Negotiation Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 6:58 AM on Wednesday, April 22, 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, Jill Askin, Tara Glandt, and Rhonda Nudell, Kathy Lentz, Cynthia Klabo, Brian Engelhard, Angela VanBruggen, Wendy McDaniel, Tonya Breckheimer, Joelle Manlove, Ashley Kellogg, Jess Enstad, and Jordyan Heck

Approval of the Minutes:
-Motion: Lerud motioned to approve the April 15, 2026, minutes.
-Second: Murray seconded the motion.
-All voted in favor, motion carried.

Purpose of Meeting
-Exchange and Discuss Negotiation Proposals

-VCEA Lead Negotiator, Sarah Lerud, presented VCEA's 2026-27 Negotiation Proposals.

1. One year contract for 2026-27
2. Contract language – replace any K-12 with PK-12
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 Article I. Teacher Rights, Section 1, Rights and Protection in Representation, p.3 – update out of date NDCC references (remove 15.38.1 and update to 15.1-16)
4. Article I. Teacher Rights, Section 1, Required Meetings or Hearings, p.3 – add Principal
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
6. Article V. Transfer, Section 2. Voluntary, p. 6 – update language and add appropriate Principals
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)
8. Article VII. Teacher Work Load, 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
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
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
11. Article VII. Teacher Compensation, Section 7. Deductions, p. 16 – remove language about professional dues
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

13. Article XII. Miscellaneous Provisions, Section 4. Copies, p. 24 – update the number of agreement copies to three (3) printed copies
14. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure, Section 1. Grievance Definition, p. 25 – update language to add "or VCPS Policy"
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
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
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

-Discussion items:

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 President, Sherri Horsager, presented the School Boards Proposals – focus on wording, clarification, and alignment with the law – not benefit reduction

1. One year contract for 2026-2027 school year

2. Article VI. Reduction/Recall Procedure, Section 1 – proposed removal, rewording, and moving of "definition". Add budget as a basis under the Reduction Procedure. Remove, "As the first determinate, seniority, to be defined..."

   Section 2 –proposed removal and rewording of duplication
3. Article VII. Teacher Work Load, Section 1 – Proposed changes to wording – change secondary teaching assignments to thirty (30) teaching periods per week and not to exceed six (6) hours of pupil contact per day. Study hall will count towards the thirty (30) teaching periods per week. Full time secondary teacher shall be provided five (5) prep periods per week; scheduled outside of the six (6) instructional periods.
   Section 2 – proposed change to FTE scale
   - Class Assignment 1 – ½ prep period – 17% FTE
   - Class Assignment 2 – ½ prep period – 33% FTE
   - Class Assignment 3 – ½ prep period – 50% FTE
   - Class Assignment 4 – 1 prep period – 67% FTE
   - Class Assignment 5 – 1 prep period – 83% FTE

   Section 3 – proposed addition of wording – add:
   The District shall establish and implement an annual school calendar that provides, at a minimum, 962.5 hours of instruction for elementary students (K-6) and 1,050 hours of instruction for middle and high school students (7-12) each school year. The school calendar and calculation of hours of instruction shall be implemented consistent with N.D.C.C. § 15.1-06-04 and North Dakota Department of Public Instruction guidance regarding instructional time calculations.

In the event of any inconsistency between a day-based calendar description and the minimum annual hours of instruction requirements, the minimum annual hours of instruction requirements shall control.

4. Article VIII. Teacher Compensation
   Section 2 Salary Base
   a. No change to the current base salary of $37,600. The step is included in the 2025-2026 budget proposals
   Section 4 Extra Curricular – remove
   Section 5 Miscellaneous Compensation (E) – proposed language to clarify payment
   Section 6 Method of Payment – proposed change to wording
   Section 7 Deductions – proposed change to wording

5. Article IX. Teacher Benefits – sections reflect proposed wording changes to clarify, simplify and align with laws/regulations *not all wording updates are listed below*
   a. Create a General Provisions section to avoid repetition and remove all duplicate language that has now be added to General Provisions
   b. Under Medical – remove the plan name
   c. Under Sick Leave Bank – change from all faculty to eligible certified employees covered under the negotiated agreement
   d. Combine maternity, paternity, and adoption under a parental leave section
   e. Personal Leave – clean up language and simplify
   f. Legislative Leave – align with current law
   g. Military Leave – align with current law
6. Article XIII. Grievance Procedure – Section 1 – proposed definition – add Non- Grievable Matters:
   Non-Grievable Matters (Scope Limitation)
   The grievance procedure shall not be used to challenge or contest:
   1. Matters of administrative or professional judgment, except as to whether the District followed an express procedural requirement of this Agreement
   2. The substance of teacher evaluations or evaluation ratings, except as to whether the District followed an express evaluation procedure contained in this Agreement;
   3. Board policy or administrative regulations unless expressly incorporated into this Agreement
   4. Claims arising solely under state or federal law, or matters for which a specific statutory or administrative remedy exists, except that alleged violations of this Agreement may be grieved even if the same facts could also support a statutory claim
   5. Decisions reserved to the Board under statute.

   Statutory Savings Clause (No Waiver of Statutory Rights)
   Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted to waive, limit, or supersede rights or procedures provided by North Dakota Century Code, including but not limited to N.D.C.C. 15. 1-15 (teacher contracts, nonrenewal/ discharge procedures) and N.D.C.C. 15.1- 1 7 (teacher personnel files)

   Further Sections: proposed removal, addition to clarify, simplify

-Discussion Items:

- Change language to match school configuration
- The School Board proposes revising Articles as listed on Board Topics presented at the April 15th meeting. Purpose would be to eliminate duplication of definitions throughout the agreement as well as duplications of state and federal law, Board policy, and insurance contract terms. The purpose of these revisions is to improve clarity, reduce internal inconsistencies, and ensure the negotiated agreement focuses on items that are appropriately subject to collective bargaining.
- Several articles currently restate or paraphrase requirements that are already governed by:
    - North Dakota Century Code (NDCC)
    - Federal Statutes (e.g. FMLA, COBRA, IRS)
    - Insurance Carrier Contracts
    - Existing Board Policies

  Duplicating these requirements in the agreement creates unnecessary length, increases the risk of conflict when laws or policies change, and limits the district's ability to administer benefits efficiently.
- Several articles currently restate definitions that can increase risk in the event of updates or changes

-VCEA express concern over the 6 period work day and the impact on prep time.
Washington – 1200 minutes of prep time
Jefferson – 1020 minutes of prep time
JH/SH – 1390 minutes and would drop to 870 minutes

Discussion around teachers already take home work, stay late, start early. It was noted that some staff have express they would consider leaving the profession if prep time was reduced.

Discussion around school day start and end time may adjust when we move to one building in 2028-29.

-VCEA presented that the district ranked 160 out of 165 for the base salary and it was noted that SVSEU's base salary is $41,000.00
-Masters 15+ is ranked highly (3rd) on the top end

-School board noted that on total compensation the district sits at around the 95% statewide
-The matrix structure creates a large gap between base and max

-Darin shared that the SVCATC created a new salary matrix to provide room for growth without a unsustainable budget hit. He shared that staff we allowed to stay on the old matrix until it was financially better.
-Sarah noted that staff could not lose pay
-Darin mentioned that Gov. Armstrong's office put out a communication regarding budget freezes across all state agencies
-Sarah discussed that staffing has been reduced and restructured and, in the JH,/SH building along there are 20+ positions that have not been replaced, and the remaining staff are doing more work w/out pay increase
-Dallas discussed why there wasn't a line item in the budget for teacher raises, but there were items listed like a Bobcat and a school bus (the budget has not been approved)
-Darin discussed the board was open to increasing the base salary, but we would need to look at the salary matrix and make adjustments to it for district sustainability

-Sherri agreed that the board is not opposed to salary discussion, but have a group work together to look at the matrix
-School Board noted to increase pay, something else may need to be reduced, due to fixed or limited revenue
-VCEA noted that it feels like teachers must lose something to receive a raise

Next meeting agenda:

1. Approval of the April 2, 2026, meeting minutes.
2. Counter Proposals & More Discussion

Next Meetings Date/Time:

- Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at 7:00 AM

Adjournment:
- Time: 7:50 AM

Date: 04.29.26

SCHOOL BOARD

Valley City School Board Lead Negotiator

TEACHERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

VCEA Lead Negotiator