

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 13, 2025

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a regular meeting on Monday, October 13, 2025, at the Mark Sanford Education Center, with President Dave Berger presiding.

Board Members Present: Josh Anderson, Dave Berger, Amber Flynn, Dr. Sherry Houdek, Jay Kleven, Joel Larson, Eric Lunn, Jeff Manley, and Bill Palmiscno. **Absent:** None.

Student Board Members Present: Adrianna Tande. **Absent:** McKayla Sagini.

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

Call to Order and Voluntary Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m., and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Reading of School Board Meeting Norms.

Larson read aloud the meeting norms.

Approval of Agenda.

It was moved by Manley and seconded by Larson to approve the agenda as written. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Houdek, Larson, Manley, Kleven, Anderson, Palmiscno, Lunn, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Flynn.

Flynn joined the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Celebrating Success: Phoenix Elementary School.

Kevin Ohstad, Principal of Phoenix Elementary School, along with Karla McDonald, Behavior Specialist, and Tiahna Edevold, Social Worker, gave a presentation about the school's beliefs, demographics, student achievement, intervention support, school climate, and the recently implemented Ron Clark House System.

Public Comments.

None.

Fall Enrollment Report.

Bakke reported on student enrollment for grades K-12 for the current school year. From spring 2025 to fall 2025, enrollment increased by 17 students. However, compared to fall 2024, enrollment decreased by 91 students. The fall 2025 enrollment is 144 students below the demographer's projection.

Head Start Orientation and Student Outcome Data.

Tracey Johnson, Director of Head Start, gave a presentation about Head Start funding, enrollment, class locations and partnerships, program components and performance standards, governance, school readiness goals, student outcomes, and attendance data.

Extracurricular Pay Scale Update.

Dr. Brenner introduced this agenda topic in response to questions regarding the newly adopted extracurricular pay scale. He emphasized that the intent of the discussion was not to reopen negotiations, as the Teacher Negotiated Agreement had already been ratified by the Grand Forks Education Association (GFEA) and approved by the School Board. Instead, the purpose was to provide background and context for how the final recommendations for the extracurricular pay scale were developed.

Mike Biermaier, District Activities Director,

explained the review process used to revise the extracurricular pay schedule. The primary goal was to correct long-standing errors and inequities. As a result of the revisions, some staff received pay increases, while others experienced decreases. He noted that a GFEA representative participated in this review process.

Joe Drumm, GFEA Vice President, confirmed his participation in much of the review process and agreed with Biermaier's description of the process, but stated that the GFEA had a different perspective. Reading from a prepared statement, Drumm outlined three goals for discussion: to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process for extracurricular pay, assess shortfalls in GFEA's methodology, and propose a solution for affected staff. He shared GFEA's perspective that a calculation error he discovered at the beginning of the school year led to unexpected pay reductions for some staff and that the actual cost of implementing the new pay scale was less than what had been estimated during negotiations. As a short-term solution, he proposed adding the following statement to the Teacher Negotiated Agreement: "Additionally, all employees that had previously achieved fifteen (15) years of experience shall receive their previous compensation rate until their pay rate is exceeded using the above mentioned calculation." This addition would restore the previous year's pay level for staff members who experienced significant decreases.

Flynn shared that she had been contacted by staff concerned about their personal situation, particularly those nearing retirement. She noted that it had been understood during negotiations that the extracurricular base pay could decrease, increase, or remain unchanged depending on the position.

Further discussion continued on GFEA's communication with teachers regarding the impacts of the proposal during the negotiation process. Drumm acknowledged that proposals were posted, but no communication had been made specifically about the potential negative impacts.

Berger recognized staff members in the audience, Brian Strom and Jeremy Cebula, and Brady Olson, and invited them to share their personal experiences. Berger also invited board members to engage in a Q&A session with them.

Flynn reflected on the negotiation process, emphasizing the responsibility of both parties to calculate the impacts of proposals and the potential for unintended consequences. She requested a legal opinion to clarify what options are available should any adjustments be considered.

Closing remarks and reflections were made during which the collaborative nature of the negotiation process was acknowledged, and that the issue was recognized as an oversight.

Consent Agenda.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Flynn to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- September 22, 2025, school board meeting minutes as written;
- Third-party requests for access to student information from Conjuguemos, Tiggbee.com, Care Solace, City Gate Languages Services, LLC, University Startups, Inc., and Solutions, Behavioral Healthcare Professionals;
- Open enrollment applications as presented;
- Teacher appointment effective September 23, 2025, of Grace Kemnitz, fourth-grade teacher, salary placement at BA/BS, Step 1, \$43,764.63; and
- Teacher appointment effective October 13, 2025, of Alixandria Brumitt, Day Treatment teacher, salary placement at BA/BS, Step 1, \$40,005.71.

Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Kleven, Manley, Houdek, Anderson, Flynn, Larson, Lunn, Palmiscno, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Superintendent Evaluation Committee Report.

Anderson reported on the September 29, 2025, meeting of the Superintendent Evaluation Committee and its recommendation for this year's superintendent evaluation criteria and instrument in accordance with Policy CAAB.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Manley to approve the use of the same evaluation instrument as last year, except that questions related to the strategic plan will be omitted from the November evaluation and re-inserted in the March evaluation, and that the superintendent's guardrails and 2025-2026 goals will be provided as reference documents. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Flynn, Kleven, Anderson, Houdek, Palmiscno, Lunn, Manley, Larson, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Policy Review.

Dr. Houdek reported that no additional changes had been made to the following policies since their first reading, as amended. The Policy Review Committee and District Administration recommended their adoption.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Houdek to complete the second reading and adopt Policy BDD, Compensation and Expenses for Board Members, as amended. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried. Aye: Anderson, Flynn, Houdek, Larson, Lunn, and Berger. Nay: Kleven, Manley, and Palmiscno. Absent: None.

It was moved by Anderson and seconded by Kleven to complete the second reading and adopt the following policies, as amended:

- ABAA, School District Organization Plan
- FAB, School Assignment
- ABBDA, Political Activities
- ABCB, Sportsmanship
- ABCA, Copyrighted Material and Intellectual Property
- ABBF, Ticket Sales for Accessible Seating
- DGGA, Professional Development Plan
- FBA, Student Fees
- HBAA, Federal Fiscal Compliance
- HEAC, Management of Student Activities Funds
- ICCB, Disposal of School Equipment and Supplies
- FGCB, Searches of Students and Students' Personal Possessions

Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Palmiscno, Manley, Lunn, Larson, Kleven, Houdek, Flynn, Anderson, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Land Exchange Agreement between Park District and School District.

Dr. Brenner presented the proposed land exchange agreement for consideration. Under the agreement,

- The Park District will transfer Williamson Park (used as a Central High School football practice field) and Exchange Club Park to the School District, including an update rather than swap the west and east greenspace for the new Valley Middle School, the new green space east of the new Valley Middle School will now be in the possession of the school district.
- The School District will transfer approximately 15.69 acres of property located east of South Middle School (currently used for soccer and football) to the Park District.
- The Park District will square off and exchange land around Lake Agassiz Elementary School as part of the land exchange equalization factor.
- Both entities will continue to collaborate on shared use of these and other properties under an updated Shared Use Agreement by July 1, 2026.

Neither properties have any special assessments.

It was moved by Lunn and seconded by Palmiscno to approve the Land Exchange Agreement between the Park District of the City of Grand Forks and Grand Forks Pubic School District No. 1, as presented. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Lunn, Flynn, Palmiscno, Larson, Kleven, Houdek, Anderson, Manley, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Contracted Staff Resignation and Release from Contract (Jonathan Ellwein).

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Larson to grant Jonathan Ellwein release from his 2025-2026 administrator contract, effective October 24, 2025, with a waiver of liquidated damages as outlined in Policy DKBB. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Aye: Larson, Palmiscno, Kleven, Lunn, Manley, Anderson, Houdek, Flynn, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: None.

Announcements.

Dr. Gillach expressed appreciation to the board members who attended the Schroeder Middle School Blue Ribbon event.

Board Requests for Future Consideration.

Flynn requested updates from the Grand Forks Foundation for Education and from committees with board-appointed representatives that meet outside the district, such as the LGAC.

School Board Meeting Norms—How Did We Do?

Larson reported that the board did an incredible job in following its meeting norms.

Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Dave Berger, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager