**Mandan Public School District Board Member Orientation March 1, 2022**

1. **What is my role as a school board member?**

The school board is created by law to maintain public schools within a given school district. Individual board members exercise their authority only when the board is actually in session and not individually outside of the board meeting. Decisions and policies of the board are agreed on only in official board meetings, and individual members should not commit the board to any action except as authorized by the board at a legal board meeting (NDSBA Handbook for New Board Members).

1. **What do I need to know about open meeting laws?**

All school board meetings and all committee meetings of the school board are open to the public. All meetings must be open (NDCC 15.1-07-21); however, portions of open meetings

may be closed to address certain matters. Executive (or closed) sessions are only permitted for the following reasons:

1. Nonrenewal and discharge procedures as covered in NDCC 15.1-15-06,

15.1-15-08, 15.1-14-06, and 15.1-14-10

1. To instruct negotiators or meet with an attorney when the board may reasonably predict that it may be involved in litigation as permitted in NDCC 44-04-19.1.
2. To discuss student educational records, including health and medical

information contained therein in accordance with the Family Educational Records Privacy Act (FERPA)

1. To consider suspension or expulsion of a student as permitted by FERPA and ND Attorney General’s Opinion No. 94-28
2. To discuss employee medical records as outlined in NDCC 44-04-18.1
3. When hiring to determine three or more finalist for a position as outlined in NDCC 44-04-18.27

Any time a school board is in executive session a recording of the session is made and kept for possible review by the ND Attorney General.

All handouts and materials used by the Board in an open meeting are public documents.

All emails sent and received by school board members that deal with school business are a public record. This is the case even if you are using a private email account. It is advised not to have discussions about school business via email, text, phone, or in person with other board members outside of an open meeting.

**3. Does the Mandan School Board have a Strategic Plan?**

The Mandan School Board has a Strategy Map that has three Goal areas: Student Achievement, Facilities and Finance, and Policy & Personnel. Each of these goal areas is a Committee of the Board with three school board members serving on each committee. All three committees also have representatives from the classified staff, the certified staff, the administrative staff, students, and the community at large. Each committee sets strategies or objectives that it wants to work towards and chooses which data it will use to track progress toward achieving that goal. Committee minutes are included in the consent agenda of the full school board meeting so board members can read and know what other committees are doing. Committees forward recommendations to the full board for action. The strategic plan can be found here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a65A-Uksnwcgy8F52FSWZnnFp4E9GPUR/view>

1. **Who hires and fires teachers?**

Teachers are interviewed by hiring committees put together by the principal in the building in which they will teach? A request to hire is then forwarded onto the full school board for approval.

Teachers are evaluated by building principals. Teachers who are not performing satisfactorily are put on an improvement plan with clear expectations. If satisfactory improvement is not made on the improvement plan, a teacher can be brought before the board for the purpose of non-renewing their contract. This needs to occur between March 15th and April 21st of each year. The principal will make their case for dismissal and the teacher will be given an opportunity to defend themselves. This hearing will be closed to the public and recorded in an executive session. Once all testimony is complete, a vote of the school board members will be taken in an open public meeting either dismissing the teacher or renewing their contract.

1. **Who hires and fires classified staff?**

Classified staff members are hired by hiring committees put together by the building principal or program supervisor in the building/program in which the individual will work. The superintendent or his/her designee can dismiss classified staff members. Although coaches are often licensed teachers, they can be dismissed by the superintendent or his/her designee. In other words the school board is not directly involved in the hiring or firing of classified staff.

1. **What employees does the Board hire and evaluate?**

The only employees that the school board directly hires are the superintendent and business manager. By law the board is required to evaluate the superintendent twice every year. A formative evaluation needs to be completed before Nov. 15th and a summative evaluation needs to be done before March 15th. Traditionally each board member completes an evaluation of the superintendent and then all nine evaluations are compiled into one document. The Board president and vice president meet with the superintendent to discuss the evaluation before the full board meets to accept the evaluation.

The Mandan School Board currently delegates their evaluation of the business manager to the superintendent.

In the past, the Board has also done a self-evaluation every other year, where each member evaluates how well the board works together and how effective the school board was in accomplishing the goals it set.

1. **What do I do when a patron bring a complaint to me about a school issue?**

It is best to redirect them to board policy for handling complaints. Mandan School Board Policy “KL - Public Complaints” states that complaints should be resolved as close to their origin as possible. If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved at that level, the complaint shall be directed to the proper channel which will be as follows: School Employee/Teacher, Principal or Program Manager, Superintendent. If the decision is still not agreeable to parties involved, a hearing may be requested in front of an appropriate subcommittee of the Board as appointed by the Board President.

1. **Is the same policy followed for complaints about school personnel?**

No, in order to minimize the risk of liable and slander and to retain the impartiality of the school board should the teacher ever come before the board for a non-renewal hearing, a separate policy details the procedure for complaints about personnel. Mandan School Board Policy “KACB – Patron Complaints about Personnel,” outlines the procedure that is to be followed. The same process is followed except that when the complaint is about personnel, the superintendent’s decision is final. The person with the complaint is not able to appeal the superintendent’s decision to the full school board or a committee of the board.

1. **Does the Mandan Public School District have an Organization Chart that outlines the chain of command?**

The MPS District Organizational Chart is included at the end of this document. The organizational chart clearly defines the chain of command in the District.

1. **As a Board member what should I do if I have a complaint about a teacher or a coach?**

Regardless of your elected position, you are still a parent and patron of the Mandan School District. You have all the rights and privileges that every other parent and patron in the Mandan School District has. You should follow the chain of command and begin by setting up a meeting with the teacher or coach.

1. **Where can I find a copy of the Mandan School District Policies?**

Mandan School Board Policies are located online at the following link <https://www.mandan.k12.nd.us/en-US/school-board-70834dde/board-policies-click-to-view-e8dc3d2a> It takes two readings of a policy by the school board for the policy to become official. Most policies approved by the school board do not take effect until July 1st. The Mandan School Board subscribes to “Policy Services” through the North Dakota School Boards Association. The NDSBA provides policy suggestions and legal advice to the District as part of this service.

1. **How do I go about adding an item to the school board agenda?**

According to Mandan School Board Policy “BCBD – Board Meeting Agenda and Dissemination,” any school board member, staff member, or citizen of the district, may suggest items of business for the school board. However, the inclusion of such items shall be at the discretion of the superintendent and Board President. Often times before an item is placed on the board agenda, it will be referred to one of the three school board committees for study and a recommendation.

1. **What should I do if I have a conflict of interest on an issue?**

Mandan School Board Policy “BHA – Board Member Conflict of Interest,” defines a conflict of interest as the personal, professional, or financial interest of an individual, the individual spouse or relative, or the individual’s business or professional associate. When a conflict of interest is found to exist, the member of the board may not participate in any discussion or votes regarding the agreement without the consent of all other board members.

1. **Is the Mandan School District gaining of losing students?**

Since 2007-2008, the Mandan School District has grown by over 1,100 students. This equates to a 33.6% increase in enrollment. During the 2019-2020 school year, the Mandan School District contracted with RSP, Inc. to do enrollment projections through the 2024-2025 school year. Those projections are pasted below. K-12 enrollment as of 2/25/22 is 4,158.



1. **Why don’t all schools receive Title 1 Services?**

Title 1 is a federal program designed to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on state assessments. Title 1 funding is based on school poverty counts (the number of children who qualify for free and reduced lunches). For a school to qualify for Title 1 services the number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunches in that school must be higher than the District average. In Mandan we currently have five schools that receive Title 1 services; Custer, Mary Stark, Roosevelt, Lewis & Clark & Mandan Middle School.

1. **What do I need to know about Food Service?**

The Mandan School District participates in the National School Lunch Program which means that we are required to follow their rules. This means that we need to limit sodium, use whole grains, and monitor calories in every meal served. In return we receive a federal reimbursement for each student meal served. Adult meals are not subsidized and therefore they are required to be $0.50 more expensive than our highest priced student meal.

The Mandan Child Nutrition Program is self-supporting. The program does not receive any general fund dollars from the Mandan School District. *During the 2020-21 & 2021-22 school years, the federal government allowed all students to eat breakfast and lunch at no charge.* Students can still be charged for al-a-carte items.

1. **How Does the ND State School Funding Formula Work?**

The ND school funding formula is a state and local partnership. The formula is designed to make sure that all pupils, regardless of the wealth of their community, have an equal amount of dollars available to support their education. In 2021-2022 that per-pupil guarantee is $10,136 per pupil. Local school districts are expected to levy 60 mills in their general fund. The state will then “fill in the gap” between whatever dollars are raised locally as a result of the 60-mill levy in order to ensure that each district has $10,136 available to spend on each pupil. The per-pupil payment is different for every school district in the state. Below is how this partnership looked for Mandan is 2021-2022.

2021-2022 State Per Pupil Guarantee $10,136

State Assumed Local Contribution -$ 2,091

Total State per-pupil Payment to Mandan $ 8,045

1. **What is the Mandan School District budget?**

The 2021-22 general fund **revenue** budget is $64,757,928 The 2021-22 general fund **expenditure** budget is $64,348,117

**Proposed 2021-22 Surplus** $ 409,812

1. **Does the Mandan School District have a reserve fund or carryover dollars?**

A few years back the Mandan School Board set a goal to carryover 12%-13% of its expenditure budget each year. On June 30, 2021, the end of the fiscal year MPSD had a balance of $7,960,763.61. This is 15% of the projected expenditure budget.

1. **What do I need to know about negotiations?**

Traditionally, MPS negotiates with the union representing the Mandan teachers, the Mandan Education Association (MEA), every other year just after the legislative session ends. In 2021, Rick Horn, Tim Rector, and Jeff Fastnacht were the negotiation team for the Mandan School Board. A two-year agreement was reached so we will not need to negotiate with our teachers again until April/May of 2023.

If during negotiations the school board and teachers cannot reach an agreement, impasse can be declared. If this happens a three member fact finding commission, appointed by the Governor, comes in to make a recommendation on how to move forward. This recommendation is non-binding. In other words, the school board can issue contracts based on their last best offer to the teachers if they choose not to accept the fact-finding commission’s recommendations.

The school board also negotiates with the Mandan School Administrators (principals, activities director, special ed. director, etc…). These negotiations are usually much simpler and less contentious than teacher negotiations

As a district we do not negotiated with classified staff. The board sets their wages at a level that it considers to be fair and in line with the market. Traditionally the three-member team that negotiated with the teachers, meets and looks at comparable data, and comes to the full school board with a recommendation for where to set the classified wages for the upcoming year.