

# **Dickinson Public Schools**

Approved School Board Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2017; 5:00 p.m.

Central Administration Office Board Room

The Dickinson Public School Board held a regular meeting on December 11, 2017, at the Central Administration Office. Board members present were: President Sarah Ricks, Vice President Brent Seaks, Board Member Tanya Rude, and Board Member David Wilkie. Absent was Board Member Kim Schwartz. 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 Shawn Leiss, Jefferson Elementary Principal Sara Streeter, Prairie Rose Elementary Principal Sherry Libis, Roosevelt Elementary Principal Henry Mack, RACTC Director Kevin Nelson, James Wosepka, PC, School Board Secretary Twila Petersen, Miss Lexi Olson, Mr. Charlie Bothum, Ms. Krista Bothum, Miss Anna Bothum, Mrs. Laura Tangen, Mr. Del Zubke, Mrs. Tracy Zubke, Mr. Dawson Zubke, Miss Sarah Braun, Miss Kyra Kantor, Miss Jaci Lossie, Mr. Steve Kirch with KX News, and Mr. Iain Woessner from the Dickinson Press

**Call to Order** - Board President Ricks called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

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

**Additional Agenda Items/Removal of Items from Consent Agenda** - Mr. Seaks moved to add Superintendent's Contract Negotiations to the agenda under Business Topics as item "h". Mrs. Rude seconded the motion. Assuming a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**Consent Agenda** - Mr. Wilkie moved to approve the revised agenda including the consent agenda consisting of the minutes from the November 13 regular School Board Meeting, the November 13 School Board Workshop, and the November 30 Special Board Meeting; the bills for November 2017; the financial reports for November 30, 2017; the pledged assets report for November 30, 2017; the personnel reports; a tuition waiver request for a child of Kay Lanfersieck from Dickinson to South Heart; the students/faculty/staff recognitions; and the addition of the Superintendent's Contract Negotiations to the agenda. Mrs. Rude seconded the motion. Assuming a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**Superintendent's Report** – Superintendent Sullivan reported on the following topics that did not require Board action.

**Meetings This Week** – There is a District-wide Technology Committee Meeting on Tuesday, December 12 at 4:00 p.m. There is a School Improvement Leadership Team Meeting on Wednesday, December 13 at 4:00 p.m.

**Concert** – The Dickinson High School Holiday Concert is Tuesday, December 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Dickinson State University Stickney Auditorium.

**No School** – There is no school December 22-January 1 for the Christmas break. School will resume on January 2.

**Smart Goals** – Dr. Sullivan explained he had an initial conversation with the Cabinet members at today's meeting regarding adding SMART Goals to the District's Strategic Plan. There was enthusiastic discussion. This discussion will possibly carry over to this week's School Improvement Leadership Team Meeting.

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**Business Topics**

**Audit Report** – The 2016-2017 audit report had been emailed to the Board members and was available upon request. Mr. James Wosepka, the school district's auditor, addressed the Board. Mr. Wosepka stated there were no misunderstandings nor issues with the management of the audit. His firm has issued a non-modified opinion of the financials. He noted there is a sensitive area regarding pension liability. That fluctuates based on the number of individuals in the plan. The controls are good in the District. He had no recommendations. Mrs. Rude moved to approve the annual audit report for the year ending June 30, 2017. Mr. Seaks seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken on the motion: ayes-4 (Wilkie, Rude, Seaks, Ricks); nays-0; absent-1 (Schwartz). The motion carried unanimously.

**Roughrider Area Career and Technology Center (RACTC) Update** – Available under Supporting Documents is the RACTC November Director's Report and an itinerary for a practicum day. RACTC Director Kevin Nelson also provided to Board members the RACTC estimated expenses, projected income, and course offerings which are available upon request. Mr. Nelson addressed the Board and provided his career background. He noted the health sciences program has the largest participation in the program with over 200 students. There is a partnership with Dickinson Public Schools, the nursing program at Dickinson State University, the local hospital, parents, and students. Mr. Nelson explained some of the RACTC courses, the individuals that teach the courses, the process for negotiating salary and benefits for the teachers, and the reimbursement for the program. Vice President Seaks is the Dickinson Public Board representative on the RACTC governing board. Mr. Seaks inquired if the income received from membership fees, technology fees, student fees, and other fees was sufficient to cover the operating costs. Mr. Nelson explained this year RACTC will deficit spend by approximately \$15,000. Mr. Nelson anticipated next year the budget will be back on track. Mr. Nelson thanked numerous DPS employees for their assistance provided to RACTC. Board members thanked Mr. Nelson for attending the meeting and providing an excellent program for the students. This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

**Southwest Community High School (SWCHS) Report** – Available under Supporting Documents are two reports prepared by Principal Kristy Goodall from SWCHS. Principal Goodall along with two students from SWCHS addressed the Board. Mrs. Goodall explained SWCHS is in its 16<sup>th</sup> year serving students. The staff focus on individualized instruction for each student in an alternative setting with an enriched school experience. The individualized instruction allows staff to keep students academically accountable, as well as holding students accountable for their behavior. On a daily basis, the staff collaboration focuses first on attendance, and then increasing engagement and learning, developing life skills needed to go into the workforce or advance the student's education, and helping students cope with challenges and problems.

The current enrollment at SWCHS is 27 students. There is a waiting list of 15 or more students. SWCHS students have a variety of risk factors. Those factors may include dropping out due to loss of credit, students who are parents and need an alternative setting or schedule, and/or students who may not fit into the traditional high school mold socially. Mrs. Goodall explained the application and registration process for the students. Students are served by several teachers offering over 50 courses throughout a school year. Due to SWCHS moving to the Hagen building, they can now also have physical education on the premises. The teachers are very dedicated and form important relationships with the students.

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**Southwest Community High School (SWCHS) Report (cont.)**

SWCHS recently switched to a positive attendance model where credit is earned and tied to student performance and competency, more so than to a strict, seat-time model. Absenteeism this year is at 9% which is a drop from 17% in a previous year.

Miss Jacie Lossie is a senior at SWCHS. She explained how the alternative setting has helped her complete her junior and senior credits. Counselor Whitney Fong has been instrumental in helping Jacie prepare for college and scholarship applications.

Miss Kyra Kantor is a junior at SWCHS. She explained SWCHS has changed her life. If it was not for SWCHS, she would have dropped out of school. She now realizes the opportunities for her future and learned skills to help with her reading and comprehension.

Mrs. Goodall explained a community work force program with a veterinarian and the Dickinson Police Department. She is predicting the largest graduation class this May. Board members thanked Mrs. Goodall and the two students for attending the meeting and sharing their information. This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

**Principal Reports** – Prairie Rose Elementary Principal Sherry Libis and two 4<sup>th</sup> graders addressed the Board. Ms. Libis explained the students decided they wanted to share with the Board members information regarding school-wide goals and classroom goals. The school-wide goal that was established is that students will demonstrate growth in their reading and math scores. The classroom goals help to achieve the school-wide goals. Students have their own personal goals and partner with other students to be accountable for their goals.

Mr. Charlie Bothum and Mr. Dawson Zubke, both 4<sup>th</sup> graders at Prairie Rose, shared information from their leadership binders explaining each section in the binder. The sections included the student's favorite things; favorite places; how well they think they do listening in class; spelling expectations; writing standard rubric; scores in the NWEA testing from fall, winter, and spring; jobs available in the classroom or in the school; and a celebration section. The two students read the mission statement for their classroom.

President Ricks thanked the students for the information and noted there was a lot of work involved in tracking all that they are doing in school and inquired if the students felt it was worth it. Mr. Bothum explained it helped the students be successful. Vice President Seaks also thanked the students and inquired what was the job most students applied for. Mr. Zubke thought the mailroom and classroom librarian jobs were the ones most pursued. Board members expressed their appreciation for the great presentation.

Dickinson High School (DHS) Principal Ron Dockter and two students from DHS addressed the Board. Mr. Dockter explained the two students would be sharing information regarding community involvement and partnership for a program the students are participating.

Miss Sarah Braun is a junior at DHS and Miss Lexi Olson is a senior at DHS. Both students are involved in the early childhood education program supported by courses through DHS in partnership with area preschools, the Early Childhood Center, and other community organizations focused on early

**Principal Reports (cont.)**

childhood education. The two DHS students explained the importance of stimulating young minds and gave several examples. The students had many one-on-one bonding opportunities with the children and bonded with the families. In the courses they took, the students learned how to interact with the children, provide positive behavioral support, and how to build relationships. A PowerPoint slideshow was presented to the Board and audience. The slideshow was a glimpse of the places the DHS students visited and worked at for the exponential learning program. The slideshow also explained the number of children at the locations and the number of hours the students were working with the children.

Mr. Dockter tied the discussion into the District's strategic plan and how it relates directly to the strategic plan, AdvancED, and school improvement.

Mr. Dockter recognized some faculty from Dickinson High School. Dickinson High School Social Studies Instructor Dave Michaelson will be inducted into the Close-Up Hall of Fame spring 2018 in Washington, D.C. He is only the fourth teacher to receive this honor. Dickinson High School Social Studies Instructor James Fahy has been selected as a member of the NASSP Student Leadership Advisory Committee by the NASSP Board of Directors. This is a two-year term from November 2017 through October 2019. Mr. Fahy's first meeting will be in Washington, D.C. January 24-26. While there, Mr. Fahy will participate in an educational briefing hosted by NASSP on Capitol Hill. Dickinson High School Technology Education Instructor Susan Haider has received the *Program Excellence Award* for the 2017-2018 school year. This award is sponsored by the International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) and recognizes outstanding Technology Education programs in each state and several foreign countries. Mrs. Haider will be presented the award in Atlanta, GA April 2018. The selection committee made this selection based on a proven record of a standards-driven program geared towards a student-centered model.

This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested on the reports from the schools.

**Budget Input and Development Committee Update** – The Budget Committee met on November 30. A copy of the minutes is available on the website under the District-wide Meeting Minutes link. President Ricks and Vice President Seaks are Board representatives on this committee. Vice President Seaks noted the Budget Committee authorized the administration to move forward with the three positions identified by the needs assessment and also with the hiring of certified and classified staff for the reopening of Berg. This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

**Bonding Capacity** – At last month's Budget Committee Meeting, there was a discussion about possibly increasing bonding capacity from 5% to 10%. Superintendent Sullivan addressed the Board and explained the bonding capacity of Dickinson Public Schools is 5% of its taxable valuation. This could be increased from 5% to 10% through a vote from the community requiring a simple majority for passage. He explained the current bonding has approximately \$17 million in availability for future bonds.

Dr. Sullivan explained the birth rates at the hospital continue to be good with the hospital administration projecting record-breaking births again this year. Moving forward, when these children start attending kindergarten, it will put pressure on the elementary schools. Even with the reopening at Berg, Superintendent Sullivan advised the Board another elementary school may be needed in

**Bonding Capacity (cont.)**

approximately 5-7 years. A new elementary school could be built for \$17 million; however, then there would not be funds available to address the growing enrollment at the high school. The Budget Committee felt this was a topic that should be discussed by the entire Board weighing in pros and cons and possibly moving forward. Dr. Sullivan explained if the Board would choose to move forward with the bonding capacity, it would require a great deal of time. This would be very similar to what the District went through with the bonding for Dickinson Middle School. The Board and administration at that time reached out to the community and connected with the community in various forums and through various mechanisms to provide information and also educate the community. The community would need to be educated on the reason why the Board was making the request. Vice President Seaks agreed that educating the community would be important so that they understood why it was needed. Mr. Seaks inquired what would be a good amount of time to educate in preparation for the community vote on the bonding capacity. Superintendent Sullivan responded there would be enough time if this was placed on the June ballot. There are no set timelines. He recommended starting no later than February to provide ample time and to be thorough in communicating and educating and explaining to the public.

President Ricks noted there is a great deal happening in the District. The District is preparing for the AdvancED visitation, conversations continue about the future of Dickinson High School, and there will be a busy hiring season. She inquired if there were any concerns from the administration about the capacity to also take this on right now. Superintendent Sullivan responded there had not been a discussion at the Cabinet level. That could be done at its January meeting. Dr. Sullivan explained he has a lot of confidence in his Cabinet members.

Mrs. Rude inquired if the District could use its remaining eight mills to raise funds without having to go to the public for a vote. Business Manager Anderson responded that the District could but it would probably exhaust the entire building fund levy. He added two mills generates approximately \$380,000. Mrs. Rude inquired if the eight mills could be used to build a tech center or whatever they end up doing for the high school. Mr. Anderson responded that it could be used for that. He added the Board would in essence pass a resolution to borrow the funds and dedicate the funds from the building fund levy that is already being levied to pay the debt service on that debt. He clarified it would basically give the school district the authority to borrow funds without having a vote from the community. There are various mechanisms to borrow dollars of the building fund levy without a vote.

Vice President Seaks explained he felt the bonding capacity was similar to an example of having a credit card limit of \$5,000. The credit card company could decide to extend the limit to \$10,000. Just because there is a limit of \$10,000 does not mean \$10,000 has to be spent. It was there if it was needed. Increasing the bonding limit would give the District the ability to have that option at some point. He noted it would still need to be voted again by the community to get permission. Mrs. Rude added there is a capacity of 5% of total assessed valuation right now and if the District was asking the community to raise it to 10%, that is not necessarily going to be a debt to the taxpayer. Eventually if the mills would be used to construct a building, that would require a vote from the community as it would be assessed onto the tax bill. Mr. Anderson explained if it would become necessary in the future to construct a new high school or whatever building might be needed, right now the District would not be able to do that. Extending the bonding capacity would allow the authority for the School Board to request the funds from the public.

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**Bonding Capacity (cont.)**

Mrs. Rude felt the purpose for the funds should be established before asking for an extension of the bonding capacity. President Ricks responded that the timing would be now to ask the public. There are two uncertainties; the bonding capacity is one and the bond itself is the second. Both of those steps require a vote from the community. If the first part is done now and the District is under a time crunch later, it would not have to tackle both issues at the same time. Mr. Anderson added that if the voters do not approve the increase in the bonding capacity it will make it easier for the District to know how many funds it has available to address the challenges. The community is involved right now. They have seen the middle school and seen the enrollment projections. There have been public forums regarding redistricting. The community has been educated about the enrollment demands.

This agenda item was informational only. No action was requested.

**Early Resignation Incentive Applications** – Mrs. Marilyn Dukart and Mrs. Susan Bogner, both third grade instructors at Roosevelt Elementary, have submitted their resignation to receive the early resignation incentive. Mrs. Dukart has been an instructor in the District for the past 18 years. Mrs. Bogner has been an instructor in the District for the past 27 years. The administrative recommendation was to approve the early resignation incentive applications. Action was requested. Mrs. Rude moved to approve the early resignation incentive for Marilyn Dukart and Susan Bogner, both third grade instructors at Roosevelt Elementary, with an effective date of May 28, 2018. Mr. Seaks seconded the motion. Assuming a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**Superintendent's Contract Negotiations** - Mr. Seaks moved to authorize School Board President Sarah Ricks to negotiate with the superintendent over the terms of a contract beginning on July 1, 2018. Mr. Wilkie seconded the motion. Assuming a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**Other** – There were no other topics for discussion.

**Adjournment** – At 6:35 p.m., President Ricks declared the meeting adjourned.

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Sarah Ricks, Board President

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Kent Anderson, Business Manager

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Twila Petersen, Secretary