



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2023 Session

OUR MISSION

"Educating and empowering all students to succeed"

EDUCATION SNAPSHOTS

Additional information: please press ctrl + click or scan embedded QR codes when provided to access additional information embedded in this document.

North Dakota



Fargo Public Schools



FPS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Positive School Culture and Safety

A desired result of the Fargo Public Schools (FPS) Strategic Plan is that all Fargo Public School environments are physically and psychologically supportive for students and adults. Therefore, FPS supports more options that allow educators in schools to help students improve academically, engage in and maintain positive relationships, and develop life skills around teamwork, communication, and decision-making.

These supports are inclusive of state and community partnerships that ensure adequate school funding for safety and health-based services (i.e. nurses, school psychologists, counselors, social workers, behavioral specialists, and school resource officers) and opportunities to provide a well-rounded education with consistent access to mental health and wraparound services. Offering these services to students and families will create a school climate where they feel safe, healthy, engaged, challenged and supported to succeed. FPS supports expansion of behavioral health pilot programs implemented during previous legislative sessions.

Publications by the Education Commission of the States, a nationwide resource for education policy, provide relevant context and state level policy examples regarding student health and wellness. The publications are available using the following QR codes.

Policy Reports



Relevant legislation from other states



Education Funding

Special Education

When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) passed in 1975, Congress understood it was creating a law that would have increased financial impact at state and local levels. Congress promised to pay a significant share (40%) of the excess costs of educating a child with a disability compared to a general education student. In the 1997 reauthorization, the 40% of excess cost was changed to 40% of the National Average Per Pupil Expenditure (NAPPE) for every child enrolled in special education. Funding through the federal, state, and local partnership to provide an equal educational opportunity for all students has not worked very well from the local district perspective. As a result, 2020 enrollment numbers show the North Dakota state shortfall for special education funding is \$65,200,000 and the outstanding unpaid federal share of IDEA funding for Fargo Public Schools is approximately \$7,700,000.

Increased funding designed to help level the education playing field for students with disabilities is an investment in our state's students and their future. We support increased funding for our most vulnerable students. In the previous five years, Fargo Public Schools has realized a 27% increase in special education students. The complexity of student needs continues to increase. Continued student growth coupled with increased costs to provide specialized services is projected.

English Learners

We support additional funding for English Learner students. English Learner students speak many different languages, bring with them other barriers that must be solved for learning to occur and often require educational programs that are varied and delivered on an individual basis.

Tuition Revenue Offset

We support adjustment to the tuition contribution from other local revenue in the funding formula. Currently, 75% or \$328,000 of FPS' tuition revenue received by educating students placed or enrolled by other districts is deducted from our state aid payment.

Mill Levy Deduct

We support legislative action to provide relief to local taxpayers supporting districts subject to the 60-mill levy deduction. Due to legislative action in 2009, every ten years voters must approve maintenance of a specified mill levy. Through taxpayer support, this was successfully accomplished by FPS in 2017 at a rate of 127 mills. The mill levy deduction to state aid becomes a critical factor as we return to voters for approval in 2027. As property valuation rises the deduction becomes greater, significantly impacting future funding.

OUR OTHER PRIORITIES

- State support for regional career workforce academies
- Initiatives supported by partner agencies including the North Dakota Council for Educational Leaders and the North Dakota School Boards Association
- Supporting the recruitment and retention of all staff employed by Local Education Associations

CONTACT INFORMATION

Key Contacts



Dr. Rupak Gandhi
Superintendent
gandhir@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 446-1005



Jackie Gapp
Business Manager
gappj@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 446-1032



Tara Brander
District General Counsel
brandnt@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 446-1078

Board of Education

Robin Nelson – Governmental Affairs Committee Chair
nelsonr@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 238-1188

Dr. Tracie Newman, President
Newmant1@fargo.k12.nd.us
(612) 998-1727

Melissa Burkland
burklam@fargo.k12.nd.us
(414) 530-7907

Katie Christensen
christk3@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 388-7369

Greg Clark
clarkg1@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 212-0703

Nyamal Dei
dein@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 318-5167

Seth Holden, Vice President
holdens@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 388-2782

Nikkie Gullickson
gullicn@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 412-8141

Jim Johnson
johnsji@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 232-7481 EXT 121

AnnMarie Campbell, Secretary
campbea1@fargo.k12.nd.us
(701) 446-1005



Please visit our website for updated information regarding legislative issues that affect our district.

