

GFSB/GFEA SPECIAL EDUCATION WORKLOAD REVIEW COMMITTEE
(A Subcommittee of Teacher Contract Bargaining)
MEETING MINUTES
September 30, 2024

The Grand Forks School Board/Grand Forks Education Association Special Education Workload Review Committee met on Monday, September 30, 2024, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with Griffin Gillespie as the meeting chairperson.

Committee Members Present: Dr. Elisa Diederich, Marie DeMarce Garner, Griffin Gillespie, Laura Mason, Carrie Weippert, and Katie Wood.

Committee Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary.

Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m.

Approval of Minutes. It was moved by Diederich and seconded by Weippert to approve the minutes of May 29, 2024, as written. Upon voice vote, the motion unanimously carried.

Special Educators' Workload and Work-Related Asks. Gillespie reviewed the goals of the MOU and takeaways from the last meeting.

Diederich reported that after reviewing the weights and the number of supported students, it became evident that adding a leadership role at each building was necessary. However, the number of hours needed each day exceeds those of a leadership role, so the district needed to look beyond that to cover building and prep needs, and that would require additional allocations with budgetary implications. Teachers were submitting extra pay sheets for missed prep and lunch. The cost of retention and staff loss should be considered.

DeMarce Garner joined the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

Committee members reiterated the difficulties they faced in their workload and filling the needs of students. When asked what the remedy was, they agreed more legitimately trained and effective paras are needed.

Current recruiting efforts were discussed, and all agreed it was good to try to hire more paras, but it still doesn't address staff getting their prep and lunch

hours.

Dr. Diederich shared a concern from the state that paying staff based on the student's needs or caseload can unintentionally identify students and their disability, something that cannot happen. Following the provisions of the teacher negotiated agreement would prevent this.

The special education unit has gotten away from 6/5ths contracts.

Discussion continued about the substitute para pool. It was reported that there are very few subs and that it was challenging for a sub to jump in because every student has a specific need, and some subs would only do certain tasks.

The recent budget cuts of classroom specialists, some of whom assisted with special education, and special education coordinators, have not helped. Having them back in the buildings would help to improve morale and teacher support.

All seemed to agree that money won't fix the feeling of burnout, and a weighted caseload is not a part of the problem.

Next Meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.

APPROVED _____
(Date)

Griffin Gillespie, Meeting Chair