Negotiation Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 AM on Thursday, June 4, 2026.

Attendees:
-Sherri Horsager, Darin Anderson, Sarah Lerud, Buff Murray, Dallas Dockter, and Nicole Powers

-Others Attending: Superintendent Josh Johnson, Business Manager Jackie Cordie, Ryan Mathias, Tara Glandt, Rhonda Nudell, Cynthia Klabo, Brian Engelhard, Angela VanBruggen, Jess Gregerson, Kathy Lentz, Joelle Manlove, Jill Askin, Kristi Shanenko, Andrea Jensen, Jill Taylor, Tom Milbrandt, Phil Hatcher, Annie Beauchman, Sheila Larson, Kayleen Marthaler, Jordyn Heck, Michelle Mennis, and Grant Kraft, ND United.

Approval of the Minutes:
-Motion: Horsager motioned to approve the May 21, 2026, minutes.
-Second: Murray seconded the motion.
-All voted in favor, motion carried.

Purpose of Meeting
-Counter Proposals and Discussion

School Boards Remarks and Counter Proposals (Horsager)

VCEA Discussion Items:

- 403b options – maybe better discussed in HIC
- Athletic Pass – this item should be made as a request though the Activities Committee, not in the Negotiated Agreement.

Recognition:
The board *tentatively accepts* the wording changes as presented – change from guidance to school counselor; using teacher throughout agreement to identify teachers, librarians, and school counselors.

Article IV. Teacher Evaluation:
The board *rejects* this proposal

Article VII. Teacher Workload, Section 6:
The board *rejects* this proposal

Article IX. Teacher Benefits:
The board *tentatively accepts* the last submission from VCEA to continue working on section 10 F – 15 to ensure compliance with state and federal law.

Article X. Professional Leave, Section 2:
The board *rejects* this proposal

Article VIII. Teacher Compensation Section 2: Counterproposal on the Committee, Timeline, and Resolution

- VCEA proposed:
  A. School Board will withdraw proposals about
     a. Removing seniority as the first determinant in the RIF policy, and
     b. Grievance procedure changes
- *VCEA will commit to working collaboratively next school year on*
  1. language updates that do not change the meanings of the sections,
  2. to investigate alternative structures and create examples of salary schedules, including transition planning from the current structure to any new structures,
  3. extra-curricular pay,
  4. teacher workload.
- *B. The committee shall consist of four (4) Association members chosen by VCEA , two (2) administrators, Superintendent, and two (2) board members.*
- *C. Timeline and Deadlines:*
  - *A. No later than October 1, 2026: Committee members shall be appointed and hold their first meeting.*
  - *B. By ~~May 1, 2027,~~ February 1, 2027: The committee shall issue a preliminary progress report to both negotiation parties*
  - *C. ~~January 15, 2028,~~ May 1, 2027: The committee shall submit final mutually agreed-upon recommendations for contractual changes.*
- *D. Resolution: The final recommendation shall serve as the baseline framework for negotiating a successor agreement to be implemented no later than the start of the ~~2028-29~~ 2027-2028 school year. The committee's work is not binding on either party. ~~VCEA needs to approve the agreement with its members, and the full School Board must approve the agreement~~.*

May 21, 2026, Board Proposal: Stipend and Joint Committee:

- One-Time Stipend – the Board proposes a one-time stipend of $500.00 for teachers who are currently stepped out of the salary matrix, in recognition of their experience and service. Teachers on the matrix will continue to advance to their eligible step according to the negotiated agreement. Stipend will be paid on the first payroll in September. This proposal is offered as a good-faith measure while broader compensation issues are reviewed.
- Joint Committee – the Board proposes a joint Board-Association committee to review:
  - Article VIII: Teacher Compensation and Extra-Curricular pay
  - Article VII: Teacher Workload
- Purpose – the committee will:
  - Review compensation for fairness and competitiveness
  - Evaluate extra-curricular assignments and compensation
  - Examine overall teacher workload
  - Develop recommendation for future negotiations

Structure & Timeline:

- ~~Equal representation: Board/Administration and Association~~
- ~~First meeting by September 30, 2026~~
- ~~Final Recommendation by March 1, 2027~~
- The committee shall consist of four (4) Association members chosen by VCEA , two (2) administrators, Superintendent, and two (2) board members.
- Timeline and Deadlines:

- A. No later than October 1, 2026: Committee members shall be appointed and hold their first meeting.
- B. By ~~May 1, 2027,~~ February 1, 2027: The committee shall issue a preliminary progress report to both negotiation parties
- ~~January 15, 2028,~~ May 1, 2027: The committee shall submit final mutually agreed-upon

VCEA Remarks and Counter Proposals (Lerud)

Article VIII. Teacher Compensation, Section 2. Salary Base, p 13, 14 – *Counterproposal (updated for June 4th meeting)*

- *Establish a $38,400 base salary for 2026-27 and the Board will assume 8% of the teacher's contribution to the Teacher's Fund for Retirement (back to the original).*

- A. As part of this counterproposal and if the school board will withdraw their proposals about
  - Removing seniority as the first determinant in the RIF policy,
  - Grievance procedure changes,

  VCEA will commit to working collaboratively next school year on
  1. language updates that do not change the meanings of the sections,
  2. to investigate alternative structures and create examples of salary schedules, including transition planning from the current structure to any new structures,
  3. extra-curricular pay,
  4. teacher workload.
- B. The committee shall consist of four (4) Association members chosen by VCEA , two (2) administrators, Superintendent, and a board member.
- C. Timeline and Deadlines:
  - A. No later than October 1, 2026: Committee members shall be appointed and hold their first meeting.
  - B. By May 1, 2027: The committee shall issue a preliminary progress report to both negotiation parties
  - C. January 15, 2028: The committee shall submit final mutually agreed-upon recommendations for contractual changes.
- D. Resolution: The final recommendation shall serve as the baseline framework for negotiating a successor agreement to be implemented no later than the start of the 2028-29 school year. The committee's work is not binding on either party. VCEA needs to approve the agreement with its members, and the full School Board must approve the agreement.

Lerud provided some DPI School Finance Facts – statewide average for how much staff and admin pay is the total or percent of the budget – the statewide average for teachers is 51.01% and back in February 2021 staff pay was 57.63% and now we are down to 44.99%- so a decrease in the total budget of 12.64%. We are now 6.02% less than the state average. State average of admin pay was 7.52% of the budget and in 2021 it was 6.81% and now is 14.32%- so an increase of 7.51% and are 6.8% more than the state average.

Anderson commented there is no way that number is correct, that admin did not go up times three in four years.

Lerud said even if we don't look at the admin part, the teacher portion has still gone down 12.64% and we are 6% less than the state average percent wise.

Anderson commented that is still fifth overall.

Lerud then showed a list of the positions that we have lost or been restructured.

Anderson acknowledged it and said it has not been fun.

Lerud said the board has not given an increase on the base in three years, and a stipend is not going to cut it for us to agree to that big committee next year – they will not agree to that – there has to be money on the base.

Powers mentioned that when looking at other positions that have job duties increased, maintenance, secretary roles, busing – it has been recognized in the minutes and at board meetings that their jobs have increase and they have been paid more for those jobs.

Anderson showed a working spreadsheet that allows you to enter dollar amount adjustments and view the impact to the carry over percent and to see where the fund balance ends.

Dockter commented that VCEA has started at a point and came down and the board hasn't even started.

Anderson said what came in initially was at $450,000 and that was unreasonable.

Murray commented that zero was unreasonable also.

Anderson said he acknowledged that last week but wonders if coming in at $500 would have been any better.

Dockter said $500 on the base would have been a good start.

Anderson said that would bring the carry over below 12% and we haven't accounted for the adjustments for Special Ed, Votec or admin salaries. He also noted that we need to get something to help with snow removal – which the district has taken on and saved a lot of money in doing so, but we still need to have equipment to do it.

Lerud said that she doesn't want this to happen, but she does remember when carry over was down to like 4%, and that was when we had to change insurances – not saying it needs to be that low, but a little lower to pay teachers when they haven't had an increase on the base.

Anderson mentions that we still are unsure of the property tax valuation, and he said there has been other districts who have seen a decrease in value – down 5 to 8%.

Horsager stated the board is committed to going to the state level and say that it is not okay.

Anderson said let's go to our legislators that cover Valley City, BCN, Maple Valley, and Lisbon and Enderlin and invite them to start talking about this and if they are not responsive, we go higher.

Anderson stated that he is not trying to play hardball, but it is the reality. He said there is a little room on the cash bonus, and he knows that was not their expectations. He said even a small increase to the base put the carry over lower because of everything that is tied to the base.

Dockter asked if they have discussed other ways of compensation that doesn't relate to salary? What can you do? He said that in the past they have been brought to VCEA. He noted that he is not going to say yes to a stipend.

Horsager noted that having a pizza party would not go over well.

Lerud asked what amount to the base they would be comfortable with.

At a $300 increase to the base the carry over percent would be 11.99%; Anderson commented that is close enough.

Anderson said that as of right now, they are not authorized to do anything on the base, because they knew the number would be so small and that it would get addressed next year when the committee figures out the base side.

Lerud commented that many teachers may have to sit on the old base side for a long time, so some kind of increase on the base even if it is $300 would be more enticing than cash.

Anderson reiterated they are not authorized to do anything to the base, but they are authorized to do $700 cash in September – he said he really wished it was a better story.

Lerud asked if they could go back to their board and ask if they can get the percent down to get something on the base – like $300 or $250.00.

Caucus: 7:24AM
End Caucus: 7:37AM

Lerud said that they need to look over the changes and that VCEA would like to meet again once they are authorized to offer something on the base.

Anderson said we can offer $950 or we can bring $250 on the base to the board and have that discussion – he noted that both of those would get them to basically the same dollar amount, same percent anyway.

Lerud asked about the $300, when you said it was close enough.

Anderson said that they would have to take that back to the board.

Powers wanted clarification that the $950 was just for teachers at the end of the salary matrix, so it doesn't affect everyone.

Anderson acknowledged that it was for those at the end of the matrix,

Horsager noted that the teachers on the matrix still get their step increase.

Anderson said we could do $650 for everyone, if that would be better.

Anderson said that if the board accepts $250 (or whatever number), then the joint committees that we talked about would go forward.

Lerud noted that would want equal committee, if they add another board member – they would want five association members if the board and administration equals five.

Lerud noted that she checked on the DPI numbers and that was what was reported.

Anderson said there is no way that number tripled, it must be a reporting error and that they decreased admin in the last two years.

Anderson mentioned they will have a special board meeting prior to meeting next week.

We will meet Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 7 AM.

Next meeting agenda:

1. Approval of the June 4, 2026, meeting minutes.
2. Continuation of Counter Proposals & Discussion

Next Meetings Date/Time:

- Thursday, June 11, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Adjournment:
- Time: 7:43 AM

Date: 6-11-26

SCHOOL BOARD

Shi Horsager

Valley City School Board Lead Negotiator

TEACHERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Sarah E. Lerud

VCEA Lead Negotiator