



Dickinson
Public Schools
Empowering All Learners to Succeed

District-Wide PAC Meeting
Minutes

Wednesday, October 10, 2018; 12:00 p.m.

Members present: Dr. Shon Hocker (Superintendent), Mr. Keith Harris (Assistant Superintendent), Mrs. Jessica Cron (representing Prairie Rose Elementary PAC), Ms. Nikki Wolla (representing Lincoln Elementary PAC), Mrs. Alicia Saienga (representing Heart River Elementary PAC), Mrs. Rachel Melvin (representing Dickinson Middle School PAC), and Mrs. Julie Heidecker (Representing Roosevelt Elementary PAC). Also present was Mrs. Twila Petersen.

Call to Order – Superintendent Hocker called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Introduction of Committee Members – Attendees at the meeting introduced themselves and explained what building/school they represented. Superintendent Hocker shared his appreciation for the committee member’s involvement in this group which is important for its success. He estimated each monthly meeting to be about an hour of time. He added the committee member’s time is valuable and looks forward to their role in sharing their wisdom and advice.

Purpose and Role of this Committee – Superintendent Hocker explained his goal for this committee was to be a connection for the District office to educate and inform the building representatives and to dispel any rumors. It is also another avenue for communication.

Proposed Meeting Dates and Times – Dr. Hocker explained this committee had normally met the day after the school board meeting at noon and a lunch was provided. Most of the time, the Board meeting is held the second Monday of the month. He asked the committee members if they had any conflicts with this scheduling and there were none noted.

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

Approval of the May 15, 2018, Meeting Minutes – The May 15, 2018, meeting minutes were distributed to the committee members.

Business Topics

October 9 School Board Meeting and Workshop Agendas – Superintendent Hocker explained the Board approved an amended budget at last night’s meeting. The initial budget was created in August. There was an adjustment of \$300,000 to the federal funds that generated the adjustment to the budget.

Superintendent Hocker said there were statements mailed by the County Auditor’s office to individuals within the District sharing information regarding an estimated property tax. The estimated change in the property taxes was not accurate and indicated a higher amount for the school district than what was submitted to the auditor. Dr. Hocker felt when the final property tax statements are distributed at the end of the year, individuals should notice a lower tax than estimated previously by the Stark County Auditor’s office.

After last night's Board meeting, a workshop session was held. The discussion in the workshop was to address capacity challenges within the District. For example, the student enrollment has increased 150 students from spring 2018 to fall of 2018. Dr. Hocker said the District typically has had growth around 5-6% every year. The kindergarten, 1st grade and some of the 2nd grade classes are at capacity or beyond. There are elementary classrooms with 29 students. The past Assistant Superintendent Reep used a model of taking 80% of the births and estimating that number as kindergarten enrollment five years later. Last year, there were approximately 700 births. Using that number at 80%, the estimate would be 560 students. The current kindergarten enrollment is approximately 350. Therefore, there could be almost 200 more kindergarteners than the District has now. Based on this information, Dr. Hocker felt the District would need another elementary school in the near future.

Dr. Hocker discussed the challenges at Dickinson High School. The current enrollment is 1,000 students. When looking at the enrollment of the students in grades 4-7, which is 1,200 students, and rolling those numbers forward with a potential 4% increase, the student enrollment at the high school could be 1,245 students in five years.

Superintendent Hocker noted that the District hired an architect last year to start gathering information regarding Dickinson High School and drafting information. At last night's Board workshop, Board members decided to pursue a construction management at risk (CMAR). Dr. Hocker expressed the importance of noting a CMAR is not a contractor. The CMAR's purpose is to help the District shore up some numbers on expenses at the high school in preparation for a potential school bond vote in the spring 2019. The architect is able to provide soft costs. The District would like to be more transparent and the CMAR will help make this possible.

There will be a public tour of Dickinson High School on Tuesday, October 16 from 6:15-7:00 p.m. followed by a public input forum at the high school. The input forum will be a time for questions and answers. The public is encouraged to attend the tour and see the interior of the high school. Committee members provided some options for those unable to attend the open forum, such as a FaceBook Live video.

Dr. Hocker explained some of the challenges with the interior of Dickinson High. When the high school was built in the 1960s, it was built as a pod design to serve as major classroom spaces. Classrooms could serve 50-100 students with multiple teachers. Then the pods were broken into pie-shaped classrooms. The walls for the pie-shaped classrooms do not have outlets and are not conducive for 21st Century technology and learning.

Additional challenges at the high school he noted were the bathrooms are not ADA compliant. There are two boilers on the location. These have been band aided to keep them running. One boiler is currently not functional and will need approximately \$40,000 in repairs to keep it going for maybe one or two more years. Because the boilers are so old, parts can no longer be found. A new boiler would cost approximately \$1 million. Dr. Hocker also noted the roof on the main building is flat and there are many areas that have leaks.

It is important for the community to provide their input on what to do at the high school. What is needed and wanted in the schools needs to come from the community. The school district is stewards of the public's tax funds and needs to be judicious with the taxpayers' money. If the community feels it does not wish to renovate the high school facility or build a new facility, then

a solution will need to be found to accommodate the incoming large amount of students. This could mean starting school earlier for some sections and going later for other sections.

Dr. Hocker said he has heard feedback from community members that they wish the high school to remain in its current location. This may be due to the cooperation with the Community Center and Dickinson State University. Community leaders are anxious for a new facility to be built to enhance the programs and continue to progress in a vocational and technological world.

Mrs. Heidecker suggested when having the open forums with the public, not only mention the student enrollment projections, but also the concerns with the equipment that is breaking down and the areas that are not ADA compliant. Weighing the option of continually fixing equipment versus something new would be beneficial. Ms. Wolla felt the public should be educated and given a list of areas that need repairs. She also suggested considering options for the parking and the traffic flow at the high school. A meeting with the Dickinson Public School Board and the City Commissioners might help find a solution to the congestion.

Superintendent Hocker explained a timeline for renovation or construction, if that is the route the community wishes to pursue. If a bond would be passed by the community next spring, construction could begin in the summer with the potential of the remodeled school or new school opening in fall 2021.

Dr. Hocker stated there will be a public open house at Berg Elementary on November 5. A time has not been identified. The open house time needs to be coordinated with activities in the Berg gymnasium. He added that \$5 million was spend to remodel the Berg Elementary building.

AdvancED Engagement Review November 4-7 – Superintendent Hocker shared with the committee that every five years, the school district is accredited. AdvancED is the accreditation organization designated by the state. Dickinson Public Schools will have an engagement review November 4-7. There is time set aside on the schedule for the engagement review team to meet with a focus group of parents with representation from each level, elementary, middle school and high school. Dr. Hocker will consider moving the time for the parent focus group meeting to Monday, November 5 at 12:00 noon with a lunch provided to the attendees. Committee members will recruit parents from their buildings to attend. Superintendent Hocker requested that committee members let Twila or him know of those attending to get an accurate count for the meal.

Student Enrollment – This topic was covered under the discussion of the October 9 School Board Meeting agenda item.

Rumors and Other – Mrs. Melvin inquired what the District was doing to recruit special education teachers. Dr. Hocker responded the administration has put together an organized recruiting package. This includes discussion with upcoming graduates from the Dickinson State University teacher education program, recruiting student teachers, and interviewing a candidate in the near future. Dr. Hocker added the District was short four special education teachers at the beginning of the school year. There is a shortage nationwide for special education teachers, not just in Dickinson.

The District has created a new Mental Health Task Force with 27 committee members. The discussion in the task force included the challenges and disabilities students face in mental health

and avenues to assist the students. Assistant Superintendent Harris has discussed with Governor Burgum the mental health issues and the state century code statutes that create barriers. Mr. Harris has also reached out to 240 universities posting an opening for special education teachers.

Mrs. Saienga felt the parking lot and traffic flow at the middle school could use improvement. Assistant Superintendent Harris will observe the traffic at the middle school during drop offs and pickups prior to the November meeting.

Superintendent Hocker appreciated the discussion and lead into providing information regarding the busing service for students. Right now, there are approximately 1,000 students riding the bus. There are 29 bus routes. The busing is contracted out through Harlow's Bus Services. It is difficult for Harlow's to find individuals who have the CDL licensing and also have a flexible schedule to work early mornings with a long break and then come back and work a segment of time in the afternoon. Those same people who have the CDL licensing could be working in the oil field.

The District is going to be doing a parent survey regarding busing. The survey will be to analyze if more parents would sign up for busing if the fees were waived. Dr. Hocker explained hypothetically if the number of students riding the bus would double, the District would need to buy possibly 30 more buses and find 30 more drivers. This could be at a price tag of approximately \$3 million. Right now, Harlow's cannot find drivers for the current 29 bus routes.

There was a discussion regarding attendance areas and busing boundaries. There was additional discussion regarding adding sections to Heart River Elementary. Superintendent Hocker noted most of the new families moving in are moving north of the interstate, not by Heart River Elementary. He explained, even though the boundaries established may not make sense in some areas, it does balance out the elementary student enrollment.

Adjournment- At 1:30 p.m., Superintendent Hocker adjourned the meeting.