

FARGO BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMO #129 – 2022-23

June 27, 2023

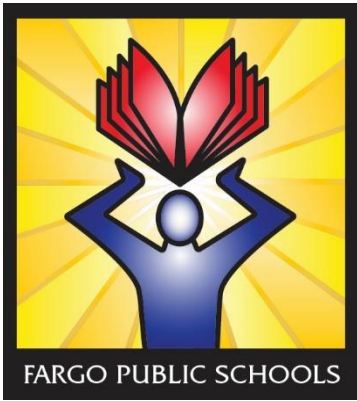
RE: Results Policy Monitoring
FROM: Dr. Rupak Gandhi, Superintendent
RE: Strategic Initiative 5: Equitable Resources and Planning

Attached to this memo, you will find an internal report from me certifying compliance with the Board of Education's Strategic Initiative 5: Equitable Resources and Planning (R-5). In compliance with R-5 and the Board of Education's Governance Process Annual Agenda Planning Policy (GP-8E), this report is provided to the Board annually for monitoring purposes. My certification ensures that the information provided in the report complies with the monitoring frequency, monitoring criterion, and monitoring method outlined in R-5.

If approved, this internal report will be utilized as monitoring of Fargo Public Schools Strategic Initiative 5 on the Strategic Plan Dashboard, as one of the reports to assist monitoring Superintendent performance as outlined in Board/Superintendent Relationship Policy 5 (B/SR-5) and as one of the reports for the Annual Evaluation of the Superintendent in accordance with the Board-Superintendent Relationship Policy 5-E (B/SR-5-E).

At the meeting, I and/or other designated staff will be able to answer any specific questions regarding the information or Superintendent's Interpretation presented in the attached report.

RECOMMENDATION: to accept that reasonable progress has been made on R/SI-5 for the 2022-23 school year.



**Results Monitoring Report: Strategic Initiative 5 - Equitable
Resources and Planning**
SY 2022-2023

Prepared: June 27, 2023

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5: EQUITABLE RESOURCES AND PLANNING

RESULT: Fargo Public Schools will secure and allocate resources needed to adequately fund and carry out this strategic plan.

RESULT: Fargo Public Schools will meet the needs of all students by providing equitable resources across the district.

RESULT: Fargo Public Schools will employ highly qualified staff that achieve and/or continuously make progress to the fulfillment of Fargo Public Schools' mission of educating and empowering all students to succeed.

Monitoring Frequency: *Annually in Concurrence with Strategic Plan Review, Periodic Updates as Scheduled in GP-8-E*

Monitoring Criterion: *In accordance with Board/Superintendent Relationship Policy 5 (B/SR 5), the Board of Education will monitor this Result by drawing conclusions based upon the Board's prior action during the year relative to whether each Result has been achieved or whether reasonable progress has been made toward its achievement.*

Monitoring Method: *In accordance with Board/Superintendent Relationship Policy 5 (B/SR 5), the Board will acquire monitoring data on Results and Executive Limitations policies by one or more of three methods:*

- a. By internal report, in which the Superintendent discloses and certifies compliance information to the Board*
- b. By external report, in which an external, disinterested third party selected by the Board assesses compliance with Board policies*
- c. By direct Board inspection, in which the Board assesses compliance with the appropriate policy criteria*

With the adoption of the current Fargo Public Schools Strategic Plan, the Fargo Board of Education determined analysis of the following information in the context of the overall operations of Fargo Public Schools shall be provided for monitoring Result(s) tied to this Strategic Initiative:

- Analysis of [FPS budget](#)
- Analysis of [FPS Standard of Effort](#)
- Analysis of FPS staffing data (recruitment, retention, resignation, retirement, qualification status, etc.)

The Superintendent and/or their designee will submit an internal report annually with the information identified above for the monitoring Result(s) tied to this Strategic Initiative.

SUPERINTENDENT CERTIFICATION

In accordance with the Fargo Board of Education’s Results Policy (R-5), I certify this monitoring report complies with the expectations outlined Fargo Board of Education policies.



Rupak Gandhi, Ph.D.
Pronouns: he, him, his
Superintendent
Fargo Public Schools

SUPERINTENDENT INTERPRETATION

For the purposes of monitoring Results in Strategic Initiatives, it is the interpretation of the Superintendent that the analysis of each identified Results Policy Indicator includes the following information (if and when applicable):

- Key Accomplishments
- Challenges
- Next Steps

SUPERINTENDENT MONITORING RECOMMENDATION

RESULT: Fargo Public Schools will secure and allocate resources needed to adequately fund and carry out this strategic plan.

RESULT achieved or reasonable progress made towards achievement
 Reasonable progress not made towards achievement

Evidence of Reasonable Progress

Fargo Public Schools has made notable accomplishments in securing and allocating resources to support its strategic plan. However, challenges persist, including limited funding, equity in resource allocation, and rising personnel, utility, and food costs. By implementing the suggested next steps, such as exploring alternative funding sources, conducting equity audits, and implementing cost-saving measures, the District can overcome these challenges and ensure the effective allocation of resources to achieve its strategic objectives.

RESULT: Fargo Public Schools will meet the needs of all students by providing equitable resources across the district.

RESULT achieved or reasonable progress made towards achievement
 Reasonable progress not made towards achievement

Evidence of Reasonable Progress

Fargo Public Schools aims to provide equitable resource allocation through systematic and data driven approaches. These approaches include analyzing student demographics, teacher-student ratios and funding

availability. Additional resources are distributed to areas of specific need including students from low-income backgrounds, English learners, and students with disabilities. Fargo Public Schools will need to continue to develop evaluation criteria to assess the equity of resource allocation. These criteria could include per-student funding, focusing high-quality teachers to areas of greatest need, and providing or expanding on specialized programs.

RESULT: Fargo Public Schools will employ highly qualified staff that achieve and/or continuously make progress to the fulfillment of Fargo Public Schools’ mission of educating and empowering all students to succeed.

 X RESULT achieved or reasonable progress made towards achievement
 Reasonable progress not made towards achievement

Evidence of Reasonable Progress

Fargo Public Schools has achieved significant accomplishments in employing highly qualified staff and fostering a supportive environment. However, challenges such as staff retention, diversity, and work-life balance need to be addressed to further enhance the District’s mission fulfillment. By implementing the suggested next steps, including improving retention strategies, strengthening diversity and inclusion efforts, and promoting work-life balance, Fargo Public Schools

RESULTS POLICY INDICATOR: ANALYSIS OF FPS BUDGET

Key Accomplishments:

- 1) Strategic Initiative 1: Increased Investment in Instructional Programs: The budget shows a significant increase in funding for instructional programs, with a focus on enhancing curriculum resources and professional development opportunities for teachers, specifically through ESSER. This investment aims to improve student achievement and promote innovative teaching methods to further student outcomes.
- 2) Strategic Initiative 2: Expansion of Support Services: The budget indicates a notable expansion of support services, including counseling, special education, and English language learner programs, specifically through ESSER. By allocating resources to these areas, Fargo Public Schools demonstrates its commitment to meeting the diverse needs of its students and fostering an inclusive learning environment.
- 3) Strategic Initiative 1 and 2: Technology Integration: The budget reveals a substantial investment in technology infrastructure and equipment, enabling the integration of digital tools into the classroom. This initiative aims to enhance student engagement, facilitate personalized learning experiences, and equip students with essential digital skills for the future.
- 4) Strategic Initiative 3: Co-Curricular Activities: The budget supports student learning through co-curricular activities as evidenced by increased funding to activities outside of the school day to keep students engaged.
- 5) Strategic Initiative 4: Partnerships with Fargo Park District: The building budget supported issuance of debt for the North High Track Project. Part of this project included collaboration with the Fargo Park District and their ownership of a portion of the south parking lot. The District bonded funds on behalf of

the Fargo Park District with repayment over time to assist with this much needed parking lot maintenance.

Challenges:

- 1) **Limited Funding:** The majority of District funding is limited to state aid and local property taxes. Despite the District's efforts to maintain and improve school facilities, the budget shows stagnant funding allocated to address infrastructure needs. Securing funding necessary for proper preventative maintenance for facility upgrades remains a significant challenge for Fargo Public Schools.
- 2) **Balancing Equity and Resource Allocation:** While the District strives for equitable resource distribution, the budget analysis reveals discrepancies in resource allocation across schools in the area of staffing. Some schools may require additional support and resources to bridge achievement gaps and provide equal opportunities for all students. Ensuring a fair and equitable allocation of resources will require further attention and monitoring.
- 3) **Rising Costs of Personnel:** The budget highlights the increasing costs associated with personnel, including salaries and benefits. As personnel costs continue to rise, the District faces the challenge of balancing the need for competitive compensation with the available resources. Strategic planning to manage personnel costs effectively is vital to ensure the sustainability of the District's budget.
- 4) **Inflation and the Rising Cost of Debt:** The average inflation rate during 2022 was 8.0%; 2023 is tracking at 4.0% through May. All areas of Fargo Public Schools have experienced the effect of rising costs from utilities and general supplies to food and milk. Food and energy costs continue to be the most volatile items. While interest earning rates on investments have increased, so have interest debt costs. Bonding in the future will become more expensive in our current economy.

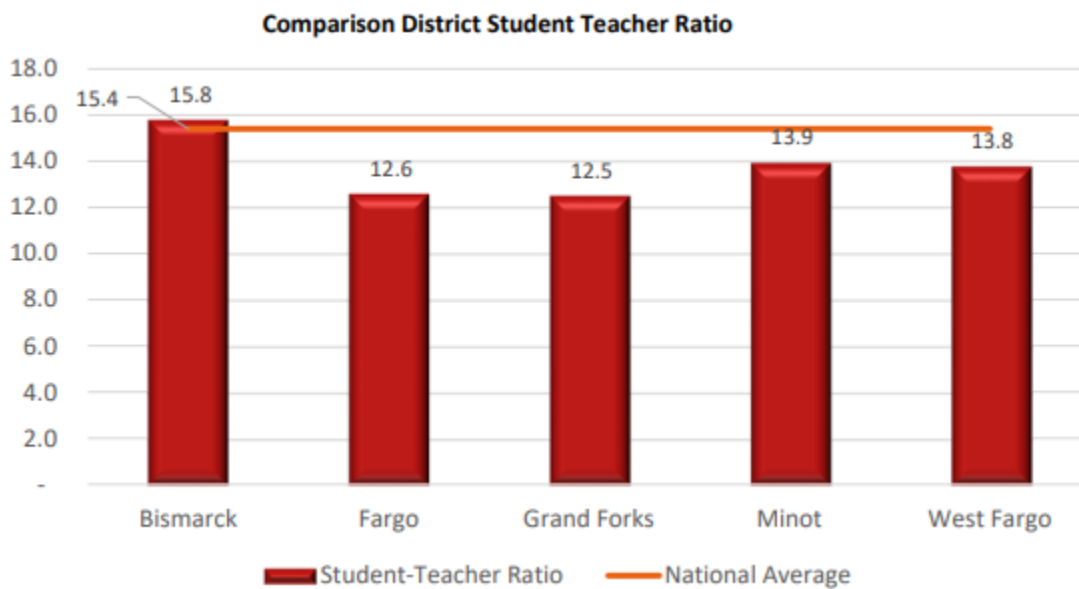
Next Steps:

- 1) **Explore Alternative Funding Sources:** To address the challenge of limited funding for facilities, Fargo Public Schools should actively seek alternative funding sources, such as grants, partnerships with community organizations, or bond measures. Maintaining an acceptable fund balance level will be imperative to controlling future bond costs and earning positive credit ratings.
- 2) **Conduct Equity Audits:** To address the challenge of resource allocation disparities, the District should consider conducting equity audits to identify gaps and areas where facility resources are inequitably distributed among buildings. This analysis will enable Fargo Public Schools to develop targeted strategies and reallocate resources where they are most needed, ensuring equal opportunities for all students.
- 3) **Implement Cost-Saving Measures:** To manage rising personnel costs, the District should explore cost-saving measures without compromising the quality of education. This may involve streamlining administrative processes, adopting innovative technologies to enhance operational efficiency, and implementing evidence-based practices to optimize resource utilization.

RESULTS POLICY INDICATOR: ANALYSIS OF FPS STANDARD OF EFFORT

Key Accomplishments:

- 1) Mill Levy Reduction and Stabilization: Since 2001, Fargo Public Schools has decreased the general fund mill levy by a total of 170.82 mills through both required legislative action and demonstrated fiscal responsibility to relieve tax burden on property owners. Since 2018, Fargo Public Schools has operated on a stable number of mills levied at 126.78.
- 2) Student-Teacher Ratio: Fargo Public Schools invests in lower student-teacher ratios through its guiding principles for class sizes. Teacher salaries and benefits per pupil are the highest among comparison districts with an average of \$9,019. The two districts larger than Fargo, Bismarck and West Fargo, reported per pupil averages of \$7,849 and \$7,664, respectively.



- 3) Extracurricular Support: Fargo Public Schools provides the highest support per pupil at \$591 for extracurricular activities.
- 4) Educational Enhancements: Fargo Public School provides numerous educational enhancements to our students through the arts including 5th grade orchestra, middle school sectionals and Trollwood Performing Arts School.

Challenges:

- 1) General Fund Mill Levy: Fargo Public Schools specified general fund mill levy will be up for voter approval in 2027. Without voter approval to maintain the 127.0 mill levy, property tax revenue will be frozen at the actual dollars levied. The District will not be able to maintain its current standard of effort without the dollars available through valuation increases.
- 2) Limited Special Education Funding: Since its initial enactment, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has included a commitment to pay 40% of the excess costs of educating students with

disabilities. According to the National Education Association, the federal share was just 13% in fiscal 2021, the lowest share since fiscal 2000. This lack of funding creates a shortfall that places a burden on state and local education agencies to fill in the remaining funding gap.

- 3) School Counselors and School Psychologists: School districts are significantly under the recommended ratios for school counselors and psychologists. Fargo Public Schools has made some headway and has continued work to do in securing additional staffing to improve ratios for students in these support areas.

	National Recommendation	National Average	ND Average	Fargo 2020	Fargo 2021	Fargo 2022
School Counselors	250:1	415:1	297:1	325:1	310:1	
School Psychologists	500:1	1,211:1	1,692:1	2,924:1	2,869:1	

- 4) Transportation Costs: Fargo Public Schools spends a higher amount on student transportation than comparable districts with 50% of transportation costs going towards transporting special education students.
- 5) Continued Support of Programs and Staffing: As grant funding decreases for English Learners, increased local support may be required to maintain the same level of support for students in the future.

Next Steps:

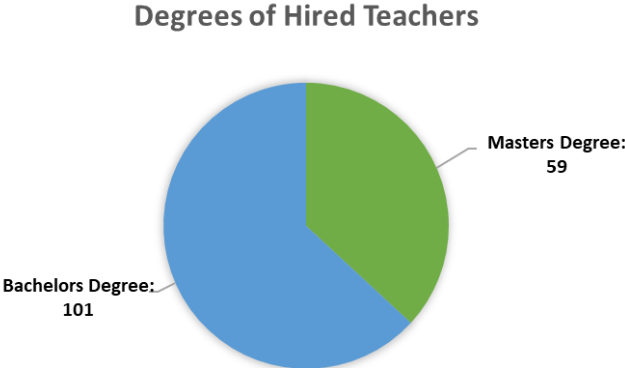
- 1) General Fund Mill Levy: Begin to prepare for a required mill levy vote within the next few years.
- 2) Legislative Action: Continue to advocate for state funding to support K-12 education, especially for our most vulnerable learners.

RESULTS POLICY INDICATOR: ANALYSIS OF FPS STAFFING DATA (RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, RESIGNATION, RETIREMENT, QUALIFICATION STATUS, ETC.)

Key Accomplishments:

- 1) Recruitment of Highly Qualified Educators: The staffing data indicates that Fargo Public Schools has successfully recruited a significant number of highly qualified educators. The district's commitment to attracting and hiring competent professionals is evident in the qualifications and experience of its teaching staff. This accomplishment ensures that students receive instruction from skilled educators who can contribute to their academic success.

160 teachers hired for the 2022-2023 school year



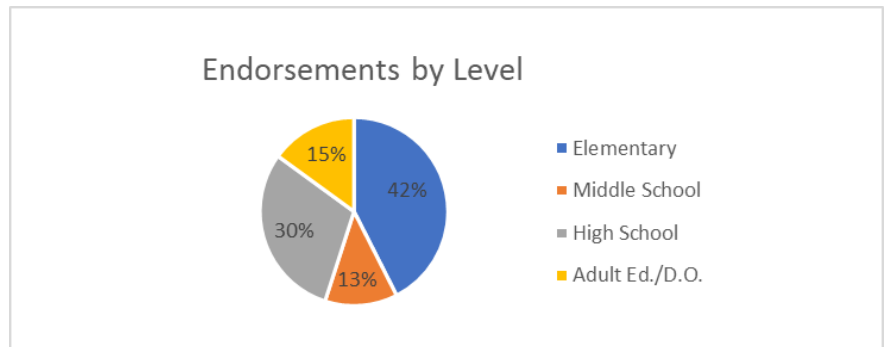
- 2) Ongoing Professional Development: The data reveals that the District prioritizes professional development opportunities for its staff. Fargo Public Schools invests resources in training programs, workshops, and conferences to enhance the skills and knowledge of its educators. By providing continuous learning opportunities, the district ensures that its staff stays updated with the latest educational practices and strategies.

Science	Assessment	Secondary Literacy	Equity
Elementary Literacy	Specifically Designed Instruction	Classroom Management	Sp. Paperwork /IEP
Restorative Practices	Social Studies	Trauma Informed Practices	MTSS

Secondary Math	Elementary Math	Recruiting / Hiring	Coaching / Developing
----------------	-----------------	---------------------	-----------------------

- 3) The second year of *All for One* was implemented resulting in an increased number of staff members with the necessary endorsements to support our most vulnerable students.

Endorsements 2022-2023	
Content	Number
SPED: LD	10
SPED: ED	7
SPED: ID	1
SPED: VI	1
Gifted	2
English Learners	16
EC: Kindergarten	2
Marketing	1



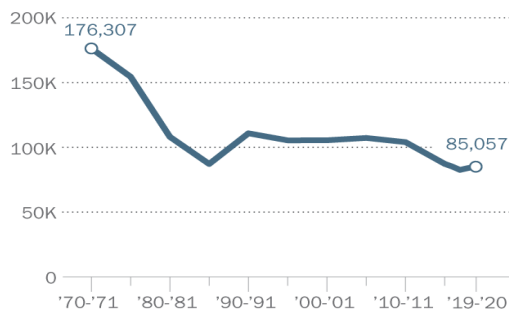
Challenges:

- 1) **Staff Retention and Turnover:** Despite the District's efforts in recruiting highly qualified staff, the data indicates challenges related to staff retention and turnover. Retaining experienced and effective educators can be difficult, as factors such as relocation, personal circumstances, or attractive job opportunities elsewhere may contribute to turnover. This challenge poses a risk to the continuity of quality instruction and requires attention. (See Appendix)
- 2) **Addressing Diversity and Inclusion:** The staffing data highlights the need for Fargo Public Schools to address diversity and inclusion within its staff. Ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the student population promotes cultural competence, enriches the educational experience, and supports equitable outcomes for all students. The District should focus on strategies to recruit and retain staff from diverse backgrounds.
- 3) **Compensation for 2023-2024** was not finalized prior to early June impacting both retention and recruitment of all employees.

- 4) Fewer college students are going into education preparation programs and this “pipeline shortage” is having both short-term and long-term impacts on our ability to develop robust applicant pools for all teaching positions.

In the U.S., the number of bachelor’s degrees in education has declined over the last few decades

Number of bachelor’s degrees in education conferred by postsecondary institutions, by school year



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Next Steps:

- 1) **Improve Retention Strategies:** To address staff retention and turnover challenges, Fargo Public Schools will develop and implement comprehensive retention strategies. These will include strengthening our mentoring programs, implementing more recognition and incentive programs, and designing professional growth opportunities that provide a clear career path for educators within the district.
- 2) **Strengthen Diversity and Inclusion Efforts:** The District should actively pursue strategies to enhance diversity and inclusion among its staff. This can involve targeted recruitment efforts, partnerships with diverse organizations, cultural competency training, and the creation of supportive environments that value and celebrate individual differences.
- 3) **Work with Board and Cabinet to develop compensation rollouts for classified, administrative, and professional staff earlier to allow for a May *Compensation Statement* pushout.**
- 4) **Develop and implement “Grow our Own” programs that allow Fargo Public Schools to promote teaching as an option to our current students and an initiative that will allow Fargo Public Schools to create pathways from paraprofessionals to classroom teachers.**
- 5) **Implement ongoing check-ins, surveys, and data collections tools to monitor and guide our work to intentionally focus on gaps and opportunities that will allow us to support and coach our team members.**

- 6) Evaluate the onboarding process for new teachers and identify opportunities throughout the academic year that provide additional resources and support campus and department leaders.

APPENDIX

RESIGNATIONS AND RETIREMENTS

Turnover rate = 10.3% (National Average is > 15%)

Resignations & Retirements 2022-23	
Total	108
Resignations	79
Retirements	29

Resignations 2022-23	
Service Years	Resignations
1	18
2	9
3	7
4	14
5	2
6	3
7	3
8	5
9	0
10	3
11	2
12	4
13	2
14	0
15	0
16	1
17	2
18	1
19	1
20	1
21	1