

Manitowoc Public School District  
Manitowoc, Wisconsin

Board of Education Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes  
May 28, 2015

The Manitowoc Public School District Personnel Committee met on Thursday, May 28, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. Committee members Dave Nickels and Linda Gratz were both present. Committee member Barbara Herrmann was absent. Superintendent Marcia Flaherty, Business Director Ken Mischler and Human Resources Director Andrea Holschbach were present for Administration.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

**1. Discussion of Potential Changes to Teacher Handbook Language**

We discussed the recommended language changes in the Teacher Handbook.

- **Health and Dental Insurance %.** The handbook still states the Board will pay 84% of monthly health insurance premiums for employees who do not participate in the most recent HRA. We need to change that to 80% if they and their spouse do not participate. The Board voted on this earlier this year.
- **Health and Dental Insurance Duration.** Administration recommended changing the duration of coverage if someone leaves during the year. The insurance would end the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month if the employee left between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and would end at the end of the month if they left after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Dave Nickels expressed that he saw this as a penalty and he also did not want employees to stay another couple of weeks just to get insurance and then not want to really be there. He suggested that we discuss it more during the Non-Teacher Handbook language changes since the same wording was being proposed there too.

- **Retirement at end of school year.** We would like to clarify that teachers are retiring at the end of the school year. This is not clearly stated in the handbook. Right now it just says that teachers need to notify us by March 15 of the school year preceding their retirement in order to qualify for the retirement benefits. We have had a few teachers who have wanted to retire midyear and claimed that the handbook (and that would have been true of the collective bargaining agreement as well) does not clearly state that the retirement has to be at the end of the year. That has always been our intention and the way we have always administered the retirement benefits i.e. that a teacher needs to retire at the end of the school year. There have been times that the Board has made an exception i.e. medical needs, etc. but this is truly an exception. We would like to add the clarification so there is no confusion.
- **The term "Retirement".** We changed the wording in the Administrator handbook to move away from "retirement" benefits. We changed the wording to "post-employment". The requirements are still the same as they have been i.e. 15 years of service and at least 55 years old.
- **Part-Time Post-Employment Benefits.** The retirement section also references that retirement benefits are for regular, full-time teaching positions. We also give retirement benefits to part-

time teachers. We should change wording to reflect actual practice. Part-time teacher's benefits are pro-rated based on the % of employment.

- **Probationary.** Our handbook still refers to "probationary status" and there is no such thing anymore.
- **Evaluation Schedule.** Evaluations section needs to be changed to teachers will be evaluated for the first **two** years (instead of three) with the District and at least once every three years thereafter. This is based on the evaluation policy that was voted on by the Board this year.
- **Non-renewals.** In the Non-renewal section we should add that the "Non-renewal process is only applicable for full-time employees per Wisconsin Statute 118.22". This is the law but it would clarify it by including it in the teacher handbook.
- **Reductions in Staff and Insurance Coverage.** In Reduction in Staff section it still references the employee will receive 89% District paid health and dental insurance through August 31. This is actually 88% now and could be less if the employee did not participate in HRA. We are recommending taking out the reference to the percentage and just say "the employee will receive the District's pro-rated share of the paid health and dental..." to reflect actual practice. this way we do not need to keep updating this section as the %'s change.

Administration explained to the Committee that we met with the Teacher's Union leadership May 11<sup>th</sup> and there were no issues with the suggested handbook languages.

## **2. Discussion of Potential Changes to Non-Teacher Handbook Language**

- **Health and Dental Insurance.** The handbook still states the Board will pay 84% of monthly health insurance premiums for employees who do not participate in the most recent HRA. We need to change that to 80% if they and their spouse do not participate. The Board voted on this earlier this year.
- **Health and Dental Insurance Duration.** Currently our non-teacher handbook states, "Employee who resign or retire their employment will have coverage through the end of the month of their last day worked." We have had employees give their last day worked as the first of the month in order to have coverage for that entire month at the employee rate. This is a \$1,384.86 cost for health and \$98.48 cost for dental to the district with the employee only working one day that month. Administration recommended changing the duration of coverage if someone leaves during the year. The insurance would end the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month if the employee left between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and would end at the end of the month if they left after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Also, if a 10 month employee leaves at the end of the school year they would have coverage for all of June.

That was more lengthy discussion around this topic with Dave Nickels expressing again that he saw this as penalizing the employee and he did not want employees to stay another couple of weeks just to get insurance and then not want to really be there.

- **Resignation and insurance coverage.** We would like to add that a non-teacher 10 month employee needs to come back to work for the month of September in order to have coverage for July and August. We have had an employee try to come back to work for a couple of days at the beginning of the school year and then resign in order to get the benefit of July, August and September coverage. We have said that was not our intent by the language reading "coverage through the end of the month of their last day worked". That would be a three month benefit

for someone only working a few days. More importantly it is not good for the school to have that transition and have to hire right at the beginning of the school year. It is best for the school to have that non-teacher 10 month employee leave at the end of the previous school year or if they are going to come back for the next school year to at least stay through the month of September at a minimum to help with a smooth transition/continuity for the beginning of the school year.

- **Break time change.** The non-teacher handbook currently gives non-custodial staff working 4 but less than 6 hours, one 15 minute break and employees working 6 or more hours, two 15 minute paid breaks. Our custodial group receives one 15 minute break. We would like to change this to all employees who work 4 or more hours receive one 15 minute break. We would like to propose this change because we feel that 15 minute paid break for employees working 4 or more hours is a sufficient break time and employees who work 5 or more hours also receive a 30 minute lunch break. Employees always have the ability to use the rest room when needed. Our environment is much different than a factory where you cannot leave your work area. Administration did a survey with area districts and discovered that Neenah, Kaukauna, Kimberly did not give any breaks. There were many districts that gave one break after 4 hours and for those districts that did give a second break the majority of them only offered that second break to staff working 8 hours. The majority of our staff working 8 hours has the flexibility in their schedule to take a break when needed/desired. We do not feel a need to make a second break as part of our language.

Administration explained to the Committee that we met with Paraprofessionals April 28<sup>th</sup> at ERC about handbook language changes and then again May 19<sup>th</sup> as a follow-up. They said that some people may have a problem with the "break" language change but they did not think that there were too many people actually taking two 15 minute breaks. We also met with the Non-Rep group on May 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss the proposed language changes. The only question from that group regarding the language changes was why someone needed to work September in order to receive July and August benefits. When the reasoning was explained regarding the smooth transition to the beginning of the school year the group seemed to understand.

There was still concern expressed by the personnel committee regarding insurance stopping at the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month versus the end of the month.

There was a motion by Linda Gratz and seconded by Dave Nickels to approve the language changes at the committee level and move them forward to the full Board with the reference to insurance stopping at the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month versus the end of the month removed from the proposed language changes. Please refer to attached language changes in the Teacher and Non-Teacher handbook with that reference removed. We will keep the current wording that insurance ends at the end of the month of the last day worked.

There was a motion by Linda Gratz and seconded by Dave Nickels to adjourn. There was a unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.