

Minutes
School Board Retreat
Gladstone Inn, Jamestown, ND
Montpelier Public School District #14
214 7th Ave
Montpelier, ND 58472
January 27th, 2024

Board Members Present: President Scott Harms, Abram Valenta, Tony Roorda, and Kyle Throener.
Absent: Wade Dally, Robert Froehlich, and Brock Naze.

Also Present: Superintendent/High School Principal Phil Leitner, PK-8 Principal Sara Wilson, and Business Manager Amy Maurer.

Call to Order: President Harms called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

School Operations:

- a) **Staff:** The current school staff and the roles they fill was reviewed. The number of students in preschool, what the limit for the number of students should be and process for signing up were discussed.
- b) **Enrollment:** Current K-12 enrollment is 93 students. 92 is projected for next year. Projections are difficult when so much of the enrollment comes from open enrollment.
- c) **Transportation:** The current bus fleet and bus routes were reviewed. Mr. Leitner proposes that buses 1 and 4 should be sold. The board discussed whether they could be sold through Orr Auction. A wage comparison was reviewed. Montpelier's rates are competitive, but there is just a shortage of drivers across the state.
- d) **School Safety:** A school safety/emergency action plan was reviewed. Inexpensive walkie-talkies have been purchased and effectively helped to improve in-school communications.

Finance Review:

- a) **Classified Staff Health Insurance:** Classified staff is currently not offered health insurance through the school. A single health plan is projected to cost \$9350 per year in 24-25. The first scenario reviewed was if classified staff working 32+ hours per week/9-months or more per school year were offered a single plan. If all staff elected the insurance it would cost approximately \$84,000 per year. The idea of freezing wages for next year but offering a one-time \$1000 cash payout to those not electing insurance had been discussed by the finance committee. A family plan would be an \$584 per paycheck cost to the employee. The second scenario reviewed was if classified staff working 32+ hours/9-months per year received a single plan prorated to the number of months worked. The approximate cost to the district if all employees elected insurance would be \$67,760 per year. A 3% across the board raise to classified staff would cost approximately \$10,000.
- b) **Budget/Mill Levy:** The preliminary 2024-2025 budget that is being worked on shows the district as \$5475 to the good in the general fund for 24-25 with a \$62,750 increase to the mill levy. Currently, health insurance for classified staff is not included but staff raises are included. State foundation Aid is based on 96.66 ADM with the state aid formula based primarily on student enrollment. An ending fund balance of \$741,000 is projected. Federal ESSER funds will have been expended and so no longer contribute to the budget. The cost to home owners for the

proposed tax increase would be approximately \$27 on a \$100,000 home and \$59 on a \$200,000 quarter of land. Our taxable valuation and our mill levies are currently lower than any neighboring districts and ranks 130 of 146 K-12 school districts in the state.

Long Term Planning:

- a) Superintendent Plans: Mr. Leitner discussed several goals. 1) Improving the school environment among students, staff, and community. 2) Improving the school building and grounds. 3) Promoting the school to the community with expanded social media presence and communication. 4) An emphasis is being placed on continued training for staff and mentorship for new staff members. 5) He is working to place an emphasis of having decisions and direction of the school driven by policy. 6) He would like to begin a dialogue with the community on the long-term planning of the district.
- b) Systems: Having more team systems in place of individual systems in order to provide consistency for students was reviewed and discussed. Examples included grading practices and practices for addressing late work reviewed.
- c) Building and Grounds: Core Facility Solutions shared an estimate to strip off the old roofing and replace with new over the kitchen, stage, and locker room areas. \$169,872. This was discussed. Creating a new list of building repairs and improvements in order to prioritize them was discussed. The board members requested a list of work that has been done, with dates.
- d) Athletics: Concerns were brought up to Mr. Leitner by the Edgeley and Kulm superintendents about Montpelier's participation in the co-op. They questioned whether some students were committed, concerned that some playing time is being taken away from Edgeley/Kulm students, and that Montpelier is not contributing anything financially.
- e) Committee Structure and Purpose: Policies on committee structures and purpose were shared.
- f) Cognia Goals and Data: Cognia is the tool that is required to be used by North Dakota School Districts to receive state accreditation. The following was shared and discussed: 1) Information on the strategy map matrix was shared. 2) Proposed changes to the belief and mission statements were shared. 3) Objectives, initiatives, and key measures were shared. Preliminary data/scores were shared. The district changed this year to the ND A+ testing system. IXL usage data was shared.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Tony Roorda, Board President

Amy Maurer, Business Manager

Approval Date