Negotiation Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 8, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 AM on Friday, May 8, 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, Tonya Breckheimer, Suzy Becker, Jess Gregerson, Jessica Enstad, Sheila Larson, and Wendy McDaniel.

Approval of the Minutes:
-Motion: Horsager motioned to approve the April 29, 2026, minutes.
-Second: Dockter seconded the motion.
-All voted in favor, motion carried.

Purpose of Meeting
-Counter Proposals and Discussion

-VCEA reviewed the School Boards Counter Proposals (Lerud):

1. One year contract for 2026-27 – *Tentative Agreement*
2. Contract language – replace any K-12 with PK-12 – *Tentative Agreement*
3. Article I. Teacher Rights, Section 1, Rights and Protection in Representation, p.3 – update out of date NDCC references (remove 15.38.1 and update to 15.1-16) – *Tentative Agreement*
4. Article I. Teacher Rights, Section 1, Required Meetings or Hearings, p.3 – add Principal – *Tentative Agreement*
5. Article IV. Teacher Evaluation/Personnel Files, Section 1. Teacher Evaluation Document, p.6 – align language with current evaluation system (Marzano Evaluation System) & update language – *Resubmit – The policy says nothing about the evaluation tool or model that is used. This section in the negotiated agreement has explained the tool that is used. It used to be a document, and now it is Marzano. If we don't update it, then it is not accurate. A committee has been used to make these decisions as long as we can remember.*
6. Article V. Transfer, Section 2. Voluntary, p. 6 – update language and add appropriate Principals – *Tentative Agreement*
7. Article V. Transfer, Section 3, Involuntary, p.7 – add seniority as the first determinant (keep references to elementary and JH/SH as they are currently structured) – *Withdraw*
8. Article VII. Teacher Workload, Section 6. Class Sizes, p 13 – add new language:
    a. PK-3 no more than 18 students
    b. Grades 4-8 no more than 22 students
    c. Grades 9-12 no more than 27 students

    Additional compensation if class size is greater than noted – *Resubmit*
9. Article VIII. Teacher Compensation, Section 2. Salary Base, p 13, 14 – establish a $40,000 base salary for 2026-27 and the Board to pay for the entire teacher share of TFFR – *Counterproposal – A salary base of $38,800 shall be established for the 2026-27 school year.*
    **As part of this counterproposal and if the school board will withdraw their proposals about 1. Removing seniority as the first determinant in the RIF policy, 2. Change class load, 3. Remove extra curriculars from the negotiated agreement, and 4. Grievance procedure changes, VCEA*

will commit to working collaboratively next school year on language updates that do not change the meanings of the sections and to investigate alternative structures and create examples of salary schedules, including transition planning from the current structure to any new structures. These examples could be brought forward to the negotiation table, but the committee's work is not binding on the either party. VCEA needs to approve the agreement with its members, and the full School Board must approve the agreement.

10. Article VII. Teacher Compensation, Section 5. Miscellaneous Compensation B., I. p 14, 15 – remove language that states teachers shall not receive personal leave for time substitute teaching – *Tentative Agreement*
11. Article VII. Teacher Compensation, Section 7. Deductions, p. 16 – remove language about professional dues – *Tentative Agreement*
12. Article X. Professional Leave, Section 2. North Dakota United President Leave, p. 22 – add North Dakota United President Leave – they will be granted a leave of absence without pay for the term of office – *Resubmit*
13. Article XII. Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 4. Copies, p. 24 – update the number of agreement copies to three (3) printed copies – *Tentative Agreement*
14. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 1. Grievance Definition, p. 25 – update language to add "or VCPS Policy" – *Withdraw*
15. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 5. Adjustment of Grievance, D., p. 27 – change the approval to the VCEA Executive Board vs the entire membership and add that if the Executive Board does not support, they can proceed but they will have to pay for the cost of arbitration on their own – *Resubmit*
16. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 7. Denial of Grievance, p. 27 – change language so that if the Board does not issue a decision within the timeline, the grievance is treated as approved – *Withdraw*
17. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 8. Arbitration Procedures, C. Selection of Arbitrators, p. 28 – correct typographical error (be to by) and change the decision of the arbitrator from advisory to binding on the parties – *Withdraw*

-Discussion items:- *Come back to at a later time*

1. Can better 403B options be explored
2. The athletic pass earned by taking tickets should still be for the employee + 1
3. Reminder about: Article IX. Teacher Benefits, Section 6. Annual Coverage, p. 18

-School Board reviewed VCEA's counter proposals (Horsager):

1. Article IV. Teacher Evaluations/Personnel Files – the district does not want to have the name of the evaluation in the negotiated agreement. Horsager noted that having the name in the negotiated agreement ties you to that evaluation tool unnecessarily. Dockter noted that the administration could meet to change the evaluations, Horsager responded that it could not be changed with the committee. Anderson said that would be the absolute worst-case possibility but can't imagine that ever happening. Murray noted that there is still an opportunity that it could.

-Horsager requested a caucus at this time – 7:10 AM (approx. 15 minutes)
-Caucus ended at 7:24 AM.

-School Board responds to VCEA (after caucus):

5. Article IV. Teacher Evaluation/Personnel Files, Section 1. Teacher Evaluation Document, p.6 – align language with current evaluation system (Marzano Evaluation System) & update language
-Lerud presented VCEA's Concerns and Response – *Decline (Not interested)*

8. Article VII. Teacher Workload, Section 6. Class Sizes, p 13 – add new language:
    a. PK-3 no more than 18 students
    b. Grades 4-8 no more than 22 students
    c. Grades 9-12 no more than 27 students

    Additional compensation if class size is greater than noted – *Decline (Not interested)*
9. Article VIII. Teacher Compensation, Section 2. Salary Base, p 13, 14 – establish a $40,000 base salary for 2026-27 and the Board to pay for the entire teacher share of TFFR – *Need further analysis – could possibly answer at next meeting*

Anderson noted that the proposed increase would be about $200K in teacher salary and the additional TFFR contribution would be approx. $150K – between the two, it would be about $350K from the general fund and doesn't know where those funds would come from, but they would take it to the board.

Anderson shared, that he knows salary is important, but he noted that when you look across the 166 districts in ND, Valley City ranks number five in total compensation. Belcourt is number one, Eight Mile is two, Ft. Totten is three and four is Mckenzie County; he also noted that Valley City doesn't have access to some federal money that other districts may receive and we do not have access to oil money. He said that compared to districts in our region, we are $20- $30K higher in total compensation.

Anderson noted that he thinks the board in the past has done a nice job of making sure teachers are fairly and well compensated.

12. Article X. Professional Leave, Section 2. North Dakota United President Leave, p. 22 – add North Dakota United President Leave – they will be granted a leave of absence without pay for the term of office – *Decline (Not interested)*
15. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 5. Adjustment of Grievance, D., p. 27 – change the approval to the VCEA Executive Board vs the entire membership and add that if the Executive Board does not support, they can proceed but they will have to pay for the cost of arbitration on their own – *Tentative Agreement*

Murray noted that people can't survive being flat (no increase), Anderson responded that he understands they want a salary increase and that is what they are trying to do by looking at and redoing the pay matrix, so it is I more workable for the district long term. It is tough to come up with extra money and pay for all the other needs in the district. Murray said he brought the idea of a the new school and savings and that the last minutes noted the savings amount was not known yet. He recalled Anderson making a video 11 months ago saying the savings would be $700K; how can it not be known? Anderson mentioned that we have not saved that money yet, nor will we next year.

Lerud brought up that it would be beneficial if the association and the board work together and go to Bismarck and talk to legislators and make them show up, and fully fund public education, and have more appropriate increases.

Murray shared that in 10 years the base has gone up 4.4% and you said there was money in the budget to give a raise, but there are strings attached. Anderson responded that this is negotiations and we have accepted eight of your proposals and we accepted another one today, so we have accepted nine and VCEA has not accepted any of the boards proposal.

Lerud commented, that VCEA feels the board proposals are takeaways, and that the negotiated agreement is things that teacher have given up, for the board to give them things. It is not a policy manual. It is their contract on what they have given up in the past to get what they have, and they are not willing to throw everything out into policy, because this is not policy, it is their contract. Lerud acknowledged that the salary at year 15 is a great number, but she noted that 42% of VCEA members have jobs over the summer and 47% have other year-round jobs, so what they have to pay monthly bills, they are struggling.

Next meeting agenda:

1. Approval of the May 8, 2026, meeting minutes.
2. Continuation of Counter Proposals & Discussion

Next Meetings Date/Time:

- Friday, May 15, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Adjournment:
- Time: 7:50 AM

Date: 05.15.25

SCHOOL BOARD

Valley City School Board Lead Negotiator

TEACHERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

VCEA Lead Negotiator