



## *From the Cabinet*

*By Superintendent Dr. Rupak Gandhi*

### **Moving Parts**

If you have roots in our community, you might have heard the name Charley Johnson. Charley served in the media industry for more than 30 years, is currently the President/CEO of the Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau and is a dedicated promoter of our region. I'm lucky enough to call Charley a friend, which also means I have had the opportunity to watch him and his wife Mary play in their band, Moving Parts, on a variety of occasions. As I look at many upcoming considerations and potential decisions in Fargo Public Schools, I am reminded of Moving Parts because though many nuanced changes might be coming, they will harmonize together to compose a more enhanced experience for the students, staff, and community members of Fargo Public Schools.

During their September and October meetings, the Fargo Board of Education reviews and approves governing documents that provide an outline for the future of our District. The documents include, but are not limited to, the Strategic Plan, the Long Range Facilities Plan, and the Long Range Financial Plan. The Long Range Facilities Plan was approved earlier this week and it outlined some potential upcoming changes to District facilities. I am highlighting some elements of the plan below, which could impact varying parts of our community. As you read through some future considerations, know there will be many moving parts that come together for an experience our students deserve. Additionally, please note that these plans are simply a prelude for consideration, and subject to change based on our community and District needs.

#### **Horace Mann/Roosevelt/Madison**

The above-average cost to provide secure entries to Horace Mann and Roosevelt Elementary Schools (paired campus) has re-sparked prior District conversations about the needs of those buildings as they are aging facilities. The schools are experiencing growth in enrollment and structural needs due to both the aging of the buildings and current offering of ancillary programming the buildings were not originally designed for, such as specialized Special Education classrooms. Administration discussed the potential future repair costs or replacement of these buildings with the Board's Planning Committee in September 2022. With the information available at the time, it is recommended to research the possibility of consolidating Horace Mann, Roosevelt, and possibly Madison Elementary campuses into one new building built on the site of Horace Mann's property and bring forward potential Board action during the 2022-23 school year, if possible.

#### **Agassiz – Dakota High School and Adult Education**

The Agassiz building is used for multiple purposes. There are, however, areas of the building that cannot be utilized without significant renovation, as well as areas that would require continuous investment to



# *Moving Parts, continued*

maintain standards. With the relocation of the District Office, many employees housed at Agassiz moved to the new location. After the move, remaining programs at Agassiz include Early Childhood Special Education, Adult Education, and Dakota High School. Administration will continue to explore potential sites for these programs, which would allow for the sale of the facility, or to determine a long-term plan that outlines renovations or other solutions.

## **Resolve South Side Enrollment Increases**

Bennett Elementary School continues to grow at an exceedingly rapid pace. Fargo Public Schools owns land on 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, which would be ideal for the next elementary school to provide relief to Bennett because it would be the most southern developable area, allowing the District as much time as possible and addresses one of the fastest growing areas of town. However, developing the owned land prior to the completion of the FM Diversion would significantly increase the cost of a building project. At this time, it does not seem that Bennett will be able to “hold out” until this school is built.

Additionally, despite previous boundary changes, Discovery Middle School and Davies High School continue to grow. In prior task forces, the Fargo Public Schools community and School Board have expressed desire for a consistent middle school to high school feeder pattern. To best fulfill this desired feeder pattern and manage growth, it would be best to separate the Discovery Middle School to Davies High School feeder pattern. Since there is no land east of I-29 that is currently or forecasted to be available that would be big enough for a high school and not encroach in in the Davies High School attendance area, Discovery Middle School may need to be paired with a future new high school and Fargo Public Schools may need to build a new middle school that feeds into Davies High School. Therefore, the District is considering the following short, intermediate and long-term solutions to resolve south side enrollment increases:

### *Short-Term:*

Fargo Public Schools explores building a middle school on the eight acres owned directly east of Davies High School

- This would be a shared campus concept where the middle school and high school share fields and are located within walking distance of each other.
- This middle school would open and operates as a 5th Grade, 8th Grade, and 9th Grade Center for several years.
- This provides the needed relief to Bennett, Discovery, and Davies for the immediate and intermediate future.
- Fargo Public Schools explores purchasing two plots of land for future development of schools west of I-29.



# *Moving Parts, continued*

## *Intermediate-Term (after completion of F-M Diversion)*

- Build an elementary school on district owned property on 76th. When this school opens, fifth graders will no longer be served at the 5-8-9 campus east of Davies High School.

## *Long-Term*

- Build a feeder pattern high school campus for Discovery Middle School feeder pattern (when needed). When this high school opens, the 8-9 campus built east of Davies will become a middle school for Davies High School and serve grades 6-8.

## **Future School Sites**

Current development and growth projections indicate the District will need to consider the purchase of land west of I-29 for a future elementary and high school site. The District will monitor southwest development to look for land that could accommodate these facilities. The timing for a future elementary school will be dependent on the rate of growth west of I-29 and south of Kennedy Elementary School.

The pieces of information shared above are just a few highlights from the approved Long Range Facilities Plan. All of these considerations are based on the information available to Fargo Public Schools at this time and is subject to change based on new information, enrollment patterns, or changes in demography. We encourage active participation from stakeholders in the FPS community so feel free to reach out to appropriate District Officials for more information about future considerations. Remember, there are many Moving Parts, but the harmony is worth waiting for. Also, if you haven't had the opportunity to do so, check out the Moving Parts in the Troll Lounge at Sons of Norway on Thursday nights. Stay tuned...

