



DPS/DEA Negotiations Meeting No. 8

Unapproved Minutes

Monday, June 13, 2022; 1:30 p.m.

Professional Learning Lab

Negotiators Present:

Representing the School Board - School Board Vice President Kim Schwartz, School Board Member Michelle Orton, and Assistant Superintendent Keith Harris.

Representing the Dickinson Education Association (DEA) - Dickinson High School Chemistry and Physics Instructor CaraLee Heiser, Lincoln Elementary Fourth Grade Instructor Karl Leggate, and DEA President Shawna Knipp (Chair).

Others Present – Superintendent Dr. Marcus Lewton, Business Manager Stephanie Hunter, Human Resources Manager Meghan Ziegs, Tammy Meschke, Melinda Fridrich, Carla Schaeffer, Ellen Getz, Gregg Bertelsen, Amanda Cross, Amy Kuehl, Desirae Tibor, Shelly Wolberg, Kalindi Brandvik, Chelsea Hartman, Amanda Fisher, Laurae Dykema, Jodi Martin, Brenda Dolyniuk, Nichole Tooz, Leah Campbell, Jill Nelson-Wetzstein, Geoff Greenwood, Marjorie Lehman, Karla Larson, Clarence Hauck, Carolyn Carroll, Jolene Gress, Diana Stroud, Susan Moberg, Kristine Moormann, Susan Pankowski, Lee Mehrer, Alicia Hutzenbiler, Sara Steier, Marilyn Larsen, Kelly Olson, Crystal Hoerner, Brenda Loney, Jackie Glaser, Amy Shobe, Megan Morey, Angela Ernst, and Twila Petersen.

Call to Order – Chair Shawna Knipp called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Review Attitudes for Teacher Negotiations – Chair Knipp asked team members to review the Attitudes for Teacher Negotiations. She reminded team members to be open, honest, and respectful. The discussions should take place with all members at the negotiations table and should be positive and productive for the District's future.

Review and Approve the May 24, 2022, Meeting Minutes – The minutes from the May 24, 2022, meeting had been distributed to the team via email last week. Mrs. Heiser moved to approve the May 24, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Mrs. Schwartz seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approve the May 25, 2022, Meeting Minutes – The minutes from the May 25, 2022, meeting had been distributed to the team via email last week. Chair Knipp requested a correction to the minutes referencing the proposed salary schedule. The minutes reflect that she said, “they (the DEA) feel that most people (teachers) would have an increase of approximately \$300 when typically the teachers have seen an increase of \$1,300.” Chair Knipp explained she had looked at the wrong numbers and the proposal from the Board reflects an average increase of \$843.00 and not \$300.00. She added the minutes were correct; her facts were incorrect. Mr. Leggate moved to approve the May 25, 2022, meeting minutes noting the one clarification. Mrs. Schwartz seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approve the Amended Ground Rules – The amended Ground Rules had been emailed to the team last week. Chair Knipp read the amendment to the Ground Rules. They were amended to change the date on No. 14 as follows, “A target date to complete the 2022-2023 negotiations is June 13, 2022.” Mrs. Heiser moved to amend #14 of the Ground Rules to reflect the June 13 date. Mrs. Schwartz seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Memorandum of Understanding on the Negotiated Lump Sum Offer Agreed to at the May 25, 2022, Teacher Negotiations Meeting – Chair Knipp stated at the May 25, 2022, negotiations meeting the DEA approved and had a Memorandum of Understanding at that time to approve the negotiated agreement of the lump sum offer which was a 0% increase to the base with steps and lanes; a reduction to the index of .015; the addition of Step 16; no sunset clause; the PTO language as proposed on May 4, 2022, with the addition of “principals will either approve or deny a submitted PTO request within 7 contract days” to leaves A.2. in addendum “B”; then the Board was willing to withdraw the proposed changes to the workday. Mrs. Knipp clarified the team needed to sign the memorandum since it was approved at the May 25, 2022, meeting. The parties signed the agreement as presented.

The DEA’s Proposed Counter to the Agreed Upon Lump Sum Offer – Mrs. Heiser explained the DEA representatives had sent an email with a counteroffer. The counteroffer was a change to the matrix of .0125, splitting the difference from their original change of .01 and the Board’s 0.02 (.015), the DEA liked the PTO language as is, the addition of lane 16, and no change to the workday.

Mrs. Orton responded that she and Mrs. Schwartz had an in-depth discussion regarding the DEA’s counteroffer. They recognized the DEA representatives and everyone that has worked on the negotiations team have put in a lot of time. She said it felt like a roller coaster going back and forth with the numbers. Mrs. Orton requested to read some points that they had put a lot of thought into after seven meetings and going into meeting No. 8. At the end of the points, the Board representatives would provide a response to the DEA’s counteroffer.

Mrs. Orton stated “In March, the Board proposed adding 1% to the base. This proposal was in line with the 1% funding increase from the state and resulted in an equitable distribution of new monies to all teachers. In making this offer, the Board acknowledged the deficit associated with the proposal would be covered by the carry-over balance in the general fund.

Also in March, the DEA proposed giving the teachers steps and lanes which would cost the District \$261,989.00 more than the Board’s initial proposal. The Board communicated that they were amenable to the DEA’s proposal of offering steps and lanes if a viable solution to pay for the increased costs could be found.

In May, the Board proposed covering the excess cost of steps and lanes by reducing the index by .020% which would result in an additional \$4,141.00 cost to the Board’s original proposal. In response, the DEA proposed covering the increased costs of steps and lanes by reducing the index by .010% which would result in an additional \$125,855.00 cost to the Board’s original proposal.

In good faith, the Board proposed meeting the DEA in the middle by proposing a ‘final’ compromise of a .015% reduction to the index resulting in an average salary increase of \$843.00 for all teachers. In making this proposal, the Board acknowledged the increased cost of \$67,117.00 to their original proposal. The DEA negotiators agreed to this compromise only to have their membership fail to ratify the agreement.

The DEA currently is requesting the Board consider a proposal of a reduction of .0125% to the index which will result in an increased cost of \$99,221.00 over the Board’s original proposal and an average salary increase of \$896.00 per teacher. \$896.00 represents a greater salary increase than the superintendent or assistant superintendent received. The 180-day classified salary increase is \$720.00.”

Mrs. Schwartz said that the Board negotiators had met and in choosing to move away from the final lump-sum offer and in response to the DEA’s current counteroffer, which was rejected on May 25, the Board offers the following rationale for their decision.

“The District has received some unexpected oil revenue which it will use to cover the additional costs for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, oil revenue is not sustainable revenue, and it is risky to commit it to ongoing expenditures like salary. By committing the oil revenue to salary, the money will not be available to use to defer the anticipated increase to insurance premiums.

And since the oil revenue is not sustainable, agreeing to this now comes with a clear understanding that we will enter into the next negotiations cycle with a potentially larger deficit than we are experiencing this year.

The District also acknowledges that there is a cost to impasse, both financial, and more importantly, to the working culture of our buildings, and most importantly, a potential negative impact to our students. To avoid these costs, the Board is willing to risk a higher budget shortfall.

Thankfully, and appropriately, the topic of trust has come up throughout these negotiations. In particular, the need for trust to be a two-way street has been discussed. The Board believes that by considering the DEA’s offer, it is demonstrating trust that over the next few months, both sides will come together and create a sustainable salary schedule.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the District will attempt to cover some of the increased costs of the DEA’s proposal by not filling some of the current certified and classified positions. This will also place an increased burden on other employees and positions.

At this time, the Board proposes the following last and final counter-proposal: a 0% increase to the base with steps, lanes, and career increments earned; a reduction to the salary indexes of 0.0125%, which will automatically transition to a 0.015% reduction on June 30, 2023, with the addition of Step 16 to the salary schedule; no change to the PTO language that was agreed upon at our May 25, 2022, meeting; and no changes to the current workday language.”

Mrs. Heiser requested an opportunity to take the offer back to the DEA membership. Mrs. Knipp concurred. Mr. Leggate clarified the 0.0125 was for one year with a sunset working on trying to get the (salary) matrix. Mrs. Schwartz agreed and added the Board would need to have a response to the offer before noon on Wednesday, June 15, 2022. She noted there was a School Board Meeting scheduled for that Wednesday afternoon. She added if there was not an agreement then, unfortunately, they would have to go to impasse. Mr. Leggate said that he could see a challenge with getting the membership together with a quorum of members to vote to ratify it. Mrs. Schwartz responded they were coming down to “crunch time”. Mrs. Knipp said she would schedule a DEA meeting for tomorrow, Tuesday. She said they had a tentative agreement for the proposal and would meet with the membership tomorrow. Mrs. Knipp thanked the Board negotiators. The parties signed the tentative agreement on the negotiated lump-sum offer.

Debrief – Human Resources Manager Ziegs summarized the meeting. The May 24, 2022, meeting minutes were approved and the May 25, 2022, meeting minutes were approved with one edit referenced by Mrs. Knipp. An agreement was signed amending No. 14 of the Ground Rules. The Memorandum of Understanding Lump Sum Offer agreed to at the May 25, 2022, Meeting was signed by the parties. The DEA emailed the team on Friday, June 10, 2022, a counter to the agreed-upon lump sum offer. The DEA’s counteroffer was a 0% increase to the base with steps and lanes and career increments earned, a reduction to the salary index of 0.0125%, the addition of Step 16, PTO as agreed upon previously, and no change to the workday. Both parties tentatively agreed to the following: a 0% increase to the base with steps and lanes and career increments earned; a reduction of the salary indexes of 0.0125% which will automatically transition to 0.015% reduction on June 30, 2023; the addition of Step 16 to the salary schedule; no change to the PTO language that was agreed upon at the May 25, 2022, meeting; and no changes to the current workday language.

The DEA membership will meet tomorrow, June 14, 2022, to present for consideration the agreed upon 2022-2023 negotiated agreement for ratification. The school board will be meeting Wednesday, June 15, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. to consider the agreed upon 2022-2023 negotiated agreement for approval.

Mrs. Schwartz thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Adjournment – Chair Knipp declared the meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Dated this _____ day of _____ 2022.

DICKINSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DICKINSON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

By: Board Negotiator

By: DEA Negotiator