

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
August 12, 2024

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a special meeting on Monday, August 12, 2024, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with Vice President Josh Anderson presiding.

Board Members Present: Josh Anderson, Amber Flynn, Jay Kleven, Joel Larson, Eric Lunn, Jeff Manley, and Bill Palmiscno. **Absent:** Dave Berger.

Others Present: Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools; Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager; Catherine Gillach, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education, Matt Bakke, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education; Joe Drumm, Vice President of Grand Forks Education Association; Terry R. Snider, Sr., Vice President of GFAFB School Board, and Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to order at 7:38 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Personnel Complaint about Dr. Brenner. Flynn reported that on May 15, 2024, a personnel complaint was delivered to her under Policy KACB and Policy DE by Ms. Catherine Gillach, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education. The report generally alleged that Dr. Brenner attempted to coerce or manipulate Ms. Gillach into resigning her position as Associate Superintendent and further that he told her that if she did not resign, he would seek dismissal for cause. Ms. Gillach also asserted that Dr. Brenner had indefinitely suspended a proposed letter of reprimand to her. Ms. Gillach asserted that Dr. Brenner made false and unfair allegations that threatened her professional credibility and career. Ms. Gillach alleged that there has been a pattern of behavior by Dr. Brenner against her resulting in a hostile work environment.

Flynn reported that she, along with Legal Counsel Howard Swanson of Swanson & Warcup, investigated the complaint and reported that no confirmed conduct violated relevant policy or law. She recommended the following:

1. No disciplinary action against Dr. Brenner is warranted.
2. The District reaffirms the recommendations outlined in the investigative report dated May 20, 2024, including the following:
 - a. The Superintendent shall have a 360 evaluation.

- b. The District shall hire a leadership coach chosen by the School Board President and Vice President to evaluate and provide feedback on Dr. Brenner's leadership style and assist in cultivating building/rebuilding good relationships with administrators in the District.
3. A written instruction to all parties shall be issued stating that absolutely no retaliation by any District employee, including the Complainant and Respondent, with regard to any employee, investigator, or legal counsel, participation, recommendation, statements made in the investigation of this complaint shall occur.

Board members discussed the recommendations. Highlights of the discussion are:

- It was requested the Board receive a report at its regular meetings about the superintendent/administrator meetings.
- Whether recommendation number 2 should be included as this was a recommendation from a previous issue that had nothing to do with this complaint.
- Resolution of the draft letter of reprimand.
- The role of the board in internal matters.
- The superintendent's authority to supervise staff according to statute and policy.

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Palmiscno to approve the recommendations as written. Upon roll call vote as follows, the motion failed. Aye: Flynn, Larson, and Manley. Nay: Lunn, Palmiscno, Kleven, and Anderson. Absent: Berger.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Palmiscno to approve recommendations numbers 1 and 3 as written.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Flynn to amend the motion to include moving recommendation number 2 out of Recommendations and adding it to the Conclusions item number 23.

Discussion continued about whether the use of the word "shall" in recommendation numbers 2a and 2b was appropriate.

Discussion continued about whether the words "the District" should be "the Board". Kleven and Flynn accepted this change in wording as an amendment to their motion.

Upon roll call vote as follows, the amendment carried. Aye: Larson, Manley, Kleven, and Flynn. Nay: Palmiscno, Lunn, and Anderson. Absent: Berger.

Upon roll call vote as follows, the original motion as amended carried. Aye: Flynn, Larson, Manley, and Kleven. Nay: Palmiscno, Lunn, and Anderson. Absent: Berger.

Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

APPROVED _____
(Date)

Dave Berger, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager