

Unapproved School Board Workshop Minutes

Dickinson Public Schools
Board Workshop

March 3, 2015; After Board Meeting
Board Room, Central Office

The Dickinson Public School Board held a workshop on March 3, 2015, at the Central Administration Office. Board members present were: President Kris Fehr, Ms. Leslie Ross, Mrs. Tanya Rude, and Mrs. Sarah Ricks. Board member absent was Vice-president Jason Hanson. Administrators present were: Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Vince Reep, Mr. Jay Hepperle, Dr. Marcus Lewton, Dr. Becky Pitkin, Mrs. Susan Cook, Mrs. Melanie Kathrein, and Mr. Shawn Leiss. Others present were: Mr. Chris Gibbs, Mrs. Diana Stroud, Ms. Alisha Webster, Mr. Les Dykema, Mrs. Barb Bonicelli, Ms. Leann Mehrer, Mrs. Twila Petersen, and Ms. Nadya Faulx from the Dickinson Press.

Call to Order - Board President Fehr called the workshop to order at 4:40 p.m.

New Middle School Design/Construction – Superintendent Sullivan explained there have been approximately 15-17 months that have passed since preparation began for the new middle school. A lot has happened within that time frame including the passing of the bond election. A team has been reviewing what a middle school would look like and what the construction would look like. Superintendent Sullivan thanked Berg Principal Shawn Leiss, Director of Instruction Melanie Kathrein, and Hagen Junior High Principal Marcus Lewton for their relentless hours working with the DLR Group. Construction is set to begin within the next couple of months. DLR Group Principal Chris Gibbs was invited to provide information regarding the building and a preliminary presentation. Even though this is a work in progress some things are being confirmed.

Mrs. Kathrein explained a document is posted under Supporting Documents that will give the Board members a general idea of the driving factors for the design of the school. Targets include building a school within a school, building relationships with students, space for Response to Intervention, while remembering that students learn at a different pace. Dr. Lewton added that the team traveled and viewed some middle schools and made note of some ideas they liked for the new middle school design, such as flexible spacing, year-long physical education, an area for fine arts and other extracurricular. He also felt within the design should be an opportunity for student exploration.

Mr. Chris Gibbs from the DLR Group addressed the Board thanking them for this opportunity to share information and provide an update. The District provides a unique, dynamic challenge with its enrollment fluctuations which will require a design that must be flexible. Mr. Gibbs provided a PowerPoint with a synopsis of the new middle school design which is posted on the District's website. One slide showed a construction progress plan. The current schematic design will lead into the design development which includes parameters that are continually being researched by the team. This process will go into June and will be followed by the documentation process. The actual construction is broken down into three processes: site, core and shell, and interiors. The process stage began summer of 2014 when DPS representatives met with DLR Group representatives at a workshop. The design of the new middle school started taking shape as the group worked with foam cubes to create a 3-D diagram. Last fall DPS representatives toured other middle schools and brought back ideas. Flexible spaces with self-contained classrooms seemed to be the common theme. Mr. Gibbs explained different ideas presented for interior designs. The designs displayed the layout of the three grade levels. Classroom and lab areas could serve 100 students. The interior spaces have the capability of interchanging. There was discussion regarding the location of the auditorium, gymnasium, cafeteria, and multi-purpose area. There was information provided regarding the sixth graders having one teacher similar to the elementary model or four or more teachers similar to a junior high school. Mr. Gibbs explained the academic wings, or clusters, could have furniture that

New Middle School Design/Construction (cont.)

was flexible that could be moved around to create the atmosphere required by the teacher. Some spaces could face a courtyard or windows that face outside. Areas would have sliding glass panels with acoustics controlled for noise. The flexibility allows for students to learn in different ways.

Differentiated Discovery areas would allow for team teaching or multi-disciplinary teaching. It could also have the flexibility to meet enrollment growth numbers. The commons configuration could have a variety of uses or functions, such as: a 4-station gymnasium, seating for 400 in a cafeteria, theater area, auditorium setup with tablet arm chairs, a raised platform, or a stage facing two directions. There was discussion regarding the positioning and layout of music/band concerts and the acoustics.

There was discussion regarding the exterior entrance and the challenge of having an area for bus drop-offs and pickups, also points for parent drop-offs and pickups, and staff parking for 120-140 staff members. An area also would need to be set aside for a track/football/baseball field.

Mr. Gibbs explained that based on discussions with the construction manager it would be best to build the shell in its entirety and then possibly take areas and not finish them unless they are needed with increasing enrollment. There was discussion on this process.

Board members voiced concerns about having enough room in the budget to buy equipment, furniture and other soft costs. Mr. Gibbs felt, in general, out of the \$65 million for the middle school, about \$50 million would pay for the hard walls and site materials; the remainder would be for soft costs.

Superintendent Sullivan and Assistant Superintendent Reep will be going to Minneapolis next week to meet with the engineers, DLR Group representatives and Mortenson Construction to work out some important details regarding the construction of the middle school.

Adjournment - By consensus, at 6:07 p.m. the workshop adjourned.

Kris Fehr, Board President

Vince Reep, Business Manager

Twila Petersen, Secretary