



Board of Education Column

By Robin Nelson, Board of Education Vice President

Governmental Affairs Committee Update

The 67th North Dakota Legislative Assembly held a special session during the week of Monday, November 8. The impetuses for the session were to address redistricting as a result of the decennial census and to appropriate funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Other bills could be added to the session by working through the Delayed Bills Committee, agency requests, or a two-thirds majority of legislators.

Legislators submitted 26 additional bills and one concurrent resolution for consideration. Eight of those eventually made it to the floor for consideration. The bills addressed a range of topics including COVID-related mitigation strategies and classroom instruction. The Board's Governmental Affairs Committee followed a number of bills related to K12 education. The following three garnered the most discussion:

[HB1507](#): This agency bill, submitted by North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler, would have required school districts to offer cyber security instruction to elementary and middle school students and to add another high school unit as a graduation requirement. Before final passage, it was eventually amended to direct superintendents to collaborate with workforce development stakeholders to determine how to best integrate these items and to provide a report to legislative management. Refer to the underlined section of the bill to view the addition.

[HB1508](#): This bill was introduced by Fargo Representative Jim Kasper. It prohibits the teaching of Critical Race Theory by K-12 school districts. After two amendments, it overwhelmingly passed through both chambers. It went into effect as soon as Governor Burgum signed it on Friday, November 12.

[SB2346](#): This bill allowed the state to withhold a one-time \$88-per-pupil deduction from foundation aid formula to pay for a rebuild to the state reporting system, STARS. The bill also allows ESSER funds to be used by districts to cover the cost.

The special session adjourned sine die on Friday, November 12 shortly after noon.

