

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 23, 2026

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 23, 2026, at the Mark Sanford Education Center, with Vice President Josh Anderson presiding.

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

Board Members Absent: Joel Larson and Eric Lunn.

Student Board Members Present: McKayla Sagini.

Student Board Members Absent: Adrianna Tande.

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 (via phone), Sr., Vice President, GFAFB School Board; and Joe Drumm, Vice President, Grand Forks Education Association.

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m., and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Reading of School Board Meeting Norms.

Kleven read aloud the school board's meeting norms.

Approval of Agenda.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Houdek to approve the agenda as written.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Houdek to amend the motion by removing Item #5 from the consent agenda and the meeting agenda in order to work with the administration on the item. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion, as amended, carried unanimously. Aye: Manley, Anderson, Houdek, Kleven, Palmiscno, Flynn, and Berger.

Nay: None.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

Celebrating Success - Classified and Certified Employees of the 1st Quarter.

Century Elementary School Associate Principal

Chelsea Benke introduced Amanda Koopman, Inclusion Paraeducator, as the Classified Employee of the 2nd Quarter. She was presented with a plaque in recognition of the selection.

Grand Forks Central High School Associate Principal Mike Wilber introduced Brian Ringdahl, science teacher, as the Certified Employee of the 2nd Quarter. He was presented with a plaque in recognition of the selection.

Post-February 9, 2026, Budget Reduction Approval: Administrative Due Diligence and Next Steps

Dr. Brenner presented an overview of administrative work to implement the board's action following the February 9th board decision to reduce the budget by \$4.4 million.

Board members discussed this item. Administration clarified that communication will be sent to all staff following the board's decisions later this evening. Staff input regarding budget realignment may be directed to the Superintendent.

Virtual High School – Board Discussion and Direction.

Dr. Brenner presented a memorandum regarding the Virtual High School as part of the district's \$4.4 million budget realignment process. The discussion was intended to gauge the Board's interest in either discontinuing the high school after its first year or continuing it into the 2026–27 school year, to determine whether enrollment growth would allow it to become self-sustaining.

Board members discussed the Virtual High School and whether it should continue operating for another year to allow additional data to be collected regarding its operation.

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. Synje Peterson – budget cuts.
2. Miren Burbank – budget proposal.
3. Nile Riedhammer – music department cuts.
4. Mohammad Alohaso- music cuts.
5. Jakob Krewald [sp?]- reduction of musical position.
6. Andrew Foerster – proposed music teacher cuts.
7. Theodore Sandberg [sp?] – music budget cuts.
8. Taya Baric – music education.
9. Jonathan Mayo – budget realignment, 6.5 music FTEs, and how the RIF process affects elementary music teachers.
10. Whitney Berry – music cuts.
11. Steve Carriere – RIF timeline.
12. Joshua Fischer – ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪.
13. Logan [illegible] – music cuts.
14. Niska Kempernich – cutting teaching positions—music teacher specifically.
15. Eli Stevenson – proposed cuts to the music programs.
16. Vedant Srivastava – budget realignment.

Consent Agenda.

It was moved by and seconded by to approve the

consent agenda as amended as follows:

- Open enrollment applications as presented;
- Administrator resignation of LuAnn Schmidt effective June 15, 2026;
- Teacher resignations of Alex Regorgo, Talia Vazquez, Julianne Gause, Valentina Moro, Myah Burckhard, and Trevor Weiland, all effective May 29, 2026;
- School-Sponsored Fundraising Report; and
- February 9, 2026, school board meeting minutes as written.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Palmiscno, Flynn, Anderson, Kleven, Manley, Houdek, and Berger.

Nay: None.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

General Fund Financial Statement.

Baumbach reported that for the period from July 1, 2025, through January 31, 2026, total general fund revenue was \$66,879,359 and total general fund expenditures were \$64,583,648, resulting in revenue exceeding expenditures by \$2,295,712.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Flynn to approve the General Fund Financial Statement for July 1, 2025, through January 31, 2026, as outlined. Upon roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Houdek, Kleven, Manley, Flynn, Anderson, Palmiscno, and Berger.

Nay: None.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

Recommendation for Board to Determine Scope of Reduction-In-Force.

Dr. Brenner presented a memorandum regarding the scope of the Reduction-in-Force (RIF) for certified staff, following the Board's approval of a \$4.4 million budget reduction at the February 9, 2026, meeting. Administration recommended a reduction of 16 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to align with district needs, noting that resignations and retirements in other areas may reduce the overall number of positions to be eliminated.

The Board discussed the proposed scope of the

RIF, the associated rubric (DKA-E), the amendment process and its application to the RIF process, and budget implications, including potential adjustments related to the Virtual High School program and K-12 Music positions.

Griffin Gillespie, Director of Human Resources, reported on the amendment to the rubric (DKA-E) and its application.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Anderson, based on the needs of the school district, to eliminate 15.5 additional full-time equivalent positions as follows:

- K-12 Music Teacher – 6.5 FTE;
- 6-8 Interventions/Special Topics Teacher – 2.0 FTE;
- K-12 Physical Education Teacher – 1.5 FTE;
- K-12 Multilingual Learner Teacher – 1.5 FTE;
- Secondary MTSS Coordinator – 1.0 FTE;
- Elementary Enrichment Teacher – 1.0 FTE;
- 9-12 School Within a School Teacher – 0.6 FTE;
- K-12 Instructional Coach – 0.5 FTE;
- CTE Information Technology Teacher – 0.5 FTE;
- 9-12 Graphic Design Teacher – 0.2 FTE; and
- 9-12 German Teacher – 0.2 FTE.

and instruct the Superintendent to identify the individuals for Reduction in Force based on the Reduction-In-Force Policy.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the proposed scope for K-12 music teachers, fourth-grade orchestra, current and future opportunities within the music program, and the budget realignment process.

It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Houdek to amend the motion to remove two K-12 Music Teacher FTEs from the RIF scope and to keep the fourth-grade orchestra.

A discussion was held regarding the potential effects of removing two K-12 Music Teacher FTEs from the RIF scope and keeping the fourth-grade orchestra on the budget realignment, and

whether it should be studied further.

Baumbach clarified that the agenda item speaks only to the scope of the RIF, which is to reduce 6.5 FTEs in K-12 Music Teachers. The amendment is to adjust the K-12 Music Teacher down to 4.5 FTE and would be silent to fourth-grade orchestra, although the spirit regarding keeping fourth-grade orchestra was understood.

Upon a roll call vote, the amendment carried. Aye: Flynn, Houdek, Anderson, Kleven, and Berger.

Nay: Manley and Palmiscno.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

The amended motion was restated: Based on the needs of the school district, to eliminate 13.5 additional full-time equivalent positions as follows:

- K-12 Music Teacher – 4.5 FTE;
- 6-8 Interventions/Special Topics Teacher – 2.0 FTE;
- K-12 Physical Education Teacher – 1.5 FTE;
- K-12 Multilingual Learner Teacher – 1.5 FTE;
- Secondary MTSS Coordinator – 1.0 FTE;
- Elementary Enrichment Teacher – 1.0 FTE;
- 9-12 School Within a School Teacher – 0.6 FTE;
- K-12 Instructional Coach – 0.5 FTE;
- CTE Information Technology Teacher – 0.5 FTE;
- 9-12 Graphic Design Teacher – 0.2 FTE; and
- 9-12 German Teacher – 0.2 FTE.

and instruct the Superintendent to identify the individuals for Reduction in Force based on the Reduction-In-Force Policy.

A discussion was held regarding whether the board's original intent to achieve a \$4.4M budget reduction would still be realized and whether other concepts would need to be introduced. The administration confirmed it would be necessary to find a replacement reduction for the \$170,000 [2 FTEs K-12 Music Teacher and .5 FTE Virtual High School Teacher] and that the necessity of a \$4.4M budget reduction has not changed.

Upon a roll call vote, the amended motion carried unanimously. Aye: Palmiscno, Flynn, Anderson, Houdek, Manley, Kleven, and Berger.

Nay: None.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

Adjustment to High School Physical Education Graduation Credit Requirement.

As part of the District's \$4.4 million budget realignment, Dr. Brenner presented the administration's recommendation to reduce the high school Physical Education graduation requirement by 0.5 credit, effective for the 206-2027 school year. This adjustment maintains meaningful elective physical education instruction, provides students with greater scheduling flexibility for advanced coursework and career pathways, and supports efficient staffing and budget alignment, following extensive stakeholder engagement and review. The recommendation only lowers the requirement to graduate.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Flynn to approve the reduction of the high school Physical Education graduation requirement by 0.5 credit, effective beginning with the 2026-27 school year, and direct the administration to revise the District's graduation requirement documentation and student registration materials accordingly. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried. Aye: Berger, Anderson, Flynn, Kleven, Houdek, and Manley.

Nay: Palmiscno.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

Approval of UFLI Foundations to Replace Really Great Reading (Elementary).

As part of the District's \$4.4 million budget realignment, Dr. Brenner presented the administration's recommendation to adopt UFLI Foundations as the elementary foundational reading curriculum, replacing Really Great Reading, effective for the 2026–27 school year. This research-based program maintains evidence-based literacy instruction, supports strong student outcomes, provides instructional consistency, and reduces curriculum-related

expenditures while ensuring a smooth implementation for teachers and students.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Houdek to approve the adoption of UFLI Foundations as the District's elementary foundational reading skills curriculum, replacing Really Great Reading, effective for the 2026–27 school year. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Kleven, Palmiscno, Berger, Manley, Flynn, Houdek, and Anderson.

Nay: None.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

Adjustment to High School Speech Graduation Credit Requirement.

As part of the District's \$4.4 million budget realignment, Dr. Brenner presented the administration's recommendation to reduce the high school Speech graduation requirement by 0.5 credit, effective for the 2026–27 school year. This adjustment preserves meaningful communication instruction, provides students with greater scheduling flexibility for career, technical, and advanced learning opportunities, and supports efficient staffing and fiscal responsibility, following extensive stakeholder engagement and review. Speech will still be offered as a dual credit elective.

It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Kleven to approve the reduction of the high school Speech graduation requirement by 0.5 credit, effective beginning with the 2026-27 school year, and direct the administration to update the District's graduation requirement documentation, student handbook, and registration materials to reflect this change. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried. Aye: Manley, Houdek, Anderson, Kleven, Flynn, and Berger.

Nay: Palmiscno.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

Finance Committee Report.

Palmiscno reported on the February 16, 2026, meeting of the Finance Committee and the resulting recommendations.

• **Consideration of Bid Results Related to**

Safety and Security Enhancements at Viking Elementary. The bids received were \$18,326 less than projected, thereby reducing the total project cost from \$782,190 to \$770,383.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Kleven to approve the Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$638,977 (total project cost of \$770,383) for the safety and security enhancements at Viking Elementary School. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Anderson, Flynn, Houdek, Kleven, Manley, Palmiscno, and Berger.

Nay: None.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

- **Consideration of Change Proposal Request 15 for the New Valley Middle School.** Palmiscno informed the board that the Finance Committee approved the Valley Middle School Change Proposal 15 to install an exterior stairwell between two different height roofs on the new Valley Middle at a cost of \$111,423, which will be paid from the owner's contingency. The change will improve access and safety of the roof for routine maintenance.
- **Consideration of Building Fund Use for Winship Flooring Project.** In the summer of 2019, new carpet tiles were installed at Winship Elementary School; however, due to timeline constraints, three rooms were not completed. The carpet tiles used for the project are approaching a discontinuation date. The committee's recommendation is to complete the project before the carpet tiles are no longer available and to use Building Fund dollars to fund it. The project budget is \$12,937 and includes including 5% contingency.

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Kleven to approve the Winship Flooring Project at a cost of 12,937 and to pay it from the Building Fund. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Berger,

Palmiscno, Manley, Kleven, Houdek, Flynn, and Anderson.

Nay: None.

Absent: Larson and Lunn.

Announcements.

Kleven announced that the state speech took place last weekend and offered his recognition of the award winners.

Board Requests for Future Consideration.

Flynn requested that the elementary orchestra provide a report to the board about the feasibility of transitioning from offering fourth-grade orchestra.

School Board Meeting Norms—How Did We Do?

Kleven concluded that the board did a good job in following its meeting norms.

Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Dave Berger, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager