

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 20, 2026

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at the Mark Sanford Education Center, with President Dave Berger presiding.

Board Members Present: Josh Anderson, Dave Berger, Amber Flynn, Dr. Sherry Houdek (via phone), Jay Kleven, Joel Larson (via phone), Eric Lunn, Jeff Manley, and Bill Palmiscno.

Board Members Absent: None.

Student Board Members Present: Adrianna Tande and McKayla Sagini.

Student Board Members Absent: None.

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; Jon Strandell, Principal, Grand Forks Central High School, Dr. Gabe Dahl, Associate Principal, Grand Forks Central High School; Tad Schye, Principal, Valley Middle School; Ali Parkinson, Principal, Discovery Elementary School; Dr. Holly Larson, Principal, Century Elementary School; Amy Bartsch, Chief Academic Officer; Joe Drumm, Vice 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.

Palmiscno read aloud the school board's meeting norms.

Approval of Agenda.

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

Recap of January 16, 2026, Board Retreat.

Baumbach reported that the board met on January 16, 2026, at First Presbyterian Church to continue the conversation on budget realignment. The discussion also included the board's role in setting policy and the administration's role in executing it. Board members had the opportunity

to ask clarifying questions and receive general explanations regarding current programs and proposed changes.

Budget Realignment Discussion – Criteria, Conditions, and Ongoing Deliberations.

Board members further discussed budget realignment concepts, including nursing, interventions, CODA and performance expectations, enrichment, interventionists, instructional coaches, orchestra, transportation coordinator position, federal grant requirements, MSEC-related savings, virtual high school, and existing alternative learning pathways.

Public Comments.

Berger provided opening remarks outlining expectations for decorum and the process for public comments.

Listed below are the names of citizens who spoke before the Board, along with the topics they indicated on their comment cards. The topics reflect what was written and may differ from the

details of their spoken remarks.

1. Eli Stevenson – budget realignment.
2. Jay Smith – budget realignment.
3. Danette Smith – program and budget cuts.
4. Steve Carriere – budget/retreat.
5. Sarah Harlow – budget reductions for music in the district.
6. Erin Cummings, cuts to 4th-grade orchestra/budget realignment.
7. Ava Hager, concern on music and theater cuts.
8. Rebecca McFarlane, music cuts, specifically to middle and elementary orchestra.
9. Angie Black Erickson – budget cuts – middle school music.
10. Kristy Sandbeck – virtual HS academy, instructional coach.

Changes in revenue that caused the district's budget to be in deficit were reviewed. These included an 8% decrease in federal funding, state law changes that capped district growth, a decline in student enrollment, and the expiration of COVID-19 funding.

Sagini left the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

Berger acknowledged the difficulty and emotional weight of the ongoing process, emphasizing the importance of transparency and open dialogue. Appreciation was expressed for the civility and thoughtful reflection of all involved, as well as for the collective support received.

The meeting was recessed from 7:58 p.m. to 8:02 p.m.

Larson left the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Administrators Strandell, Dr. Dahl, Schye, Parkinson, Dr. Larson, and Bartsch left the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Tande left the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Consent Agenda.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Manley to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- Open enrollment applications as presented;
- School-sponsored fundraising reports;
- Appointment of Samantha Roehrich, school counselor, salary placement at BA/BS, Step 1, \$23,090.54, effective January 26, 2026; and
- Resignation of Traci Nelson, special education teacher, effective May 29, 2026.

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

General Fund Financial Statement.

Baumbach reported that for the period from July 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, total general fund revenue was \$57,623,401 and total general fund expenditures were \$52,875,765, resulting in revenue exceeding expenditures by \$4,747,636.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Anderson to approve the General Fund Financial Statement for July 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, as outlined. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Lunn, Palmiscno, Flynn, Anderson, Kleven, Manley, Houdek, and Berger. Nay: None. Absent: Larson.

Finance Committee Report – Consideration of Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$848,808 for Safety and Security Enhancements at Grand Forks Central High School.

Palmiscno and Baumbach reported on the January 20, 2026, Finance Committee meeting, where the committee reviewed the bid book summary for the safety and security enhancement at Grand Forks Central High School. Chad Dustin of Construction Engineers reported that the bids were generally good and under budget.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Kleven to approve the Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$848,808 (total project of \$1,006,593) for safety and security enhancements at Central High School. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Houdek, Kleven,

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

Announcements.

January is School Board Appreciation Month.

Board Requests for Future Consideration.

Flynn requested recognition of GFEA and an opportunity for their representative to comment at board meetings, and that the proposed elimination of the Virtual High School from the budget realignment be removed.

School Board Meeting Norms—How Did We Do?

Palmiscno concluded that the board did okay in following its meeting norms.

Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Dave Berger, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager