



DPS/DEA Teacher Negotiations Meeting #2
Approved Minutes
Monday, April 19, 2021; 5:30 p.m.
Professional Learning Lab

Negotiators Present:

Representing School Board - Mr. Steve Brannan, Lead Negotiator for the Board, School Board Vice President Kim Schwartz, and School Board Member Michelle Orton.

Representing Dickinson Education Association (DEA): Dickinson Middle School Mathematics Instructor Diana Stroud, Berg Elementary Grade Five Instructor Karl Leggate, and Dickinson High School Mathematics Instructor Jay Schobinger.

Others Present – Lee Mehrer, JoAnn Coates, Kalindi Brandvik, CaraLee Heiser, Donna Abrahamson, Shelly Wolberg, Leslie Wilkie, Sara Berglund, Elizabeth Walsh, Brenda Loney, Kelly Smith, Amy Wyant, Fern Pokorny, Naomi Thorson, DEA President Shawna Knipp, Superintendent Shon Hocker, Business Manager Stephanie Hunter, Human Resources Manager Meghan Ziegs, Shary Smith, Lyle Smith, and Twila Petersen.

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Brannan at 5:30 p.m.

Review Attitudes – The Attitudes for Collaborative Bargaining were distributed at the April 14, 2021, meeting. These attitudes will be used by the negotiating team.

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda – There were no edits to the agenda.

Review and Approval of April 14, 2021, Teacher Negotiations Meeting Minutes – The minutes from the April 14, 2021, Teacher Negotiations Meeting had been emailed to the team before the meeting and were available at the meeting. Mr. Leggate moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mrs. Schwartz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentation on District Financial Status – Business Manager Hunter prepared a packet of information that was emailed to the team shortly before the meeting. Paper copies were distributed at the meeting. She said the information was an indicator of the District's current financials.

Mrs. Hunter summarized the material. The May 2021 enrollment numbers will be submitted to the North Dakota Department of Instruction (DPI). The state funding for next year will be based on the May 2021 enrollment. DPI has given the District preliminary estimates based on the September 2020 student enrollment. This gives the District an idea of what DPI is anticipating for state aid. Mrs. Hunter stated that state aid is about 50% of what the District uses towards salaries and benefits.

The first two pages of the packet explained what line items in the documentation might be most beneficial for finding the financial references. Also included in the packet were the DPI state foundation aid worksheets, state aid payment estimates for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 years, Stark County taxable valuation and the mills levied by the District, and the 2019-2020 DPS State Financial Statement. Mrs. Hunter noted the 2020-2021 DPS State Financial Statement will not be filed until October 2021.

Business Manager Hunter also included in the packet detailed information regarding guidelines for all Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. Her handouts included the ESSER allocations for I, II, and III, including allocations for other Districts in the State. She also included information on what the ESSER funding may and may not be utilized for.

Mrs. Hunter said it may take some time to review the information and encouraged team members to ask questions.

Chair Brannan stated the information shows the decline in enrollment which would reflect in the payments received from the state. Mrs. Hunter referenced the worksheet provided by DPI with estimates for the 2021-2022 school year. The estimates reflect a decrease of funding of \$3.2 million. DPI has included the 1% increase for that year as well as an estimate for 2022-2023 year and shows an estimated increase of 360 students. Mrs. Hunter stated the District funding would be down \$649,000. She added, the unknown is if the legislation will or will not approve the 1% and 1%. Chair Brannan asked if there were any questions or comments. None were noted.

Introduction of New Topics for Discussion - There was a discussion regarding how many meetings new topics may be introduced. The ground rules were referenced. “The team agrees that no new agenda items will be proposed, unless by mutual agreement, after the primary topics have been set and a second meeting has followed the primary topics discussion.” By consensus, this meeting would be the last meeting new topics would be introduced.

Payment Procedures – The Board distributed a handout with the below proposed language.

II. Salary

F. Payment Procedures

1. A teacher will be paid on a ~~ten (10) or twelve (12)~~ twice a month payment schedule. Payments will be made on the ~~fifteenth day and on the last day of each month by direct deposit only. 20th of each month or the last working day prior to the 20th. Final payment for all monies due will be made by June 30.~~

Later in the meeting, Mr. Schobinger inquired regarding the rationale for the two changes. Business Manager Hunter responded to the change from 10 months of payments to 12 months of payments. She said when the District pays out a lump sum in June it is losing interest on the funds. The funds are approximately \$40,000-\$50,000 that could be earning interest. Mrs. Schwartz added that if the employee is paid over 12 months, they are covered by insurance for those 12 months.

Mr. Schobinger asked for the rationale of payments twice a month versus the current once a month. Mrs. Hunter responded this was to get all employees on the same pay schedule. Mr. Leggate explained some teachers may be paying bills based on the paycheck received on the 20th day of the month. As an example, they might have their payments set up to generate on the 23rd or 24th of the month. This change could be an adjustment since the second paycheck would not be received until the last day of the month.

One-year Contract – The Board introduced the new topic of a one-year contract.

Discuss Topics for Negotiations

Graduate Hours/Horizontal Movement (introduced by the DEA) – Mr. Schobinger said he would be interested to know in the last 2, 3, 4 years how many contracts per year had to be redone because of somebody receiving their credit later in the summer (language in the previous negotiated agreement). Mrs. Schwartz referenced the last meeting where it was identified by the DEA that three individuals were having difficulties with their notice of intent for additional credits. Mr. Schobinger referenced a discussion from negotiations two years ago and felt the deadline was too soon. He was curious what the deadline for application was in the 2017-2019 Professional Negotiated Agreement and would like to compare the deadlines to the current agreement.

Mr. Schobinger inquired if anyone contacted the three individuals identified at the last meeting. DEA President Knipp responded she had contacted those three individuals and they are working with the Central Office and have until April 19 to get their information submitted. Mrs. Knipp added those individuals were confused by the process because Frontline wanted the description of the course they were taking. The individuals did not know the description that is why they sent an email noting their intent.

Mrs. Knipp said she had a discussion with Mr. Harris and received more clarification on what extent of a description was satisfactory when entering information in Frontline. She explained the necessary information cannot be entered into Frontline without the course catalog. The course catalogs are just now coming out. Mrs. Knipp suggested a May 1 deadline. The catalogs could be out by May 1 and the descriptor could be filled in on Frontline. She added summer courses do not become available until the middle or end of April.

Mrs. Orton inquired if Frontline could be tailored to fit the needs of the District. Human Resources Manager Ziegs said that currently, Frontline does require something filled in the box; however, it might be able to be rebuilt.

Mr. Schobinger referenced minutes from the 2019 teacher negotiations and read the language from the 2017 teacher contract prior to the revisions. Mrs. Schwartz noted the District was not operating under the 2017 negotiated agreement. Mrs. Schwartz read the language from the 2019-2021 teacher negotiated agreement including the deadlines for the application process. She felt if there was a problem with the April 1 deadline, then that would be a negotiated item and discuss the ramifications of why it could or could not be changed.

Chair Brannan noted at the last meeting there was an extension granted and the deadline was moved to April 19 (for the three individuals). He referenced graduate courses to a degree with the teacher knowing what courses they had left in their degree program. If it is not part of the degree component, the individual could indicate the content area.

Mrs. Stroud felt the biggest concern in her opinion was the inability of the individual to have a descriptor to fill in Frontline because a catalog was not available. The individual cannot get past the requirement in Frontline.

Mr. Schobinger referenced language in the contract regarding the April 1 deadline for application and the exception for "special circumstances" where "the application may include anticipated courses not yet identified." He added that Frontline won't allow this. Mr. Leggate inquired if there was a way to enter that the individual anticipates taking a class over the summer for a lane change. Mr. Schobinger said he remembered the biggest concern was budgeting purposes. Mrs. Schwartz concurred.

Dr. Hocker referenced the minutes from the last meeting where Mr. Harris explained there was a second challenge in non-negotiating years as the Board is required by statute to provide contracts by May 1.

Chair Brannan said another talking point was the principal having the ability to review the application with the course submitted to make sure it was not a repeat course.

Mr. Schobinger reiterated, by April 1 the teacher has no idea what courses will be offered even if they are planning to take courses. He is satisfied with the April 1 notice of the intent deadline. But there were no resources available to identify what the course descriptions were going to be. Dr. Hocker responded that he thought the District could find a way. If the individual submits their notice of intent for a lane change, the descriptor could be as simple as noting the individual is going to take X amount of credits. Mr. Schobinger referenced the approval or disapproval by April 10. This will be difficult if there are no course descriptors until potentially April 25. The Century Code deadline of May 1 for getting out contracts was revisited.

Chair Brannan recognized this was an exceptional year and there was leeway provided by consensus. He felt the District needs to research the data and share it. Mr. Schobinger requested looking at Frontline and find a way to remove the requirement for a descriptor. He added this issue will come up every year. Mrs. Orton concurred to have it researched. Mrs. Schwartz requested Mrs. Ziegs look into some language and present it at the next meeting.

Workload and Working Conditions (introduced by the DEA) – Mrs. Stroud suggested looking at the online teachers and make sure the contract is covering them and what is expected of them. She noted the contract was not clear in the number of hours expected of the teachers teaching full-time online students. The online teacher hours and conditions need to be protected. Mrs. Stroud referenced the online school anticipated for next year. Mr. Schobinger requested discussion on how the K-12 online school was going to be implemented. Mrs. Orton referenced the online teacher working conditions that Mrs. Stroud mentioned and asked for an example and how we could make that comparison as far as a school day in a general day for an online teacher. Mrs. Stroud referenced the language in the contract regarding a school day. She wanted protection for the online teachers that they also only have 7-3/4 hours shifts each day as dictated by the needs of the students and within that 7-3/4 hours there are 2.25 hours of unassigned responsibility and 1.5 hours for preparation/professional collaboration. She is hearing the online teachers are putting in an exorbitant amount of hours in a day/week.

Mr. Schobinger added the expectation is a teacher could be teaching face-to-face but also be teaching online. In his opinion those were two different things. He shared frustration that there has been a K-12 person hired just for K-2 online learning and that teacher was not responsible for any face-to-face students.

Mr. Schobinger gave an example that the math department at the high school is going to an a/b schedule. There are nine different courses students could sign up for. One teacher will have one prep time every other day. He feels if a teacher is teaching online students then that teacher should not have to worry about also teaching face-to-face students. Mrs. Orton inquired if as of right now for next year will Mr. Schobinger have to do both, online and face-to-face. Mr. Schobinger responded that one teacher in the DHS math department will be expected to teach the online classes every other day for 1.5 hours. That teacher will have one prep every other day.

Mr. Schobinger felt the District has an online academy currently with the students attending Southwest Community High School (SWCHS). He felt SWCHS could be the online academy.

Leave Language/Paid Time Off (PTO) (introduced by the DEA) – Mr. Leggate referenced the discussion during the 2019 negotiations and PTO. It was the DEAs understanding the reason the District could not have the language was due to financial reasons. Mrs. Schwartz concurred. She noted it was due to unanticipated expenses that the District would have to pay out at the individual's daily rate. Mr. Leggate said the DEA would like to come up with some acceptable language. The consensus was the DEA, the Board, and the Central Office would like language to be drafted that was within the guidelines of the law and not a financial hardship for the District. South Heart School District's language for Paid Time Off (PTO) was distributed. The DEA will draft language to potentially bring to the next meeting. After a tentative agreement is reached on the language, it will need to be reviewed by legal counsel.

Salaries (introduced by the Board) – Chair Brannan noted there was a presentation by Business Manager Hunter earlier in the meeting.

Agenda Topics for Next Meeting – Chair Brannan said there would be additional conversation regarding graduate hours, continue the discussion on workload and working conditions, possibly a proposal on the leave language, more discussion on the payment procedures, and a one-year contract.

Adjournment – Chair Brannan declared the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

Dated this 28th day of April 2021.

DICKINSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS


By: Board Negotiator

DICKINSON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION


By: DEA Negotiator