

GEORGE-LITTLE ROCK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

The George-Little Rock Board of Education committee representatives and George-Little Rock Education Association (GLREA) representatives met for initial proposals on Monday, March 31, 2025, in the community room in the GLR central office building in George at 4:30 pm. Those in attendance were Board members Austin Lloyd and Andrew Sprock, School Business Official Cathy Bonestroo, Superintendent Amanda Miller joining electronically, and GLREA representatives Ben McCray, Valecia West, Kim Dykstra, and Melissa Schroeder. Lloyd thanked everyone for taking the time to meet and recognized good amicable tone set in the past and wants it to continue and expressed appreciation for often a thankless job noting regardless of the outcome we are all on the same team and have had good positive wage increases for teachers.

McCray presented the GLREA initial proposal recognizing the proposal is from the association but representing all staff from meetings, emails and conversations held including with teachers who are not part of the union. GLREA proposal was to adjust the salary schedule increments from \$200 increments per year to \$1000 increments per year based on staff feedback of not enough incremental increases with the example shared of an 11 year teacher being moved from \$49,700 to \$61,000. This recognized the state minimum required increases to the new base wage of \$50,000 (a \$2500 increase) for a new teacher and 12 year teachers to \$62,000 (a \$2000 increase) along with minimal changes to the educational lanes. It was also recommended to remove the salary schedule for those over 25 years placing all at step 25 changing in the future to a longevity increase instead of agreed upon step minimum. Proposal resulted in at least a 4.5% increase for all full-time teachers. McCray recognized his understanding and valuing the solid financial stability of the district recognizing the hard work done financially to enable the increases in the past but also recognizing the enrollment decline of over 40 students and sharing the fluctuations over the past 10 years and believed the ability to absorb the costs for the district for at least one year with budget guarantee understanding 2nd year may be a concern. The district maintains a steady unspent balance ensuring enrollment decline can be absorbed.

Discussion was held that negotiations discussion is on base wage and the state funding for TSS is to bring to the state minimums. Total costs for proposed salary schedule for teachers over last year's costs for wages only McCray estimated at \$200,000 with vacant positions replaced with new staff at cost of \$50,000. Package costs were discussed for new teachers is just under \$67,000 with benefits. Most area districts do not have a salary schedule and did not increase all staff as GLR did the previous year with raises and costs significant. Miller shared GLR goal is to be financially stable and sound for decades into the future with current path with concern of over 40 student decrease giving funding of approximately \$35,000 for next year with not recouping 40 students resulting in minimum \$180,000 budget cuts in the following year.

After a brief break, Lloyd presented enrollment information and the high costs of open enrollment impacting the district including online schooling and the net new money and decreasing enrollment projections with continued decreases over the next 4 years projected with budget guarantee for only 1 year and the competitiveness and differentiation of raising all teacher salaries significantly last year including the estimated budget costs. Consecutive years of decreased enrollment is a concern for future position or program cuts if not aware of increase limitations and impacts. PLC time continued positive impact has been noted and expressed more personal commitment needed to PLC time and the high absence rate is a concern with not following no leave time on PLC days. The board's commitment towards the work environment and culture and facility assessment are a big piece with supportive environment and recognizing and appreciating roles. Lloyd presented the initial proposal from the district. Steps cannot be changed for the district sustainability with annual increments to remain at \$200. Proposal included salary schedule increases for Tier I (0–11 years experience) of \$2500, Tier II (12–19

years experience) of \$2000, and Tier III (over 20 years experience) at \$500. The resulting pay raises would be Tier I of \$2700, Tier II \$2200 raise, and Tier III \$700 raise.

Discussions were held that GLR can weather a few years of significant enrollment loss due to our financial stability but awareness is needed to make adjustments to maintain and want to avoid future cuts. Fund balance allows us to maintain through the rough years with leaner next few years with reasons for optimism in the future. Significant raises were given last year but recognition that state funding needs to follow and was not given for all increases. Base wage will be reviewed in the future for all increases. Negotiations continued for just over 4 hours. Counter proposals with Tier III proposal presented for \$1100 schedule increase resulting in \$1300 raise. Tier I and Tier II were in agreement, but Tier III needs further discussions. Next meeting was set for April 7, 2025 at 6:00 pm.