



Board of Education Column

By Robin Nelson, Board of Education

Governmental Affairs Committee Update

Even in non-legislative years, the Governmental Affairs Committee remains active. Members Nikkie Gullickson, Katie Christensen Mineer, Jason Nelson, Kristin Nelson, and I have developed a work plan alongside the administrative team to help prepare for the 2027 North Dakota Legislative Assembly.

Our interim priorities include monitoring legislative interim committee activities, strengthening engagement with local legislators, and tracking federal education policy developments.

Key Interim Committees

We are closely following three committees:

1. **Special Education Funding Committee** – Studying teacher shortages, funding levels, and reading/math proficiency among students with disabilities.
2. **Education Committee** – Analyzing dual-credit programs in addition to regular reports from the Department of Public Instruction.
3. **Tax Relief and Reform Advisory Committee** – Reviewing the impact of House Bill 1176, which introduced property tax buy downs and a 3% annual budget growth cap for taxing entities.

Building Legislative Relationships

Superintendent Dr. Steiner and the committee agree that stronger ties with lawmakers are essential. Our shared goals include sharing accurate education data and creating opportunities for legislators to visit our schools.

The first step: We've scheduled an informational session in December for legislators to learn how recently enacted laws are affecting our district.

Federal Developments

The U.S. Department of Education is undergoing significant restructuring under the current administration, including the desire to eliminate the agency and shift selected functions to other departments to "return education to the states." Recent reductions in force have eliminated positions unlikely to be refilled. While we have limited influence in Washington, D.C., we remain vigilant in monitoring these changes.

We look forward to keeping you informed as we advocate for our students, staff, and community.

