

## Unapproved School Board Meeting Minutes

Dickinson Public Schools  
Special School Board Meeting

March 16, 2015; 2:00 p.m.  
Board Room, Central Office

The Dickinson Public School Board held a special meeting on March 16, 2015, at the Central Administration Office. Board members present were: President Kris Fehr, Vice-president Jason Hanson, Mrs. Tanya Rude, Ms. Leslie Ross, and Mrs. Sarah Ricks. Administrators present were: Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Vince Reep, Dr. Becky Pitkin, Ms. Tammy Praus, Mr. Ron Dockter, Mr. Henry Mack, Mrs. Susan Cook, Mrs. Dorothy Martinson, Ms. Sherry Libis, and Mrs. Melanie Kathrein. Others present were: Mr. Keith Fernsler, Mrs. Twila Petersen, and Ms. Abby Kessler from the Dickinson Press.

**Call to Order** - Board President Fehr called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. She noted because this was a special meeting only the items on the agenda would be discussed.

**Public Participation** – There were no requests for public participation.

**Open Enrollment Application** – At the March 9 School Board meeting, an open enrollment application was reviewed by the Board with a motion to table the decision on the application until further research could be done. Superintendent Sullivan noted that the administrators reviewed the enrollment patterns and there has been a drop in the student enrollment. Since February 1 enrollment has dropped by 32 students. According to today's newspaper the price of oil continues to fall. Assistant Superintendent Reep added that students are being tracked through PowerSchool and as of last week Friday the District had lost 41 students. The administrative recommendation was to take care of the students who reside in the DPS District before allowing others to enroll into the District; however, at this time there was room for some flexibility. Dr. Sullivan would like to recommend each open enrollment request be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. He referenced 180 students in a grade at DHS that will be replaced by 256 students. That is a large number of students being replaced in that grade. Dr. Sullivan suggested revising the administrative regulation attached to the open enrollment policy. Ms. Ross moved to approve the open enrollment request of a child of Audrey McMacken from South Heart to Dickinson and further moved to delegate to the Superintendent of Schools the authority to close open enrollment. Mrs. Rude seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Ricks, Rude, Hanson, Ross, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously. President Fehr thanked the administration for doing the research regarding this application.

**Executive Session for Attorney Consultation to Discuss Teacher Grievances, Pursuant to N.D.C.C. §§ 44-04-19.1, and 44-04-19.2** - At the March 9, 2015 Board meeting, the Board tabled the decision regarding teacher grievances in order to obtain the advice of legal counsel. President Fehr noted this item may be discussed in an executive session. The legal authority for closing this portion of the meeting is North Dakota Century Code section 44-04-19.1 and 44-04-19.2. The topic or purpose of the executive session was teacher grievances. President Fehr reported a motion would be in order to discuss this topic in executive session, if this was the wishes of the Board. Mrs. Rude moved to close the meeting and go into executive session for the purpose of discussion of teacher grievances as per North Dakota Century Code NDCC 44-04-19.1 and 44-04-19.2. Mrs. Ricks seconded the motion. Discussion: none. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Rude, Ross, Hanson, Ricks, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously. President Fehr reported the executive session would be recorded and all members of the governing board were limited to their discussion during the executive session to the announced

**Executive Session for Attorney Consultation to Discuss Teacher Grievances (cont.)**

topic. Any collective decision, collective commitment, or other final action by the governing board would occur when the meeting reconvenes unless required by law during the executive session. President Fehr designated those individuals that may be in attendance at the executive session as: Attorneys David Phillips and Amy De Kok, Superintendent Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Vince Reep, Board President Fehr, Board Vice President Hanson, Board Member Ross, Board Member Ricks, Board Member Rude, and Recorder Petersen. President Fehr noted the estimated time for the executive would be 30 minutes and the board meeting would reconvene at approximately 2:30 p.m. At 2:12 the School Board went into executive session for the purpose of discussion of the teacher grievances. The session was attended by Attorneys David Phillips and Amy De Kok, Board President Kris Fehr, Board Vice President Jason Hanson, Board Member Leslie Ross, Board Member Tanya Rude, Board Member Leslie Ross, Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Vince Reep, and Recorder Twila Petersen.

The executive session was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. President Fehr invited the public back into the Special School Board meeting. She noted that the Board discussed the teacher grievances during the executive session.

Mrs. Rude exited the meeting at 2:51 p.m. and returned at 2:53 p.m.

**Teacher Grievances** - President Fehr invited the elementary principals and Director of Instruction Melanie Kathrein to join the Board members at the table. President Fehr asked the elementary principals to explain how Curriculum Night developed in each of the buildings and the principal's role in Curriculum Night. Ms. Libis said the discussion regarding Curriculum Night started at an elementary principals meeting. There was discussion how to educate parents. The common core was a hot topic. The elementary principals agreed to do Curriculum Night and Mrs. Kathrein offered to help with the presentation so that all the buildings would be presenting the same information. Curriculum Night was taken back to the teachers and the teachers were responsible for 20 minutes of mathematics and 20 minutes of Language Arts. Coaches were responsible for a small scale lesson plan. Ms. Libis added that at Prairie Rose, RSVPs were sent out; 134 parents responded they planned to attend, approximately 60-70 parents did attend. Parents were allowed to visit whatever teacher they wanted. After 20 minutes Principal Libis announced on the PA system the parents could move onto the next session. Mrs. Cook said it was basically the same process also at Heart River except they maybe spoke a bit longer. The beginning session started at 6:30 and adjourned at 7:00 and then they went to their portion. Mr. Mack said it was a similar setup at Roosevelt; however, there were no parents that attended. President Fehr asked what happened when no parents showed up and Mr. Mack responded that he gave his presentation and then after about 45-50 minutes if the teachers wished to leave they could. Mr. Mack and the coach stayed in case someone would show up. President Fehr clarified that at about 7:15 the teachers left. Mr. Mack concurred. Dr. Pitkin added that she knew at Jefferson that during super block collaboration half the teachers had a super block to go over the lesson plan and roll it out. The majority said it wasn't bad, it was what they do most of the time anyway so it wasn't an excessive burden. Mrs. Praus said at Lincoln there were teachers from music, physical education and a guidance counselor available for parents to visit during the transitioning time. Principal Pitkin added there was food available at the end also. President Fehr inquired if the planning happened during the superbloc or

**Teacher Grievances (cont.)**

outside of the regular school day. Dr. Pitkin responded that she felt that it wouldn't have gone outside the school day. The coaches wrote the plan and made copies.

Mrs. Kathrein stated the intent of Curriculum Night was to help parents be aware of what the students were going through and the type of homework they were bringing home. Mrs. Kathrein explained how parents are unfamiliar with some of the material brought home and the new way the teachers are encouraging students to be engaged and have more cognitive learning. There was more discussion regarding the preparation for Curriculum Night and time spent outside the contract. Building principals also discussed their past practice of willingly being flexible if a teacher would like to leave early, before 3:45 p.m. Several principals noted they do not keep track of the teachers that have utilized flex time. There are teachers that stay late or work weekends; this is their own choice, they care for their students. Superintendent Sullivan inquired how many teachers possibly worked Curriculum Night. Mr. Reep estimated about 110 teachers. A Board member felt that if a teacher had used flex time that teacher was satisfied with what was provided and their request should be denied. Principals discussed how many of the teachers had utilized the 3-30 minute flex time tickets and how many of those that used the tickets that filed a grievance. A Board member inquired what the cost would be to the District. Mr. Reep calculated the cost for substitute teachers and FICA cost for an additional  $\frac{1}{4}$  day of personal leave without taking into consideration the cost of the loss of instruction time. Superintendent Sullivan explained the requests for consecutive time off and his solution of providing time off on the last day of school. Principals shared the full day attendance of teachers on the last day of school and how the time is utilized. A board member noted there were options but physically it was better to pay the teachers; probably  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the teachers have merit and half don't. Another Board member felt a statement could be written explaining the reasoning for the decision. Some teachers take longer to prepare than others and therefore will put in more hours in preparation. A Board member noted that the superintendent had done a good job of trying to resolve the issue. There was discussion about paying only those that showed up for Curriculum Night. Board President Fehr motioned to recess. At 3:35 p.m. the Board members recessed. At 3:37 p.m. Board President Fehr called the meeting back to order. There was discussion regarding the teachers requesting personal leave time and those requesting contract salary pay. One Board member noted that personal leave time must be requested and approved by the building principal. After discussion, Mr. Hanson moved to accept Superintendent Sullivan's decision in part and the remedy provided would be to grant  $\frac{1}{4}$  day or two hours of personal leave to all teachers who participated in the December 2, 2014, Curriculum Night to be used in accordance with the 2014-2015 negotiated agreement. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ross. Discussion: Mr. Reep stated that the Board would have to rely on the building principals to provide the names of those that attended so that human resources could log those into the system. There was discussion regarding one individual who filed a grievance that was not a licensed classroom teacher. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Rude, Ricks, Ross, Hanson, Fehr; nays-none. The motion carried unanimously. President Fehr requested the attorney prepare the letters and the administration would distribute the letters. Ms. Ross moved to direct the administration to identify and provide the same remedy to any individual(s) who are not licensed by ESPB and not otherwise compensated who participated in the December 2, 2014, Curriculum Night. Mr. Hanson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: yeas-Ricks, Ross, Hanson, Rude, Fehr; nays-none. Discussion: none. The motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment** – At 4:17 p.m. Ms. Ross moved to adjourn. Mrs. Ricks seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

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Kris Fehr, Board President

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Vince Reep, Business Manager

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Twila Petersen, Secretary