

**GRAND FORKS SCHOOL BOARD
GRAND FORKS PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT #1
PRELIMINARY BUDGET AND TAX LEVY PUBLIC HEARING AND REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2026**

The School Board of Grand Forks Public School District No. 1 held a public hearing on the FY26 preliminary budget and tax levy and a regular meeting on Monday, September 8, 2025, at the Mark Sanford Education Center, with President JoNell Bakke presiding.

Board Members Present: Mary Adams, JoNell Bakke, Dr. Allyse Dunnigan, Amber Flynn, Brianna Hall, Jay Kleven, Lori Kraemer, and Eric Lunn.

Board Members Absent: Jeff Manley.

Student Board Members Present: Bella Aipperspach and Elsa Parrill.

Student Board Members Absent: None.

District Administration Present: Dr. Terry Brenner, Superintendent of Schools; Ryan Gatzke, Interim Business Manager; Dr. Kris Arason, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education; Chris Triggs, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education.

Other Present: Brady Olson, President, Grand Forks Education Association; Branden Shepperd, GFAFB School Board Liaison; and Cindy Johnson, Senior Executive Assistant and School Board Operations Coordinator.

Resource Staff Present: Theresa Ostgarden, Middle School Summer School Director; Nick Pederson, Summer Valley RISE Program Director; Terry Bohan, Driver's Education Director; Allison Peterson, Summer Performing Arts Director; and Amy Bartsch, Chief Academic Officer.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Public Hearing on Preliminary Budget and Certificate of Tax Levy for FY27.

The public hearing began at 6:00 p.m.

Gatzke reported that the board approved the preliminary budget and tax levy, which was certified to the county as required by state law. Notices of estimated property tax and the hearing date were sent to each owner of taxable property, and the hearing date was published as required. The preliminary mill levy is 128.75.

The floor was opened for public comment. No individuals came forward to speak. The public hearing was closed at 6:02 p.m.

Reading of School Board Meeting Norms.

Aipperspach read aloud the meeting norms.

Approval of Agenda.

It was moved by Kleven and seconded by Hall to approve the agenda. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Adams, Hall, Kleven, Lunn, Flynn, Kraemer, Dunnigan and Bakke. Nay: None. Absent: Manley.

Public Comments.

Listed below are the names of citizens who spoke before the Board, along with the topic(s) indicated on their comment cards:

- David Boura – Special Ed funding and communication.
- Amanda Loiland – new para allocation for program rooms.

- Nicole Wilebski, para budget cuts.

Summer School Reports.

Dr. Arson, Triggs, and Summer School Directors Theresa Ostgarden, Nick Pederson, Terry Bohan, and Allison Peterson reported highlights of elementary summer school, ENCORE, secondary summer school, Valley Summer RISE, driver's education, and Summer Performing Arts (SPA). Detailed and statistical data were provided in the meeting agenda packet.

School Board Academic Goals.

Dr. Terry Brenner and Chief Academic Officer Amy Bartsch presented an overview of the district's academic goals and how they align with the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. The presentation outlined current targets in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and the Native American four-year graduation rate, while detailing the history of goal setting under the state's "Be Legendary" framework. A primary focus of the discussion was the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's (NDDPI) transition from the NDSA to the new ND A-PLUS assessment, alongside NDDPI's initial platform calibration errors and score release delays. Administration recommended resetting the district's academic assessment baseline using the upcoming 2026 ND A-PLUS results to ensure accurate, long-term measurements. Future discussion regarding adopting the Native American graduation rate goal and updating the academic goals will take place after the first of the year once complete NDDPI aggregate data becomes available.

Consent Agenda.

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

- August 24, 2026, school board meeting minutes;
- Student Transportation Bus Drivers and Equipment;
- Third-party Requests for Access to Student Information for lessonscheduler, ClassLink Identity Management Suite, ClassLink, Inc., and Team Reach (Desktop and App Versions);

- Teacher appointment, effective September 14, 2026, for Gabrielle Voyles, School Counselor, 169 contract days, salary schedule placement MA/MS, Step 12, \$58,520.74;
 - Renewal of Parking Lot Lease with The United Lutheran Church for September 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027; and
 - Renewal of Shared Parks and Facilities Use Agreement for July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.
- Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Hall, Kleven, Lunn, Flynn, Kraemer, Dunnigan, Adams, and Bakke. Nay: None. Absent: Manley.

Designation of NDSBA Convention Delegates.

Dr. Brenner reported that the District may have up to five delegates at the Annual Convention Delegate Assembly. To date, four board members have indicated that they plan to attend the annual convention.

It was moved by Flynn and seconded by Kleven to designate Allyse Dunnigan, Mary Adams, JoNell Bakke, and Brianna Hall as delegates to the 2026 NDSBA Annual Convention. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. Aye: Kleven, Lunn, Manley, Flynn, Kraemer, Dunnigan, Adams, Hall, and Bakke. Nay: None. Absent: Manley.

Superintendent's Recommendation to Contemplate the Discharge of Teacher Tara Ulrich from her current contract, and possible Board action. Dr. Brenner and the Board discussed the recommendation to contemplate the discharge of Teacher Tara Ulrich from her current contract due to insubordination, conduct unbecoming of her position, and/or failure to perform contracted duties without justification.

Following discussion, it was moved by Lunn and seconded by Adams that a special meeting of the board be held at a time and place to be set by the administrative law judge, at which time the board will discuss and act upon the contemplated discharge of Tara Ulrich from her current contract for insubordination, conduct unbecoming her position, and/or failure to perform contracted

duties without justification, and that the school district provide written notice of this action to her. Motion carried on roll call vote as follows: Aye: Lunn, Flynn, Kraemer, Dunnigan, Adams, Hall, Kleven, and Bakke. Nay: None. Absent: Manley.

Ryan Gatzke, Interim Business Manager

Announcements.

Dr. Brenner reminded Board members of the following upcoming meetings:

- Self-Evaluation Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 17, is being rescheduled.
- Finance Committee Meeting – Monday, September 21 at 5:30 p.m.
- Superintendent Evaluation Committee Meeting – Wednesday, September 22 at 5:30 p.m.
- Next regular School Board meeting – Monday, September 28 at 6:00 p.m.
- Policy Review Committee meeting – Tuesday, September 29 at 5:30 p.m.

Board Requests for Future Consideration.

- Hall requested an update on the Wednesday meeting with paras, safety, and communication.
- Lunn requested discussion about The Gavel newsletter.
- Hall requested data on whether attendance has changed because of busing fees.
- Lunn requested discussion about board member conflict of interest.

School Board Meeting Norms—How Did We Do?

Aipperspach concluded that the board did a good job of following its meeting norms.

Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
(Date)

JoNell Bakke, President