

Dickinson Public Schools

Unapproved School Board Workshop Minutes
October 9, 2017; After School Board Meeting
Board Room, Central Administration Office

The Dickinson Public School Board held a workshop on October 9, 2017, at the Central Administration Office. Board members present were: President Sarah Ricks, Vice President Brent Seaks, Board Member Tanya Rude, Board Member Kim Schwartz, and Board Member David Wilkie. Others present were: Superintendent Douglas Sullivan, Business Manager Kent Anderson, Director of Student Services Dorothy Martinson, Director of Instruction Melanie Kathrein, Dickinson High School Principal Ron Dockter, Dickinson High School Assistant Principal Jay Hepperle, Southwest Community High School Principal Kristy Goodall, Dickinson Middle School Principal Marcus Lewton, Dickinson Middle School Assistant Principal Cassie Francis, Heart River Elementary Principal Susan Cook, Jefferson Elementary Principal Sara Streeter, Lincoln Elementary Principal Tammy Paus-Peterson, Prairie Rose Elementary Principal Sherry Libis, Roosevelt Elementary Principal Henry Mack, Mr. Chris Gibbs from DLR Group, and School Board Secretary Twila Petersen.

Call to Order: Board President Ricks called the workshop to order at 6:04 p.m.

Boardsmanship: Board Member Rude created a draft Board calendar that was distributed. She had compiled the information from the National School Boards Association 2017 Convention. Topics on the calendar were Governance Culture, Board/Superintendent Relations, Operations and Expenses, Student Achievement, Community Dialog, Urgent and Other Business, and Board Development. Mrs. Rude explained it was difficult to come up with a true definition of governance. The topics all related to something the board deals with each year. Mrs. Rude inquired what the group felt was a government culture and in general, what should the Board be bringing up at the meetings. She also asked if the strategic plan should be left to the group that drafted it (School Improvement Leadership Team). President Ricks responded she would like to tie the agenda topics into the strategic plan and its overall goals but did not think it would need to be a separate topic.

Superintendent Sullivan referenced the discussion regarding the Berg building where the topic was taken back to the Cabinet for review. Dr. Sullivan recommended the Board calendar be a topic for Monday's Cabinet Meeting. President Ricks felt that was satisfactory. Mrs. Rude explained that some topics may not be discussed during the Board meeting that particular month, such as service clubs. It could be that some of the Board members meet with a particular group. President Ricks felt the Board calendar could be a mechanism of making sure areas are covered but did not feel the Board needed to worry about all of the topics all of the time, it was just a snapshot. She added it was important to celebrate the successes and receive input on what is needed. President Ricks thanked Mrs. Rude for putting the information together.

Update Regarding District Projects: Superintendent Sullivan referenced the school district boundary analysis prepared by RSP & Associates. Some of the school buildings are already at the enrollment projections for 2020 or have exceeded the 2020 enrollment projection. Dr. Sullivan explained he has asked RSP to recalculate the enrollment and include the 2017-2018 enrollment since those numbers would include some enrollment growth. The previous assistant superintendent projected 373 kindergarten students for this fall. At the start of the school year, there were 356 kindergarteners. That is only 5% off from the projection. Dr. Sullivan added that the District enrolled 16 students last week. The students seem to be trickling in and those involved in the oil industry said this could be the new norm, a trickle instead of a boom.

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Update Regarding District Projects (cont.)

Dr. Sullivan shared some kindergarten projections with a 5% margin; 2018=406 students, 2019=456, 2020=517, and 2021=550. He noted the further out the more variables that could impact the enrollment. The kindergarten enrollment continues to be strong and based off of the live birth rate.

Dr. Sullivan noted there is a new refinery proposed for Belfield that could influence Dickinson Public. He added there are some future growth challenges for the District to face in terms of enough room for the students in grades K-5. He hoped the community open forums scheduled for November 1, November 2, and December 14 will provide input on how the community wishes to move forward. With the purchase of the 114 acres, the District will have some flexibility with a myriad of options. He hoped early 2018 there could be a communication with the parents to let them know where their elementary students are going to be placed for fall 2018.

With the reopening of Berg in 2018, Dr. Sullivan has had extensive conversations with Mr. Chris Gibbs from the DLR Group. There have been several tours of the building by administrators and consultants to get ideas regarding the Berg building. Some possible options include flexible learning spaces, moving the office from upstairs to the main level, improving the security, improving the library/media center/technology lab, and spaces in terms of learning methods. Mrs. Kathrein and Dr. Sullivan are establishing a Berg Planning Committee that includes Mrs. Twist, Mr. Leiss, Mrs. Praus-Peterson, Mrs. Fettig, Mrs. Leiss, Mrs. Fridley, Mrs. Cook, and Mrs. Schwartz. Dr. Sullivan will be asking the District-wide PAC committee for volunteers at tomorrow's meeting. He is also keeping Business Manager Kent Anderson informed. Moving forward, Dr. Sullivan expects the building's furniture to be removed and replaced with furniture similar to Dickinson Middle School where it is movable and flexible. Mortenson Construction will be touring the Berg building this week Thursday. Mortenson has visited with the DLR Group regarding concept pricing.

Dr. Sullivan explained the Berg reopening could be a two-year process. The main floor could possibly open in 2018 as a K-4 building with renovations taking place on the second floor. This would not be unusual since construction companies and architects all over the country have been making renovations while a school is in session.

Mrs. Rude inquired how a consultant could be brought on board when it had not been voted on. Dr. Sullivan responded with the time constraints and the urgency and because DLR knows the District's facilities, time was of the essence. The DLR Group has been the facility master planner for the District. It would be feasible for the master planner to pull out the floor plans and make a recommendation for improvements for the building. A request for a proposal would have taken at least two months and that would be two months the school district does not have available if it would like Berg to reopen in 2018. If Berg does not reopen in 2018, it will cause significant challenges. President Ricks stated that she was aware of the decision to use the DLR Group and thought it was the right decision to move forward with the specific proposal they were developing. Mrs. Kathrein added that the DLR Group did the initial work with the middle school project and she appreciated DLR's visualization to conception. It was important to have someone with an educational background look at a conceptual building space. She felt the District was fortunate to have the DLR Group involved.

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Update Regarding District Projects (cont.)

President Ricks asked for a time frame for the Berg building project. Dr. Sullivan requested to defer the question to Mr. Chris Gibbs. He noted the end goal was to have completion by July 1.

Mr. Gibbs explained the DLR Group was taking all the data from the facility and doing an assessment report using the master plan to identify areas that are suspicious and how they may be addressed. This will include the magnitude of the fix and solutions for remodeling. There will be concept plans in the format of a spreadsheet that will allow the District to review and make decisions. This will be a holistic picture with pricing. The plans should be done by the end of October and then turn it quickly around and returned to the District. There will be pressure on the District to make a determination. The project will be done in phases.

Mr. Gibbs explained at the open forum at the high school on Tuesday, there will be an interactive workshop with community members that attend the session. There will be many variables in the conversation regarding the high school. He explained there was excitement in the conversation on Monday with the high school staff. He added many things they talked about had very little to do with the building. It will be important to understand the engagement level of the community to start the conversation. There are some things about the building that are confined. Mr. Seaks inquired if the open forum would include a profile of a graduate. Mr. Gibbs responded that the open forum will be a snapshot of why we are here. This is all part of the master planning process. The world the students are going into will be changing and the demands will be different. The world has different jobs with different angles. The open forum will have tabletop exercises and feedback from the group with a written reflection.

Mrs. Kathrein said the conversation this morning at the high school was a spin off from the discussion the DLR Group had with the leadership at the elementary and secondary levels. They were asked to think outside the box. Today's discussion was very different; the teachers were very engaged and had interesting dialogue. It was a great experience from the beginning. Mr. Hepperle explained it was a great opportunity to be creative and share what they would like it to look like in the future.

Mrs. Rude referenced back to a profile of a graduate and inquired what is the goal of the students when they graduate and what is it the community wants to see. Mr. Gibbs responded that he thought some of that would be included but noted it is difficult to get that information. If that question would have been asked to the staff this morning, he did not believe they would know the value and would have gotten stuck. This was an opportunity for the staff to think and let them dream. Mr. Gibbs added that it will be hard to determine success of a graduate. What is the mentality of success for an individual? Deciphering if an individual needs this type of math or that type of math is difficult and if that individual needs it 10-15 years down the road is even more difficult. It is not going to be a nice little box.

Vice President Seaks inquired what the expectation for the outcome would be from tomorrow's public input. Mr. Gibbs responded it will be cross sectional with input from the community and the Dickinson High School staff regarding the vision for the high school and what it should and should not be. That will be tested against what was learned early on. There will be some assumptions that will be shared with the Board and administration. Then some parameters will be established. Mr. Gibbs expressed that professional development could not be underestimated.

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Update Regarding District Projects (cont.)

There was information shared regarding the HVAC units at Dickinson High School and Heart River Elementary. There was also a discussion regarding the District's bonding capacity.

Adjournment: President Ricks declared the workshop adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Sarah Ricks, Board President

Kent Anderson, Business Manager

Twila Petersen, Secretary