

DPS/DEA Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) Meeting #1

Minutes

Monday, February 20, 2017, 5:00 pm
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, Mr. Jay Schobinger, and Mrs. Shawna Knipp.

Others Present: Mrs. Diana Stroud, Mr. Lyle Smith, and Mrs. Twila Petersen.

Call to Order – Chair Sarah Ricks called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Review and Establish Ground Rules – Prior to the meeting, Mrs. Schwartz distributed copies of the IBB 2017-2018 Ground Rules. Chair Ricks opened the floor for discussion. Mr. Fahy inquired if the draft that was handed out was similar to last year's accepted ground rules, with the appropriate updates. Mrs. Ricks responded they were similar and suggested going through each ground rule. Consensus was to go through the proposed ground rules number by number. Mrs. Ricks noted there were two items that are not on the 2017-2018 drafted ground rules. One was decorum which has been removed; she recalled from the negotiations last year that it was stating the obvious. Mr. Fahy concurred. Mrs. Ricks explained the second item that was removed from the draft ground rules was the topic on caucus. She recalled if there was IBB they would not caucus. She asked for input. Mr. Fahy explained there are some instances where IBB cannot be done and preferred an option to go back to the traditional bargaining then caucus would be an acceptable part of negotiation. He emphasized to maintain the IBB to the extent that it can be done. Mrs. Ricks clarified that if the group comes to a consensus to go back to traditional bargaining, that the team could include a caucus rule included in the statement. Dr. Sullivan recalled in previous ground rules there was a ground rule that either party could request to go to traditional bargaining at any time, it was not a process of consensus; it was at the discretion of either party. If the parties returned to traditional bargaining the ground rules would need to be reviewed. Mr. Fahy explained that it was not the intent for the transition to occur and noted that the IBB trainer, Laura, had said that sometimes money cannot be IBB. Mrs. Ricks proposed either party can request to go to traditional bargaining; if that event occurs new ground rules will be drafted. Mr. Fahy stated in the IBB sample ground rules there was language regarding caucusing. Consensus was to add back in language regarding the caucus using the language in the IBB sample ground rule #22. Mr. Fahy mentioned another sample ground rule IBB #33–The parties will transition out of IBB when and if one party no longer desires to use this process. This is not an unfair labor practice. Additionally, sample ground rule IBB #34–All previously agreed to items remain agreed to. Mrs. Ricks concurred, they both would be good to add to the ground rules. Mrs. Schwartz asked for clarification regarding which sample IBB ground rules would be added back in. Consensus was to add #22, #33, and #34 from the sample IBB ground rules and to combine #33 and #34 into one.

The team went through each item in the IBB 2017-2018 Ground Rules. Consensus was to adopt ground rule #1-Composition of IBB team, as written. There was a minor change to #2-Meeting Dates, Notices, and Location; consensus was to change the word “wanted” to “requested”.

Under ground rule #3-Financial Information, Mrs. Ricks noted if the team was using IBB they were going to be sharing information. However, this topic has been a sticking point generally in the past. Mr. Fahy explained that one of the requests from some of the DEA membership was to have the administrative contracts occur first prior to the completion of the IBB. The rationalization for this request was because in the past, the administrative ground rules stated “no administrator salary shall decrease and the board is not operating with an established, finite pool of funding for the administrative salaries.” The teacher negotiations appear to have a set amount of funds but then the administrative negotiations appear to have no limit for funds. Mrs. Ricks understood the perception. She said the request is marrying the two negotiation processes. She felt that in the past the administrative negotiations have wrapped up fairly quickly. She added that she can’t control what the membership is asking for and would be hesitant to say anything about that timeline in the ground rule. She appreciated the DEA members bringing this to their attention since the team may be setting a timeframe for completion and if the DEA bargainers already know that the membership was not going to ratify something at completion then that might invalidate the goal that the bargainers are trying to set. Mrs. Ricks inquired if there was a perception that completing the administrative negotiations first will somehow change things. Mr. Fahy explained the perception is that “this is all the money there is” when the teachers negotiate and then they settle and then the administrative negotiations comes out afterwards and find out what they have accepted and settled. He recognized they are two different fields and would not want the administrator’s job. Mrs. Ricks asked for a suggestion on how to handle the request. Mr. Fahy had no suggestions. Mrs. Ricks suggested with proceeding with a goal and then as it gets closer, and if it looks like it is going to be an issue, to deal with it at that time. Mr. Fahy responded he was satisfied with working around something and added the financial aspect possibly would not be known until after March 9 with only forecast numbers available, at that time. There was a discussion if the timelines for contracts were similar. Mr. Fahy said that some DEA members would not want the team to accept the ground rules knowing there is a limited amount of funds and the administrators do not have a limited amount. Mrs. Ricks understood what he was saying but noted they are two separate committees. She did not feel it would be very professional to dictate to Mr. Seaks and Mrs. Rude what to do with their negotiations committee. Mr. Schobinger explained a previous DPS administrator had commented that the teachers should not be settling before the administrator. Mrs. Ricks added that it also would set a precedence; what if the administrators are not going to settle until the teachers settle. Mr. Schobinger said it didn’t seem fair that there is a finite pool of funds and the administrators have an infinite pool of funds. He added that they know and understand that it actually is not an infinite pool of funds. Mrs. Ricks explained, in both situations, the Board looks at the financial situation and tries to figure what it can afford to do. She thought the percentages have been fairly equivalent over the years. Mr. Fahy reiterated there is a large vocal group of DEA members who looked at the last administrator salary and saw the lump sum plus the percentage and then the teachers were told this is all the money there is available. Referencing back to the ground rule, Mrs. Ricks noted that it did not state there was a finite amount of money in the ground rule. There is an overall awareness of where the finances are and agree that this is the revenue that the school district has. Mr. Fahy agreed and added it did not state a set amount that is available to bargain. Mrs. Ricks wanted to make sure the team had their finance facts line up and all were using the same set of facts. She noted that there probably would not be new money to discuss. Mr. Fahy said that he didn’t have a problem with ground rule #3 but he would have to defend it. He noted the financial information is public information. Consensus was to adopt ground rule #3-Financial Information, as written.

Consensus was to adopt ground rule #4-Handouts, ground rule #5-Meeting Facilitator/Chairperson, ground rule #6-Public Participation, ground rule #7-Recorder, and ground rule #8-Agenda for next meeting, as written. Consensus was a minor change to ground rule #9-Deadline for Issues by changing the word “issues” to “topics”.

Consensus was a minor change to ground rule #10-Negotiating and Agreeing to Proposals by changing the word “Issues” to “Topics”. Mr. Fahy said he appreciated during the last negotiations when there was a tentative agreement, the tentative agreement was reviewed and brought back to the next meeting so that everybody had an opportunity to review it and make sure it was drafted as everyone wanted and then it was signed by both parties.

There was discussion regarding the time frame for completion of the negotiations. Mr. Schobinger explained it is the DEA negotiators intention to get through every topic and therefore the correlation between setting a time frame based on the number of topics is irrelevant. There was discussion regarding finding the date contracts need to be out and backing that up to find a target date. Mr. Fahy acknowledged that it is important to get the contracts out to the teachers and returned before the summer break. Dr. Sullivan noted that the Board has been informed in previous negotiations that there is a window of time that needs to be allowed for the DEA membership to ratify a tentative agreement. Mr. Fahy gave an example, if there was a tentative agreement received on May 1, the first DEA meeting could be as early as May 2 and could then ratify as early as May 9. Then it could go to the school board shortly thereafter for consideration. The contracts would then need to be printed and distributed. Consensus was to remove the following sentence from #11: ~~A time frame will be set based on the number of topics and anticipated time needed to address them at the first or second meeting following the establishment of ground rules.~~ Consensus was the target date for completion of negotiations would be discussed and set by the IBB team. The target date for completion of the 2017-2018 negotiations was set for May 1, 2017.

Schedule the Next Meeting Date and Time – Mr. Fahy explained the DEA bargainers plan to brainstorm some topics and put together a survey so that they can get the perspective of the DEA members. By consensus, the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 7 at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Administration Office.

Agenda Topics for the Next Meeting – By consensus, the agenda topics for the next meeting would be:

- Review and Approval of the February 20, 2017, Meeting Minutes
- Sign Ground Rules
- Introduction of Topics

Mrs. Ricks inquired if the team was going to prioritize the topics and noted there are two meetings to introduce the topics. Mr. Fahy felt the understanding was that the team was going to cover all the topics. Mrs. Ricks concurred. He added that any topics that dealt with money would need to be put on hold. The team may know how much it would cost based upon figures but will not know how it will affect the revenue. There was discussion regarding the topics order and how last year the team sometimes did not stay with the order of topics and pulled topics that could be taken care of right away and get them off the table. Mrs. Ricks hoped that the team would talk more about the interest behind the topic and what they can do as a team to more collectively brainstorm solutions.

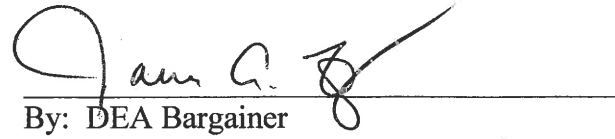
Adjournment – Chair Ricks thanked the team for their time and declared the meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Dated this 7th day of March 2017.

DICKINSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DICKINSON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION


By: Board Bargainer


By: DEA Bargainer