



Board of Education Column

By Seth Holden, Board of Education

2022 Negotiations Update

In [my last column back in December](#), I covered information pertaining to our last negotiations cycle. I talked about our negotiated agreement, some of the challenges we met, the successes we had and some of the work that had yet to be completed.

As I covered in my last column, as part of the negotiated agreement, three Memos of Understanding (MOUs) were created and agreed upon that created two different commissions. One to focus on recess and one to focus on salary. At that time, both the Recess Commission and the Salary Commission had begun their work. The Recess Commission was able to finish up their work in January of this year and presented their report at the regularly scheduled Board meeting on January 25. The Salary Commission finished their work in March and presented its report to the Board at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 26.

I found that the Salary Commission contained some great conversation that will hopefully lead to continued successful negotiations between the Board and the Fargo Education Association (FEA) That commission produced several recommendations. First, it was agreed upon that honoring step and lane changes was a priority in future negotiations. Second, that continued work over time between the Board and the FEA can produce a salary matrix that the district deems sustainable, and the FEA deems adequate and functional. Third, that during both legislative and non-legislative years, the Board, the FEA, the District administration and any other entities work with each other to ensure that the North Dakota legislature adequately fund public education and strike down any legislation that would work to dismantle public education. Lastly, that the Board and the FEA meet upon the start of negotiations with members of the administration in order to be provided with budgetary information.

The third MOU to come out of our most recent negotiated agreement pertained to both the Board and the FEA engaging in negotiations training. After an initial meeting with FEA President Kim Reger, the FEA's lead negotiator Grant Kraft, Board President Rebecca Knutson and myself, we determined that the training we should be seeking to undertake should focus less on negotiations and more on relationship building and building trust between the Board and the FEA as trust is the foundation on which all successful relationships are built. The work to satisfy this MOU is still ongoing but we are working to have a trainer agreed upon this week and will have the training completed in late Summer/early Fall. I am looking forward to this training and look forward to reporting its success in my next column.

