

**GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD  
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
April 14, 2020**

NOTE: Per Governor Doug Burgum's executive order, all North Dakota school districts, including Grand Forks Public Schools, are closed until further notice. This is a precautionary measure against the transmission of COVID-19. This meeting was held via Zoom.

The Grand Forks School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, April 14, 2020, with Bill Palmiscno presiding.

**Board Members Present:**

Bill Palmiscno, President/Voting Member  
Amber Flynn, Vice President/Voting Member  
Doug Carpenter, Voting Member  
Jacqueline Hoffarth, Voting Member  
Eric Lunn, Voting Member  
Jeff Manley, Voting Member  
Shannon Mikula, Voting Member  
Cynthia Shabb, Voting Member (via phone)  
Matt Spivey, Voting Member

**Student Board Members Present:**

Riley Thoreson, Non-voting Member  
Oliver Wolfe, Non-voting Member

**Board Members Absent:**

None

**Student Board Members Absent:**

None.

**Others Present:**

Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools  
Scott J. Berge, Business Manager  
Jody Thompson, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Education  
Catherine Gillach, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education  
Chris Arnold, Director of Buildings & Grounds  
Melissa Buchhop, Vice President, Grand Forks Education Association  
Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary

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**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda.** It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Lunn to move the Finance Committee Report to the action items and approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

**Celebrating Success.** Trevor Lennon, Business Education Teacher at Grand Forks Central High School, was recognized as the Certified Employee of the Quarter. Ken Carlson, Print Shop Supervisor, was recognized as the Classified Employee of the Quarter.

**Approval of Minutes.** It was moved by Hoffarth and seconded by Carpenter to approve the March 17 and March 23, 2020, minutes as written. Motion carried unanimously.

**Citizen Comments (non-agenda items).** None.

**Review School Board Norms.** Palmiscno drew to the board's attention the school board norms and requested board members follow them.

**Facilities Taskforce Update.** Dr. Brenner reported that pursuant to a phone conversation with Tom Weber, Senior Business Consultant from SilogIQ, about the next steps with the

Facilities Taskforce, it was determined based on solicited feedback from the Taskforce members that the Taskforce will be meeting weekly on Thursday evenings from 6:00-7:30 p.m. going forward. Topics of conversation for future meetings were highlighted. Additionally, the Core Planning Team will reinstate its meetings beginning on Tuesday, April 14 at 11:00 a.m. with subsequent follow-up meetings every Monday at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.

**Finance Committee Report: Financial Update, Construction Projects Update, Mold and Radon Abatement at West Elementary School.** Flynn reported on the April 2, 2020, Finance Committee Report.

Berge reported on the financial update that was discussed at the meeting. He said that with everything going on with COVID-19, oil prices, economic conditions with agriculture and retail, and the potential for a referendum vote next year, it was pretty hard to dial into a specific long-range financial plan. Likely, the district's general fund balance at the end of June will be in the \$10M range which during the school year is less than one month's expenditures. This will result in very tight operating conditions going forward and any decision to increase services or construction type expenditures will be met with the challenge of reducing expenses in an equal or greater amount in other areas. The auditors consider a healthy fund balance to be 15-20% of our operating expenses, which run a little over \$100M. The variety of construction expenditures in the last two years and what is foreseen to be ongoing; the general fund balance has taken a hit. Even with economic conditions improving and making improvements to operations, growing the general fund balance back to a healthy balance will take four to eight years.

Berge explained the utilization of the construction services budget through March 31 and reported that it will be fully used during this fiscal year. Some projects will be split between this fiscal year and next fiscal year. Some projects will not be able to be completed due to budgetary constraints.

Arnold reported on construction projects that are in progress. Some projects that are inside the

schools could be started early if the schools remain closed. He expects that by the end of the month mold remediation throughout the entire district will be completed.

Regarding mold and radon abatement at West Elementary School, Arnold reported that he commissioned EAPC Architects Engineers and Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. (AE2S) to study and help develop solutions to address relative humidity, water, and radon issues at West Elementary School. West was part of a district-wide radon test that was completed in March by the State of North Dakota and was the one campus with concerning levels. All grade level areas were at or exceed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) action level. Resolving radon issues requires fresh air to be introduced into the environment. Unfortunately, West's HVAC system does not operate as designed and parts are no longer manufactured or supported due to its age. The total expenditures for moisture mitigation, HVAC replacement, and mold and radon abatement would be slightly less than \$1.5 million. It was noted that the HVAC replacement would still not provide air conditioning.

Derrick Lunski from EAPC reported on their observations at West, the existing HVAC system, code violations, and how to address the radon issue through the repair/replacement of the HVAC system.

Justin Otto, the Radon Coordinator for the State of North Dakota, discussed via telephone the State's radon program and testing methodology and their observations and test results at West.

Jay Kleven from AE2S reported on their site observations at West, how water gets into the exterior walls and buildings, and how it can be mitigated.

The estimated cost to complete repair/replacement of the HVAC system and water mitigation work is approximately \$1,486,000. Discussion continued about the possibility of recouping some of the water mitigation costs through FEMA, but the work cannot be started before FEMA approval is received. Because of the COVID-19 issues and

social distancing, site visits cannot be completed.

Palmiscno and Flynn reported the committee's recommendation is to not reopen West Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year and to forward this new information to the Facilities Taskforce so that it can be included in their overall planning process and subsequent facilities recommendation to the school board.

Citizen comments were received from Jennifer Martin, 2204 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Grand Forks, and Arlene O'Halloran, 1504 Cherry Street, Grand Forks.

It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Carpenter to accept the Finance Committee recommendation to not reopen West Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year and to forward this new information to the Facilities Taskforce so that it can be included in their overall planning process and subsequent facilities recommendation to the school board. Motion carried unanimously.

**Consent Agenda.** It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Spivey to approve the consent agenda as follows: Appointments of Aaron Cummings (salary \$52,183), Elizabeth Evans (salary \$44,810), Claire Folson (salary \$42,445), Nichole Michaud (salary \$46,273), Jenna Pederson (salary \$46,273), Hannah Vonasek (salary \$44,358), and Kaydra Weigel (salary \$42,445) effective August 18, 2020; Open Enrollment Applications as presented; and Resignations of Melinda Blakeman, Maire Brandenburg, Nichole Cappon, Jayne Flaagan, Tara Gregory, Britni Hart, Stephanie Krueger, Allyson Linder, Carissa Olson, Haley Olson, Hailey Ryan, and Maggie Willyard effective May 29, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

**Policy Review Committee Report: First and Second Readings and Rescinding of Policies.**

Shabb reported on the April 6, 2020, Policy Review Committee meeting at which the committee reviewed a summary of the action taken and action yet to be taken on proposed policies and board regulations. Listed below are the following policies which are forwarded to the board for their appropriate reading:

1. Policy BDAB-Savings Clause. The first reading as written was completed on March 23, 2020. The recommendation is to complete the second reading of Policy BDAB-Savings Clause as written and adopt it as the official policy of the district.
2. Policy BDAA-Contracts Supersede Policy and Regulations. The first reading as written was completed on March 23, 2020. The recommendation is to complete the second reading of Policy BDAA-Contracts Supersede Policy and Regulations as written and adopt it as the official policy of the district.
3. Policy DBA-Procedure for Adoption Board Policy. This policy will replace the current Policy 8600-Adoption and Amendment of Policies and Regulations. The first reading with a revision was completed on March 23, 2020. The revision was to add the word "full" so the statement on page one, paragraph 7 reads "2/3rds majority of the full Board..." is considered substantive; therefore the policy needs to be resubmitted for a new first reading. The recommendation is to complete a new first reading of Policy BDA-Procedure for Adopting Board with a revision to add the word "full" so the statement on page one, paragraph 7 reads "2/3rds majority of the full Board..."
4. Board Regulation BDA-BR-Procedure for Development of Board Policy. Following the second reading and adoption of Policy CBAA-Administration Regulations is completed, this board regulation will be recommended to read and adopt as written.
5. Policy CBAA-Administrative Regulations. This policy will replace the current Policy 8620-Formulation of Administrative Regulations. The first reading as written was completed on March 23, 2020. The recommendation is to complete the second reading of Policy CBAA-Administrative Regulations as written and adopt it as the official policy of the district.
6. Policy 8620-Formulation of Administrative Regulations. Presuming the second reading and adoption of Policy CBAA-Administration Regulations is completed; the recommendation is to rescind Policy

- 8620-Formulation of Administrative Regulations which has been replaced by Policy CBAA.
7. Policy 1001-School Calendar. This policy is not formatted to the NDSBA template at this time so that it can be expedited to ensure the approved district calendar is compliant with policy. The first reading as revised was completed on March 23, 2020. The revisions were: rename the policy from School Calendar to District Calendar, change all references from school calendar to district calendar, change the definition of Early Release Dates from a 1:30 p.m. dismissal to a 1:00 p.m. and/or 1:30 p.m. dismissal, and eliminate the Late Start Dates definition. Due to clerical oversight, an additional minor revision is recommended: to eliminate the words "and late start" in section II. Policy Statement, paragraph 3. The recommendation is to complete the second reading of Policy 1001-School Calendar with an additional revision to eliminate the words "and late start" in section II. Policy Statement, paragraph 3 and to adopt it as the official policy of the district.
  8. Policy 4300-Early Retirement of Professional Staff Members. This policy is not formatted to the NDSBA template because the policy will sunset. The first reading as revised was completed on March 23, 2020. The revisions were: to add "Provision 6. The early retirement payment(s) for professional staff members who have retired early under the provisions of this policy and who have been re-hired in a contracted position will be suspended. Upon separation of employment the payment(s) will be reinstated." and to add "Provision 11. This policy will terminate at the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year." Additional action was taken to allow the administration to update the list of staff on pages 3 and 4 of the policy that are eligible for early retirement. The titles in the list have been updated and the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, Director of Head Start, Assistant Director of Special Education, Elementary Associate Principals, and Audiologists added. The addition of additional positions is considered substantive; therefore the policy needs to be resubmitted for a new first reading. The recommendation is to complete a new first reading of Policy 4300-Early Retirement of Professional Staff Members with the revisions to add "Provision 6. The early retirement payment(s) for professional staff members who have retired early under the provisions of this policy and who have been re-hired in a contracted position will be suspended. Upon separation of employment the payment(s) will be reinstated." and to add "Provision 11. This policy will terminate at the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year." and with the additional revisions to update the titles of eligible professional staff, eliminate two positions, and add the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education, Director of Head Start, Assistant Director of Special Education, Elementary Associate Principals, and Audiologists to the list of eligible professional staff. It was agreed by consensus that the Chief Academic Officer was also added to the list of eligible professional staff.
  9. Policy AAC-Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy. This policy will replace current Policies 4660, 4661, 4662, 4663, 5660, and 5662 will be recommended to be rescinded upon adoption of Policy BDA and Board Regulation AAC-BR. The first reading as written was completed March 23, 2020, with referral back to the NDSBA about whether "sexual orientation" may be added to their required policy template. The policy is further revised to add "sexual orientation" to the list of conditions in paragraph 1 and to add the definition "Sexual Orientation is the sex and gender of those to whom one is sexually attracted." The revisions are considered substantive; therefore the policy needs to be resubmitted for a new first reading. The recommendation is to complete a new first reading of Policy AAC – Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy with the revisions to add "sexual orientation" to the list of conditions in paragraph 1 and to add the definition "Sexual Orientation is the sex and gender of those to whom one is sexually attracted."

10. Policy ACEA-Bullying Policy. This policy is a revision of the current Policy 5351. The first reading as written was completed on March 23, 2020. The recommendation is to complete the second reading of Policy ACEA-Bullying Policy as written and to adopt it as the official policy of the district.
11. Policy 5351-Bullying. Presuming the second reading and adoption of Policy ACEA-Bullying Policy is completed; the recommendation is to rescind Policy 5351-Bullying which has been replaced by Policy ACEA.
12. Board Regulations AAC-BR-Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure. Policy. Policy BDA authorizes the board to adopt board regulations with one reading. The recommendation is to read AAC-BR – Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure as written and adopt it as the official board regulation of the district.
13. Policy BDBB-Retaining an Attorney. The first reading as written was completed on March 23, 2020. The recommendation is to complete the second reading of Policy BDBB-Retaining an Attorney as written and adopt it as the official policy of the district.

As a result of discussions with Jeff Gibson, Senior Program Coordinator for LGBTQ+/XCultural Programming at the University of North Dakota, Shabb recommended the following additional changes to Policy AAC-Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy:

1. To change the definition of sexual orientation to “a person’s sexual identity in relation to the gender to whom one is sexually, emotionally, and romantically attracted.”
2. To add “gender expression” to the list of protected conditions.
3. To add a definition of gender expression as “the way in which a person expresses their gender identity through appearance, dress, and behavior.”

Citizen comments in favor of the additional changes were received from Sarah Galbraith, Grand Forks; Gretta Gabrielson, 146, Columbia Court, Grand Forks; Maura Ferguson, 1220 Cherry Street, Grand Forks; Jane Croeker, 1010

Campbell Drive, Grand Forks; and Fayme Stringer Henry.

It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Carpenter to complete the second reading of Policy BDAB-Savings Clause, Policy BDAA-Contracts Supersede Policy and Regulations, and Policy CBAA-Administrative Regulations, Policy 1001-School Calendar, Policy ACEA-Bullying Policy, and Policy BDBB-Retaining at Attorney, and adopt each policy as an official policy of the district. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Carpenter to complete the first reading of Policy BDA-Procedure for Adopting Board Policy and Policy 4300-Early Retirement of Professional Staff Members. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Flynn to send Policy AAC-Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment back to the committee. Motion carried unanimously.

It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Flynn to rescind Policy 8620-Formulation of Administrative Regulations and Policy 5351-Bullying. Motion carried unanimously.

**Employee Compensation through May 15, 2020.** Berge reported that since Governor Burgum’s directive to close schools, all classified staff have been paid through today. He recommended the continuation of pay of all regularly scheduled hours for classified staff through May 15, 2020, and that this topic is revisited at the May 11 board meeting.

It was moved by Shabb and seconded by Lunn to approve the administrative recommendation to pay classified staff all regularly scheduled hours through May 16, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

**Appointment of Schroeder Middle School Principal.** Gillach reported on the interview process for this position, the background of candidate David Nowatzki, and the administration’s recommendation to hire him.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Carpenter to appoint Mr. David Nowatzki as principal at Elroy Schroeder Middle School for

the 2020-2021 school year with an annual salary of \$128,526. Motion carried unanimously.

**Announcements.** Palmiscno announced the conference for school board members with State Superintendent Baesler on April 15, 2020, is posted as a special meeting of the board.

**Board Requests for Future Consideration.**

**School Board Norms - How Did We Do?**

Palmiscno reported the board did a fine job in following its norms.

**Adjournment.** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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Bill Palmiscno, President

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Scott J. Berge, Business Manager