



Dickinson Education Association / Dickinson Public School Board
Negotiations Meeting No. 2
Minutes
Tuesday, May 2, 2023; 5:30 p.m.
Professional Learning Lab

Negotiators Present:

Representing the School Board - School Board President Michelle Orton and School Board Vice President Kim Schwartz.

Representing the Dickinson Education Association (DEA) - Dickinson Education Association President Shawna Knipp, Dickinson High School Chemistry and Physics Instructor CaraLee Heiser, Lincoln Elementary Fourth Grade Instructor Karl Leggate, Dickinson Middle School Social Studies Instructor Alyssa Wagner, and Dickinson Middle School Science Instructor Gretchen Flatz.

Resource Individuals - Superintendent Dr. Marcus Lewton and Business Manager Stephanie Hunter.

Others Present – Human Resources Manager Meghan Ziegs, Assistant Superintendent Keith Harris, Diana Stroud, Lee Mehrer, Naomi Thorson, Susan Pankowski, Carolyn Carroll, Nichole Tooz, Donna Abrahamson, Tammy Meschke, Natalie Monarrez, Chelsea Hartman, William Hultberg, Angela Ernst, Shelly Wolberg, Brenda Loney, Marjorie Lehman, Rachel Burns, Amy Sherer, Crystal Hoerner, and Twila Petersen.

Call to Order – Dickinson Education Association President Shawna Knipp, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approve the March 7, 2023, Teacher Negotiations Meeting Minutes – Mrs. Heiser moved to approve the March 7, 2023, Teacher Negotiations Meeting minutes as presented. Mrs. Schwartz seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken on the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The minutes were signed by the parties.

Ground Rules

Review No. 9, Recorder – Chair Knipp noted the Ground Rules were approved and signed on March 7, 2023. At that time, it was agreed to review No. 9 at the next meeting. Mrs. Schwartz said the Board representatives wished to take out the following language in No. 9 of the Ground Rules; ~~After five meetings, the cost of the recorder will be shared equally by both teams.~~ Both parties agreed with this request.

Potentially Amend Completion Date - Chair Knipp referenced the May 5, 2023, completion target date for the teacher negotiations in No. 14 of the Ground Rules. She asked if the team wished to amend that date. Mrs. Schwartz proposed May 30, 2023, as a target date. Both parties agreed to the new completion date. The amended Ground Rules were signed by the parties.

Financial Update – Business Manager Hunter distributed a handout with Finance Stats with updated scenarios. Mrs. Hunter stated the updated scenarios reflected the North Dakota Legislature approving a 4% increase for the per pupil amount for the 2023-2024 school year and another 4% increase per pupil amount for the second year of the biennium. She also made an adjustment to the Professional-Current Schedule section to correct a previous unintentional error identified by the teacher negotiators. Mrs. Hunter thanked the teacher negotiators for revealing the information and added that Mr. Leggate reviewed each formula and made sure they were accurate and corresponded with the numbers provided on the handout. Mrs. Hunter noted the reverse side of the handout listed the amount budgeted for the 4% increase for each year of the biennium. It was broken down by professionals, administrators, and classified. Mrs. Hunter asked if there were any questions. No questions were noted.

Topics for Discussions – On behalf of the teacher negotiators, Mrs. Heiser requested the topic of salaries. On behalf of the Board negotiators, Mrs. Schwartz requested salaries and a two-year agreement. There were no other topics proposed by either party.

Prioritize Topics for Discussion – On behalf of the teacher negotiators, Mrs. Heiser proposed negotiating salaries first and then the two-year agreement. Mrs. Schwartz concurred. Chair Knipp suggested adding the topic of grammar and language cleanup of the agreement. She added this might be contingent on a two-year contract. Mrs. Schwartz concurred.

Salaries – Mrs. Heiser stated the DEA negotiators had submitted a proposal on Sunday, April 30, 2023. She noted the DEA polled their membership and provided a survey to receive input on which schedule the membership liked and did not like and the justification for their responses. Mrs. Heiser stated from the results, the membership would like to keep the current schedule for one more year. The most common comment was to allow teachers to finish up their lane changes. She reiterated they would like to keep the current salary schedule for one more year. Mrs. Heiser added they would like to negotiate the current salary schedule and make changes to the salary schedule to include the following: increasing the base by 2.5% from \$37,295.00 to \$38,227.00 and changing the language in II. Salary, B. Graduate Hours for year 2 and item II. Salary, D. Vertical Movement, ~~Maximum vertical movement on the salary schedule is one step per year. There are no maximum movement limits on the salary schedule after moving from the 2023-2024 schedule.~~ Mr. Leggate referenced the second year of the biennium, the membership that responded to the poll would like option 1 with a few adjustments to it. One of the concerns was if there was a good year, would the teachers be limited to one step? Could a teacher potentially do two steps since a step is not necessarily a year? Mrs. Schwartz requested on behalf of the Board negotiators an opportunity to caucus for a couple of minutes.

At 5:46, the meeting recessed to caucus. At 5:47 p.m., Chair Knipp reconvened the meeting.

Mr. Leggate continued his explanation of the DEA's proposal. Option 1 was the top preference, but individuals questioned some of the language, so they need to resurvey it for the purpose of discussion. He said they want to make sure they are in agreement with it. Mrs. Heiser said there was an additional change included in the DEA's proposal in reference to the career increments. Some teachers are due their career increments this year because they did not receive it last year on the current schedule. The DEA negotiators would like those individuals to be able to receive their career increment. Additionally, the DEA negotiators would like those that receive the career increment on the off year to receive one-half of their career increment reflected in the changes. Mr. Leggate said the main point was if they were able to negotiate the first year and work on the second year.

Mrs. Schwartz requested an opportunity to caucus. At 5:49 p.m., the meeting recessed to caucus. At 6:02 p.m., Chair Knipp reconvened the meeting.

On behalf of the Board negotiators, Mrs. Schwartz addressed the team. She thanked the DEA negotiators for the substantial amount of time and energy dedicated over the past six months to get the team to where they were today. Mrs. Schwartz said she and Mrs. Orton appreciated the willingness of the DEA to explore options to secure the financial solvency of Dickinson Public Schools. Additionally, the Board negotiators were grateful for their assistance every two years. She also thanked the DEA negotiators for preparing and presenting the current offer.

Mrs. Schwartz stated resources are limited and the District cannot pay everyone what they wish they could; therefore, the Board negotiators could not accept the DEA's offer. Mrs. Schwartz stated the DEA's offer was \$1,406,952.00 which is \$640,463.00 over the \$766,489.00 that the District has available to allocate towards professional staff salaries.

On behalf of the Board negotiators, Mrs. Schwartz stated they would like to "offer .5% on the base wage on the 2022-2023 salary schedule for the 2023-2024 school year; provide step and lane movement for qualifying staff; grant career increments of 5% of the BS+0 cell to all teachers who qualify for career increments in the 2023-2025 biennium; transition to the Option 1 salary schedule for the 2024-2025 school year; grant double steps and regular lanes changes on the new schedule for qualifying employees; and provide career increments of \$775.00 per year for employees qualifying for step 26 or higher in lanes BS+32 to MS+16." Mrs. Schwartz stated the Board (Negotiator's) offer would cost the District \$768,354.00 for the 2023-2024 year and \$819,838.00 for the 2024-2025 school year. This is based off of the Business Office's projections.

Mrs. Schwartz summarized the proposal. The Board negotiators were offering a two-year contract. The teachers would remain on the salary schedule for one more year. In year two, the teachers would have more than one step. The Board Negotiator's offer would address Mr. Leggate's concerns regarding career increments. The Board Negotiator's proposal would fall within the financial restraints that have been communicated with the teachers over the past several months.

Mr. Leggate requested to clarify, on Option 1 with the double steps, those individuals getting a career increment could get a double increment. Business Manager Hunter responded when she ran the numbers, those individuals at step 25, would move two steps and move to the next one and get a career increment for (step) 26 and a career increment for (step) 27.

Mrs. Orton distributed the Board Negotiator's proposal to the team.

Mr. Leggate inquired regarding year one, the Board Negotiator's counteroffer was .5% to the base plus steps and lanes. He noted the handout reflected \$733,396.00. He wanted to confirm that was accurate. Mrs. Hunter responded in the proposal from the Board Negotiator's, she was instructed to run the numbers when providing career increments for every teacher. If the teacher was eligible for career increments in the 2023-2024 school year, the individual could also get it (a career increment) in the 2024-2025 year if they were eligible. Mrs. Hunter referenced the DEA's proposal where they were recommending one-half of the amount on the off years. She said she ran full career increments in the full biennium adding it would be granted next year.

Mrs. Heiser requested an opportunity to caucus. At 6:08 p.m., the meeting recessed to caucus. At 6:32 p.m., Chair Knipp reconvened the meeting.

Mrs. Heiser thanked the Board negotiators for the proposal. The DEA negotiators requested to take the proposal back to the membership at a meeting tentatively scheduled for Monday. That will provide an opportunity to re-poll the membership and get a survey out in the next one or two days. Mrs. Schwartz agreed to the request.

Superintendent Dr. Lewton addressed the Chair and noted the grammar and language cleanup would need to wait pending a decision if it would be a two-year agreement.

Build Agenda for Third Meeting – Chair Knipp said the agenda for the next meeting would include reviewing and approving the minutes from tonight's meeting. The next meeting would be the last meeting to add topics for discussion. The team would continue the discussion on the topics, rationale, and present proposals. Also on the agenda would be the scheduling of the fourth meeting.

Schedule the Third Meeting – The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at the Professional Learning Lab.

Debrief – Human Resources Manager Ziegs summarized today's meeting. The minutes from the March 7, 2023, meeting were approved and signed by both parties. The Ground Rules were amended to reflect the removal of the cost of the recorder shared equally by both parties after the fifth meeting and also extend the date for completion of the negotiations to May 30, 2023. The amended Ground Rules were signed by the parties.

The financials were presented to the team by Business Manager Hunter. The Board presented new topics for discussion; (salaries), a two-year agreement, and the language cleanup. The DEA presented one topic which was salaries. The topics for discussion were prioritized. As per the Ground Rules, there was one more meeting to add new topics.

Both the negotiators for the DEA and the Board shared proposals. The next meeting has been scheduled.

Adjournment – Chair Knipp declared the meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Dated this 16th day of May 2023.

DICKINSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS


By: Board Negotiator

DICKINSON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION


By: DEA Negotiator