



## *Board of Education Column*

*By Brian Nelson, Board of Education*

### **Changes to Board Policy EL-14**

At our last Board meeting on March 23, 2021, the Fargo Board of Education approved changes to [Board Policy EL-14](#), which provides more clear direction to the Calendar Committee. As the Board Member on the Calendar Committee and an administrator in two other school districts, I know that the school calendar impacts many people and can garner a lot of attention. I also know that without clear guidance and expectations from the Board, the Calendar Committee has a lot of flexibility to create a calendar, especially with recent changes in state legislation.

The modified policy approved by the Board was a result of discussion at the March 8, 2021 Board of Education work session. Changes in North Dakota Century Code during the 2019 and 2021 legislative session have resulted in greater flexibility for school districts in the creation of their school calendar. After determining the Board's role in creating set expectations for the District's Calendar Committee, the Board discussed values paramount to the Board of Education that should be reflected in the calendar. Specifically, the Board reached consensus that the calendar should focus on maximizing in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible.

As a result, modifications to EL-14 were drafted through discussion at the work session, which will be used as expectations for the Calendar Committee. These expectations state that the District calendar must include:

- a. 175 Student Contact Days
  - After utilizing the two school make-up days (2.g.) the superintendent may waive student contact days up to the state minimum hour requirements due to emergency closures
- b. 5 Holidays
- c. 5 Professional Development Days
- d. 2 Professional Planning Days
- e. 2 Days Equivalent for Parent Teacher Conferences
- f. 1 Day Equivalent for Parent Teacher Communication
- g. 2 School Make-Up Days
  - To be scheduled before the last scheduled student contact day

While student contact time is calculated in hours versus days legislatively, the Board of Education does not feel that the resulting flexibility provided to the districts should significantly lessen student contact days, unless there are unexpected circumstances. Therefore, our expectations are that the district calendar still include 175 student contact days. Because we value in-person



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instruction, the Board of Education still expects the district calendar to include two school make-up days that the Superintendent must utilize prior to waiving any other student contact day, even if virtual instruction is an option. The Board also discussed when the make-up days are placed in the district calendar and consensus was reached that the Board would not support a calendar presented to them that had school make up days as the last day of the school calendar.

The Fargo Board of Education believes that these expectations are aligned to our values and will assist the Calendar Committee in developing the most appropriate yearly calendar for Fargo Public Schools. I look forward to continuing in my role on this committee and presenting District calendars for Board approval this Spring.

