State of the State Address Sets World Class Challenge for K-12 Education

by L. Anita Thomas, J.D., LL.M.
General Counsel, NDSBA

In a State of the State address that lasted barely 35 minutes, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum needed only three minutes to signal that major change was on the horizon for K-12 education.

Governor Burgum rightfully referred to K-12 education as the foundation of our future and stressed its role in creating responsible and engaged citizens, helping to attract businesses, and strengthening our economy.

He acknowledged that “[b]y many traditional measures, our education system is strong.” But he also pointed out that our “basic education model dates back to before statehood.” He spoke of a 19th century teacher-centric knowledge transfer model being used at a time when “nearly all of the world’s information is . . . available online, anywhere, anytime, for free.” He said knowledge transfer is no longer only tied to the school day, to a school building, or to a school year.

Governor Doug Burgum

Governor Burgum envisions 21st Century schools preparing students who are creative problem solvers, effective communicators, strong collaborators, and as they take their role in society, informed and responsible citizens.

The challenge that he presented to K-12 education was figuring out “how to equip students with these essential skills and learning mindsets.” He reminded us that our challenge is also our opportunity and that this is our opportunity to “lead education across America.” More than that, he reminded us that “North Dakota schools can be the best in the world.” He reminded us that our “schools can be world-class in preparing our students for the 21st Century.” As can be expected from any executive who understands basic managerial principles, he signaled his willingness to trust and empower superintendents, principals, teachers, and students, together with parents, business leaders, community organizations, and legislators to “lead the way” and make that vision a reality.

As daunting as this challenge may seem initially, the fact is that K-12 education in North Dakota is not the first to venture down the road of trying to define and be the best in the world. Other countries and provinces have gone before us and have made and continue to make major strides in reconfiguring their education systems to meet the demands of a 21st Century world.

While no two have approached their challenges in the same way, research has shown that education reforms among the top performing countries have focused on similar dynamics.

In some countries, educational reform began with a national-level vision and state or provincial implementation. Such an approach would be doomed to failure in this country because it simply does not recognize and account for vast differences in circumstances. Even within North Dakota, a state-level vision would have to acknowledge that the manner in which educational reform might be achieved in Williston is not going to be the same as that taking place in Wahpeton and that which works in Bismarck is not going to look the same as that which works in Bottineau.

Education reform is going to take place. Governor Burgum’s State of the State address must be heeded as a clarion call to each and every board member, administrator, teacher, parent, community member, and even student. Begin to think about education reform in your school and school district. Begin to imagine what a 21st Century educational experience might look like in your school and school district and begin to envision the possibilities that come with being the best in the world.

School Board Recognition Month

January is School Board Recognition Month to recognize board members for their tremendous commitment to North Dakota students. Even though showing recognition should be a year-round process, taking advantage of a designated month ensures these volunteers receive some of the thanks they deserve. This month is a great opportunity to build community awareness and understanding about the crucial role of your local school board.

NDSBA thanks those individuals who devote their time, energy and talents to North Dakota students by serving on their local school boards.
2017 Legislative Session Is Underway

At this point in the legislative session, the expressed goal for education funding is “to hold schools harmless” according to Senator Don Schaible, chairman of the Senate Education Committee. That means keeping funding at current levels. Let’s hope.

In addition to funding, it appears there will be an emphasis on change. In his State of the State address, Governor Doug Burgum said North Dakota’s approach to education “demands change” because “our basic education model dates back to before statehood.” State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler believes innovation will be a focus and in her testimony, Anita Thomas said “school boards need the flexibility to select advisory committee members based on their knowledge, training, expertise, and experience, not just on the type of land that they own and certainly not on a requirement for land ownership in the district.” The bill received a unanimous Do Not Pass.

HB1140: This bill relates to a school board that appoints an advisory committee to advise the board regarding any public improvement project supported by property taxes. The committee membership must reflect the property-owner interests of the district, proportionate to the share of agriculture, rural, and urban property taxes expected to fund the project.

NDSBA opposed this bill and in her testimony, Anita Thomas said “school boards need the flexibility to select advisory committee members based on their knowledge, training, expertise, and experience, not just on the type of land that they own and certainly not on a requirement for land ownership in the district.” The bill received a unanimous Do Not Pass.

HB1142: This bill relates to new school construction projects and would prohibit use of funds from the district’s ending fund balance to pay for the project. NDSBA opposed this bill and in her testimony, Anita Thomas said the bill fails to recognize that school board members are duly elected by the patrons of each district and they are entrusted with public dollars and charged with using those dollars in the most efficient and effective manner possible. It was great to see Superintendents Jeff Fastnacht (Ellendale), Rob Lech (Jamestown), Brandt Dick (Underwood), and Mike Blitz (Mandan) take time to attend the committee hearing and talk with committee members. The bill received a unanimous Do Not Pass.

HB1143: This bill would have allowed multiple school districts within a county with fewer than one thousand combined students to jointly employ a superintendent. I testified that the bill was not necessary since this is permitted under current state law. The bill received a unanimous Do Not Pass.
# Teacher and Administrator Evaluation, Contract, and Nonrenewal Deadlines

**Note:** Administrator is defined as principal, assistant superintendent, and associate superintendent. It excludes the superintendent. See reverse side for superintendent evaluation, contract, and nonrenewal deadlines.

## Evaluations of Teachers and Administrators

- **First three years after hired:** Evaluations must be made available on or before December 15 and on or before March 15.
- **Fourth year or more:** Evaluations must be made available on or before March 15.

### Superintendent Evaluations and Contract Issuance & Renewal

- **Offering contracts to teachers and administrators currently employed:**
  - No earlier than March 1 and no later than May 1. Provide at least 14 calendar days to return contracts. NDCC 15.1-15-04 (2)
- **Offering contracts to newly hired teachers and administrators:**
  - No deadline in law. Give new hires a reasonable timeframe to consider offer and return contract (e.g., 10 days).
- **Contract issuance during negotiations:**
  - Issuance suspended until negotiations are complete. NDCC 15.1-15-04 (4)

## Nonrenewal Deadlines for Teachers and Administrators

- **Notice of contemplated nonrenewal:**
  - In writing and no earlier than March 1 and no later than April 15. NDCC 15.1-15-05 (1)
- **Nonrenewal hearing deadline:**
  - No later than April 21. NDCC 15.1-15-05
- **Notice of nonrenewal decision:**
  - In writing and no later than May 1. NDCC 15.1-15-06 (10)

### Exceptions to Nonrenewal Deadlines (First-Year Teachers & Administrators in Positions for Less Than Two Years)

- **First-year teacher (defined as an individual teaching for the first school year since obtaining a license to teach):**
  - After March evaluation is complete, board meets with teacher in executive session to discuss reasons for contemplated nonrenewal. Notice of nonrenewal decision must be provided no earlier than April 15 and no later than May 1. NDCC 15.1-15-02 (4)
- **Administrators employed in that position by a district for less than 2 years:**
  - Provide written notice of nonrenewal decision before May 1. Board shall meet with administrator in executive session to convey reasons for nonrenewal if requested. NDCC 15.1-15-05.1

## Superintendent Evaluations

- **NDCC 15.1-14-03 (1) requires that each school board conduct two evaluations:**
  - On or before November 15
  - On or before March 15

## Superintendent Contract Issuance & Renewal

- **Contract duration:**
  - No more than three years. NDCC 15.1-14-09 (25)
- **Renewal deadline:**
  - Automatically renews for one year unless board provides notice of contemplated nonrenewal on or before April 15 or superintendent provides written resignation on or before June 1. NDCC 15.1-14-11
- **Offering contract to newly hired superintendent:**
  - No deadline in law. Ensure contract of former superintendent has been terminated before issuance. Give new hire a reasonable timeframe to consider offer and return contract.

## Nonrenewal Deadlines for Superintendent with a District Less Than Two Years*

- **Notice of nonrenewal decision:**
  - In writing and no later than May 1. Provide written notice of nonrenewal decision before May 1. Board shall meet with superintendent in executive session to convey reasons for nonrenewal if requested. NDCC 15.1-14-12 (1)

## Nonrenewal Deadlines for Superintendent with a District Two or More Years*

- **Notice of contemplated nonrenewal:**
  - In writing and on or before April 15. NDCC 15.1-14-09 (1)
- **Nonrenewal hearing deadline:**
  - On or before April 21. NDCC 15.1-14-09(1)(b)
- **Notice of nonrenewal decision:**
  - In writing and no later than May 1. NDCC 15.1-14-10 (8)

*Count only years employed as superintendent

Questions? Contact NDSBA at 800-932-8791.
2017 School Board Election Deadlines

Annual school board elections must be held between April 1 and June 30 per NDCC 15.1-09-22. The following is a mock timeline using June 13, 2017, as an example election date. If you have a different election date, compute your schedule in accordance with state law cited below. Please note that if your school board election is held in conjunction with a county election, the county election board "shall administer the election in the same manner as the county or state election" per NDCC 15.1-09-13 (4).

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March 11, 2017
Thirty days before the filing deadline for candidate names to be printed on the ballot, an official notice of this deadline must be published in the official newspaper of the city or county. (NDCC 15.1-09-09)

April 10, 2017
An individual seeking election to the board of a school district shall prepare and sign a document stating the individual’s name and the position for which that individual is a candidate. A candidate shall also file a statement of interests as required by section 16.1-09-02. These documents must be filed with the school district business manager, or mailed to and in the possession of the business manager, by four p.m. of the sixty-fourth day before the election. (NDCC 15.1-09-08)

Each board of a school district that enters into an agreement with the county [to share election expenses] must notify the county auditor, in writing, at least sixty-four days before the election of the offices to be filled at the election and any measures to appear on the ballot. (NDCC 15.1-09-24) NOTE: This deadline only applies to school districts holding the annual election in conjunction with a primary election and sharing election expenses with a county.

May 4, 2017
At least forty days before the election, the business manager shall prepare and cause to be printed, or otherwise uniformly reproduced, an official ballot containing the names of all individuals who have indicated their intent to be candidates by meeting the provisions of section 15.1-09-08. (NDCC 15.1-09-11)

May 9, 2017
1. At least thirty-five days prior to the annual election, the board of each school district shall designate one or more precincts for the election. The board shall arrange the precincts in a way that divides the electors of the district as equally as possible. (NDCC 15.1-09-13 (1))
2. At least thirty-five days prior to the annual election, the board of each school district shall designate one or more polling places for each precinct. The board shall locate the polling places as conveniently as possible for the voters in the precinct. (NDCC 15.1-09-13 (2))

May 30, 2017
At least fourteen days before the date of an annual or special school district election, the school board shall publish a notice in the official newspaper of the district stating the time and place of the election and the purpose of the vote. (NDCC 15.1-09-09)

June 13, 2017
School board election

June 19, 2017
On the sixth day after the election, the school board shall meet to canvass all election returns and shall declare the result of an election. (NDCC 15.1-09-15)

June 20-22, 2017
Within three days after the canvass by the school board for a school district election, the business manager of the school district shall provide to each elected individual written notice of the individual’s election and of the duty to take an affirmation or oath of office. (NDCC 15.1-09-17)

June 20-29, 2017
1. Within ten days after the canvass by the school board, the business manager shall certify the individuals elected and their terms to the county superintendent of schools. (NDCC 15.1-09-17)
2. An individual elected as a member of or appointed to a school board shall take and file with the school district business manager an affirmation or oath of office within ten days after receiving notice of the election or appointment and before commencing duties. (NDCC 15.1-09-25)
Standing Education Committees Appointed – House and Senate Education Committees have New Chairmen

After serving two sessions at the helm of the House Education Committee, well-known Bismarck Legislator, Representative Mike Nathe has been appointed to the Appropriations Committee. His successor as chairman of the House Education Committee is Representative Mark Owens, who has represented District 17 in Grand Forks from 2005-2008 and from 2011 to the present. The vice-chairman is Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck, who has represented District 25 in Wahpeton since 2015.

Filling out the 14 member House Education Committee will be Rich S. Becker, District 43, Grand Forks; Ron Guggisberg, District 11, Fargo; Pat Heinert, District 32, Bismarck; Dennis Johnson, District 15, Devils Lake; Mary Johnson, District 45, Fargo; Donald Longmuir, District 2, Stanley; Andrew Marschall, District 16, Fargo; Cory Mock, District 18, Grand Forks; Bill Oliver, District 4, New Town; Brandy Pyle, District 22, Casselton; Matthew Ruby, District 40, Minot; and Denton Zubke, District 39, Watford City.

On the Senate side, District 31 Senator Donald Schaible from Mott will assume the chairmanship of the Education Committee and David Rust, District 2, Tioga, will serve as the vice-chairman. Kyle Davison from District 41 in Fargo and Erin Oban from District 35 in Bismarck are returning members of the committee. Senator Jordan Kannianen from District 4 in Stanley and Shawn Veddah from District 6 in Velva are the freshmen members of the committee.

We hope that you take the time to connect with the Representatives and Senators from your area who will serve on these important committees and ensure that they have a full and complete understanding of all issues that affect your school district. Contact information for each legislator is available through the Legislative Council website at www.legis.nd.gov/legislative-council.

NDSBA Webpage Has a New Look

We’ve given the NDSBA webpage an updated look. Most interior pages look similar to how they were before, so it will look familiar to you and as easy to navigate as in the past.

Now is the time to keep track of happenings at the legislative session, so be sure to check out the LEGISLATION page that includes BILL TRACKING, HEARING SCHEDULE, and LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER. The Bill Tracking page includes a link to all bills being tracked by NDSBA. The Hearing Schedule and Legislative Newsletter pages will be updated every Friday. The Hearing Schedule will be for the following week and the Legislative Newsletter will touch on bills heard during the week and present upcoming issues of interest. Also included are links to House and Senate Education Committee members. Check it out at www.ndsba.org.

New State Mileage Rate

As of January 1, 2017, state rate for mileage reimbursement is $0.535 per mile.

State mileage rates can be found on the North Dakota Office of Management and Budget website at www.nd.gov/fiscal/policies/under Fiscal Policies – Fiscal and Administrative Policy Updates effective 1/1/17. There is also a direct link on the NDSBA webpage under Quick Clicks.

Jamestown Public School Leader Named North Dakota Superintendent of the Year

Rob Lech, Superintendent of Schools for Jamestown Public School District, has been named the North Dakota Superintendent of the Year by the North Dakota Association of School Administrators.

As the North Dakota Superintendent of the Year, Lech will be placed in competition with other state winners for the award of National Superintendent of the Year. In addition, he will be honored along with other finalists at the National Conference on Education in New Orleans, LA, March 2-4, 2017.

Rob is a member of the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders and other professional organizations. He has held a number of leadership positions including serving his first year as a North Dakota representative on the American Association of School Administrators’ Governing Board. Rob was appointed by Governor Jack Dalrymple in 2013 to the Teachers’ Fund for Retirement board and was subsequently elected from that board to serve on the State Investment Board where he currently serves as parliamentarian.

A native of Dickinson, Rob graduated from Dickinson High School. He received an undergraduate degree in History Education from Northern State University, a master’s degree from the University of Mary in Educational Leadership, and is pursuing a doctorate through the University of Mary.

Rob has served as a teacher at the Richland School District in Colfax, ND; principal at Tappen High School in Tappen, ND; principal and superintendent at the Mt. Pleasant School District in Rolla, ND; and superintendent at the Beulah School District in Beulah, ND.
Keep in Touch with Your Legislators

Board members should communicate regularly with their local legislators regarding bills that impact their districts. It is also important to build coalitions with parent, business, and farm organizations to broaden advocacy efforts. Legislators are always interested in local impact of proposed legislation.

During a legislative session, a legislator can be reached through email or by leaving a message with the legislative telephone message center at 1-888-NDLEGIS (635-3447).

When contacting your legislator, please follow these guidelines:

- Your purpose should be addressed in the subject line, the first paragraph, or at the start of the phone call. Identify specifically which legislation your contact pertains to (e.g., HB1013 or SB2019).
- Be specific and include key information, using examples to support your position.
- Address only one issue in each contact and keep your contact short and on topic.

Follow 2017 State Legislative Action

www.ndsba.org/index.php/legislation/

Register to attend!
2017 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar
February 9-10, 2017
Registration information has been sent to superintendents and business managers and is also available on the NDSBA website at www.ndsba.org.

Mark your calendar

2017 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar
February 9-10, 2017
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

2017 NSBA Annual Conference
March 25-27, 2017
Denver, CO

2017 NDSBA Annual Convention
October 26-27, 2017
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

2018 NDSBA Annual Convention
October 25-26, 2018
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck