



**Dickinson Education Association / Dickinson Public School Board
Relationship Meeting
Wednesday, February 24, 2021; 4:00 p.m.
Professional Learning Lab
Approved Minutes**

Present: Roosevelt Elementary Fifth Grade Teacher Donna Abrahamson, Dickinson High School Physics and Chemistry Instructor CaraLee Heiser, Assistant Superintendent Keith Harris, Superintendent Shon Hocker, Dickinson Middle School Mathematics/Social Studies Instructor Diana Stroud, School Board President Brent Seaks, Prairie Rose Elementary Third Grade Instructor Leah Campbell, School Board Vice President Kim Schwartz, and Director of Student Services Shawn Leiss.

February 17, 2021, Relationship Meeting Minutes – The February 17 meeting minutes were emailed to the team before the meeting. DEA representatives presented several minor changes at the meeting. The changes will be incorporated into the minutes and then emailed to the team.

Topics for Discussion

Copy Machine Codes – Board President Seaks referenced last week’s meeting when research was requested regarding the requirement for a code on some of the copy machines. Assistant Superintendent Harris responded and said he had checked with the District administrators. When the copy machines were set up the vendor could set the machines to require a code. In a report from several administrators, copy machines came with the standard code requirement. Principals did not ask for the code. Mr. Harris added this was not a conspiracy nor an ulterior motive. Some principals could have the code on the machine as a way of keeping track of the copy machine usage and if the copy machine costs were over budget it could be addressed individually instead of an entire group which could lead to negative impressions.

DEA representatives explained the District was no longer ordering particular workbooks and teachers were photocopying the workbook sheets for the students. Superintendent Hocker responded the workbooks are becoming obsolete as the learning becomes more digital. He added there will continue to be some assignments that need to be done on paper and turned in; however, the District we will be seeing more assignments turned in digitally.

Building Leadership Team and Communication – There was a discussion regarding identifying members of the leadership team at the buildings. Every teacher should know their building leadership representatives. The buildings may have a different name for their building leadership team. Director of Student Services Leiss recommended bringing up concerns with the building leadership team so they could be addressed at the building level.

DEA representatives suggested when there are instances where a change is taking place, such as the copier code, to notify the teachers ahead of time and provide a justification for the change. Superintendent Hocker explained at the high school level, the copier code requirement concern

was never communicated to the principal and therefore he could not address the new code requirements. DHS Principal Hoherz did not request the copier code requirement.

Mr. Seaks said it was good to have an explanation for the copier code requirement. This was a good example of how something simple could be portrayed as something vindictive and create a breach of trust. Elementary Instructor Abrahamson said that there should have been communication with the teachers. Mr. Seaks said it would have been a good topic to bring up with the building leadership team. Information could have then been shared out with a collective understanding.

Mr. Harris explained the District's role in the leadership team. As part of the District's strategic plan to achieve Level I of HRS, the District and building goals were to have a safe, supportive, and collaborative culture. Safety can be physical and emotional, collaboration can be through PLCs and cross-over to communication, and the support comes through the RTI framework.

Mr. Harris explained the different levels for the school to function. One side provides support for the teachers and the other side provides support for the principals. The principal's PLC is the building leadership team or the department heads. It is the principal's responsibility to create the leadership team and identify a name for this team. The leadership team assists the principal so the principal is not left in isolation. Additionally, the leadership team will assist with ideas. This information is then shared with the teachers and co-workers and a natural communication link. The District office is not the best choice for running the business of the building. This would create miscommunication.

There was a discussion about the importance of knowing who is on the leadership teams at the buildings so teachers know whom they can approach to ask questions and share concerns. It was reiterated the leadership team may have a different name at each building.

Dickinson Middle School Instructor Stroud requested there be more communication at the buildings. Communicating information doesn't leave a gap where any information could be filled in. She added the administrators expect communication to happen in the classroom. It goes both ways.

Removing Responsibilities/Providing Teacher Assistance - Mrs. Abrahamson passed out a letter from a Roosevelt Elementary instructor with several ideas of what responsibilities could be removed from the teacher's tasks and ways to assist the teacher. She distributed the letter to the team. This letter had been sent in November. She also distributed requests from a group of teachers that had gotten together over the summer.

Daily Task Assistance – Mrs. Abrahamson said it would be very beneficial to have someone that could do daily tasks, such as making photocopies.

PLC Time for Physical Education and Music Teachers – Mrs. Abrahamson shared some ideas of how the physical education teachers and music teachers could have PLC time on different dates other than the early release dates.

Kindergarten-Grade Two Student Retention – Mrs. Abrahamson said the teachers in grade K-2 do not feel supported as their requests for student retention are denied. She asked for some

clarification. Mr. Harris responded that when the District looks at what is best for students, retention needs to be viewed as something that will be a solution to the issue. Oftentimes, retention is not the solution and would not meet the needs of the student. Mr. Harris said that data shows that the worst thing a person could do for a student is to retain them. Research also shows retained students will show an increase in the drop rates, creates stress and anxiety for the student, and is not socially popular.

Promethean Board Cheat Sheet – A recommendation from the teachers was to have the building technology specialist create a 3-ring binder with information on using the Promethean Boards.

Title I Substitute Teacher – Mrs. Abrahamson said another suggestion was to hire a substitute teacher for when the Title I teacher is absent. Superintendent Hocker referenced the low pool of individuals on the substitution list. He explained that having a substitute teacher for the Title I instructor when they are absent was possibly not the best means of utilizing the substitute teacher pool. The best way to utilize the substitute teacher was during the classroom teacher absence. Title I and Specialists are not entering their leave in the AESOP system and asking for a substitute during their absence.

There were examples shared of how the classroom teacher was at a disadvantage when they need to be gone and away from the classroom. There is a great deal of preparation work involved when this happens. There are other certified positions where the perception is that those teachers do not have added responsibilities and preparation work attached to taking time off when compared to the classroom teacher. DEA representatives shared it is more of a burden on the classroom teacher when substitute teachers are not hired for specialists when they are gone as the classroom teacher will now need to prepare and plan for the time the students are typically with the specialists.

Mrs. Abrahamson suggested when a specialist is going to be gone, the specialist should create an online lesson that their students could view in their absence. Mr. Harris said he liked her idea. He added because the direct supervisor of the specialist is the principal, her idea should be shared with the principal. Superintendent Hocker concurred. He said this should be shared internally at the building level. Dr. Hocker said he would try to look into this and if there was some avenue to provide the continued services for the specialist when they are absent.

Early Release Days – Mrs. Abrahamson referenced the early release days and the option for the early release professional development to begin at 1:30 instead of 1:15. She said the elementary teachers want to have their preparation time in the day. Dr. Hocker responded the elementary buildings would be getting their 15 minutes, starting this week Friday. Mrs. Abrahamson said that the elementary teachers are not getting their prep time between 8:00-lunchtime. She has been getting a lot of teacher input asking to have their prep time on the early release days. Dr. Hocker responded he was sensitive to their request and wants to find a solution. He referenced the six early release days during the school year. Superintendent Hocker noted that through the course of the school year, there are other days when some of the elementary teachers will not have their prep time; such as when there is a fire drill or when there is an assembly and there is a shortened schedule.

Mrs. Abrahamson said the teachers are not feeling their prep time is respected.

Dickinson Middle School Instructor Stroud shared an example of the early release days when Berg Elementary was a sixth-grade school and creative planning was utilized to develop a schedule that allowed teachers a planning/prep period.

Schedule Next Meeting – President Seaks said the team has brought some awareness to some of the concerns at the elementary building. He inquired when the next meeting should be scheduled. Dr. Hocker will attempt to meet with Dickinson High School Instructor Heiser to receive information on some of the concerns at the high school. Mrs. Abrahamson requested an agenda for the next meeting. Dr. Hocker suggested the team review the names of the individuals that serve on each building leadership team at the next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 10, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. at the Professional Learning Lab.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Twila Petersen.