Heitkamp Introduces Bipartisan Bill to Improve Healthy School Lunches

U.S. Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Susan Collins (R-ME) recently introduced legislation to give schools greater access to the tools and resources they need to offer healthy food options for students.

“Kids often spend up to seven hours a day at school, making it particularly important that they get healthy meals to help them focus as they learn and grow. But in North Dakota, more than 70 percent of school districts need new or improved kitchen equipment. Congress can’t just mandate healthy school lunch requirements. We need to offer real support like Senator Collins and I are proposing with this legislation. As the daughter of a school cook, I understand the work that goes into preparing many healthy meals each day for kids, and this bill would help make limited resources stretch as far as possible to provide support to communities that need it in North Dakota,” said Senator Heitkamp.

“As the daughter of a school cook, I understand the work that goes into preparing many healthy meals each day for kids, and this bill would help make limited resources stretch further to provide assistance to schools to upgrade their equipment and provide healthy meals to students,” said North Dakota School Nutrition Association President Dave Rice. “Many schools in North Dakota, particularly those in rural communities, will be able to apply for needed assistance because of Senator Heitkamp’s legislation to install modern ovens and refrigerators and train kitchen staff to prepare healthy, inviting meals. That benefits our students, employees, and our schools.”

The School Food Modernization Act aims to make better use of current resources by authorizing grants and loan assistance for school equipment and infrastructure improvements and by helping food service personnel meet the updated nutrition standards. At no additional cost to the federal government, this legislation would:

- Provide targeted grant assistance to give school administrators and food service directors the funding they need for smaller projects to upgrade kitchen infrastructure or to purchase high-quality, durable kitchen equipment such as commercial ovens, steamers, and refrigerators.

North Dakota Century Code 15.1-07-26 requires school boards to engage in a formal long-range planning process in even-numbered years. Between January 1 and June 30 every board must invite the public to participate in the planning process to address effects of demographic changes in the school district over the next three and five years.

Updated three- and five-year planning document forms can be downloaded from our homepage at: www.ndsba.org. Find the link under “Quick Clicks.”

At the conclusion of the planning process, the board is required to publish a notice in the official newspaper of the district indicating that the report is available upon request.

Law Requires Long-Range Planning for Districts

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- Establish a loan assistance program within USDA to help schools acquire new equipment to prepare and serve healthier, more nutritious meals to students, like refrigerators. School administrators and other eligible borrowers can obtain federal guarantees for 80 percent of the loan value needed to construct, remodel, or expand school kitchens, dining, or food storage infrastructure.
- Strengthen training and provide technical assistance to aid school food service personnel in meeting the updated nutrition guidelines. Not every school food service employee is equipped with the expertise to comply with healthier meal and food preparation standards. The proposed legislation authorizes USDA to provide support on a competitive basis to highly qualified third-party trainers to develop and administer training and technical assistance.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently updated nutrition standards for school meals to align them with the most up-to-date science. As a result, schools are serving more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or no-fat dairy options, while offering fewer high-fat options and excess calories. While nutritional standards for meals served in our schools have increased considerably, supports for schools to implement these important changes have lagged behind. Many outdated school kitchens were designed with little capacity beyond reheating and holding food for dining service.

In North Dakota, $28.1 million is needed to purchase new or improved equipment. Serving healthy foods in schools is critically important for our children’s health and well-being. Childhood obesity rates in our country have tripled over the past three decades. More than 23 million adolescents and children in our country – nearly one in three young people nationwide – are obese or overweight. Improving the nutritional quality of school meals can help fight the obesity epidemic throughout the country, putting children on healthy footing in order to prevent long-term health concerns related to obesity, such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

New Annual Convention Format for 2014!

At the request of our members, the NDSBA Annual Convention in October will not run through Saturday noon as in previous years. The tentative schedule will run a bit longer on Thursday with the Law Seminar and New Member Seminar concluding at 2:45. The convention will begin at 3:00 with a keynote speaker followed by the first business session. We will finish the day by 5:00.

On Friday, sessions will begin at 8:00 a.m. with clinic sessions during the day. Business managers will have their convention sessions from 8:00-11:45 a.m. A closing keynote address will be at 2:15, with the second business meeting from 3:15-4:00 p.m. This schedule allows attendees to depart late Friday afternoon and have a full weekend at home.

In addition, the registration process will be streamlined. Rather than using one form to register for the Law Seminar and another to register for the New Member Seminar and/or Convention as in the past, all options will be available on one registration form.

We look forward to seeing you this fall in Bismarck!
NSBA Elects Board Leaders: Anne M. Byrne of New York to Serve as President

School board leader Anne M. Byrne of New York’s Nanuet Union Free School District was named the 2014-15 president of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) at the association’s Annual Conference in New Orleans.

John D. Tuttle of Oklahoma’s Kellyville Public Schools was elected president-elect and Miranda Beard of Mississippi’s Laurel School District was elected secretary-treasurer by NSBA’s 150-member Delegate Assembly. Additionally, David A. Pickler of Tennessee’s Shelby County Schools, who served as the 2013-2014 president, will now serve as immediate past president.

Byrne has been a member of the Nanuet Union Free School Board for 32 years and has served as vice president and president. She has served as president and vice president of the Rockland County School Boards Association. She is also an executive board member and a past president of the Mid-Hudson School Study Council. She is a founding member of the Hudson-Long Island Coalition for responsible state funding, a nine-county coalition, and served as its chair.

In addition, Byrne has served as president during 2004-2005 followed by a term as immediate past president of the New York State School Boards Association. Byrne joined the National School Boards Association’s Board of Directors in 2006.

In the one-year term as NSBA president, Byrne plans to help NSBA become a “reservoir of research” for how engaged school boards positively affect student achievement. Byrne spoke at the Annual Conference about how she wants NSBA to become an even greater advocate for public education.

“Research very clearly says that if a school board expects each child in their district to be successful and they devote the time, it happens. But school boards have to have that vision first,” said Byrne. “Once we make the decision to focus on leading children to excellence and turning around low-performing schools, we have an opportunity to change the conversation about public schools with the media and the public.”

NSBA’s Delegate Assembly also elected Anne Ritter of Idaho’s Meridian Joint School District #2 as a Western Region Director.

Research very clearly says that if a school board expects each child in their district to be successful and they devote the time, it happens. But school boards have to have that vision first.”

New England School District
Search Extended
Superintendent/Elementary Principal
Contact: Jon Martinson
(701) 255-4127
e-mail: jon.martinson@ndsba.org
Application: www.ndsba.org
Salary range: $90,000-$100,000
Deadline: May 6, 2014
Position begins: July 1, 2014

South Heart School District
Superintendent
Contact: Kristine Mehrer
e-mail: Kristine.Mehrer.1@sendit.nodak.edu
(701)677-5671
Deadline: Open until filled

New Public School District #8 (Williston)
Business Manager
Contact: Fran Swensgard, Supt.
e-mail: fran.swensgard@sendit.nodak.edu
(701)572-6359
Deadline: Open until filled

Powers Lake School District
Superintendent/Secondary Principal
Contact: Anne Puckett
PO Box 346
Powers Lake, ND 58773
e-mail: anne.puckett@sendit.nodak.edu
(701)464-5432
Deadline: May 31, 2014

Wing Public School
Full-time Supt. or PT Supt./HS Principal
Contact: Becky Bernhardt, BsMgr.
P. O. Box 130
Wing, ND 58494-0130
e-mail: rebecca.bernhardt@sendit.nodak.edu
(701)943-2319
Deadline: Open until filled
The North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program is pleased to announce that orientation courses will be offered to new students July 17-18 at the Radisson Inn, Bismarck.

Application forms are available online at: http://ndsbmcp.org/handbooks-and-forms/ and will be accepted until June 20. Enrollment is limited to the first 40 students. For more information on the program, including cost of tuition, prospective students may download a program brochure at http://ndsbmcp.org/handbooks-and-forms/. Please contact alyssa.martin@ndsba.org with any questions regarding the program.