
Interest Based Bargaining Meeting #8

Minutes

Tuesday, May 9, 2017; 6:00 p.m.

Central Administration Office Board Room

Bargainers Present:

Representing School Board: Board President Sarah Ricks, Board Member Kim Schwartz, and Superintendent Douglas Sullivan.

Representing Dickinson Education Association (DEA): Mr. James Fahy, Ms. Sara Berglund, Mrs. Shawna Knipp, and Mr. Jay Schobinger.

Others Present: Mrs. Shary Smith, Ms. Leann Mehrer, Mr. Lyle Smith, Ms. Brenda Loney, Mrs. Leslie Wilkie, Mr. David Wilkie, Mrs. Dawn Sipma, Mr. Tracy Sipma, Mrs. Diana Stroud, Ms. Naomi Thorson, Mrs. Donna Abrahamson, Mrs. Angela Ernst, Mrs. Mary Ann Reisenauer, Mr. Clarence Hauck, and Mrs. Twila Petersen.

Call to Order – Chair Douglas Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Representatives of the two parties read pages 2 and 7 of the IBB training manual.

Review and Approval of the April 27, 2017, Meeting Minutes – The April 27 minutes were provided in advance to the team. They were approved, as presented, and signed by Mr. Fahy and Mrs. Schwartz.

Sign Tentative Agreement – Mrs. Ricks had emailed the team proposed language for the personal leave bank. There was discussion regarding a timeframe for returning contribution forms under #2. By consensus, it was agreed to add “and returning it within 10 school days” to the end of the sentence under #2. A tentative agreement regarding the personal leave bank was drafted and was signed by Mrs. Knipp and Mrs. Schwartz.

Discuss Topics for Negotiations/Bargaining

Flexibility of Leave (item c.) – Mr. Fahy noted that it was his understanding that teachers are currently taking leave in 30-minute or 60-minute increments. Mrs. Ricks said if the IBB team was still interested in the pilot program, Dr. Sullivan did speak to two principals at two schools about piloting this for one quarter to gather feedback and then it could be discussed at negotiations next year. Ms. Berglund liked the idea noting that most of the time when the teachers take personal leave it is usually at the end of the day. It would be interesting to find out, with the smaller increments, if it is difficult to find substitute teachers. She shared concerns if an individual would take half hour off and a paraprofessional possibly being pulled from a classroom to fill in as a substitute teacher in another classroom. If the elementary schools did go to trimester then the pilot would be for a trimester. Consensus was to have a Memorandum of Understanding drafted to be reviewed and signed at the next meeting.

School Calendar (item o.) – Mrs. Ricks suggested a compromise that would satisfy all interests. Her recommendation was to identify four school days in the calendar as storm days and then plan to use a grace day on day five. Mrs. Knipp explained the schools in the District are providing more than the minimum amount of required hours of instruction, in most cases than 30 minutes a day. If the time

was cumulated it would average out to an extra 14.5 days each year. She noted the team has looked at different things to be respectful to the tax payers but the tax payers also needed to know that the schools are going above and beyond what the law requires. It was noted that the Calendar Committee had incorporated three days into the current school calendar. Mrs. Ricks explained the grace day was a tough issue for the School Board because the classified staff expect to make a certain amount of money in a year and would have to take a day deduct if there was no school or a day was missed. She added that there is an inherent contract with the taxpayers; they expect their child to receive the full amount of days of instruction. She also thought that the staff would not want to do the minimum amount of instruction and they are proud of the fact that they do more. Mrs. Ricks said the Board bargainers wanted to be reasonable and understood that if every non-student contact day in the calendar was identified as a storm day, then no one could really make solid plans and that would be unsettling and frustrating. The School Board wanted to be reasonable and was willing to put the grace day in the plan, even though it was not their ideal choice. She was hoping the IBB team could have four storm days built into the calendar and then put the grace day into the plan. Mr. Schobinger said that the Calendar Committee puts a lot of time into the calendar and he would not feel right changing the wishes of the Calendar Committee otherwise those on that committee would feel as if they were wasting their time. Mrs. Ricks said they have had the same discussion and the Board would not feel comfortable putting anything in the language of the contract, for that reason. The Board appreciates the work the Calendar Committee does and it tries to respect the decision of that committee. She said that she thought that accepting a variety of calendars this next school year that were presented by the Calendar Committee represented that the Board appreciated their work. Mrs. Ricks suggested a Memorandum of Understanding. Mrs. Knipp suggested language where the calendar will have three snow days, if a fourth one is needed it would be understood that the fourth makeup day will be tacked on at the end of the school year. If a fifth storm day was needed the District would utilize the grace day. Mr. Fahy added if there were six or more makeup days needed that they would continue and be added at the end of the school year. There was discussion about the teacher work day and it was mutually agreed any work day at the end of the school year would be bumped back. Mrs. Knipp used this year's (2016-2017) school calendar as an example. If there would happen to be another storm day, the last student contact day would be Friday, May 26 and therefore the teacher work day would be moved to Tuesday, May 30. Consensus was to have a Memorandum of Understanding drafted and signed at the next meeting.

Discussion of Class Size and Case Load (item 1.) – Mr. Fahy inquired if there were plans for any more teachers to be hired for the next school year. Mrs. Ricks responded that was a constantly moving target based on enrollment. She added that Dr. Sullivan looks at the enrollment carefully and brings recommendations for additional sections to the Budget Committee. Dr. Sullivan explained there was one occasion where a kindergarten teacher was hired a few days before school started because the enrollment continues to change. He noted there are currently five vacancies in K-5. Mr. Fahy inquired what the current classroom sizes are appearing to be in the elementary schools for next year. Dr. Sullivan responded the District aims for the guidelines for the recommended class sizes. Mrs. Ricks thought the current projections from Mr. Reep for kindergarten next fall is around 20 students. Ms. Berglund inquired if there was a way to request a paraprofessional if the class sizes are large and there was no room in the budget to hire a teacher. Dr. Sullivan responded there are guidelines that the District utilizes that were put in place a few years ago during the boom to try and address those concerns. This was easier to address when the funding was not frozen by the state. The District is facing some difficult budgets in the next few years.

Mr. Fahy referenced a plan by the School Board that Mrs. Ricks had talked about in the past and asked for more clarification. Mrs. Ricks explained the School Board would eventually like to have a more concrete strategic plan with guidelines. They are hoping a few years from now when there are negotiations they would be able to discuss spending with everyone understanding where the money was spent and, as an example, not give as large of a pay raise so that additional teachers could be hired. The details would be the Board's decision and there are committees that make those decisions and put those plans together.

Mrs. Knipp requested the Board to keep in mind special education when making those plans. She noted the larger number of special education students and the burden of paperwork from the state for those students. Mrs. Ricks said that they have been doing some research; they have looked at weighted caseloads from different places around the country and they have met with NDSBA about this topic and it is something on their radar. Mr. Fahy explained that often teachers believe the only time that anything can be heard is at the negotiations table and he was hoping there could be communication to make sure that they could discuss the caseloads and class sizes so that their thoughts and their concerns are heard. Mrs. Ricks said that it was important and that she has discussed this with Dr. Sullivan and Dr. Sullivan has shared that he is always glad to meet and discuss concerns. As a thought, maybe a management committee with regular meetings with the DEA leadership was a possibility, or other options. Mr. Fahy suggested an opportunity for a member of the DEA to report to the Board with an update from the DEA or an update from the teachers on a monthly basis to keep that line of communication open. Mrs. Schwartz and Mrs. Ricks welcomed this idea. Consensus was to remove this item from the agenda.

Define Specifically Assigned and Unassigned Time (item n.) – Ms. Berglund explained, even though it shows on paper that the teachers have approximately 110 minutes for unassigned time in the daily schedule, she is meeting with students during their recess time to reteach material. In instances where the child was absent from school, she is teaching the child the information they missed when they were absent during recess time. Recess time is the ideal time since there are no other children in the classroom. She noted, as of yesterday, there have been 172 absences from school from her students. She explained that recess is for the students. If she would not reteach the students during recess it would have to be done during her lunch time or before or after school. She said she cannot make the students stay after school and cannot make the parents bring the student in early in the morning. Ms. Berglund also noted that a 15-minute recess does not provide enough time for the student who was absent for an entire day. She expressed that the 40 minutes of preparation time is important. The Superblock is a concern because it happens every sixth day and they are giving up the preparation time on that day. Mrs. Ricks explained Superblock happens every sixth day; however, there is still an average of the allowed amount of preparation time in the week.

Ms. Berglund explained she has received two emails from teachers that there would be 15 minutes of recess removed in the schedule next school year and that was very concerning. Mrs. Ricks said that was something that would need to be discussed with the administrators. She thought the School Board would want to stand behind the contract and the contract states 90 minutes in unassigned time. She would hope that with good communication with the building principals the teachers could work through the schedule issues. Mrs. Ricks recommended the teachers also visit with the principal and let them know if the teacher is having a hard time getting their unassigned time because they are reteaching students over recess and discuss this with others on their team to find out how they are working through this. She noted it is the Board's responsibility to make sure the contract is being

honored and right now, with the schedule that has been presented, as far as they can see, it looks like the contract is being honored.

Mrs. Ricks said the School Board did a book study on PLCs and have read the research and there is strong evidence that the PLCs are good for the schools and the teachers need time to be able to incorporate the PLCs. There was discussion regarding the math calculation for the unassigned time in a week's time and Ms. Berglund again noted that she understood how it looked on paper. She added there is low morale in the K-5 buildings because the teachers are giving up unassigned time to reteach students. She explained that teachers go into the profession of teaching because they care about their students and that's why they spend the recess time reteaching the students.

Mr. Fahy said that what he was hearing from Mrs. Ricks is, that based on the information that is received, the School Board shows that they are meeting the requirements so the next option would be if it is not happening to go through the grievance procedure. Mrs. Ricks responded that she would hope it would not come to that and would hope that this could be worked out. Mrs. Ricks referred back to the topic and noted the topic was defining unassigned time and that the topic was not going to fix the problem that was being described.

Superintendent Sullivan said he was only aware of one elementary building that was in the discussion stages about the research showing that shorter periods are beneficial to the students because they prevent behavioral problems which lead to disciplinary issues on the playground but when visiting with the principal there was no indication to the superintendent that he received that there was any intention to shorten the recess. The conversation was a "what if" and the 15-minute recess will remain in the schedules. He also clarified that the teachers would not be taking their students out at recess. Dr. Sullivan offered to follow up and express to the principal that there needs to be some clarification to eliminate the misunderstanding. This topic would remain on the agenda for input regarding DMS schedule.

Lane 7 and Beyond on Matrix (item e.), Salary Schedule (item f.), Frozen Step in 2009 (item g.), Stipend for District Moves (item i.), and Wages and Benefits (item m.) - Consensus was to put all the remaining topics together since they involved money and use the IBB process.

Issue: Pay Fair Salary

Interests: Equal in Movement Through Salary Schedule, Competitive Salaries, Fiscally Responsible, and Sensitive to Economic Climate

	Affordable	Mutual Gain	Doable	Ratifiable
Fix the Matrix				
Money on the Base				
Flat Raise				
Dental/Vision Insurance				
Unused Insurance Compensation				
Pay for 2009 Step				

Mrs. Ricks thought the team could brainstorm some options and eliminate the ones that do not work and narrow it down before getting to the actual number since it would make sense not to spend a great deal of time running scenarios if neither party was interested in a particular option. There was confusion regarding keeping all the agenda topics lumped together and the interests listed reflecting those topics. Mr. Fahy said, in the past during collaborative bargaining, they knew how much money there was and therefore would know how to deal with it. Without knowing the money, it was difficult. Mrs. Ricks explained this would be similar to the calendar topic since there were many different options with the calendar that would result in a complex resolution. Mrs. Ricks asked the group what questions they would need answered or information gathered before the next meeting. She reminded the team there was no new money which makes it different but added that it did not mean some funds could not be spent. Ms. Berglund inquired where the funding would come from to pay for items if there was no new money. Mrs. Ricks responded that she thought it might come from the interim fund which is why everything was trickier. Mr. Fahy inquired if the Board was anticipating the 112% on the property tax levy. Mrs. Ricks was not sure of the comfort level of the Board, at this time. Mrs. Ricks inquired if the DEA bargainers had a sense of what the membership was expecting. Mr. Fahy responded he did not know if the DEA membership had an expectation. He noted the membership understood the climate of the District. Due to lack of time, this agenda topic was tabled until the next meeting.

Debrief – Chair Sullivan summarized the meeting. Pages 2 and 7 of the training manual were read by representatives from the two parties. The minutes of the April 27 meeting were reviewed and signed by the parties, as presented. There was a discussion about Simplifying Leave Language (item a). A tentative agreement on the Personal Leave Bank was signed by the parties. Regarding the Flexibility of Leave topic (item c.), there will be a Memorandum of Understanding prepared regarding what the District will pilot next year either for one quarter or for one trimester in one elementary building and DHS. There was a discussion about class size and caseload and having a further dialogue during the upcoming school year about this topic. The topic of Discussion of Class Size and Case Load (item l.) was removed. There was discussion about Defining Specially Assigned and Unassigned Time (item n.). That topic will remain on the agenda for future discussion. There was discussion about the School Calendar (item o.). There will be a Memorandum of Understanding drafted that will include three snow days placed in the body of the calendar, a fourth snow makeup day at the end of the calendar, if a fifth snow makeup day is needed the first option would be a grace day, and six snow makeup days and beyond would be added to the end of the calendar. There was a discussion regarding the financial topics with discussion to continue at the next meeting.

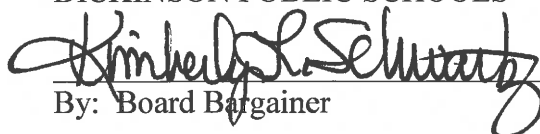
Schedule Next Meeting Date and Time – By consensus, the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 16 at 6:00 p.m.

Set Agenda Items for Next Meeting – The agenda topics for the next meeting were incorporated in the debriefing.

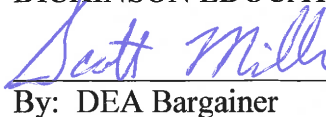
Adjournment – Chair Sullivan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Dated this 16th day of May 2017.

DICKINSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS


By: Board Bargainer

DICKINSON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION


By: DEA Bargainer

