



District-Wide PAC Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, January 10, 2023; 12:00 p.m.

Central Administration Offices

Committee members present were Superintendent Dr. Marcus Lewton, Mrs. Krissy Kilwein (representing Berg Elementary PAC), Mrs. Natalie Pallireto (representing Heart River Elementary PAC), Mrs. Barb Shockey (representing Prairie Rose Elementary PAC), Mrs. Stephanie Rogers (representing Roosevelt Elementary PAC), Mrs. Melissa Wells (representing Jefferson Elementary PAC), Mrs. Laura Fetting (representing Lincoln Elementary PAC), Mrs. Stacy Kilwein (representing Partners in Parenting and West Dakota Parent and Family Resource Center), and Business Manager Stephanie Hunter.

Call to Order – Superintendent Dr. Lewton called the meeting to order at noon. Committee members introduced themselves and the building they represented or the role they held in the District.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda Items – There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

Approval of the November 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes – Mrs. Barbara Shockey moved to approve the November 15, 2022, meeting minutes. Mrs. Laura Fetting seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Business Topics

January 9, 2023, School Board Meeting Agenda – A copy of the agenda from last night’s Board Meeting was distributed to the committee members. Superintendent Lewton highlighted topics from the agenda. He explained last week, the school board completed a Board self-evaluation on the student outcome goals. The self-evaluation was in six different areas. The Board has directed the superintendent to formalize his implementation plan and share it with the Board. An area the Board would like to improve on is communication with students and families on the Board goals. The District’s Communications Department will be working on a presentation on the State of the District.

There will be no school on Monday, January 16 as it is a Professional Development Day. Superintendent Lewton described the training that will be provided in the various buildings for teachers and specialists on Monday.

Dr. Lewton reported a survey went out on December 22 to parents and certified employees regarding feedback on the recent storm days transitioning to virtual learning days. Summaries from the survey were distributed to the committee. The survey provided three options for parents and staff regarding the school calendar. One option was to keep the current calendar as it is with no storm days built into the calendar and storm days going virtual. Another option was to build in two snow days. Typically, the snow makeup days were held during the Easter break and the last day of the school year. The third option was to have two grace days built into the current calendar and after the two grace days, the snow days would transition to virtual. Responses from 575 parents that participated in the survey overwhelmingly supported the virtual days. A small percentage of the parents wished

to have storm makeup days built into the calendar. He added there is nothing perfect during storm days.

It is difficult for families and teachers during virtual learning said Dr. Lewton. He said in the work world, oftentimes employees will be in virtual meetings and if they take college courses, they could be online courses. Virtual learning is a part of today's world.

Dr. Lewton reported there was great feedback from parents completing the survey. One area that was relayed from parents was to have some consistency from teachers. This request had been made to the teachers and will be communicated again. Committee members shared concerns about their children being at the elementary level and having different amounts of work to complete. If one child has three assignments and another child has 10, it makes it hard to convince one to be quiet while the other works and the other to stay focused on their work while one is playing.

Dr. Lewton proposed the District use virtual learning when there is a storm day. If a storm should prolong over several days or there is not ample time to prepare to send devices home with the students, then the District would consider grace days. He asked for input from the committee members. Committee members shared their support for this option.

The 2023-2024 school calendar committee will be meeting again this week. There could be a calendar to present to the school board for its consideration at the February 13 Board Meeting.

Another topic discussed at last night's Board meeting was an update on the Budget Committee regarding building C at the Southwest Area Career and Technical Education Academy. Funding for the remodel/construction of this building will be delayed until the Treasury Department releases funding from the North Dakota CTE Capital Projects Grant.

There are currently 25 seniors graduating with work experience as part of the student outcome goal for students to be Choice Ready.

Dr. Lewton reported the Board adopted a policy regarding critical race theory. This policy was adopted as per a requirement in the North Dakota Century Code prohibiting the teaching of critical race theory in North Dakota. This law took effect on January 1, 2023.

Mental Health Grant – Dr. Lewton explained the District applied for and was awarded a \$2.5 million mental health grant. This grant may be utilized to hire professionals with credentials as a counselor, social worker, psychologist, or other specialists trained in this area. The District currently has 15 counselors, five social workers, and five psychologists. These specialists will provide training for families and students to be equipped with the skills for the student to get back into the classroom and learn. There was a discussion regarding the shortage of counseling services in the community.

State of the District – Superintendent Lewton has been providing State of the District presentations to the buildings in the District. He distributed a handout with some highlights. Following are some of the areas he summarized to the District-Wide PAC.

- Achievement Data – Dickinson Public scores are at the state average in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.
- Finances – To start up a new athletic program, such as the recent girls' wrestling, it will cost the District \$50,000. Student activities traditionally operate in the red.

- Capital Projects – There are 10 mills dedicated to capital projects. This is not sufficient to sustain the needs of the buildings in the District.
- Food Services – This typically operates in the red. Last year it operated in the black.
- Debt Services – There are approximately 25.7 mills for debt services. These funds are used to pay off the Dickinson Middle School construction loan.
- Revenue – There are 70 mills dedicated to the general fund. Funds are received from oil and gas production tax (3.1%), local tax (22.7%), state tax (56.9%), and federal taxes (17.3%). Dr. Lewton explained the federal 17.3% is all in grants procured in the last few years. He noted that money to pay for salary increases for employees is generated through legislative action, not through the school board. Dr. Lewton said the general fund was operating in the red. Last year it was anticipated the District would end the fiscal year with \$1.9 million in the red. Due to cuts, the deficit amount was reduced to \$653,000. The District anticipates operating slightly in the black at the end of this fiscal year.
- DPS Schools and Facilities – The school buildings in the District average age is 56 years old. The elementary schools are at or near student capacity. Dickinson Middle School and Heart River Elementary are the only two buildings that have not had additions to provide more available space. Dickinson High School is out of space. Six classes have been moved to Dickinson Middle School. It is anticipated Dickinson High School will increase by 70 students in the fall of 2023.
- District Focus – The District is focusing on High Reliability Schools (HRS), Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Response to Intervention (RTI), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS).
- Enrollment and Staffing – The chart on the handout displays the District was anticipating 4,077 students fall of 2020. In preparation for the anticipated increase in enrollment, 32 additional positions were filled. Due to COVID, the enrollment was 3,699 students. This put the District in a difficult situation.
- Facility Needs – Dr. Lewton explained an outside contractor was hired to review the buildings in the District and provide an expert opinion on the cost to upkeep the buildings. The contractor estimates the cost at Dickinson High School to be approximately \$60 million over the next 10 years for the needed repairs and upkeep. Some areas that need to be addressed soon are the recent water breaks at the high school. The boiler is the original 1968 steam system. It would cost approximately \$10-\$12 million to switch it to a hot water system. Many areas are outdated including the electrical panels, roofing, cabinetry, fire sprinklers, and security.

It will be up to the community how they would to proceed with the District facilities. The amount generated by the mills of \$1.6 annually for the upkeep and repairs is only a small fraction of the actual cost.

The automotive, technology, and engineering will be moved to the North Campus CTE Center. To renovate the 700 pod at the high school, which serves automotive, technology, and engineering, would cost approximately \$5 million. Roosevelt Elementary is 103 years old and needs approximately \$6 million in repairs/upgrades. The Hagen Building is 87 years old, and it would cost approximately \$7 million to renovate. If the DHS 700 pod would be renovated, the community would have to decide if this was the path they wished to follow for the entire Dickinson High School campus.

Dr. Lewton said a survey will be sent to every household in the Dickinson community asking what they would support.

Mrs. Krissy Kilwein inquired if the Roughrider Academies were sustainable. Dr. Lewton responded there are approximately 50 students enrolled in the Roughrider Academies. Most of the interest was at the middle school and high school.

Inquiries – Due to lack of time, this topic was tabled.

Other – Due to lack of time, this topic was tabled.

The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 14, 2023, at noon. The location will be determined as the committee may meet at the Southwest Area Career and Technical Education Academy.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.