrom presented information regarding replacement options and the district's immediate transportation needs. Following discussion, the Board approved moving forward with the purchase of:

- A new 72-77 passenger school bus from Hoagland Bus for approximately \$156,426.29, plus applicable federal tax.
- A used 10-passenger van at an anticipated cost of approximately \$38,000.
- A new two-place handicapped-accessible van for approximately \$96,700, plus title and related fees.

Because of availability and delivery considerations, the district will move quickly to secure the handicapped-accessible van, which will need to be obtained from Texas. Administration will also continue searching for an appropriate used passenger van, as these vehicles tend to sell quickly.

The district expects to use available special education funding to help purchase the handicapped-accessible vehicle.

The district also has a new school bus that had been ordered, helping ensure adequate transportation capacity for the upcoming school year. Administration will continue evaluating future fleet needs, including the possible purchase of an additional smaller vehicle such as a Chevrolet Traverse, minivan, or similar vehicle for staff travel and programs that transport students into the community.

A motion was made by Amanda Schmidt and seconded by Julie Bushinger to approve the purchase of the new school bus, used passenger van, and new handicapped-accessible van.

The motion passed 5-0.

2026-2027 Strategic Plan and Goals

The Board reviewed the district's 2026-2027 Strategic Plan with the superintendent and both building principals. The strategic plan is organized around four district pillars: Culture of Respect, Finance, Student Achievement, and Workforce.

Several additions were discussed as the district continues preparing for the new school year.

Staff Mentorship Program

Under the Workforce pillar, the district added an action step to establish and strengthen the staff mentorship program.

Administration and the mentor team will work together throughout the school year to provide regular check-ins with new employees and their mentors. Success will be measured by the retention of new staff members and positive feedback in mentorship surveys.

The goal is to make sure new employees receive the support, communication, and resources they need as they become part of the WDC school community.

Staff SMART Goals

Another new action step under the Workforce pillar will require teaching staff to establish an individual SMART goal at the beginning of the school year.

Principals and supervisors will conduct a mid-year check-in and an end-of-year review of these goals, with the expectation that all teaching staff will establish and report on a professional goal during the year.

Superintendent Johnson will also share his own professional goal with staff during the August back-to-school workshop.

The purpose of the initiative is to reinforce the belief that professional growth applies to everyone in the district. While not every goal may be fully achieved, staff and administration should continually look for ways to learn, grow, and improve.

Staff and Paraprofessional Handbook

The Board also reviewed a new goal to create a Staff and Paraprofessional Handbook.

The handbook will provide clearer information regarding topics such as staff start and end times, pep fest expectations, modified schedules, and information specific to paraprofessionals. Administration and administrative assistants will use examples from other school districts, along with staff input, to develop the handbook.

The goal is to have the handbook in place near the beginning of September, so employees have one consistent resource for important district procedures and expectations.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Julie Bushinger and seconded by Barb Tumberg.

The motion passed 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Wadena-Deer Creek School Board will be held on Monday, August 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Robertson Theatre.