

**July Special Agenda**  
**Special Committee Meeting**

The special committee meeting of the Board of Trustees of School District #35 has been scheduled for Monday, July 16, 2007 at 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at the Gallatin Gateway School Library.

**Call to Order**

**Set Procedures for the meeting**

**Gallatin Gateway Negotiating Committee and Gallatin Gateway Education Association MEA-MFT**

- Master Agreement: Preamble through Article 32
- Master Agreement: Matrix/Salary Schedule – Appendix A

**Adjournment**

**Special Committee Meeting, Board of Trustees, Gallatin Gateway School District #35**

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Open Session

**DATE:** July 16, 2007

**TIME:** 3:30 PM

**PLACE:** Gallatin Gateway School Library

**MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:** Erik Yager, Chair  
Celia O'Connor  
Nikki Robbins

**MEMBERS**

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Kim DeBruycker, Superintendent; Carrie Fisher, District Clerk; Deb Clark, Teacher; Nora Martin, Teacher; and Tom Vanderbeck, Teacher.

**OTHERS**

**PRESENT:** None

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. by Board Chair Erik Yager.

Ms. Debbi Clark stated that the Association would like to present the Board with the following draft proposals:

**Article 8- Work Day** specifically sections 8.5, 8.7 and 8.8. The Association recommended changing all "InSPIR" to "PIR" for clarification regarding PIR days—including the title. In addition, the Association proposed wording changes in 8.5 to clarify the scheduling of PIR days. The wording proposal was to change the next to last sentence in 8.5 to read "The Board shall establish an advisory committee to make recommendations to the School Board regarding the use and scheduling of PIR days."

**Article 11- Annual Leave** specifically the number of accumulated days of leave. The Association proposed increasing the number of accumulated days of leave from sixty (60) to seventy-five (75).

**Article 11- Annual Leave** specifically Article 11.3. The Association proposal included changing the sentence to read "Determination of accumulation and/or reimbursement for the ensuing year must be made at the beginning of the current school year."

**Appendix A- Salary Schedule** The Association proposed a 6% increase to the current base salary.

**DISCUSSION OF ASSOCIATION'S PROPOSAL:**

Ms. Clark stated that the contract wording in Article 8- Work Day regarding PIR days should match current practices of the District and the District does not refer to these days as InSPIR days but rather PIR days. Mr. Yager stated that the Board would tentatively agree to make changes in Article 8- Work Day to clarify PIR days. In addition, Ms. Martin thought it may be beneficial for the contract to address the number of PIR days, because it currently reads "a minimum of six (6) days" and the District currently has seven days

Mr. Yager stated that the Board would be willing to consider increasing the number of leave days that could be accumulated under Article 11- Annual Leave, but would need to confer with Ken Mosby, Business Manager to discuss the financial liabilities and impacts for the District before the Board would agree to increase. Ms. Clark stated that increasing the number of accumulated leave days helps teachers'

retirement and assists with long-term illnesses. She explained that in the occurrence of a long-term illness it takes 90 days before disability would be available. Ms. Martin explained that the Association also added the “and/or” wording because teachers would like the ability to accumulate or be reimbursed for leave days.

Meeting was recessed for caucus at 5:12 pm. All parties returned from caucus at 5:48 pm.

### **DISTRICT'S PROPOSAL:**

Mr. Yager stated that the Board did not have a formal proposal prepared but there were a few items that he would like feedback on from the Association.

The first item that Mr. Yager asked for the Associations opinion was regarding seniority issues. Mr. Yager wondered if the Association would like to add a section in the contract that addressed seniority if a teacher were to willingly quit and then a year or two later was re-hired. He wondered if that individual would retain his/her seniority or he/she would be treated as a new hire. Mr. Yager recommended the Association address this issue because it could cause problems if the District were to ever RIF anyone in the future, which could cause confusion as to who would be RIF'd. Ms. Clark stated that the Association would research other contracts to see how others address this issue and come back to the District with a recommendation.

Mrs. O'Connor stated that the Board Attorney Elizabeth Kaleva recommended deleting Article 28 because discrimination is covered by state law and thus not needed in the contract. Ms. Martin stated that she felt Article 28 said good things about everyone involved.

Mrs. Robbins recommended changing the title of Article 15 to read “Maternity/Paternity Leave.” Ms. Clark stated that the Association would tentatively agree to change the title of Article 15 to include paternity leave.

Mr. Yager recommended that the Association consider adding wording to the contract that no anonymous letters or article can be added to someone's personnel file. Ms. DeBruycker stated that this could also be addressed in Board policy. Mr. Yager stated that he'd rather see the change in the contract rather than Board policy because if it were Board policy it could be changed by a future Board. Ms. Clark stated that the Association would consider adding wording to the contract and would research wording from other contracts to see how this issue is addressed by other agreements.

Mr. Yager asked the Association if they wanted to re-evaluate the evaluation procedure as stated under Article 9. He stated that he has heard some unhappiness from teachers that the system seems “archaic and demeaning”. Ms. DeBruycker added that the current evaluation process doesn't seem like a good use of time for veteran teachers and noted that it was great for non-tenured teacher, but seemed inappropriate for veteran teachers and questioned whether it was even beneficial to a veteran teacher. Ms. Clark stated that the evaluation procedure was changed last year because there were concerns by the Association that beginning teachers were not receiving feedback early in the year. She noted that the mentor program that is currently being developed will likely alleviate some of the Associations concerns and suggested wording be added to the contract which refers to the mentoring program as a means of providing feedback to new teachers. Mrs. Robbins stated that the Board may not be able to guarantee a mentoring program every year in their budget. Ms. Clark stated that the evaluation is definitely a work in progress and the Association is willing to look at it and make adjustments to make it work for everyone. Mr. Yager stated that he agreed that it would be best to develop a process that is beneficial and efficient for both sides.

Mr. Yager stated that the Board had been approached by the Clerk and Administrator regarding the number of people taking leave at the same time. Mr. Yager stated that at this time the Board did not want to add limiting language to the contract, but rather increase awareness among teaching staff. Mr. Yager noted that acquiring substitutes for absent teachers can be difficult and if there are more than one or two people absent from the school there may not be the best possible replacement in classrooms. Ms. DeBruycker mirrored his comments by explaining that her intention was not to deny leave requests, but rather encourage teachers to be aware of who is already out of the school at a given time and stated that if

there are two staff members that are planning a trip together there are time of the year that are better than others for acquiring adequate, qualified substitutes for classrooms. She explained that the spring is always a hard time to find substitutes and that if all teachers were conscientious of who else was out of the building it would help the Clerk. Ms. Clark stated that limiting wording could cause problems among staff members and she thought that would hurt the team atmosphere of the District. Ms. Nora stated that the Association would consider working with the staff so there is cooperation and recommended adding some wording to the handbook addressing this issue. Ms. DeBruycker suggested adding a master leave calendar in the office that would allow everyone to when others were planning on being absent. Mrs. O'Connor suggested that teachers note on the calendar if it was a day that they were flexible with or if it was a day that could not be rescheduled and then the staff could talk with other about switching or adjusting days as needed to ensure adequate coverage of classrooms.

Mr. Yager recommended that District and the Association consider adjusting the number of years in each lane on the salary matrix. He noted that when looking at other Districts Gallatin Gateway School is beyond where other schools currently end. In addition, he noted that the District and Association have discussed the importance of continuing education and have agreed that it is important for the staff at Gallatin Gateway School be well educated and continue learning new skills. Ms. Nora noted that Helena and Anderson School are getting rid of the steps and lanes systems. Ms. Clark stated that the Association agreed a few years ago to shorten the steps in the matrix, but noted that because the base is lower than other districts it affects a teachers ability to obtain credits and move over a lane. Mrs. Robbins stated that she felt it would be reasonable for a teacher to obtain ten credits in ten years, thus justifying decreasing the number of steps in each lane.

Mr. Yager suggested that the Board and Association consider starting new teachers at a BA+3. Therefore, they would be a BA+3 for year one, year two and year three. Mr. Yager noted that Manhattan District is currently doing this and he felt that it would help new teachers begin their careers and wouldn't cost the District the same as adjusting the entire matrix. He noted that on the current matrix a new teacher would move from \$24, 606.69 to \$27,116.57. Ms. DeBruycker stated that this recommendation could help her attract new employees and noted that she has already lost prospective teachers to Manhattan because of this policy. She also suggested that the bump to a BA+3 could be tied to participation in the mentor program. Mr. Yager stated that he would also recommend moving up other staff that are below the BA+3 step, but noted that it would not be retroactive because it would be a new agreement. Ms. Clark stated that the increase would be a great benefit and would also assist with the contributions to retirement for new teachers. Ms. DeBruycker recommended that everyone consider where someone that is new to the District would be placed if they came in with an MA+0, would they be placed at an MA+3 also? She recommended that the Board and Association consider this scenario when developing language.

Ms. Clark commented that she had researched the Anderson School career ladder and offered to explain it to the Board. First, Ms. Clark noted that in the career ladder a step does not mean a year of experience. She explained that all new hires at Anderson School are placed on the career ladder, but current teachers have the option between the traditional matrix and the new career ladder. She informed the Board that there are three components to career ladder movement. These include: Evaluation, Professional Development and Community Service Projects. Ms. Clark then explained each component to the Board as described to her by Ms. Paula Schultz of Anderson School.

First, Ms. Clark addressed the evaluation component. She noted that there are ten informal observations per year and one or two observed lessons for tenured teachers and two or three formal observations for non-tenured teachers. Secondly, Mr. Clark stated that Anderson School Teachers must write a Professional development plan for themselves each year to meet the professional development component of the process. She noted that Ms. Schultz stated that the District encourages teachers to be innovative and creative in their professional development plans and noted that movement does not depend on success of their professional development plan, but rather if they did it or not. Finally, Ms. Clark described the requirements involved for meeting the community service project component. She explained that this component could be fulfill by participating in any community serve project in the valley such as Habitat for Humanity, coaching a t-ball team or by being involved in an instructional committee within the district.

She noted that some teachers have one requirement a year and others have two or three—it is dependent on where they fall on the career ladder.

In addition, Ms. Clark stated that teachers that have a master's degree receive a 3% of the base increase. She also informed the Board that current teachers moving over to the career matrix are placed on the ladder at the closest step to their current salary. Mr. Yager stated that the career ladder sounds very innovative and interesting. Ms. Nora stated that developing and implementing a career ladder system at Gallatin Gateway School is probably not something that could be accomplished this year, but would be something that the District and Association could start working on for next year. Mrs. Robbins wondered what happened to those teachers that didn't meet the requirements in a year. Mrs. Clark stated that the teacher would then remain at their current step until the requirements are met by the teacher and teachers can remain there as long as needed to meet requirements. Ms. Nora recommended that professional development plans be approved by committee as criticisms are easier if they come from a peer rather than an administrator. Ms. Clark stated that Ms. Schultz provided her with a name of a man in Helena that came to their school to conduct training and provide information about the career ladder system. She also stated that Anderson School employees would be willing to come to the school and explain the process too. Mr. Yager stated that he would like to have someone come to a Board meeting and speak about the program. He also agreed with Ms. Nora and recommended that research be conducted this year, but rather develop and implement in a future year.

Meeting was recessed for caucus at 5:00 pm. All parties returned from caucus at 6:05 pm.

Ms. Martin stated that they noticed that Article 8.5 was actually referring to early release days rather than PIR Days. Board also noticed this error and recommended the following wording:

*Article 8.5 PIR Days*

- a) *A minimum of six (6) PIR (Pupil Instruction Related) days will be scheduled per school year. The Board shall establish an advisory committee to make recommendation to the School Board regarding the use and scheduling of PIR days. The committee shall include, but not be limited to, teachers, administrative personnel, and trustees. The majority of the committee shall be teachers.*
- b) *Early Release Days: Students will be released at 12:15 to allow pupil related instruction related activities for teachers from 12:45-3:15.*

Ms. Clark stated that she was under the impression that InSPIR days were actually early release days. Mr. DeBruycker noted that early release days are Board given and do not fall under the same approval and advisory committee requirements as PIR days. Ms. Clark stated that she was convinced that InSPIR was for early release days—she noted that she understood part a of the Boards recommended wording but wondered if that was all that would be said regarding early release days. Mr. Yager noted that the statement clarifies that activities conducted on early release days will commence at 12:45 allowing for more lunch time for teachers. Ms. Martin stated that it would be her recommendation to add wording that specifies the number of early release days. Mrs. Fisher asked why that was important when they are Board given days. Ms. Martin explained that they are days currently being used for report card preparation and parent-teacher conferences and that if a new Board and/or administrator came into the District they could easily take away these days that the teaching staff depends on. Mrs. O'Connor stated that the issue arises because they are currently combined into one area when they are two entirely different items of concern. She recommended adding a new section to article 8 addressing early release days. The Board offered the following revision to the Association to address Ms. Martin's concerns:

*Article 8.5 PIR Days*

*Seven (7) PIR (Pupil Instruction Related) days will be scheduled per school year. The Board shall establish an advisory committee to make recommendation to the School Board regarding the use and scheduling of PIR days. The committee shall include, but not be limited to, teachers, administrative personnel, and trustees. The majority of the committee shall be teachers.*

*Article 8.9 Early Release Days*

*A minimum of six (6) Early Release days will be scheduled per school year. On Early Release days, students will be released at 12:15. From 12:45-3:15 instruction related activities may include, but not*

*be limited to, quarterly report card preparation, parent teacher conferencing, and administrative training.*

The proposed wording will be discussed at the next meeting between the District and the Association.

Mr. Yager stated that the Board does not currently have a definitive answer to the Association's request to increase the number of leave days to be accumulated from 60 to 70, but asked the Association if there were requests that were more important than others. He elaborated that the Board would like to know where they should focus their financial considerations most—on increasing salary or increasing number of days to be accumulated or both. Ms. Clark stated that she her personal feeling was that she's like the Board to focus on getting a decent wage for new staff, primarily because much of the staff is young and it will take a long time for them to accumulate 60 days of leave. Ms. Martin stated that she agreed with Ms. Clark. Mr. Vanderbeck clarified if the Board was looking for the Association to prioritize their requests. Mr. Yager stated that was exactly what they were asking and noted that the Board was not indicating that they wouldn't consider all of their requests they just wanted to know what was most important to the Association. Mr. Vanderbeck stated that he agreed with Ms. Clark and Ms. Martin. Mr. Yager stated that he will ask Mr. Mosby to assess the financial impact of their request and get back them at the next meeting.

Mr. Yager stated that the Board would like agree to the Association's proposal for Article 11.3, but would recommend narrowing the window that individuals turn their paperwork in requesting accumulation or payout of leave days. He proposed adding the wording "... during the two days prior to the current school year." He noted that there have been problems in the past with getting individuals to make their designations and stated that appointments can be made with Mr. Mosby the two days prior to school starting to assist with the completion of the paperwork. Mr. Yager recommended that if people do not designate their choice they will be paid out for leave at the end of the year. Ms. Clark stated that Mr. Mosby's schedule is generally very tight and often times individuals have a hard time meeting with Mr. Mosby because he is usually two or three appointments behind. She didn't think it would be fair to penalize individuals because appointments run long and they other commitments that interfere with their meeting with Mr. Mosby. Ms. DeBruycker recommended that the wording remain the same and the procedures follow the policy. She noted that it would make budgeting much easier over the summer if Mr. Mosby knew who was accumulating leave or paying out leave. She also stated that individuals have 20 days to return their contract with allows plenty of time to meet with Mr. Mosby or call him with questions. Ms. Martin stated that she would agree with Ms. DeBruycker's recommendation. Ms. Clark stated that she felt it was a better solution to include the form with the contract in May or June rather than wait until August. Mrs. Robbins asked if they still wanted to add the "and/or" wording or leave it exactly how it was in the current contract. Ms. DeBruycker stated that the "and/or" wording would be good. Ms. Clark wondered if teachers could have the option to cash-out some of their banked days also. Mr. Yager stated that they are your days you should be able to cash some of them in. Ms. DeBruycker stated that she would develop a form to attach to contracts and present it at the next meeting.

Mr. Yager state that the Board feels teachers in the four to five years need frequent, timely feedback but others should have a choice as to whether they want a formal evaluation or not. Ms. Nora stated that the Association would be willing to work with Ms. DeBruycker to develop a plan this year to implement next year. Mr. Yager asked if there was a way to add any wording now that would allow for some flexibility for veteran teachers. Mrs. Robbins recommended adding some wording from GGS Policy #5222. Ms. Clark stated that the Association would be willing to consider developing wording that would allow for flexibility for veteran teachers. Ms. Clark asked if the Board would like the Association to write something up about evaluations. Mr. Yager stated that it would be great if the Association would develop something more flexible and bring it to the next meeting.

Mr. Yager proposed decreasing lanes in the salary matrix as follows: lane one decreased by three years, lane two decreased by three years, lane three decreased by three years, lane four decreased by two years, lane five decreased by two years and lane six remaining the same. He also noted that this proposal was in conjunction with starting new teachers at a BA+3. Ms. Clark clarified that lane one would be at nine years. Mr. Yager stated that lane one would be nine years, lane two would be 12 years, lane three would be

14 years, lane four would be 17 years, lane five would be 18 years and lane six would remain at 20. Ms. Clark stated that the Association would consider and bring an answer back to the next meeting.

Mr. Yager noted that the Board did not have an answer for the Association on their request for a salary increase of 6% at this time, but would have something for them at the next meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for 3:30 pm on Monday, July 23, 2007 in the Gallatin Gateway School Library.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Erik Yager, Board Chair

Carrie Fisher, District Clerk