



## ***Board of Education Column***

***By Jim Johnson, Board of Education***

### **Planning Committee Update**

Now that spring has finally begun to show itself and we impatiently wait for summer to arrive, it's the time of the year that the Planning Committee will begin focusing on one of our primary tasks: working with administration to prepare next year's preliminary operating budgets for the School Board's consideration and approval.

State statute requires official school board action each summer and fall as it relates to approval and certification of our annual operating budgets. However, the actual work on next year's operating budgets began months and months ago at the building and department levels of the District. Through discussion, analysis, and collaboration, staff has been working tirelessly to provide input for their portion of the budget to best support the needs of our students.

Under the direction of our Business Manager Jackie Gapp, a team has been working to assemble all the revenue and expenditure projections into our operating budgets. This work needs to reflect the identified needs of the District, which can be fiscally supported and sustained going forward. This is, of course, a process filled with staffing and student projections, emerging needs discussions, tradeoffs and repurposing, revenue forecasts and much, much more!

The Fargo School Board, as well as other government bodies, has established fund balance goals for several of our operating budgets. One of the main reasons for having fund balance goals is to eliminate or minimize the need for the district to utilize short-term borrowing to cover operating costs. As such, use of fund balances is generally only to be considered in the annual budgeting process for one-time, non-reoccurring expenditures or based upon specific Board direction and action.

The end goal of the budget planning process each year is to whenever possible present a preliminary budget that is balanced in terms of projected revenue and expenditures. This coming June, the preliminary budgets will be presented by the Planning Committee to the Board for its consideration.

On behalf of the Planning Committee and the entire Board, I want to personally thank each and every staff member who's been assisting in the development of our 2022-2023 operating budgets. We couldn't do it without you!

