

**GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD  
TEACHER CONTRACT BARGAINING COMMITTEE  
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 25, 2019**

A meeting of the Grand Forks School Board Teacher Contract Bargaining Committee was held on Thursday, April 25, 2019, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with Amber Flynn presiding.

**Board Team Members Present:** Doug Carpenter, Amber Flynn, Jacqueline Hoffarth, Shannon Mikula, Dr. Terry Brenner, Scott J. Berge, and Tracy Abentroth.

**Board Team Members Absent:** None.

**GFEA Team Members Present:** Melissa Buchhop, Dawn Mord, Penny Tandeski, and Tom Young.

**GFEA Team Members Absent:** Amanda Weston Caillier.

**Others Present.** Executive Secretary Cindy Johnson.

**Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Teacher Contract Bargaining Session.** Board Team Leader Amber Flynn served as chairperson of this bargaining session.

**Approval of Minutes.** It was moved by Carpenter and seconded by Buchhop to approve the minutes of April 9, 2019, as written. Motion carried with all voting members present voting aye. Absent: Weston Caillier.

**Discussion of Overview of District Finances.** Neither team had any comments regarding this agenda topic.

**Discussion of Exchanged Topics for Discussion.** The Board Team requested a caucus. It was moved by Mikula and seconded by Carpenter to convene into executive session to discuss negotiating strategies as permitted by

NDCC sections 15.1-16-22 and 44-04-19.1(9). The executive session was held from 5:38 p.m. to 6:07 p.m.

Included in the meeting materials at the request of the GFEA Team were the District's Blackout Calendars from the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years, a 2018-2019 ranking of career earnings for Dickinson, Jamestown, Minot, Fargo, Bismarck, West Fargo, Mandan, Grand Forks, and Devils Lake school districts, a 10-year comparison of career earnings for Fargo, Bismarck, West Fargo, Minot and Grand Forks school districts, and 2018-2019 salary schedules for Bismarck, Fargo, Minot, and West Fargo school districts. Young explained that the reason for providing the blackout calendars is that there is a concern that since 2015-2016 the teachers have seen an incremental decrease in honoring the blackout dates. Mord explained the reason blackout dates were created and the reasons they are needed. Brenner explained that blackout dates were never a part of the negotiated agreement. He said that after the first year they were implemented, it became clear that with the number of 504, IEP, and other necessary meetings, it was not possible to continue with the number of blackout dates as originally planned. The blackout calendars are developed by the CIAPD Department and Associate Superintendent's Office. They are provided to the principals who are then responsible for communicating them to their buildings.

Discussion continued on the career earnings rankings. Young explained that the metric was provided to show where the District currently ranked regarding the teachers' career earnings and that it was not where they wanted to be. Mord explained how the GFEA Team calculated the rankings and Young clarified that in order that the comparison is apples to apples, additional extracurricular earnings were not included because they were not available to all teachers. Discussion continued on how mill levies and the valuation of a mill varied from

district to district. Berge pointed out that the deduct is not a complete offset of the per-pupil payment. A discussion about when teachers might meet the Rule of 85 or Rule of 90 was also held.

Hoffarth left the meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Compensation and Benefits. GFEA information requests and their responses were also provided in the meeting materials. Responses from Berge were deferred to future discussions about salary. Responses regarding maternity leave, incident reporting, staff retirements, resignations, and new hires, and the base stipend and shared teacher pay were explained by Abentroth. Benefit information was incomplete at the time of the meeting but will be provided in the future.

Mikula referred to GFEA surveys that were mentioned at previous meetings in which teachers shared their perspectives about their job climate and interests and said that she was interested in receiving that data because expectations were undefined at this point. She clarified that she wanted to verify such things as the survey sample size, response size, demographics of respondents, and how the questions were asked so that she could better understand the responses and the motivations behind them because the workforce and demographics change. Young explained that it was not the GFEA Team’s intent to be dodgy but the surveys were completed with an assumption that the data would not be generally released to the public. He clarified that when the GFEA Team brings a topic of concern, they would also bring in data to support that. Both teams continued in a discussion of reasons for wanting the data and reasons for not releasing the data. The GFEA Team reported that there are 511 members and that there were 325 responses to the survey. Mord reported that 1/3 of the respondents ranked salary as their number one or number two priority.

Safety. The GFEA Team shared the results of a survey about the classroom teachers’ personal safety, which included the loss of or damage to the teachers’ personal property and District property. Buchhop reported that the survey was completed in conjunction with Fargo, West

Fargo, Minot, and Bismarck and that the result percentages were very similar across all the districts. She also reported that 70% of GFEA’s membership responded. Mikula requested additional information such as the length of time the survey questions referred to, the number of occurrences over a specific period of time, the setting of occurrences, and whether there were comments about solutions. She said that without that information it was difficult to know the problem, which would make it difficult to come up with a solution. Mord explained that the GFEA Team was bringing the survey information to the table because they have some ideas of what they would like the District to do to help the teacher. She said that the GFEA Team did not think teachers should have to use their own sick leave for something that happened on the job. Mord clarified that District administration was working very hard with the teachers on the issue of classroom safety and that GFEA was not coming to the table to solve the problems in the classroom. Both teams agreed that the discussion of this topic would continue at the next meeting.

Meeting Schedule. The next meeting is on Monday, April 29 at 5:30 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center. Agenda topics will remain the same as this meeting except that Discussion of the Overview of District Finances will be removed. Both teams were requested to bring their calendars in anticipation of possibly scheduling more meetings. Young will chair the next meeting.

**Adjourn.** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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Amber Flynn, Committee Chair and Board Team Leader

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Tom Young, GFEA Team Leader