



Board of Education Column

By Robin Nelson, Board of Education

Governmental Affairs Committee Update

North Dakota's 68th Legislative Session began on January 3 and adjourned Sine Die Sunday, April 30 about 3:00 a.m.

Your Fargo School Board's Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) was actively engaged prior to and throughout the session. We communicated frequently with area legislators, viewed countless hours of committee work and floor discussions, submitted testimony, and fielded media inquiries related to K-12 education.

The efforts of the committee included:

- supporting increased funding for per-pupil payments, special education services and student meals;
- defending educators' professional judgement;
- supporting the public employee retirement system's viability;
- advocating against using public tax dollars to fund private education institutions;
- defending student rights protected by Federal law in Title IX;
- supporting increased transparency in school board campaign financing; and,
- supporting allowing elected bodies to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of business meetings.

Even though the session adjourned, your Governmental Affairs Committee's work is not done.

There are about a dozen education-related bills remaining that have not yet been signed by the governor as I write this column. If he opts to utilize his veto power, legislators will be required to return to Bismarck to partake in the reconsideration of each.

Updated administrative rules will be composed beginning in June by state agency employees, such as the Department of Public Instruction, for most of the newly-adopted laws. Districts and Boards are often consulted with during this process. These new administrative rules typically become effective in August following each session. Other bills contain time-specific or emergency clauses that dictate implementation.

On behalf of the Governmental Affairs Committee, I extend deep gratitude to FPS employees, parents, and community members for your assistance during this very busy session!

