

**Unapproved Minutes
School Board Retreat
Gladstone Inn, Jamestown, ND
Montpelier Public School District #14
214 7th Ave
Montpelier, ND 58472
January 9th, 2021**

Board Members Present: President Tony Roorda, Scott Harms, Abram Valenta, Lynn Boom, Robert Froehlich and Wade Dally. Absent: Jeff Jensen.

Also Present: Superintendent Jerry Waagen, Secondary Principal Benjamin Hannasch, and Business Manager Amy Maurer.

Call to Order: President Roorda called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

Strategy Map: Information was presented on the district's Continuous Improvement Plan which looks at the plans for the elementary and the high school for personalized learning, independent study, technology integration, professional growth, teacher clarity, and formative assessments.

These plans were reviewed and discussed.

School Demographics: School enrollments, and class sizes were reviewed and discussed. Enrollment has declined somewhat but predictions are difficult because the district is greatly impacted by open enrollment.

Academic Achievement: COVID and the extended absence in the spring has had a negative impact on student achievement nationwide and in Montpelier.

DPI Insights/School Data: Mr. Waagen presented information on the insights.nd.gov website which provides educational information to the public about ND schools. Some of the information is very interesting but the relevance of the statistics, regardless of whether it's positive or negative, for small districts is questionable because of the small sizes of the classes tested and the variabilities between those classes.

Because of the disruptions to the school year due to COVID, NDDPI is extending all schools on Comprehensive Support into next year even though our district has worked hard and likely achieved the goals needed to be removed from the program. The district will continue to have funds available to assist with support.

2021-2022 School Budget: Mr. Waagen presented information on the preliminary 2021-2022 budget. Since it is a legislative year the preliminary budget is likely to change greatly depending on state funding changes. It was discussed that the board finance committee would like to be part of setting financial goals for the district.

CARES Act Funding: The grants received as part of the federal stimulus package were reviewed. The Resiliency Grant and Education Corps Grant funds which had a spending deadline of December 30th were spent mostly on technology, additional wages to teachers who had to put in extra hours due to distance learning and teaching changes due to COVID-19, and cleaning equipment. The ESSER Grant funds have been used mostly for cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment. There is still ESSER funds available with a spending deadline of September 30th, 2022.

COVID and the school: The state is currently at risk level “yellow”. On the 18th Governor Burgum will reassess the mask mandate. In compliance with the current state mandate the school currently has staff and students wearing masks at all times. It was discussed how, if the state mandate is removed, discontinuing the requirement to wear masks at all times might impact contact tracing and potential quarantines.

The school currently has distance learning every Friday which helps to accommodate students distance learning by choice and students absent for extended periods due to illness/quarantine. Going to five days per week was discussed.

Binax/rapid tests will soon be available to staff on a voluntary basis.

The possibility of extending the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Policy/EFMLA, which expired on December 31st was discussed.

The cleaning/disinfecting routine continues to be implemented.

Extracurricular Activities: Fees are still in place for students participating in extra-curricular activities. Students qualifying for free and reduced meals are exempt.

School Facilities: Mr. Waagen shared with the board a list of maintenance and improvement needs including a new roof over the north elementary, painting of the old music building, science room update, basement hallway floor, fire alarm bells and high school stairwells. The fencing around the tennis court was also mentioned.

Transportation: Mr. Waagen shared information about the current bus fleet. He believes we should not have to purchase a new bus for two years. The lack of substitute bus drivers makes things extremely difficult. Mr. Bear is willing to help certain mornings this semester. Mr. Waagen and Mrs. Schrader also drive when the regular drivers are gone. A defensive driving course is required for substitutes to drive the small buses. A CDL is not required.

Technology: Many Chromebooks, computers and other technology was purchased with CARES Act funding which should put the district ahead for a few years.

NDPHIT: The district had started looking into getting it’s health insurance through the North Dakota Public Health Insurance Trust (NDPHIT) last year but put a hold on it in light of the pandemic. Having Hay’s Group, Inc present information to the board and staff soon to consider it for next year was discussed.

Staffing: Teacher staffing and options if there is a resignation in the elementary was discussed. A class could potentially be combined. What would be best for students academically and whether this would impact future possible administration changes was discussed.

Quarter Grades: The district changed to semester grades in the high school effective beginning with the current school year. Mr. Hannasch strongly recommends going back to quarter grades as students tend to procrastinate and many found themselves overwhelmed as they neared the end of the semester.

Choice Ready: Mr. Hannasch shared information on the goal for students to depart high school with specific essential skills. These skills are outlined by the state in the North Dakota Choice Ready framework. The state has outlined skills in order for students to be post-secondary ready, workforce ready, or military ready. These goals were reviewed and discussed.

Academic Innovation: Mr. Hannasch shared information on standards-based grading which is a system that grades on a 1, 2, 3, 4 scale. For example, a 1 might indicate that a student just started learning vocab and a 4 would indicate they are advanced at the skill. This grading is a change in philosophy and something that takes time to change.

There is discussion at the state to change graduation requirements to allow for more career pathways: STEM pathway, vocational pathway, military pathway, and college pathway.

He would like to make changes to the final test exemption requirements.

MTSS: Mr. Hannasch plans to add an intervention English class for middle school next year. Ms. Bear would teach the class.

Graduation Requirements: Mr. Hannasch would like to change the requirement for 9th graders to take ND studies to a requirement to take an online elective class. Distance learners struggled with the class plus this would fulfill a Choice Ready requirement.

STEM: The district is actively working to increase students STEM exposure and has technology on hand to do so including Ozobots, Sphero balls, Micro;bits, 3D printers and access to online resources.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Tony Roorda, Board President

Amy Maurer, Business Manager

Approval Date