

GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
April 13, 2026

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a regular meeting on Monday, April 13, 2026, at the Mark Sanford Education Center, with Vice President Josh Anderson presiding.

Board Members Present: Josh Anderson, Amber Flynn, Dr. Sherry Houdek, Jay Kleven, Joel Larson, Jeff Manley, and Bill Palmiscno.

Board Members Absent: Dave Berger and Eric Lunn.

Student Board Members Present: McKayla Sagini.

Student Board Members Absent: Adrianna Tande.

Others Present: Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Catherine Gillach, Associate Superintendent of Secondary Education; Matt Bakke, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education; Brady Olson, President, 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.

Manley read aloud the school board's meeting norms.

Approval of Agenda.

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Palmiscno to approve the agenda as written. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Manley, Houdek, Kleven, Larson, Palmiscno, Flynn, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

Celebrating Success – South Middle School.

Travis Neil, Principal, Brian Loe, Associate Principal, Sally Akerlind, Student Behavior Interventionist, Carla Haaven, Instructional Coach; Christine Rokke, Science Teacher; Jalissa Keller, Social Worker; Stephanie Larson, Counselor; and Caleigh Patten, Counselor, delivered a comprehensive presentation highlighting the school's mission, vision, and beliefs statements, student and staff demographics, Title I services, family

engagement events, benefits of having a behavior interventionist on staff, clubs and activities, student achievement, and a variety of interventions.

Public Comments.

None.

Update from the Grand Forks Foundation for Education.

Executive Director Emilia Hodgson gave an overview of the Foundation's recent activities, including fundraising efforts, grant distributions, and strategic initiatives that directly impact classrooms across the district.

In addition, Marilyn Ripplinger and Sandy Kovar gave an update on the TEARS Organization and its ongoing collaboration with the Foundation and the school district.

Consent Agenda.

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

- March 18, 19, 23, and April 9, 2026, Grand Forks School Board meeting minutes;
- Research request from Wei Mao and Wanting He;

- Administrator resignation of Matt Bakke, effective June 30, 2026;
- Teacher long-term family care leave of absence for Mercedes Renken for the 2026-2027 school year;
- Teacher resignations of Charlotte Woods, Mare Thompson, Tracy Foss, Samantha Berg, Katarina Krush, Annette Throener, Jessica Sundeen, Emily Tweten, Jennifer Lutz, Soledad Novio, and Roger Quinn, all effective May 29, 2026;
- Teacher appointments effective August 17, 2026, of Lorena Roses, Math Teacher, salary placement at BA/BS, Step 1, \$51,477; Daniele Two Crow, Special Education Teacher, salary placement at BA/BS, Step 1, \$51,477; and Kylee Steiner, Math Teacher, salary placement at BA/BS, Step 5, \$54,669;
- School-sponsored fundraising report as presented; and
- Student Information Sharing Request for Alzheimer's Association.

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

Appointment of Associate Principal at J. Nelson Kelly Elementary School.

Bakke reported on the interview process and administrative recommendation for appointment.

It was moved by Manley and seconded by Kleven to appoint Brian Deitchler as the associate principal of J. Nelson Kelly Elementary School for the 2026-2027 school year at a salary of \$94,752 with a school factor of \$1,250. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Houdek, Kleven, Manley, Larson, Flynn, Palmiscno, and Anderson.
Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

Summer School Program.

Bakke, Dr. Gillach, and Summer School directors Theresa Ostgarden, Terry Bohan, and Allison Peterson presented an overview of the 2025

summer school program, including Introduction to Kindergarten, Elementary, Secondary, Middle School Summer Program, the Valley Middle School Summer Rise Program, Driver Education, and Summer Performing Arts (SPA).

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Flynn to approve the 2025 Summer School Program as outlined. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Flynn, Houdek, Manley, Kleven, Palmiscno, Larson, and Anderson.
Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

Recommendation for Board to Contemplate Reduction-In-Force nonrenewal of Grace Rames.

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Palmiscno that a special school board meeting be held at the Mark Sanford Education Center on Monday, April 20th, beginning at 6:00 pm at which time the board will discuss and act upon the contemplated non-renewal of the current contract of Grace Rames for the following reasons: The needs of the Grand Forks Public School District, including enrollment concerns and lack and uncertainty of funds for next year; and that the superintendent provide timely notice to the teacher prior to the hearing. The notice must contain the date, time and place of the hearing and the detailed reasons for contemplated nonrenewal. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Palmiscno, Larson, Flynn, Houdek, Manley, Kleven, and Anderson.
Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

Policy Review Committee Report: First Reading of GDB, Graduation Exercises.

Dr. Houdek reported on the March 12, 2026, Policy Review Committee meeting and its discussion of the reduction-in-force rubric, DKA-E, and its recommendation to revise Policy GDB by adding the graduation dress code from Policy FFH.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Houdek to complete the first reading of Policy GDB, Graduation Exercises, as amended. Upon a roll

call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Flynn, Kleven, Houdek, Palmiscno, Larson, Manley, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

Recommendation to Approve Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for Discharge to be served on Ana Marie Fernandez, and Board action.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Manley to approve the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for Discharge to be served on Ana Marie Fernandez as presented. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Kleven, Larson, Palmiscno, Manley, Flynn, Houdek, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

Finance Committee Report.

A report on the April 7, 2026, committee meeting and resulting recommendations was heard.

- **Consideration of Bid Results Related to Safety and Security Enhancement at Discovery Elementary.** This project is slated for the summer of 2026. Total projected expenses were \$210,518 prior to bids. The bids totaled \$192,185, or \$18,333 less. Total project cost decreased from the original estimate of \$248,411 to \$228,700 (a decrease of \$19,711).

It was moved by Palmiscno and seconded by Houdek to approve a Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$192,185 (total project of \$228,700) as outlined. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Larson, Manley, Palmiscno, Houdek, Kleven, Flynn, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

- **Consideration of Bid Results Related to Safety and Security Enhancement at South Middle School.** This project is slated for the summer of 2026. Total projected expenses were \$217,815 prior to bids. The bids totaled \$190,005, or \$27,810 less. Total project cost decreased from the original estimate of \$257,022 to \$226,106 (a decrease of \$30,916).

It was moved by Larson and seconded by Kleven to approve a Guaranteed Maximum Price of \$190,005 (total project of \$226,106) as outlined. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Flynn, Houdek, Kleven, Larson, Manley, Palmiscno, and Anderson.

Nay: None. Absent: Berger and Lunn.

Announcements.

Accolades were given for a concise, well-organized presentation on the summer school program.

Board Requests for Future Consideration.

None.

School Board Meeting Norms—How Did We Do?

Manley concluded that the board followed its meeting norms very well.

Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

Dave Berger, President

Brandon Baumbach, Business Manager