



Board of Education Column

By Melissa Burkland, Board of Education Negotiations Committee Chair

Negotiations Committee Update

Welcome back for the 2025-26 academic year! Here's hoping you've settled into a routine while still experiencing the joyful anticipation a new school year brings. In addition to a fresh school year, we also have a new two-year negotiated agreement between the Fargo Education Association and the Fargo Board of Education. I am proud of the work we all did together as we addressed many topics and faced a challenging budget. I am hopeful the agreements we made will have a positive impact on our staff and students.

To highlight a few:

- We cured ambiguity in the Board's Leave Bank and created parameters for leave requests.
- We provided more opportunities for teachers to donate to the Board's Parental Leave Donation Bank and set forth a system that handles requests more equitably.
- We clarified that all vacancies will be conveniently posted with the District's online application system.
- We simplified the process for requesting leave such that a more immediate supervisor would approve a leave request.
- We streamlined the notification process and timing for teaching assignments.
- We created an overload pay system for the 2026-27 school year that will more equitably compensate teachers at all grade levels and years of service.
- We directed the Superintendent to construct and monitor building-specific committees at the high schools to study the purpose, models, and design to implement a sixth assignment for the 2026-27 school year. A majority of the committee will be teachers and will incorporate teachers' expertise, articulate and research the problem to be solved, identify and gather essential data and goals, and develop research-based models.

The FEA and the Board were both committed to a positive, collaborative environment, and this is what I consider to be our greatest accomplishment. Although we are not negotiating an agreement this year, the Board's Negotiation Committee will continue to meet regularly. It is my hope that we can use this "off" year as a time to reflect on how to continue making the negotiation sessions positive and productive, look outward to see what can be done to continue growth despite the fiscal constraints we face, and work with the FEA and Administration to continue growing our relationships. We are, after all, Stronger Together.

