



**Calendar Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 12, 2023; 4:00 p.m.**  
**Hagen Building, Room 4**

**Members present:** Superintendent Dr. Marcus Lewton, Director of Instruction Melanie Kathrein, Mrs. Heidi Haugen-Smith (Classified Leadership representative), Mrs. Barbara Shockey (District-Wide PAC representative), Mrs. Paris Hill (Heart River Elementary), Mrs. Kandace King (Lincoln Elementary), Ms. Brenda Loney (Dickinson High School), Mrs. Crystal Hoerner (Jefferson Elementary), Mr. Jeffrey Whitehead (Southwest Community High School), Mrs. Lauren Powers (Prairie Rose Elementary), Mrs. Tammy Meschke (Roosevelt Elementary), Mrs. Shawna Knipp (Dickinson Education Association President), Mr. Jeffrey Brandt (Dickinson High School Principal), and Mrs. Ashley O'Brien (Dickinson Middle School).

**Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order by Superintendent Lewton at 4:00 p.m.

**Approval of the December 8, 2022, Calendar Committee Meeting Minutes** – The proposed minutes had been emailed to the committee and were available at the meeting. Mrs. King moved to approve the December 8, 2022, meeting minutes. Mrs. Knipp seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**2023-2024 School Calendar** – On December 22, 2022, a survey was sent to parents and certified employees requesting feedback regarding the utilization of virtual days instead of snow/storm days. Approximately 575 parents responded, and 135 certified employees responded to the survey. There were three options pertaining to the school calendar for participants to select on both surveys. The options were to keep the current calendar, keep the current calendar and build in two grace days, or create a new calendar with two snow days. The summaries of the two surveys were provided to the committee members. Dr. Lewton reported it appeared the community was satisfied with going virtual. Of the parents responding, 66% preferred the current calendar. Of the employees responding, 48.9% preferred the current calendar, and 47.4% preferred grace days built into the calendar. Superintendent Lewton asked for input on the survey. The committee would move forward without adding snow/storm days to the calendar.

Committee members broke up into four groups and listed the pros and cons of draft calendar A, the pros and cons of draft calendar B, and suggestions for amendments for calendar A and/or calendar B. Each group then reviewed the information shared by the other groups. Some comments/suggestions were agreed by the group not to be further discussed due to a lack of support from the committee.

**Early Release** – There was a suggestion to move a Friday early release day to a Wednesday. From a parent's standpoint, Mrs. Shockey felt the Friday early release days were better for families to make it a long weekend. From a teacher's standpoint, Mrs. King and Mrs. Knipp felt Fridays were not the best day to be effective early release days. Teachers are parents as well and sometimes like to travel for sports. After a long week, it is difficult to concentrate on the professional development on a Friday afternoon. Their recommendation was to change the early release days back to Wednesdays. There was discussion about how this may be difficult for

families after getting used to the early release days on Fridays. Additionally, there are late starts at the high school on Wednesdays.

Mrs. Knipp said educators have mentioned to her that they prefer having full-day professional development. They suggested removing some of the half-day early releases and having more full-day professional development days. In some instances, during the half-day early release, they just get into the discussion, and it is the end of the day. Mrs. Shockey also recommended a full day of professional development. As a parent, she would prefer to take an entire day off of work than a few hours over more than one day.

Parent/Teacher Conferences Compensation Day in March – There was a suggestion to move the March 1, 2024, parent/teacher conferences compensation day to another date. It was noted there are several breaks in school around the March 1 date. There is no school on Presidents' Day followed by a professional development day in February. There are three days off from school during the Easter break at the end of March 2024. Teachers felt it would be better to have the parent/teacher conferences compensation day moved to April. A suggestion was Monday, April 29.

There was discussion regarding the reasoning behind the parent/teacher compensation day being placed on the Friday of the boys' and girls' WDA basketball tournaments. Mrs. Kathrein shared that in a previous year when there had been school on the Friday of the WDA tournament date, there were many student absences. Sometimes it was just to make a statement from the students that they were opposed to having school on that Friday. She also noted a calendar had been presented to a previous school board with school on WDA Tournament Friday and it had been denied by the Board. Mrs. Kathrein inquired how many staff members would also wish to attend WDA basketball. Mr. Brandt said there would be four coaches from the high school and two coaches from the middle school that would be out for the tournament on that Friday. Mrs. King noted those coaches are out for every basketball game. Mrs. Shockey shared her concern about not taking time off for other athletic tournaments.

Mrs. Meschke referenced an attendance policy at the high school that might sway students from attending WDA if it was a school day. If a high school student has no absences, they are exempt from taking finals. There was discussion if basketball was still heavily supported. Dr. Lewton inquired if the committee wanted to take it to a vote. The committee members voted overwhelmingly to move the Friday, March 1, 2024, parent/teacher compensation day to Monday, April 29, 2024. The committee members explained if the Board had a major concern with this, to revert the parent/teacher conference compensation day to March 1.

Teacher Half-Day Workday - There was a recommendation to move the teacher half-day workday to Wednesday, August 23, 2023. In 2022, the teacher half-day workday was flexible the week before school started. Mrs. Meschke said if there was a teacher half-day workday that Wednesday, it would be beneficial for the teachers to grasp and understand the professional development before the first day of school. Mrs. King noted the elementary buildings would have their building's open house before August 23 and therefore the elementary teachers would need to have their rooms ready before the open house.

174 Student Contact Days versus 175 Student Contact Days – Ms. Loney noted that losing a full student contact day essentially requires a teacher not to cover a day of information. Mrs. King could see a concern with classified staff being paid one less day. Dr. Lewton said there had been a good conversation on this topic at Tuesday’s Classified Leadership Meeting. There could be work agreements that incorporate professional development or other training on virtual days.

Calendar A and Calendar B – The Calendar Committee members voted if they preferred calendar A or calendar B. Calendar B included moving the March 1 parent/teacher compensation day to April 29. Overwhelmingly, the Calendar Committee voted for calendar B for the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Lewton will present calendar B with the April 29 parent/teacher compensation day (labeled as calendar C) to the Board as a recommendation from the Calendar Committee for consideration at its February 13, 2023, Board Meeting. He will let the Board know that the committee understands if the Board wants the parent/teacher compensation date to remain on March 1, 2024. Dr. Lewton will email the draft calendar C to the Calendar Committee with talking points. Committee members were asked to share the calendar with others in their building.

**Adjournment** - The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.