

TEACHER CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS
GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD TEACHER CONTRACT BARGAINING COMMITTEE
AND GRAND FORKS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2025

The Grand Forks School Board Teacher Contract Bargaining Committee (Board Team) and the Grand Forks Education Association (Association Team) met on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with Board Team Leader Amber Flynn as chairperson.

Board Team Members Present: Dave Berger, Amber Flynn, and Jeff Manley.

Board Team Members Absent: Joel Larson.

Association Team Members Present: Melissa Buchhop, Kala Christensen, and Joseph Drumm.

Association Team Members Absent: None.

Resource Team Present: Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent (per school board policy CBD); Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager; and Griffin Gillespie, Human Resources Director (per Ground Rules).

Others Present: Mike Biermaier, District Activities Director; Dr. Elisa Diederich, Executive Director of Special Education; Carrie Weippert, Special Education Process Facilitator; Katie Wood, Special Education Teacher; Marie DeMarce Garner, Special Education Teacher; and Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary.

Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Approval of Minutes.

It was moved by Berger and seconded by Christensen to approve the April 1, 2025 minutes, as written. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. Absent: Larson.

Presentation on Final Report from the GFSB/GFEA Extracurricular Compensation MOU Subcommittee.

Biermaier reviewed the subcommittee's suggestions for clerical clean-up in the extracurricular salary schedule and FTE counts by position, changes to the number of weeks worked, the duration of seasons, and other considerations such as schedule additions and deletions. Included in the report were comparative salaries of other large North Dakota school districts.

Presentation on Final Recommendation Report from the GFSB/GFEA Special Education Workload Review Committee.

Diederich and Weippert reviewed a new workload analysis tool, which the National Education Association endorses, that was rolled out district-wide following discussions by committee members. The previous weighted case system counted the number of students and their needs. The new analysis tool counts all job tasks per student and will help determine a reasonable workload and staffing needs.

Wood and DeMarce Garner shared their positive experiences using the analysis tool and spoke about how it showed the differences in services at each grade level.

Discussion continued about the committee's recommendations, including the continued use of the workload analysis tool, prep time considerations, and paraeducator, administrator, and general education teacher training.

Discussion of Proposals and Counterproposals.

Buchhop reported the Association Team did not have any counterproposals for this meeting and

that the Association Team agreed to the Board Team's proposals #8 and #6 as follows:

- *Proposal 8:*
Article X- Recognition for Teaching Experience
Recommended Language:
TEACHERS new to the DISTRICT and those desiring a change in salary classification must file an official transcript of credits in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Credit for teaching experience prior to entering the DISTRICT shall not exceed ~~fifteen (15)~~ twenty-five (25) years on the salary schedule (full years only will be considered). In special fields wherein qualified candidates are in demand, additional credit for actual PreK-16 teaching experience may be granted by special permission of the school board.

[No language changes were recommended to be made to the remaining current language in Article X.]

- *Proposal 6:*
Article VII- Benefits; Section 4- Grand Forks Air Force Base Stipend
Recommended Language:
TEACHERS employed at Grand Forks Air Force Base school(s), who do not live on the Air Base, will be paid a stipend based on the following computation: Salary Schedule BA/BS Step 1 amount multiplied by 3.65%.

TEACHERS employed at the Air Base school(s), who do not live on the Air Base, under athletic extracurricular contracts shall receive an additional stipend of \$10.00 per week for the length of said extracurricular contract.

The BOARD will reimburse TEACHERS up to \$100 for towing costs incurred while driving to and from the Air Base. The towing costs must be the result of road or weather-related incidents.

Discussion continued on the Board Team's Proposal 2 regarding a career increment compared to the Association Team's proposal. The Association Team felt their proposal clarified the number of years a teacher would be at a particular step.

The Board Team's revised proposal 3 was distributed. The revision was limited to highlighting the proposed new language to provide the clarification that the Association Team requested. The revised proposal follows.

- *Article V Section 2 Intermediate-Term Leave of Absence.*
Recommended Language:
A family care leave may be granted by the BOARD subject to the following provisions and for the purpose of preparing and providing parental care for a natural or adopted child/children or an immediate family member of the teacher for an extended period of time. The immediate family shall be defined to include a person's: spouse/partner, parents/step-parents and grandparents of both ~~grandparents,~~ son, daughter, sister, brother, ~~step-parents,~~ step-brother, step-sister, step-children, or grandchildren.

Flynn reported the Board Team agreed to the following Association Team proposal:

- *ARTICLE V - LEAVES OF ABSENCE*
 - I. Personal Leave (Revised 2021)*
Two (2) days of personal leave shall be granted per year cumulative to a maximum of six (6) days. Starting with the 11th year of teaching in DISTRICT, three (3) days of personal leave shall be granted per year cumulative to a maximum of six (6) days. Any TEACHER may apply by the April date of pay to be paid the current rate of sub pay for any days they would not be able to carry over to the next school year, up to a maximum of two (2) days. Upon retirement, a TEACHER will be paid the current sub rate for all unused personal leave.

Personal Leave shall be subject to the following provisions:

- 1. No more than 10% of an attendance unit staff or one (1) TEACHER (whichever is greater) will be permitted leave on any one (1) day.*
- 2. The request for Personal Leave must be filed via Absence Management three (3) days prior to the anticipated leave and approved by the Principal/Immediate Supervisor. The Principal/Immediate Supervisor may waive the three (3) days provision in emergency situations.*
- 3. Personal leave shall not be granted the first five (5) days of the contract term (188 days), on parent-teacher conference days, or on the last five (5) days of the school term unless waived by the Superintendent of Schools.*
- 4. The DISTRICT values all professional development, therefore, no more than one (1) Personal Leave day per school year will be granted on a Professional Development day without the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.*
- 5. A TEACHER can apply for up to 3 UNPAID personal days (if they have run out of personal days) in order to attend an activity of their child(ren), including but not limited to: regional, state, or national competitions. Approval is at the discretion of the Superintendent of Schools.*

Flynn reported that the Board Team did not have its additional new proposal ready, but would make it a priority for the next meeting.

Flynn continued reviewing the Board Team's discussions on various Association Team proposals. Regarding the Association Team's proposal regarding extra pay for teaching a dual credit course, Flynn reported that this was the district's current practice, and the Board Team was generally in agreement, but the Board Team's intent would be not to negotiate the fee every year

because it is based on the college's structure.

Flynn reported that the Board Team disagreed with the Association Team's proposal regarding a combination classroom and adding language for a secondary teacher who is simultaneously teaching a course in person and the same coded course online.

Flynn reported the Board Team's counter-offer to the following Association Team proposal:

- *Section 4: Miscellaneous Compensation*
 - A. *Sixth Period of Classroom Instruction*

If a sixth period of classroom instruction is assigned or a TEACHER is assigned to an online course outside of their contractual 5 periods, a secondary TEACHER so assigned shall receive payment equal to 1/8 of their current salary per additional class, in addition to the contracted salary amount as determined from the applicable Salary Schedule. A TEACHER-initiated request for a sixth period of classroom instruction shall not qualify said TEACHER for additional compensation. For purposes of this section, a secondary TEACHER shall be defined as a TEACHER assigned to teach in a middle school or senior high school.

The counteroffer changed "per additional class" to "per additional course".

A discussion was held on the Association Team's proposal regarding carrying over continuing education credits from a BA lane to an MA lane. The Association Team explained that professional development credits can be earned, and they can be purchased. The financial benefit of moving from a BA lane to an MA lane is insignificant for teachers who have purchased credits that cannot be carried with into the MA lane. The Association Team explained the ease in differentiating professional development credits from course credits on the UND transcript. The Association Team also clarified that they did not mention grandfathering in their proposal and that their

proposal is for a practice moving forward.

New Exchange of Proposals.

This topic was deferred.

Flynn reviewed the schedule and agenda for the next meeting.

The Association Team noted there was still time to meet and suggested a short caucus. The Board Team agreed to caucus at 7:08 p.m.

It was moved by Berger and seconded by Manley to convene into executive session (caucus) to discuss negotiating strategy or provide negotiating instructions regarding contracts that are currently being negotiated or for which negotiation is reasonably likely to occur in the immediate future as allowed by North Dakota Century Code §§ 15.1-16-22, 44-04-19.1(9), 44-04-19.2. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. Absent: Larson.

Minutes related to the Board Team’s caucus (executive session) are drafted separately from the minutes of the negotiations meeting. Following the caucus (executive session), the Board Team returned to the meeting room, and the contract negotiations meeting reconvened at 7:34 p.m.

Discussion of Proposals and Counterproposals (continued).

Flynn reiterated the Board Team’s agreement to the Association Team’s proposal regarding three unpaid leave days.

Flynn shared the Board Team’s thoughts regarding the Association Team’s proposal about extended contracts and suggested Gillespie might explain the timeline considerations of issuing contracts at the next meeting. The Association Team clarified that the proposal was more about ensuring the extended contracts were issued before the teacher was expected to start working.

Buchhop reported the Association Team’s agreement to the Board Team’s counteroffer for Sixth Period of Classroom Instruction as follows:

- *Section 4: Miscellaneous Compensation*
 - A. *Sixth Period of Classroom Instruction*
If a sixth period of classroom instruction is assigned or a TEACHER is assigned to an online course outside of their contractual 5 periods, a secondary TEACHER so assigned shall receive payment equal to 1/8 of their current salary per additional course, in addition to the contracted salary amount as determined from the applicable Salary Schedule. A TEACHER-initiated request for a sixth period of classroom instruction shall not qualify said TEACHER for additional compensation. For purposes of this section, a secondary TEACHER shall be defined as a TEACHER assigned to teach in a middle school or senior high school.

Schedule.

Future meeting dates, times, location, agenda, and chairperson are as follows:

- Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). Agenda topics include the approval of minutes, discussion of presentations on the MOU reports, discussion of proposals and counterproposals, new exchange of proposals, and the schedule. Buchhop will be the chairperson.
- Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). Agenda topics are pending. Flynn will be the chairperson.
- Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). Agenda topics are pending. Buchhop will be the chairperson.
- Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). Agenda topics are pending. Flynn will be the chairperson.
- Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). Agenda topics are pending. Buchhop will be the chairperson.
- Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the

Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC).
Agenda topics are pending. Flynn will be the
chairperson.

Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Signed: _____
Amber Flynn, Team Leader
Board Team

Signed: _____
Melissa Buchhop, Team Leader
Association Team