

TEACHER CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS
GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD TEACHER CONTRACT BARGAINING COMMITTEE
AND GRAND FORKS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
MEETING MINUTES
April 29, 2025

The Grand Forks School Board Teacher Contract Bargaining Committee (Board Team) and the Grand Forks Education Association (Association Team) met on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at the Mark Sanford Education Center with Association Team Leader Melissa Buchhop as chairperson.

Board Team Members Present: Dave Berger, Amber Flynn, Joel Larson (via phone), and Jeff Manley.
Board Team Members Absent: None.

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: Cindy Johnson, Executive Secretary.

Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

Approval of Minutes.

It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Christensen to approve the April 22, 2025, minutes as written. Upon voice vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of Proposals and Counterproposals.

The Board Team reported that all proposals related to compensation were on hold.

Drumm reported that the Association Team fundamentally agreed with the cleanup of extracurriculars but wanted to wait to discuss the financial aspect. He offered that the teams could discuss adding positions if desired.

The Association Team reported they would discuss clarification of the extracurriculars 3% experience increment after caucusing.

The Association Team reported on provisions of the current North Dakota School Boards

Association's grievance policy that they disliked. These included:

- The filing timeline was reduced from one year to 30 days because not all staff were well-versed with the contract.
- The statement about a grievance not being a part of the employee file was eliminated,
- The final decision ended with the superintendent because it is the school board that negotiates the agreement, and since a grievance is about the agreement, it should end with the school board, and
- Arbitration is not an option.

The Association Team felt the current policy was laid out better with more steps to keep a grievance as far away from a lawsuit as possible.

The Association Team introduced a revised proposal for Section 4: Miscellaneous Compensation. The Board Team requested clarification on whether the Association Team was withdrawing its original proposal. The Association Team clarified that it was withdrawing its original proposal and proposing the revised proposal. The revised proposal is:

Section 4: Miscellaneous Compensation

E. Evaluation, Supervision, and Scheduling of Paraeducators

When TEACHERS that are expected to supervise, evaluate, and/or schedule paraeducators, they shall be compensated as follows:

- 1. 1-4 paraeducators - extra \$400 per semester (paid in Dec and May)*
- 2. 5-8 paraeducators - extra \$500 per semester (paid in Dec and May)*
- 3. 9+ paraeducators - extra \$600 per semester (paid in Dec and May)*

F. Extra Duties due to Online or Intern Positions

TEACHERS who are put in charge of the facilitation of scheduling, testing, paperwork, and supervision of students on the caseloads of online specialists or interns will receive an extra \$500 per semester (paid in Dec and May)

H. Special Education Resident Teacher Mentor

TEACHERS assigned as a mentor, to a special education resident teacher, will be compensated \$800 per semester (paid in Dec and May).

The Board Team requested clarification about how paras would be counted. The Association Team responded that it varied from building to building, but no special ed teacher should be able to claim the same para.

The Association Team introduced a revised proposal related to Article VIII – Workday. [The Board Team rejected the original proposal on April 15, 2025.] The revised proposal is:

Article VIII – Workday

Section 6: Work year definition

All education courses provided during the regular academic school year will follow the Grand Forks Public Schools Academic Calendar, starting on the defined first contact day and not extending past the last defined contact day.

The Association Team discussed claims reported to them by teachers as expectations of their job.

The Association Team introduced a revised proposal for Section 4: Miscellaneous Compensation. [The Board Team rejected the original proposal on April 15, 2025.] They reported it was brought back after Community High School teachers contacted them because they felt the proposal needed more discussion. Written testimony from several teachers was provided in the proposal. The revised proposal is:

Section 4: Miscellaneous Compensation

I. Teaching at Community High School

TEACHERS assigned to Community High School full-time will receive a 6/5ths contract.

The Association Team introduced a revised proposal for Section 3: Teacher Preparation Time. (The Board Team rejected the original proposal on April 15, 2025.) The revised proposal is:

Section 3: Teacher Preparation Time (Revised 2023)

B. Secondary Teachers (Revised 2018)

Full-time middle and senior high school TEACHERS shall be provided a minimum of one class period of preparation time per day within the student contact schedule. Additionally, the first 20 minutes of the workday are intended as preparation time for middle school TEACHERS. If the TEACHERS must perform duties other than preparation during this time, TEACHERS will be compensated at an hourly rate of pay determined by computing the TEACHER'S current salary divided by 188 contract days divided by 8 hours.

Christensen reported on behalf of the Association Team that Team Time was very directed and scheduled, and that it was not prep time for teachers.

New Exchange or Proposals.

The Board Team introduced a new proposal for Article I – Working Relations Agreement. Additional language is required to comply with federal regulations. The new proposal is:

*ARTICLE I - WORKING RELATIONS AGREEMENT
Section 6: Equal Employment Statement*

The provisions of this AGREEMENT shall apply to all employees covered by this AGREEMENT without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, or other status protected by law.

The nondiscrimination coordinator is the Director of Human Resources, whose office is located at the Mark Sanford Education Center, 2400 47th Avenue South, Grand Forks, ND, and whose phone number is 701-746-2200 and email address is HR@mygfschools.org.

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.

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 6:18 p.m.

Flynn left the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Discussion of Proposals and Counterproposals (continued).

Buchhop reported that the Association Team accepted the Board Team’s new proposal related to Article I – Working Relations Agreement, which added language about the nondiscrimination coordinator.

Discussion continued to clarify how the proposed 3% experience increment for extracurricular salaries would be applied. Both teams agreed that the intent was to add the 3% to the weekly base salary and not to the preceding year’s contracted salary. The Association Team will bring a clarified schedule to the next meeting.

The Board Team discussed inviting Dr. Gillach, Terry Bohan, and Eric Ripley to the next meeting to discuss rationale and teacher testimonies concerning the Association Team’s revised proposals before they could make any determination. The Association Team agreed.

Schedule.

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

- Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mark Sanford Education Center (MSEC). Agenda topics are the same as the April 29 meeting, minus the New Exchange of Proposals. 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 6:30 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Signed: _____
Melissa Buchhop, Team Leader
Association Team

Signed: _____
Amber Flynn, Team Leader
Board Team