



Classified Leadership Minutes

Tuesday, December 14, 2021; 1:30 pm
Professional Learning Lab

Present: Superintendent Marcus Lewton, Assistant Superintendent Keith Harris, Business Manager Stephanie Hunter, Ms. Kayla Kennedy (Berg), Mrs. Pam Wardell (Jefferson), Mrs. Heidi Haugen-Smith (Lincoln), Mrs. Tracy Lauf (Prairie Rose), Ms. Kristi Eckes (Dickinson Middle School), Mrs. Jeanette Wyckoff (Heart River), and Mrs. Twila Petersen (Central Administration Offices).

Absent: Jo Erickson (Roosevelt)

- I. Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Superintendent Lewton at 1:30 p.m.
- II. Additions/Deletions to Agenda Items** – There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.
- III. Approval of the November 9, 2021, Meeting Minutes** – Mrs. Smith moved to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2021, meeting as presented. Mrs. Wardell seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- IV. Old Business** – There were no old business topics to discuss.
- V. New Business**
 - a. Health Insurance Increase – Ms. Eckes explained a couple of classified staff members at the middle school have approached her regarding the increase for the health insurance and the amount showing in their paystub for the employee's portion of the health insurance premium. Assistant Superintendent Harris explained the health insurance premiums are deducted depending on the number of months the employee works. If the employee works 12 months then it is over a 24-paycheck deduction, a 10-month employee is over 20 paychecks, and a 9-month employee is deducted over 18 paychecks. Because the District is transitioning from October-to-October to a calendar year for the enrollment, it affected employees differently. Some employees will have premiums deducted that are unique on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Harris said the past practice of the District no longer lines up with the Classified Salary and Benefits Package. He highly encouraged the employees to review their paystub from the December 31, 2021, paycheck. That will be the amount withheld moving forward into 2022 for the health insurance premium. If after December 31, 2021, the employee has concerns, Mr. Harris highly recommended contacting the District office.

Business Manager Hunter added that Employee Navigator has not updated its system. Human Resources Manager Meghan Ziegs has been working hard on that. It will require Employee Navigator to build a new platform on the back end. Mrs. Ziegs is trying to make sure it is accurate before going live. Mrs. Hunter added the employee's portion of the premium was dependent on whether the employee was working eight hours a day or under. She apologized and wished this could have been communicated sooner. Ms. Eckes asked how it would be communicated with staff. Mr. Harris responded that he felt it would remedy itself in the December 31, 2021, paystub. Only two individuals have reached out, therefore it was felt it would be better to communicate on an individual basis rather than send out a mass email that may cause confusion.

- b. Elementary Attendance Zones – A handout to the committee members displayed the District’s most current student enrollment. Mrs. Smith noted the enrollment keeps increasing and some classrooms are seeing more and more students and less and less paraprofessional assistance. She added many students come in that are not on an IEP or 504 but need behavioral management.

Dr. Lewton explained he was addressing the attendance zones within his State of the District presentation. He noted which schools have room for growth and which buildings are full to student capacity. His presentation provides some transparency on the finances of the District and why the District needs to have a hiring freeze. Dr. Lewton said that Mrs. Smith was right that students are coming in but there are also students going out. The inward and outward migration rate is approximately 20-25%. That is high and makes it difficult for teachers, staff, and administration.

Because the District is running at a \$3.9 million deficit, even with ESSER funds to backfill, the District has to be more efficient on what it is doing. He did not see the District adding staff. Because the kindergarten and lower grade classrooms are large, there is potential for adding more teachers in the future.

In the school year 2020-2021, the District was expecting 4,000 students. Because of COVID, the enrollment was at 3,600 which was down 280 students. In 2020, the District was staffed for 380 more students that had not enrolled. Dr. Lewton stated that was the primary reason the District was in the situation it is now. Areas that will help assist the District’s financial stability will be attrition and the long-range facility plan.

- c. Review the December 13, 2021, School Board Meeting Agenda – Superintendent Lewton explained Mrs. Reiss at Jefferson has submitted her early resignation. He thanked her for her years of service.

At last night’s Board meeting, some of the topics covered under the superintendent’s report were the long-range facility plan, Dr. Lewton’s presentations at the buildings on the State of the District, the reduction in COVID numbers in the District, and also a federal mandate at the Early Childhood Center for all adults, including volunteers, to be vaccinated by January 31, 2022. This mandate was not implemented by the school board, it was at the federal level and ties into the Early Childhood Center/Head Start federal indicators for funding.

Dr. Lewton reported last night the Board approved his ability to negotiate with GT Architecture and YHR Partners on architectural services for the CTE Infrastructure at the North Campus and high school. The architectural firm was selected after interviewing four very qualified firms and scoring based on a rubric.

- d. Proposed 2022-2023 DPS School Calendar – A copy of the proposed 2022-2023 DPS school calendar was available for the committee. The proposed calendar was a draft based on input from the calendar committee. Dr. Lewton explained the calendar was a rollover from the 2021-2022 calendar with a few adjustments to the early release dates.

VI. Other – There were no other topics for discussion.

VII. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 1:30 pm at the Professional Learning Lab.