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Excellence in North Dakota public education through local school board governance ■ VOL XXXVI ISSUE 4

Analysis of Final Federal 2011 Budget

This article provides an analysis of the recently passed federal appropriations bill that will fund the remaining six months of the current fiscal year. It reduces funding a total of \$38 billion across federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education.

In addition to specific cuts summarized below, elementary and secondary education programs are subject to an additional 0.2 percent across-the-board cut. The law directs the Department of Education and other agencies to submit in-depth expenditure or operating plans to the Congressional Appropriations Committee by mid-May. Therefore, exact funding levels for programs, including Title I grants, special education, and Impact Aid, may not be available until that time.

While the law specifically continues funding for newer competitive grant programs and provides increases for early childhood education, it reduces and eliminates funding for many education programs used widely in North Dakota.

Increases to new and existing programs

Specifically, \$700 million is provided for another round of Race to the Top

competitive grants to states. It is unlikely that North Dakota would ever qualify for any of this grant money.



The law also creates a new grant program for "improving early childhood care and education" that will be administered jointly between the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Grants would be available to states to help create and improve high-quality early learning programs and services. It is not clear if North Dakota schools would be eligible for these grants since the state does not provide for early childhood programs in public schools.

Other program increases include \$150 million for another round of grants under the Investing in Innovation (i3) Fund, a \$20 million increase for Promise Neighborhoods grants, and a \$340 million increase for Head Start.

Specified reductions to current programs

- \$475 million reduction to Teacher Quality State Grants
- \$138 million reduction to Career and Technical Education grants, which may include the

elimination of the Tech Prep component that supports a transition from high school to postsecondary institutions

- \$79 million reduction to Safe and Drug-Free Schools National Programs
- \$15 million reduction to English Language Acquisition grants
- \$10 million reduction to School Improvement grants

Programs specifically eliminated

- Enhancing Education through Technology state grants (\$100 million)
- Smaller Learning Communities (\$88 million)
- Striving Readers program (\$250 million)
- Arts in Education (\$40 million)
- Even Start, which helps integrate early childhood education, adult education, and parenting programs (\$66.5 million)
- Reading is Fundamental (\$24.8 million)

It is interesting to note that multiple grants--worth hundreds of millions of dollars--that were available to **all** schools that met requirements of

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Post-Legislative Meetings

NDSBA and NDCEL will be holding legislative wrap-up meetings beginning May 4, 2011. The purpose of these meetings is to inform board members, administrators, and business managers about new laws that affect public schools. You are invited to attend any meeting that fits your schedule. In addition, the Bismarck meeting will be digitally recorded and posted online for viewing at a later date.

Superintendents will receive a letter with exact locations. Following is the **tentative** schedule of meetings:

May 4	6:30 p.m.	Fargo Public Schools
May 11	6:30 p.m.	Minot Public Schools
May 12	6:30 p.m.	Bismarck Public Schools

■ FEDERAL BUDGET

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the programs have been reduced or eliminated, but the law provides \$900 million in new funding for competitive grants for which North Dakota schools will likely never qualify. It is an unfortunate shift in funding priorities for small rural states. It would be so much better for local school districts if the federal government concentrated its appropriations on currently underfunded, federally mandated programs such as special education. This would free up billions of state and local dollars currently used to comply with federal law.

Congressional debate has already begun on the budget for fiscal year 2012 and even more drastic cuts are being proposed. These budget talks will be occurring simultaneously with discussions about reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

NDSBA advises districts to check with the Department of Public Instruction before budgeting for planned federal money.

bulletin

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from the director's chair

■ by Jon Martinson, NDSBA Executive Director

Teachers Selected for Fellowship to Germany Study/Tour

NDSBA is delighted to be invited, once again, to coordinate a study/tour of Germany for social studies teachers. The trip is scheduled for June 18-28. Cities in this year's tour include Frankfurt, Bonn, Cologne, and Berlin.

The following teachers from around North Dakota have been selected from a competitive application process:

- Brian Filibeck, Richardton-Taylor High School
- Jason Ingersoll, Community High School (Grand Forks)
- Brent Jiran, Schroeder Middle School (Grand Forks)
- Sarah Lacher, Fargo South High School
- Larry Lasch, Wahpeton High School
- Jennifer Mastel, Nathan Twining Middle School (Grand Forks Air Base)
- Brett Mayer, Magic City Campus (Minot)
- Rod Merkel, Beach High School

- Michael Netzloff, Century High School (Bismarck)

The all-expense paid study tour is sponsored by Atlantik-Brucke, a Berlin-based nonpartisan organization that seeks to strengthen understanding of Germany in the United States. NDSBA and the Department of Public Instruction are cooperating partners. We appreciate supplemental funding provided by the 2009 Legislative Assembly.

Atlantik-Brucke study trips are designed for teachers in the United States responsible for teaching about German history including the Holocaust but who may have little knowledge of Germany since the end of the Nazi regime in 1945. During the intense ten-day trip, teachers are scheduled to tour historic sites and visit with important business and political leaders as well as historians, teachers, and students. As a result, participants' knowledge is broadened with information about Germany's post-war development, the division between East and West, unification, and contemporary Germany's role in the larger European community.

Dropout Prevention Summit

The Third Annual North Dakota Dropout Prevention Summit will be held June 8-9 at Bismarck State College. Board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and other child advocates are encouraged to attend.

Author, educator, and coach Rachel Simmons will address *Bullying* on June 8. *Action Planning for Dropout Prevention* is on the agenda for June 9.

High school graduation is

imperative in the 21st Century. Because of educational, societal, or family situations, it takes intensive, multifaceted interventions to assist some students to graduation. This summit will address successful plans to reduce dropout rates. To download a registration form, go to: www.readychild.org and scroll to the bottom of the page. For more information, contact Mark Berntson at berntson@west-fargo.k12.nd.us.

2011 Legislative Session Coming to a Close

The 2011 Legislative Session is coming to a close as this *Bulletin* goes to print. Ideological and political clashes between the two chambers, as well as within caucuses, stretched the Session very close to the 80-day limit. Disagreements seemed to concentrate in areas of taxation and spending levels; reducing authority of the executive branch, state agencies, and local political subdivisions; and putting legislators on record with regard to social and religious issues. Education policy was dragged into most of these debates.

Several bills passed that require school districts to adopt policies, programs, and curriculum that address trends in societal and student behavioral issues. These include:

HB1215 requires districts to conduct “lockdown” drills in their buildings.

HB1248 enrolls North Dakota in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, which provides special considerations for transferring military students.

HB1465 requires districts to adopt a prescriptive anti-bullying policy including definitions, investigations, consequences, victim protection, and prevention programs. While everyone agrees that bullying behavior has increased--particularly through electronic media--guaranteeing prevention and 24-7 protection from its affects is a very tall order for public schools. NDSBA will be developing a

model policy that will allow districts to be in compliance with the new law in the most practical way possible.

SB2226 requires schools to report truancy based on a prescribed set of definitions and to address rates.

SB2281 requires concussion training for coaches, trainers, officials, and other supervisors of athletic activities. It also requires medical attention for athletes who sustain a blow to the head and medical permission in order to return to play. Training can be accomplished free of charge online. This is a wellness issue receiving increased attention nationwide.

School districts are also impacted by legislation regarding property tax relief grants and taxing authority including the following bills:

HB1047 provides property tax relief grants to districts for the purpose of lowering property tax payments of district residents. A great deal of time and effort was spent in committee work to address specific problems caused in some districts by rising valuations or being frozen at their 2008 levy for computation of grants. Each potential solution created a different set of “winners and losers.” In the end, the decision was to leave the grant program basically the same as current law. The bill does amend the law to provide that a grant to a school district may not exceed the grant to that district in the preceding school year by a percentage that is more than the percentage increase in statewide taxable valuation in the previous taxable year.

HB1194 requires political subdivisions to hold a public hearing

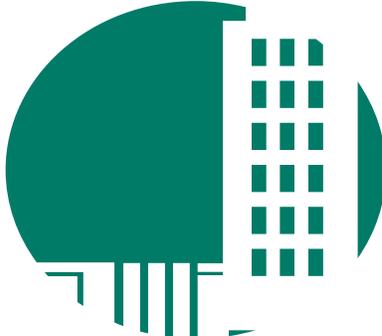
if their proposed property tax levy will produce more revenue than their levy in the prior year--excluding consideration of new growth. The public hearing must be advertised in a very specific way in their official newspaper at least seven days before the hearing. The advertisement must include:

- Date, time, and place of the public hearing
- Statement that the public hearing will be held to consider increasing the property tax levy by a stated percentage, expressed as a percentage increase over what their current number of mills would have raised in the previous year
- Statement that there will

be an opportunity for citizens to present oral or written comments

Districts should read HB1194 carefully to ensure compliance with the law. While this is a new requirement for school districts, other political subdivisions have been required to hold public budget hearings for a long time. This bill was presented as an alternative to multiple bills that would have limited valuation or budget growth and require districts to put their budgets on the ballot for voter approval. Given those alternatives, HB1194 does not seem so onerous.

SB2150 (education policy), **SB2013** (DPI budget), **HB1134** (TFFR), and **HB1229** (abstinence education) had not come to the floor of the House and Senate for a final vote when this issue went to print. The May *Bulletin* will include a summary of these bills. For a final summary of legislative action, check NDSBA’s Legislative Newsletter at: www.ndsba.org.



Evaluating Teachers on Student Performance

It is difficult to keep up with research about whether teachers should be evaluated based on their students’ performance by using value-added models. Some researchers say value-added results are too imprecise to accurately evaluate teachers while others claim using value-added results is better than how we currently evaluate

teachers. So, what are school board members and other policymakers to make of these conflicting findings?

A report released by NSBA’s Center for Public Education helps make sense of it all--even for the “non-researcher.” Their report--*Building a Better Evaluation System: Can value-added models be used in evaluations?*--delves

into the limitations of current teacher evaluation systems as well as into conflicting research on using student achievement to evaluate teachers. The report came to the following general conclusions:

Current teacher evaluation systems are lacking: Research shows

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■ EVALUATING TEACHERS

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that less than one percent of teachers nationwide earn “unsatisfactory” ratings even though by all accounts more teachers should fall into this category.

Value-added models have their flaws but are better than what are currently in place: Value-added results may misidentify some effective teachers as ineffective and vice versa, but they are more accurate than the current system that identifies both effective and ineffective teachers as “satisfactory.”

Similar statistical measures are used effectively to evaluate employees in other industries: Other professionals are evaluated based on similarly imprecise statistical measures.

There are ways to improve value-added models: There are tools available to make these results more accurate such as averaging results over multiple years.

Multiple measures that include



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Deadline: Open

value-added results provide the fullest picture of a teacher's actual effectiveness: Value-added measures should be just one tool used in determining a teacher's true effectiveness. Other measures of teacher effectiveness should also be used as part of a comprehensive evaluation system that is not only used for personnel decisions but also to help teachers improve.

The report provides a wealth of information for school board members to use when considering whether or not to include student performance results in evaluating teachers. The full report is available on the Center's website at: www.centerforpubliceducation.org.

(School Board News)



2011 NDSBA Annual Convention

PRE-CONVENTION

NDSBA New Member Seminar

NDCSA School Law Seminar

Thursday, October 27, 2011

Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

ANNUAL CONVENTION

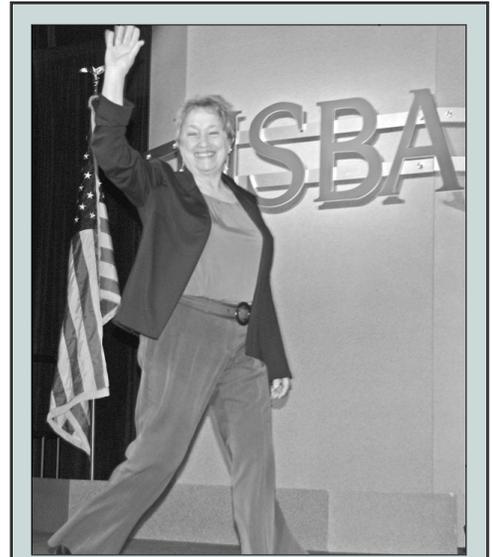
October 28 & 29, 2011

Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

2012 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar

February 9-11, 2012

Doublewood Inn, Bismarck



NDSBA President Angela Korsmo greets the crowd after being introduced at NSBA's Annual Conference in San Francisco.



Dave King and Angela Korsmo participate in NSBA's Delegate Assembly.