

## Unapproved School Board Workshop Minutes

Dickinson Public Schools  
Board Workshop

October 10, 2016; After Board Meeting  
Board Room, Central Office

The Dickinson Public School Board held a workshop on October 10, 2016, at the Central Administration Office. Board members present were: President Sarah Ricks, Vice President Brent Seaks; Mrs. Tanya Rude, Mrs. Kim Schwartz, and Mr. David Wilkie. Administrators present were: Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Vince Reep, Mrs. Dorothy Martinson, Mrs. Melanie Kathrein, Ms. Sherry Libis, Ms. Tammy Praus, Mr. Jay Hepperle, Mr. Ron Dockter, Dr. Marcus Lewton, Mr. Shawn Leiss, Mrs. Kristy Goodall, Mrs. Sara Streeter, Mrs. Susan Cook, and Mr. Henry Mack. Also present was Mrs. Twila Petersen.

**Call to Order** - Board President Ricks called the workshop to order at 5:41 p.m.

**Professional Learning Communities Institute** – President Ricks explained the board members need to consider if they are interested in attending the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) Institute. In addition, board members need to decide if this would take the place of the national convention. President Ricks opened the floor for discussion. Mrs. Rude inquired if the administrators felt it would be beneficial for the board members to attend the PLC Institute. Superintendent Sullivan responded that that he and Director of Instruction Melanie Kathrein had discussed that topic extensively and it is there opinion that it would be beneficial, especially with the PLC work done on a daily basis. He added the “what” and “why” of the PLC is most important. Mrs. Kathrein explained the Professional Development Leadership Team, which is mainly comprised of teachers, is focused on the PLC. The PLC is what the district is all about. There was discussion regarding the PLC Institute sessions. Various locations and dates were shared with no commitment. Mr. Wilkie inquired if the PLC Institute could be attended remotely. Mrs. Kathrein responded she did not know of anyone that had attended remotely. Those that have attended the PLC Institute in person would say it is a phenomenal experience and would encourage attending in person. There was discussion regarding some board members attending one institute and others attend at another time. President Ricks shared that since the board values itself as a PLC it may be important for all board members to attend together. Consensus of the board members was to try and attend both the PLC Institute and the National School Board Association 2017 convention. President Ricks asked Assistant Superintendent Reep to research the cost for all board members to attend both events.

**Central Administration Office Reorganization** – Superintendent Sullivan distributed a Central Office Administration handout. He noted the 2013 accreditation report had several required actions. One area noted by the quality assurance review team was the structure of the Central Administration Office with similar school districts. Specifically, the lean nature of the Central Office was inhibiting its ability to provide support at the building level. This has been a topic for discussion by the school board a couple of times. The conversation is being coordinated with Assistant Superintendent Reep’s departure and the discussion of a part-time versus full-time business manager. Dr. Sullivan explained the current structure of the Central Office was done for all the right reasons when there was declining enrollment and people were leaving the state. Many school districts had to make some very difficult decisions. He added there have been 900 students added in the last several years with no changes to the Central Office. Superintendent Sullivan said he was requesting the school board to review the matter thoroughly and render a decision no later than December on how the district wishes to proceed. Mrs. Rude inquired how the job descriptions were drafted. Superintendent Sullivan responded there was research done by Ms. Egeness and then drafted by her. Mrs. Rude said that when reviewing the organizational chart there is no indication of a federal program coordinator or

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grant writer. Dr. Sullivan responded that currently the district does not have a grant writer. On occasion the principals have submitted grants individually. Mrs. Martinson explained if there was a title program coordinator, that person would do the Title I and Title II along with the budgeting. There was discussion regarding the business manager responsibilities in the different scenarios in the handout. There was additional discussion regarding the transition, budgeting for additional staffing in the 2017-2018 school year, and the unknown financial outlook with the upcoming legislative session. Mr. Reep explained the unknown future in terms of a timeline for full retirement. He suggested time for transitioning and getting the human resources person trained and directly involved in teacher interviews. Mrs. Kathrein explained that it would be important for the human resources person to have an educational background if they were involved in that capacity. Mrs. Martinson added the person would need some educational background to be involved in the 504 program. President Ricks inquired if it would be realistic to fill a part-time role of a business manager. Dr. Sullivan responded it would be realistic as Mr. Reep would be interested in filling the position but beyond that it may be a challenge, unless that individual already has another part-time job. Mrs. Rude noted there are organizational charts from four school districts in the handout. Since there is financial data available for Bismarck, Minot, Grand Forks, and West Fargo, she would also like to see organizational charts for those school districts. She gave some suggestions on how the organizational chart for CAO could be adjusted and added that it is not only Central Office that is being affected. President Ricks inquired what specifically the administration was asking the board to review and how detailed. Superintendent Sullivan responded the first step he would ask the board to consider would be in terms of deciding if it wanted a part-time or full-time business manager. That decision will guide the future. Dr. Sullivan explained that one of the alternatives was to not make any changes. He explained the complications if the board should not make any changes but make a decision in May of next year to hire a full-time business manager. If Mr. Reep should decide to resign it would be difficult to find someone and train them in time before June. That is why Superintendent Sullivan recommends a decision be made by December or January. There was discussion regarding other possible options. Mr. Wilkie commented that when reviewing the model options, the district was basically renaming what Mr. Reep was doing and renaming the title as business manager. Dr. Sullivan responded that was basically correct. Mrs. Kathrein explained it was important to remember that the district has grown. Many of the responsibilities placed on the administrators are impossible to fulfill. The Mandan model is at about half the staff than any other school district in North Dakota. The district needs to consider what is most effective and still keeping in mind the “why”. President Ricks added that they needed to not only review Mr. Reep’s portfolio but also Mrs. Martinson’s and Mrs. Kathrein’s portfolios. Mr. Wilkie noted that the business manager’s position already exists under a different name. Dr. Sullivan agreed and added that it is under significantly different duties. Separating the finance from the human resource would be a big step for this school district. Currently the district looks at that as one position. There was discussion regarding the uniqueness of the job descriptions of the Central Office administrators. Mrs. Rude said she would like to have more research done, more organizational charts, and more job duties from other school districts. Superintendent Sullivan explained the research he had done by contacting the superintendents from other school districts. Mrs. Rude felt Minot and Grand Forks had the same number of students and could use those for comparison. Dr. Sullivan said he would get additional information. Mr. Seaks noted it was important to make the right decision but at the same time the board should not linger on a decision. This topic could move forward to the November school board workshop. President Ricks also suggested board members network with other school districts at the upcoming state convention. There was a discussion regarding the responsibility level of the different district administrators. President Ricks recapped that the decision was to find out

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how many people are needed at the Central Administration Office and what their titles would be. The details could be worked out later.

**Adjournment** – At 6:52 p.m. President Ricks declared the workshop adjourned.

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Sarah Ricks, Board President

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Vince Reep, Business Manager

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Twila Petersen, Secretary