



# From the Cabinet

By Business Manager Jackie Gapp

## Fargo Public Schools Legislative Priorities

The beginning of 2021 marks the 67<sup>th</sup> North Dakota Legislative Assembly as well as the initial stages of the budget planning process for the 2021-22 school year.

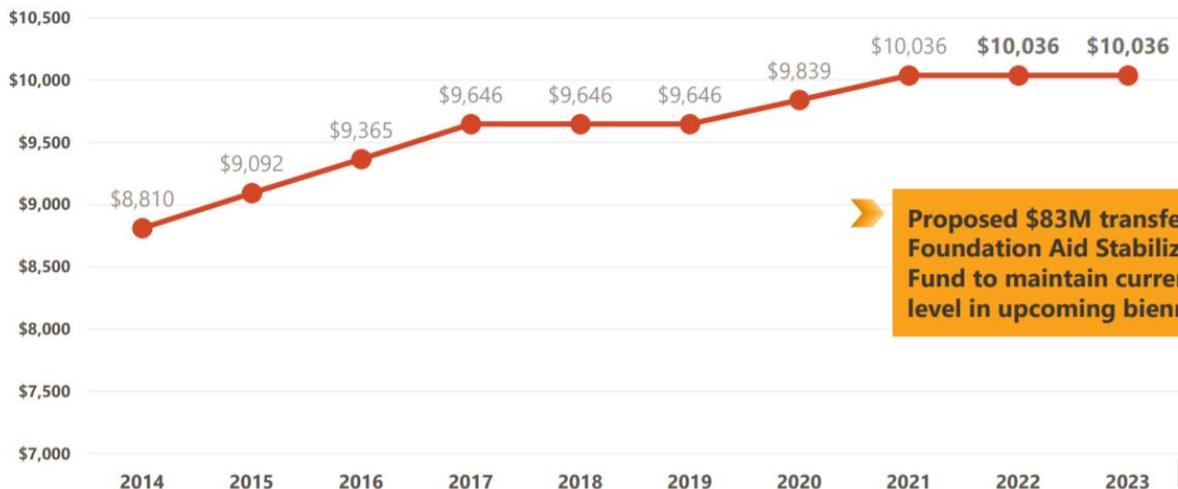
The previous legislative session provided K-12 education a per pupil funding formula increase of 2% each year of the biennium. We are appreciative of the work accomplished to ensure a strong educational foundation for our youth. Our students deserve the best education possible, and our legislative priorities will continue to improve and better prepare our children for the future.

North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum’s proposed budget, which was released on December 3, 2020, provides for maintenance of per pupil rates (or a 0% increase) in the K-12 funding formula for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years. Based on this proposal, there will be much work to be done legislatively to provide increased funding to the formula during the upcoming session.

### MAINTAIN K-12 PUPIL RATES



#### K-12 SCHOOL AID REMAINS TOP PRIORITY



Proposed \$83M transfer from Foundation Aid Stabilization Fund to maintain current level in upcoming biennium.

Graph of North Dakota per pupil budget history and projections.

Source: <https://www.nd.gov/omb/sites/omb/files/documents/news/2021-23-executive-budget-address-slides.pdf>



# *From the Cabinet, cont.*

The Fargo Board of Education agreed on the priorities that we, as a district, will support in the upcoming session. Those priorities include:

## **Behavioral Health**

- Support for social and emotional learning in schools to help students improve academically, engage in and maintain positive relationships, and develop life skills around teamwork, communication and decision-making.
- Support of state and community partnerships that ensure adequate school funding for safety and health-based services including nurses, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, behavioral specialists, and school resource officers.
- Support to provide well-rounded education with consistent access to mental health and wraparound services for students and families in a school climate where they feel safe, healthy, engaged, challenged, and supported to succeed.
- Support for the expansion of the behavioral health pilot programs enacted in previous legislative sessions.

## **Education Funding**

- **Special Education:** Support for increased funding for our most vulnerable students. In the previous five years, the District has realized a 25.74% increase in special education students. Continued student growth is coupled with increased costs to provide specialized services.
- **Transportation:** Support for increased funding of student transportation, specifically in the area of transportation for special needs students. Transportation costs continue to rise while realizing historical decreases to the funding formula reimbursement rates.
- **English Learners:** Support of additional funding for English Learner students. These students speak many different languages and often bring with them other barriers that must be solved for learning to occur.
- **On-Time Funding:** Support for the continuation of the existing provisions of on-time funding enacted by the 2019 Legislature.
- **Tuition Revenue Offset:** Support for adjustment to the tuition contribution from other local revenue in the funding formula. Currently, 75% of tuition revenue received through educating students placed or enrolled by other districts is deducted from our state aid payment.
- **Mill Levy Deduct:** Support of legislative action to provide relief to local taxpayers supporting districts subject to the 60-mill levy deduction.

## **Other Priorities**

- State support for regional career workforce academies.



## *From the Cabinet, cont.*

- Initiatives supported by partner agencies including the North Dakota Council for Educational Leaders and the North Dakota School Boards Association.

As the District begins its fiscal planning for the next biennium, many factors such as legislative funding, upcoming contract negotiations, and the outcome of COVID-19 will be unknown. We must ensure our students have access to programs that will place them on the road to success. These legislative priorities will help frame the discussion in the coming months on how to improve outcomes for our learners and how to ensure they are ready for kindergarten and beyond.

### **Sources**

Legislative Priorities brochure:

<https://www.fargo.k12.nd.us/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=296&dataid=19842&FileName=2021-23%20Legislative%20Priorities%20Brochure.pdf>

Governor's budget PowerPoint:

<https://www.nd.gov/omb/sites/omb/files/documents/news/2021-23-executive-budget-address-slides.pdf>

