

April 3, 2025

Rev 1.0

Memorandum of Understanding

This memorandum of understanding is between the Bigfork Area Education Association and the Bigfork School District.

Background

- House Bill 252 also known as the Student and Teacher Advancement for Results and Success Act (STARS Act) is expected to modify MCA 20-9-324.
- The STARS Act proposes additional funding for districts that meet the legislative goal for base teacher pay under 20-9-324, consisting of the greater of the following two criteria:
 1. Teacher base pay shall be equal to 11 times the quality educator payment (starting at \$41,613 for the 2025-26 school year, \$42,863 for the 2026-27 school year and as increased thereafter from year to year as the quality educator payment rises).
 2. 62% of the average teacher pay from the previous fiscal year in fiscal year 2026. This minimum percentage is scheduled to increase under HB 252 by 2% per year until it is capped at 70% for 2030 and onward.

Section 18 of HB 252 provides that a district must provide a written commitment compliance before the effective date of the act or May 15, whichever is later, to receive the additional funding for the 2025 -26 school year.

The parties agree to the following:

A) Salary Matrix Adjustment Provision

The existing salary matrix shall continue to be in effect for all cells, except for the following modifications:

For the 2025-26 school year, the district shall ensure that “base teacher pay”, for the district, as defined in 20-9-324, MCA, is at least the amount necessary to meet the legislative goals for teacher base pay, in accordance with the provisions of 20-9-324, or is at least sixty two percent (62%) of the “teacher average pay”, as defined in 20-9-324, MCA, whichever is greater.

B) Additional Funds

If the funds received by the district for an extra quality educator payment under 20-9-324 exceed the costs of meeting the teacher base pay incentive in 20-9-324, the district and the union agree that 55% of the funds above the cost of compliance will be allocated and pledged toward further increasing the compensation for all teachers included in this agreement.

The cost of steps and lanes in 2025-26 is \$115,866, leaving \$42,819 for the parties to allocate next year.

Negotiations and salary changes regarding such increases must result in continued compliance with the provisions of 20-9-324.

The anticipated amounts are as follows:

- Quality Educator/Staff payment increase: \$291,910
- Anticipated cost of compliance: \$ 3,392
- Anticipated net increase: \$288,518
- 55% of net increase: \$158,685
- Cost of steps and lanes: \$115,866
- Remaining amount to be distributed: \$ 42,819

Effect

All other terms and conditions shall remain in full force and effect as written.

The parties recognize that extracurricular activities, compensation and all other terms and conditions, will be open to further negotiation during the regular bargaining process.

Term

This agreement will take effect immediately and will continue for one year (expiring June 30, 2026).

In the event HB252 fails to pass or is modified beyond the terms expressed herein this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) shall become null and void.

Signed this ____ day of _____ 2025.

For the Union  4/18/25

For the District