



Board of Education Column

By Jim Johnson, Board of Education

Fargo Public Schools – Where the Future Unfolds

The Planning Committee of the Fargo Board of Education typically meets monthly throughout the calendar year. Our goal is to make sure the Board as a whole has all the information it needs to make sound, sustainable decisions regarding our resources and physical assets. While we work with the administration to develop the annual operating budgets, we also focus our time and attention to the longer term needs of the district as well. One of the main focuses of the Planning Committee is to work with our administration in developing and updating our long range financial and facilities plans.

At the Board's work session held in September, several future potential building projects were discussed, and direction was provided in terms of prioritizing those future projects. Potential projects that were discussed included acquiring land in south Fargo for a future high school and elementary school (while the need isn't immediate we would prefer to acquire potential sites while the land is still relatively inexpensive), relocation of Dakota High School and our Adult Education program (currently housed at Agassiz), a central location for our Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program (a task force in 2018 recommended three sites to serve the needs of these children). For the ECSE program, FPS completed a remodel at Longfellow Elementary School, which serves as the northside site and we are now considering a possible addition to Hawthorne Elementary School to serve as the central site.

We continue to see student numbers grow in the southern portion of our district and we will soon be at student capacity at Bennett Elementary School. To address the potential overcrowding we will most likely be doing some minor attendance boundary adjustment for elementary attendance areas in south Fargo as we wait for enrollment numbers to justify breaking ground on a new elementary building.

By planning for our future needs and determining when we will have the fiscal resources to address them, the Planning Committee can help the Board and the District to be proactive rather than reactive to our future needs and our ability to meet them.

