

Meeting Minutes: Governmental Affairs Committee**Date/Time:** May 2 – 7:30 a.m.**Location:** District Office Board Room**Start:** 7:30 a.m. **End:** 8:24 a.m.**Committee Members Present:** Robin Nelson, Melissa Burkland, Katie Christensen, and Nyamal Dei**Committee Members Absent:** Greg Clark**Board Members Present:** Jim Johnson (Came at 8:06)**Staff Members Present:** Dr. Rupak Gandhi, Tara Brandner, Jackie Gapp and Bill Westrick**Recorder:** Amy Patterson

Agenda Item	Discussion – Conclusion	Recommendations/Actions
Approval of March 21 Meeting Minutes	The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes of the March 21, 2023 meeting.	Minutes will be posted on the Board's section of the public website.
Remaining Legislation	<p>The legislative session is now over. Robin suggested that the committee review Fargo Public School's Legislative Priorities for the 2023 Session and compare what we were hoping for with the surviving legislation.</p> <p>Positive School Culture and Safety. School funding for safety and health-based services like nurses, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, behavioral health specialists and school resource officers. We did see some help with behavioral health which is a win.</p> <p>Education Funding. There was increased funding for special education designed to level the education playing field for students with disabilities--an additional \$15 million put into the weighting factor. It is a positive for us because it is another factor negotiated into the funding formula. A big portion of our general funding now goes into special education. With the state increasing the funding, it is higher revenue for special education which helps. There is still a big gap, but this is a huge recognition and a win.</p> <p>The tuition revenue offset and mill levy deduct was more of an information sharing with the legislators. Robin Nelson shared that it appears that legislators are starting to understand the mill levy deduct and the fact that the District does not get the full per pupil amount.</p> <p>Overall, 98% of our time was spent this session in defense mode. There were a lot of positive things that came out of the session. Chair Robin Nelson opened the floor up for comments. Robin Nelson presented the highlights of the busy session and committee discussion ensued.</p> <p>Senate Bill 2284. Funding was increased to a 4 and a 4. This is the biggest increase. 70% of the funding will go to salary and benefits. The special education weighting factor was</p>	

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	<p>increased to .088. Discussion ensued to clarify how this works and is calculated. The weighting factor is built into the per pupil formula. It is applied across the board, not to identified students. All Districts receive this based on their student enrollment.</p> <p>School Lunches. Increased funding for means tested families. There is an additional \$6 Million for school lunches. More will qualify as it will cover 200% of poverty level. There will no longer be reduced lunches-just free.</p> <p>School Construction Loan. This was increased so there is availability to get more money. We can apply for a portion of the money needed for our new building projects. There is an application process, and it is based on who gets their facility plans in first. There are a lot of referendums coming up for Districts (Minot, Grand Forks, Mandan, West Fargo, us). When we build, we may or may not get any funding, but the increase improves our odds. We will move forward with bonding but will always apply and try for this low interest funding.</p> <p>HB 1522 relates to pronoun usage in public employment and accommodations for transgender students and was passed. We will need to have some policies on this. Tara Brandner advised that students have to use the bathroom identified with their sex, which has Title IX implications. Tara Brandner and Dr. Rupak Gandhi will likely ask the governor to veto this bill.</p> <p>Continuing discussion was had on more highlighted legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1040 - The PERS pension plan was closed, although they are obligated to make everyone whole that is currently in the plan. • 1120 provides an opportunity to recite the pledge of allegiance. • 1178 CT3 membership. It requires 3 people, but they don't have to be Board Members. The intent is to have 1 board member and 2 staff members. • 1187 - It expands the ability of a School Board to pay a signing bonus to a licensed teacher. An educator taking on a new role can be given a signing bonus. For example, if a teacher takes on special education or counseling as a new role, you can offer a signing bonus. Recommendation to give a signing bonus which will help with recruitment. • Library Bill 1205 survived. It doesn't include schools, but it is a heartache for public libraries. • 1245 – We now need to communicate with dollars rather than mills. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1249 - Athletic teams are either male, female, or co-ed. • 1257 – School Board candidates with a fall enrollment of more than 1,000 students will have to do a Campaign Finance Disclosure Report. We will have to add it to our orientation for School Board candidates and revisit once the details are finalized. • 1259 - Clarification about contract rights for individuals employed in positions substantially funded by grants. Nonrenewal hearings or waivers are not required as long as you communicate the short-term nature of the position. • 1304 adds special education teaching permit requirements using a teaching authorization for a period of two years. This helps with SPED recruitment. • 1362 - parental rights bill says that parents have primary control over the child's education. • 1398 – We are the first state in the nation to require computer science and cybersecurity curriculum. We can integrate it into our curriculum. • 1474 - Defines sex as male and female at birth. This could have Title IX implications. • 1489 - Designated athletic teams for male, female, or co-ed for higher education. • 1494 - Prevents lunch shaming. Legislators finally seem to understand that if lunches aren't paid for, it comes out of our general fund. • 2254 – related to chronically low performing schools. Dr. Rupak Gandhi reported on the changes and amendments and suggested that we would be better off investing in pre-K and early education for high-risk students rather than reactionary measures. • 2359 – legislative management study -- the impact of political subdivisions levying special assessments against other political subdivisions (we pay taxes to other taxing agencies). We are proactive in trying to work with other subdivisions to waive taxes. <p>Discussion was had on the bill that passed related to the ultrasound video that is now required in the Health curriculum. When you offer Health and human sexuality, you must show the DPI video or another 3-minute video of early fetal development and human growth-- showing the process of fetal development for every week of gestation. This must now be included in the District's curriculum.</p>	
Next Steps	Historically, we send thank you letters to the legislators after the legislative session. The Committee will thank them for their time and commitment to students and schools. Robin Nelson encouraged all members to also send written thank you notes to those legislators	Robin Nelson and Amy Patterson to send thank you letters to legislators.

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	<p>who have been champions for schools. Robin Nelson and Amy Patterson will send thank you letters.</p> <p>Committee discussion was had on interim work and how to be proactive, setting the next committee up for success. Robin Nelson challenged the group to put more thought into an outline for what the next year’s committee will do so we can propose that. The administrative rules will be written based on what was passed and a lot of the rules start to take effect August 1, unless otherwise specified.</p> <p>Robin Nelson will create a calendar and an outline for what we covered and when to prepare for the 2025 session. Robin Nelson is also charged with writing the Governmental Affairs Committee column to overview the session and requested committee feedback as to what to write about (i.e., highlights vs. lowlights). Dr. Rupak Gandhi suggested creating guiding principles for the Governmental Affairs Committee as to themes that we will support or oppose, non-negotiables, and advice to the 2025 committee.</p>	
Next Meeting Date	The committee will meet next on June 6 at 7:30 a.m. in the District Office Board Room.	
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