

Board of Education Member Profile

Nikkie Gullickson

Name: Nikkie Gullickson
Board member since: 2020
Family: Husband – Greg and three children – Emily (20), Will (18), and Abby (16),
Occupation: Fargo City Commissioner, FPS Board of Education, Past North Dakota PTA President, National PTA Committee Member, Maxwell Certifies Leader

Tell us a little bit about yourself and your background.

I've been surrounded by education my entire life. I come from a family of educators and administrators and married into a family of educators and administrators. Because of this, I am aware of needs and opportunities in the education field. I am an active PTA member. PTA is a nationwide association advocating for all children, families, and teachers. I have been an active advocate at the local, state, and federal levels. At the federal level, I've met with North Dakota senators and representatives in Washington, D.C. over the years where topics discussed included: gun safety and violence protection, authorizing ESSA (update to No Child Left Behind), school nutrition/guidelines preservation and improvement, funding for rebuilding schools/infrastructure nationwide, funding for Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs), funding and support for mental health initiatives, reauthorizing (preserving) juvenile justice, reauthorizing (protecting) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) along with appropriate funding for these programs and more. I have also been active at the state level with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and our governor on task forces to support North Dakota students. In doing this, I have grown to know many education professionals statewide from other school districts and other agencies throughout North Dakota related to student success. Examples are ESSA creation/implementation, Graduation Requirements, School Climate, ND Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) and Innovative Technology. Locally, I have participated in various task forces for FPS over the last several years. Some of those groups include Calendar Committee, Mill Levy, Building Usage Task Force, and participating in State of the Schools discussions. I graduated from NDSCS with a certificate in computer operations and an A.A. in Liberal Arts. Not long after, I graduated from MSUM with a B.A. in Communications. For business experience, I worked at Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) for three years gaining experience in their computer/mainframe operations, underwriting, and standards testing. I then moved to Doosan Bobcat for several years in their Communications/Advertising department working with dealerships and Bobcat products worldwide. However, BCBSND was still in my heart (1999) and I returned. This time, I spent seven years in the Communications/Advertising department. Most of my work consisted of working one-to-one with team leaders, managers, and executives to produce the materials needed to move their teams and business activities forward.

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What was the reason you ran for a Board position?

I ran for a board position for several reasons. One of those reasons is that it's a natural extension of the work we do regularly in PTA, which I am passionate about. When you care about one child (which generally starts with your own), you learn quickly that ALL children can benefit. I see opportunities for our school board to work together with Administration as a team. I also see additional opportunities to improve communication with families and teachers and build relationships. The decisions FPS School Board members make impact people daily. I believe in including as many representative parties as possible at the table to gather information. Why? This way, all parties can participate with all that is involved with making these decisions, whether it is data/knowledge, daily impact, finances, or other parameters. Benefits of operating this way? No one gets surprised and the "dark cloud of mystery" diminishes because decisions are not being made behind closed doors and "handed" to people affected. By throwing all ideas in the "middle of the table," gaining as much knowledge from professional and expert sources as possible, along with including the knowledge and experience of parents and others, our board will be able to determine the best possible solutions and plan accordingly.

What do you see as big challenges for the District going forward? Challenges for K-12 education in North Dakota?

I see several challenges for our district moving forward. First and foremost, public education needs continued support as funding is continually challenged. Fargo is growing to the south, putting pressure on our existing school buildings. We have a Mill Levy vote coming up, which is vital to the success of our district and necessary for the community to thoroughly understand. We need to be mindful of equity and equality for all students and staff. We're working to increase support in a number of ways for our most vulnerable learners. We need to be inclusive of our new American families. We have wonderful opportunities to learn about different cultures around the world and would be wise to further explore them.

Something you are proud of as a representative of the Fargo Public Schools:

I am very proud of FPS because it is an active, progressive district providing quality education and striving to do the very best possible. I am equally as proud of the FPS team of professionals who show up every day to support our students. It takes a large, dedicated team of professionals working to provide the best futures for our students, their families, our teachers and staff.