

TEACHER CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS
GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD TEACHER CONTRACT BARGAINING COMMITTEE
AND GRAND FORKS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
MEETING MINUTES
April 22, 2025

The Grand Forks School Board Teacher Contract Bargaining Committee (Board Team) and the Grand Forks Education Association (Association Team) met on Tuesday, April 22, 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: Dr. Elisa Diederich, Executive Director of Special Education, Katie Wood, 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 Buchhop to approve the April 15, 2025, minutes as written. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously. Absent: Larson.

Discussion of Proposals and Counterproposals.

A revised tentative agreement report was distributed and reviewed.

Diederich and Wood joined the meeting at 5:09 p.m.

Specific to the Association Team's proposal regarding added audiology duties, Diederich reported that while there is no audiologist on staff, there is a contracted audiologist. SLPs helped with audiology screenings this year, and nurses completed the documentation. A transition process for next year has already started, and nurses will conduct audiology

hearing screenings for grades K, 1, and 5. SLPs will not be responsible for helping with these duties next year.

Specific to the Association Team's proposal regarding teaching in a Level C/Self-Contained Classroom, Diederich reported that she was contacted by the state director of special education at DPI about this issue. The state director urged proceeding with caution if this is considered because pro-rating salaries for teaching in a Setting C classroom could be discriminatory.

Wood reported on the duties of a Setting C teacher and the obstacles they face. She noted that they have no curriculum, there is additional training for paras, and they also provide Tier 1 instruction. These teachers often feel unsupported. Wood stated that there are districts in other states that give a stipend to teachers in these types of classrooms.

Buchhop disagreed that extra pay could be discriminatory because these positions require

much more work. She stated that while money doesn't solve the issues, it was a way to say that these teachers are heard, seen, and paid for their extra work.

Flynn opened a discussion about trying to identify and find solutions to the root cause of the issue.

Wood spoke about the lack of administrative support, the lack of time to provide training and support that teachers and paras need, and the lack of access to specialists to help with behavior and health plans. She stated that the teachers often lose their prep or lunchtime, and sometimes behaviors are so difficult that it is unsafe for the teacher to leave.

Diederich spoke about the available curricula and acknowledged that they require a lot of prep.

Buchhop spoke about Setting C teachers having to be with their students all day and the required levels of individualized teaching, which the Association Team felt should be recognized and accounted for.

Diederich reported that the administration recognized the need and desire for more staff in the buildings. She reported on the actions taken to attract and retain in-person staff and the challenge of finding ways to be more competitive.

Buchhop stated that the salary schedule as a whole was not competitive.

Flynn reiterated the Board Team's desire to look at the big picture for longer-term solutions rather than creating band-aids. She suggested solutions could be attained through continued conversations, such as through the MOU committee.

Wood reported that a lot of the extra duties take away from the responsibilities of the special education teachers and suggested extra compensation or an extra hour of prep.

Buchhop stated something needed to be in place

to ensure teachers are compensated for extra duties when they happen, and that band-aids will have to be in place while conversations happen.

Buchhop drew attention to the Association Team's and Board Team's proposals regarding the career increment and said that the Association Team liked their language better than the Board Team's. Flynn reported that the Board Team was holding on proposals regarding salary.

The meeting scheduled was discussed, and both teams agreed to add a meeting on June 3.

The Board's proposal regarding the grievance policy was discussed. Flynn requested that the Association Team provide specific examples of what they don't like in the new [NDSBA] version versus the current version of the grievance policy. Buchhop recalled comparing the two versions two years ago and feeling that the new version took away procedures and made it biased against teachers. Still, the Association Team would take another look at them.

Discussion continued about the Association Team's proposal regarding extracurriculars and the MOU report. Baumbach distributed and discussed a summary of increased costs based on adding items recommended by the district activities director, additional music items, and the Association Team proposal. Speaking for the Association Team, Drumm stated they needed more time for review and that it seemed to encompass the spirit of what they were trying to accomplish. Buchhop clarified that the Association Team did not want any unfilled positions removed because one never knew when the position might return.

Both teams agreed to caucus.

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 6:29 p.m.

Discussion of Proposals and Counterproposals (continued).

Flynn reported that the Board Team accepted the Association Team’s proposal regarding dual credit pay as follows:

Section 4: Miscellaneous Compensation

E. Dual Credit Pay

TEACHERS who teach a dual credit course will be paid an extra \$300 per dual credit course per semester.

Flynn reported that the Board Team agreed in spirit with the cleanup of extracurricular positions and keeping unfilled positions listed, and asked the Association Team if they needed more time or wanted to bring forth a refined proposal. Drumm responded that he would provide a revised proposal. Speaking for the Board Team, Berger requested the Association Team state the experience increment with a percentage in Year 1 and a percentage in Year 2 to clarify the intended calculation. Drumm indicated the Association Team’s revised proposal will include this.

New Exchange of Proposals.

No new proposals were exchanged.

Schedule.

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

- Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). The agenda topics are the same as those for this meeting. The Association Team will chair the

meeting.

- 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.
- Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). Agenda topics are pending. Buchhop will be the chairperson.

Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Signed: _____
Amber Flynn, Team Leader
Board Team

Signed: _____
Melissa Buchhop, Team Leader
Association Team