

**UPDATE: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
EDUCATION FUNDING COMMITTEE**

September 11, 2013

By: Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent

701-328-4570

Department of Public Instruction

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kirsten Baesler and I am the State Superintendent for the Department of Public Instruction. I am here to provide information regarding the Department's recent activities, including the No Child Left Behind Waiver, development of principal and teacher evaluations, the vertical alignment project, AdvanceED statewide accreditation, statewide ACT scores, early childhood education activities, Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced, the new statewide student assessment.

- **NCLB waiver**
 - North Dakota withdrew its waiver application March 1, 2013, after determining that the waiver would provide very little relief and, in some instances, more severe punitive consequences for North Dakota schools and teachers.

- The key issue of disagreement was over the level by which the number of non-proficient students would have needed to be reduced over a six-year period of time.
- DPI's Federal Title Programs unit is preparing for 100% Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) failure in 2015.
- North Dakota implemented a cooperative effort with non-waiver states to draft a letter to the U.S. Department of Education asking what the consequences will be for 100% school failure for AYP and if there will be a "reset" for the new assessment to be implemented in 2015. We are waiting for a response from the U.S. Department of Education. North Dakota is one of six non-waiver states; the others are Iowa, Montana, Wyoming, Vermont and California; Illinois is pending.
- DPI is revising our Supplemental Education Services (SES) application in order to make it less cumbersome and allow more local schools to be their own SES providers.
- **Principal/Teacher Evaluation System**
 - DPI recognizes that principals are at the heart of our public schools and their programs. Therefore, the principal evaluation expectations are being developed prior to the teacher evaluation.

- DPI convened a group of North Dakota legislators; school district superintendents; high school, middle school and elementary school principals and teachers; and representatives from higher education and the ND LEAD Center on August 15, 2013 to begin work on developing a model evaluation rubric for North Dakota.
- This group will meet again on September 19, 2013, to continue this work.
- The committee and DPI have set a goal for a deliverable model evaluation rubric by the spring semester of 2014.
- Full implementation of every administrator evaluated every year using a DPI-approved evaluation tool will be included as an assurance in statewide accreditation.
- DPI is also working with NDCEL, ND LEAD and the NDUS on developing a school leadership development program using the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) project that provides training and technical assistance, and prepares school leaders for increased accountability.
- **Vertical Alignment**
 - North Dakota's K-12 and higher education systems lack a seamless path for many students from high school to college level work

without the need for developmental courses that extend college graduation to five or more years after entry.

- A group of English language arts and mathematics instructors representing higher education and high school met May 28-29, 2013, to evaluate current standards, determine where the gaps exist and determine a means to close them.
- The two working groups—English language arts and mathematics—met again June 24, 2013.
- The groups are continuing their work this school year with a goal to provide deliverables to be used system wide.
- Support to spread/grow this work across the university system and high schools will be ongoing.

AdvancED State-Wide Accreditation

- DPI is implementing a statewide accreditation process to help schools better define and carry out the organizational quality assurance process.
- Statewide accreditation was recommended by a 24-member committee representing superintendents, principals, teachers, higher education, NDCEL, NDLEAD, NDEA, REAs, nonpublic schools,

school boards, large and small schools, and all geographic areas of the state.

- The 2013 Legislature appropriated funds for AdvancED to carry out this process and include the use of the web-based ASSIST tool for continuous improvement planning.
- DPI has begun this week to provide schools with webinar training to login to the AdvanceED system.
- The DPI Fall School Improvement Conference October 2-4, 2013, in Mandan and regional workshops throughout the state October 21 – November 1, 2013, will also provide Introduction to AdvanceED training for schools new to the process.
- The 2013-2014 school year will be the transition year to bring all schools on board with the process. Schools that currently use the NDMILE process for their continuous improvement will be able to continue to do so in the statewide accreditation process.
- Starting in 2014-2015, all public schools will be included in the statewide accreditation process. The five-year cycle of external reviews for school will begin at that time.

- **ACT scores**
 - North Dakota requires that all eleventh grade students take the ACT college readiness assessment.
 - North Dakota students' average composite score for 2013 was 20.5, just slightly lower than the 2012 average composite score of 20.7.
 - Our scores are not as high as we would like them to be, but DPI is working to delve deeper into the data.
 - A change occurred in how ACT compiles its reports this year. ACT included the scores of all special needs students who needed accommodations or additional testing time. Including these students' scores affects the overall state average and alters comparison with previous years' scores.
 - Again, DPI is investigating this to identify where we can make improvements.
 - In addition to ACT's change in reporting methods, North Dakota is one of only 11 states that test all of their eleventh graders. A comparison to a state such as Massachusetts, for example, that tests only 22% of its students changes the scope of this national report.

- The North Dakota ranking looks very different among its peer states that test all students compared to those states that only test 20% to 50% of their students.
 - To more accurately compare to top-ranking Massachusetts' scores, the top 22% of North Dakota students (1547 students) scored an ACT composite average of 26.91 compared to the average Massachusetts composite score of 24.1.
 - To more accurately compare North Dakota's scores to the scores from Minnesota, the top 74% of North Dakota students (5203 students) scored an ACT composite average of 22.27 as compared to the average Minnesota composite score of 23.0.
- **Early Childhood Education—Study**
 - The legislature appropriated funds in DPI's budget for a comprehensive study of early childhood education, to involve the Department of Human Services and other various entities and stakeholders.
 - A 42-member committee has been established.
 - Responses to an RFP for technical assistance are being reviewed through Friday of this week, with contract award expected by September 24, 2013.

- The project timeline is as follows:
 - October 2013: Full team meeting, creation of subcommittees, first meetings of subcommittees.
 - October-November 2013: Consultant meeting with DPI and second full team meeting.
 - November 2013: Second meetings of subcommittees.
 - December 2013: Third meetings of subcommittees.
 - January 2014: Consultant meeting with DPI and third full team meeting.
 - February 2014: Fourth meetings of subcommittees.
 - March 2014: Fourth full team meeting.
 - April 2014: Consultant meeting with DPI and fifth full team meeting.
 - May 2014: Final preparations of study and schedule time to meet with legislative management.
 - June 1, 2014: Deliver study to legislative management.
- **Early Childhood Education--Standards**
 - DPI will release North Dakota's first ever Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards on or before September 20.
 - This document united North Dakota's early learning stakeholders.

- These standards are aligned to the K-12 college and career ready standards. The work was guided by public comment and multiple levels of review by national and state experts in early childhood education.
- We are working with North Carolina to develop a kindergarten entry assessment, with conference calls tentatively scheduled for September 24, 2013 and October 23, 2013, and a face-to-face meeting tentatively scheduled for November 13-15.
- The primary purpose of the assessment will be to guide instruction, and give teachers and students a meaningful tool to adjust teaching and learning to meet or exceed standards across multiple domains of development.
- The assessment will gather a variety of data (e.g., observations, conversations, work samples, tasks) from multiple sources (e.g., teachers, support staff, families, and community members).
- This is a great boost to the early childhood component introduced into the SLDS.
- **Common Core**
 - In recent years, our partners in business, industry and higher education have identified areas where there are gaps between what

students have learned when they graduate high school and the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college or the workplace.

- The Common Core State Standards were endorsed by North Dakota in 2009 and in 2011 by the Dakota Governor's Commission on Education.
- The standards were adopted by North Dakota in June 2011.
- Full implementation will occur this year (2013-2014).
- In the past, standards were developed starting at kindergarten and working forward through 12th grade. This bottom-up process created the learning gap between high school and college or work.
- The Common Core State Standards are groundbreaking. They were engineered backward from college expectations to kindergarten.
- More than 60 North Dakota educators worked on the math and English language arts standard writing team before adoption.
- As with anything new, there will be hurdles and challenges along the way. As the Common Core standards are implemented, our students will be covering much more ground during the course of the year.
- The bar has been raised. At first, there will be a lot of catching up to do.

- Initially our test scores will drop. After students have learned to the standards for several years and have had the chance to cover the needed material, they will again rise. Just as when a new software program is introduced, productivity temporarily drops. Once employees have had time to learn the program, productivity again rises and the benefits of the new program are apparent. So it is with the Common Core State Standards.
- Last Friday, September 6, 2013, DPI completed the first step in working with the U.S. Education Delivery Institute to develop a comprehensive and proactive implementation plan. We need to continue to develop and refine the action steps of that plan.
- **Smarter Balanced/New Statewide Assessment**
 - Prior to choosing an assessment consortium, DPI invited educators to a work session that included presentations by both Smarter Balanced and PARCC and provided opportunity for discussion of each consortium's merits.
 - More than 100 educators participated.
 - DPI also deliberated the decision internally and surveyed educators prior to making the decision.

- Smarter Balanced is a good fit for North Dakota, as the consortium includes a number of neighboring states with similar educational ideals and also offers opportunities for future regional cooperation.
- The design of the assessment is state-driven and was developed in partnership with the education industry.
- A digital library of resources will be available to all member states and can be used by teachers for formative assessments. DPI will identify 50 to 60 North Dakota educators to be trained by Smarter Balanced on developing and vetting the tools that will be included in the digital library.
- The tentative schedule for assessment development and implementation is as follows:
 - Spring 2014 Field testing
 - Spring 2015: Implement assessment

Thank you. That concludes my update. I would be happy to answer any questions.