



District-Wide PAC Meeting
Central Administration Offices, Board Room

Minutes

Tuesday, February 12, 2019; 12:00 p.m.

Members present: Dr. Shon Hocker (Superintendent), Mrs. Stacy Kilwein (representing Partners in Parenting), Mrs. Laurie Strommen (representing Jefferson Elementary PAC), Mrs. Nicole Wald (representing Berg Elementary PAC), Mrs. Alicia Saienga (representing Heart River Elementary PAC), Mrs. Jessica Cron (representing Prairie Rose Elementary PAC), Mrs. Julie Heidecker (representing Roosevelt Elementary PAC), Mrs. Rachel Melvin (representing Dickinson Middle School PAC), and Mrs. Kari Sayler (representing Jefferson Elementary PAC).

Call to Order – Superintendent Hocker called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

Additions/Deletions to Agenda Items – Mrs. Melvin requested a conversation regarding the information shared on social media on Sunday night. Mrs. Wald requested information shared regarding the “Vote Yes” committee. Mrs. Melvin requested a discussion regarding extreme cold temperatures and school closure/late start.

Approval of the January 15, 2019, Meeting Minutes – The January 15 meeting minutes were distributed to the committee. Mrs. Kilwein moved to approve the meeting minutes, as presented. Mrs. Melvin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Business Topics -

February 11 School Board Meeting Agenda – Dr. Hocker explained kindergarten pre-registration for the 2019-2020 school year was held at the Central Office last week. There were 223 pre-registrants. He anticipated there would be more registering during the remainder of the school year.

A representative from Brady Martz & Associates presented an audit report at last night’s meeting. There were no areas of concern on the audit. The RASP director and director assistant presented an annual report to the Board.

There were three topics on the Board meeting agenda pertaining to the Dickinson High School project. Dr. Hocker stated the Board set a bond election date for Tuesday, May 7. There will be about five or six polling sites, mainly at schools. The Board approved two questions on the ballot. One question will change the bond indebtedness from the current 5% to a 10% increase in the bonding capacity. This will require a 50% voter approval. The second question on the ballot is to approve a \$115 million bond for the high school project and an elementary school. The \$115 million will not fund the two projects 100%. The high school project is estimated at \$106 million. There is an estimated \$4 million for items that are not in the project that could be addressed very late in the construction. These items will be prioritized against building the new elementary school. The District is hopeful there will be some additional funds in the next biennium for the new elementary school.

At last night's school board meeting, the District entered into a partnership to have boys' and girls' soccer. Dickinson Public is the only class A district in the western part of the state that does not currently offer soccer. The Hagen football field will be utilized for soccer.

Vote Yes Committee – Superintendent Hocker explained a Vote Yes Twice Committee has been formed to promote the bond election. If anyone is interested in participating in this committee, they may contact CaraLee Heiser at caraleeheiser@ndsupernet.com.

Six community open forums regarding the high school project have been identified. They are scheduled for February 26, March 13, March 28, April 10, April 25, and April 30. There will be tours at 6:00 p.m. on these evenings with the open forum to follow at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Hocker explained for the bond referendum to be successful, individuals need to be educated. Dickinson Public administration can only share facts and details. Part of the education is to explain the student enrollment has been increasing and these students will be rolling forward into the high school in a few short years. If the District waits five more years to build the high school, it could cost an additional \$50 million. The boiler must be repaired, there are residential air conditioning units at the current high school that need to be addressed, and the roof needs to be replaced. The repairs will cost approximately \$10-20 million and this is for temporarily fixing them. Inflation on the new construction will be another 6% over five years or approximately \$30 million.

Snow Days and School Release – A question was asked if there is a certain low temperature when the school will close. Superintendent Hocker responded there is not. He added the general rule is if the District can get 75% of the students to school safely, then school will be held. Busing is a large factor. The buses cannot drive through large snowdrifts. Snow has really not been an issue so far this school year.

Because our District is on Mountain Time, we have the added benefit of one more hour. That is why schools such as Bismarck and Mandan are opening two hours late and our District has been able to have school at the regular time.

Superintendent Hocker has received input from many parents asking not to cancel school or start late because parents still need to get to work and don't know what to do with their children if school is cancelled or is delayed. Even though parents are upset that school is in session, there will be even more parents upset if school is cancelled and the children are at home. He added if there is a lot of snow and the buses cannot get around, then likely school will be cancelled. If there is no school then athletic activities will also be postponed and need to be rescheduled.

Dr. Hocker explained legislation that would change the required number of days of instructional time to the number of hours of instructional time. The House passed the bill overwhelmingly.

Rumors – Dr. Hocker referenced the incident on Sunday night which created a social media frenzy. He said after last night's school board meeting, he had a meeting with some patrons. He noted the District cannot divulge a lot of information about a student or students because of FERPA and student privacy laws.

A young man unfortunately made some comments, but the comments were never directed at bringing harm to a school or in a school. A reference was made by a student which warranted

some additional research or additional evaluation. That is where the law enforcement stepped in. The District has a great relationship with law enforcement and other resources.

Dr. Hocker explained the police have been called over 200 times in the first half of the school year. He said that the District cannot notify parents every time a police officer has been called to the school. Individuals would just ignore the messages and then when a serious emergency justifies a message to parents, parents would ignore the message.

In this particular instance, the student was referred to youth corrections for some additional evaluation. They did evaluate and returned the student back to school. During that time, a small group of kids exaggerated stories insinuating the student could potentially come back to school and shoot. Dr. Hocker stated this was not true. This small group of kids were visited with on Thursday and Friday and administration felt it was an isolated group of friends. The administrators asked the kids if they had in fact heard what they claim was said. The kids responded they had not. Administrators explained to this group of friends that this was not how to solve problems and not okay to spread rumors that are not true.

On Sunday night, there was a posting by an uninformed parent that led to 100s of postings. Some of the postings referenced incidents in other states. If someone was joining the post, they would not know that some references were from other states and thought it was happening in this District. The reference to a hit list was propelling out of proportion. The middle school principal and superintendent decided early Monday morning to do some damage control. They had the Dickinson Chief of Police at the school and some additional officers at the school to show the school was in fact safe. Some individuals used this as a negative and jumped to conclusions. Assumptions were filled in with the worst scenarios. There was also a student assembly held on Monday morning at Dickinson Middle School to reiterate there was not a threat made to the school.

Dr. Hocker stated the situation was never a threat and nothing was ever there. He added he met with some patrons after Monday night's Board meeting. They wanted to know why he had not let them know two or three weeks ago the student did something. Dr. Hocker responded to the group that nothing had happened, therefore there was nothing to report.

Committee members shared how the social media was out of control. Emails sent to the middle school principal were responded explaining it was a rumor. A FaceBook posting suggested a committee be formed. A District-wide PAC member responded asking what is another committee needed for since there are parent representatives at each of the schools. It is no different from parents upset about a brand new school and not wanting their child to go to Berg.

Dr. Hocker said it is very important if a person hears something and it is concerning, than report it. He did not wish a person who heard one person say they heard it from another person who heard it from another person. Everyone wants students to be safe.

Dr. Hocker explained why the police department had its posting late Sunday night. It was their intent to be proactive. He added that the term terrorist is anyone that makes someone feel uncomfortable.

Mrs. Melvin asked what can be done for the student. Dr. Hocker responded the student is in a difficult situation. The student would like to come back to school and be in a good learning

environment but has been prejudged. He added it is a sad and horrible experience for the child. Now there is damage control for the child.

Dr. Hocker said he did post a response on FaceBook, on the District's website, and emails to parents on Monday pertaining to the rumor of a planned school shooting. He would have liked to post it sooner but was working with the Dickinson Police Department to have joint statements.

Mrs. Wald inquired regarding an issue with a student that rides a bus. Dr. Hocker responded this was another situation where there were many assumptions. There is a challenge because of FERPA laws. Many parents have wanted to know how it was handled and what was the consequences. Superintendent Hocker has told those parents he cannot divulge that information.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.