

INNOVATIVE EDUCATION TASK FORCE: FINAL REPORT

December 2018



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North Dakota is in a pivotal moment in its history. Tremendous technological advances, new economic realities and an increasingly dynamic world have culminated in a rapid pace of change. To fulfill the collective obligation to North Dakota's future, our students must experience a learner-centric education. New systems grounded in best practices, collaborative action and continuous improvement are essential to provide a choice-ready education that empowers students with the relevant knowledge, skills and disposition to reach their full potential and thrive. North Dakota's future lies in its students' success.

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-Innovative Education Task Force Purpose Statement- 2018



— State of —
North Dakota
Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
Governor

December 31, 2018

This report is a direct product of the expertise, passion, and commitment of the individuals who served on the Innovative Education Task Force. With boundless gratitude for the work they do to support student learning, there is no questioning North Dakota's opportunity to lead the nation in providing young people with a transformative education.

One of the highlights of the Task Force was the opportunity to visit several schools across our great state. To hear directly from staff and students in all corners of North Dakota on what innovation means to their community was as inspiring as it was informational. We must continue to equip our educators on the front lines with the systems and supports they need to be successful. This report is an outline of a comprehensive journey exploring where we've been, where we are, and where we ought to go.

It's our hope this report sparks conversations around cafeteria tables and in classrooms across the state about how student-centric learning can best prepare our students for the rapidly evolving world they will inherit. Attending each and every meeting of the Task Force only cemented a firmly held belief that this work cannot be done alone. By fostering leadership everywhere, working as one, being student-focused and bringing a growth mindset to our work, we can truly make a difference in developing our state's most precious resource: its young people.

Thank you, Innovative Education Task Force. Our work has not ended; it has just begun.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Burgum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Doug Burgum
Governor



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Kirsten Baesler
State Superintendent

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The need for innovation has never been more important in our schools. Every classroom teacher, school administrator, parent and student has ideas about how to improve teaching and learning. We must help to set their imaginations free and encourage a thousand ideas of innovation to flourish.

We must emphasize individual learning, and allowing our students to pursue the passions that interest them. We should allow students to learn at their own pace, rather than follow an industrial learning model that was devised more than a century ago.

We must do dramatic things to encourage and develop our students' skills in communication, collaboration, analysis and problem-solving.

I believe at the state level, with the help of the Legislature, we've been successful at creating an environment where innovative education ideas are encouraged and given opportunity to grow.

With help from a range of North Dakota education stakeholders, as well as public comments from regional forums held across the state, we have developed a strategic vision for K-12 education. We have many independent education agencies and associations across North Dakota, and our plan harnesses their energy to serve our shared priorities to raise the level of student achievement.

We will increase our number of students who are entering kindergarten prepared to learn. We will increase our number of third graders who are proficient in reading; this is a crucial benchmark for future success.

We will increase our number of students who meet their expected learning gains each year. We will increase our number of students who are fully engaged in learning, who are striving for excellence and not just trying to get by.

We will increase our number of students who graduate choice ready.

And we will reduce the disparity in achievement for students in poverty and for Native American students.

We will do this by having quality early childhood education, support for safe and healthy behaviors, the ability to explore careers, by having excellent teachers and administrators in our schools, and by offering quality, personalized learning.

By doing this, we will provide future North Dakotans with the tools they need to succeed in a state and world that is changing in ways we can barely imagine.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kirsten Baesler".

Kirsten Baesler
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Overview

TASK FORCE ESTABLISHMENT

On September 13, 2017 Governor Doug Burgum established the 15-member Innovative Education Task Force (IETF) through Executive Order. EO 2017-15 set out the goals for the IETF:

- Investigate and identify the conditions necessary to unleash the potential of our teachers and students
- Create a system of identification and support for schools and districts implementing innovative practices
- Highlight practices providing an effective and equitable 21st century education
- Identify changes to state education policies that will promote the strategic adoption of student-centered learning experiences

The original IETF members included:

1. Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler (ex-officio)
2. Maggie Barth, leader of the Innovation School in Bismarck
3. Denise Bervig of Williston, a high school social studies teacher
4. Allen Burgad of West Fargo, Assistant Superintendent
5. Governor Doug Burgum (ex-officio)
6. Mary Jean Dehne, executive director of the nonprofit Legacy Children's Foundation in Fargo
7. Stacy Duffield of Fargo, professor of teacher education at North Dakota State University
8. Jessie Erickson of Grand Forks, a parent, teacher and instructional coach
9. Kathryn Froelich from Selfridge, cultural coordinator with the Missouri River Educational Cooperative
10. Michael Gilbertson, secondary principal of New Salem-Almont Public School District
11. Sonya Hansana, member of the Hazen school board and Oliver-Mercer special education board
12. Cody Mickelson, a teacher in the Jamestown Public Schools district
13. Sen. Donald Schaible of Mott, chairman of the Senate Education Committee
14. Rep. Cynthia Schreiber-Beck of Wahpeton, vice-chair of the House Education Committee
15. Superintendent Cory Steiner from Northern Cass
16. Jeff Ubl, president of Übl Design Group
17. Tamara Uselman, superintendent of Bismarck Public Schools

Mark Vollmer, superintendent at Minot Public Schools, replaced Tamara Uselman after her departure from the Bismarck Public School district and quickly became an invaluable asset to the Task Force.

IETF MEETINGS

The IETF met formally 10 times over the course of 14 months. In addition to meeting at the state Capitol, the Task Force visited schools across North Dakota to solicit input from educators working in a variety of school contexts and intentionally engage students. Garrison, Oakes, Harrisburg (South Dakota), Fargo, Northern Cass, Watford City, and Fort Yates all graciously hosted IETF meetings or events. The IETF established the creation of work groups, led by educators from across the state, broadening engagement and providing periodic updates to the full Task Force.

Conversation

Conversation during the course of IETF meetings can be organized into three sections: scoping, exploring, and developing recommendations. Detailed agendas from each meeting can be found in Appendix A.

Scoping

The first two meetings of the Task Force were dedicated to scoping the work of the group. The goals laid out in the Executive Order provided much flexibility to the group to define innovation and chart a path from strategic visioning to concrete recommendations. Each Task Force member submitted a sample vision which was then synthesized into themes (Appendix B) for discussion at the second meeting. After discussing and prioritizing vision themes, the IETF began exploring resources to support innovative education in North Dakota.

Exploring

After charting the direction for the Task Force, the group engaged a variety of stakeholders to better understand the landscape of innovative best practices across the state, region and county. School leaders from across the state shared new systems designed to support student-centric learning. National leaders and organizations shared historical context and contemporary practices happening around the U.S. Additionally, the IETF visited the Harrisburg School District in March to study the first district-wide partial personalized learning pathway for students in the Dakotas.

Developing Recommendations

After several meetings of research and conversation, the IETF began to discuss concrete strategies that could be utilized by the state of North Dakota and individual school districts. In August the group collectively brainstormed 41 initiatives that could help advance the vision of the group (Appendix C). These initial submissions were then grouped thematically, discussed in more detail in subsequent meetings, and ultimately prioritized and aligned with specific policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

In all, the IETF endorsed 10 priority areas in rank order utilizing a 1-10 scoring metric for each initiative. The scoring was not forced choice: Task Force members could weigh multiple initiatives equally.

Updated Themes by Rank			
Rank	Theme	Rank	Theme
1 (123)	Flexibility: Graduation Requirements and More	6 (92)	Incentive Funding for Innovation
2 (121)	Holistic Student Support	7 (87)	Task Force Communication Strategy
3 (115)	Innovation Tool Kits	8 (77)	Higher Education Collaboration
4 (107)	Alternative Accountability Assessments	9 (76)	Data Synthesis
5 (96)	Wrap-around Supports: REAs, CDE and More	10 (74)	Sample Proficiency Scale Development

1. Flexibility: Graduation Requirements and More

The highest ranked initiative, as determined by the IETF, focused on providing additional personalized learning pathways that would be recognized by the state. Specifically, a personalized graduation pathway that could complement the current Carnegie Unit-based system was strongly recommended. Given the increasing opportunity for interdisciplinary, work-based and proficiency-based instruction and assessment, confining graduation requirements to specific credits was identified as a major barrier to student-centered learning. Instead, a proficiency transcript, in which mastery could be demonstrated in multiple modalities and disciplines, was identified as a way to preserve rigor while promoting flexibility. This personalized pathway would not replace the current credit-based graduation pathway: students would be able to select the route that was best aligned to their future aspirations.

Other areas of flexibility identified included removing subject-specific designations from disciplinary credit requirements. For instance, in the sciences students would still be required to amass three credits, but would not necessarily be forced to take physical science and biology.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. The North Dakota Legislative Assembly should approve a Personalized Graduation Pathway based on demonstrated proficiency mastery to complement the traditional credit-hour system

2. Holistic Student Support

Educators from buildings large and small across the state have identified the need for holistic student support that recognizes the increasing behavioral health challenges facing students in the 21st century. To address this chronic issue, a multifaceted approach is required: Medicaid billing processes, appropriate educational environments, private provider involvement, improving identification of students with needs, and ensuring the state-sponsored behavioral health systems become more school-facing in their organization and operation. Instructional pedagogy and learning systems will be fully utilized only if students have access to the services they need to live and learn at their full potential.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. Expand behavioral health services to students through human service agencies and private providers
2. Scale the behavioral health early intervention pilot program established through HB 1040 during the 2017 legislative session, improving screening for students in need of services and expanding statewide
3. Ensure Medicaid bill processes ensure individuals' needs are met, maximize reimbursement, incentivize private provider involvement and minimize district administrative responsibility

3. Innovation Tool Kits

Educating students is hard work and is made more difficult when done in isolation. The IETF recommends the creation and dissemination of innovation tool kits to help support districts wanting to explore more student-centered learning practices. The tool kits will be comprised of information developed by North Dakota educators leading instructional changes in their community and other research-based best practices.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. Creation and dissemination of Innovation Tool Kits

4. Better Aligned Accountability Assessments

Improved instructional practices necessitate better-aligned assessments. In the digital age, knowledge retention, as often demonstrated on multiple-choice and other standardized tests, is insufficient to ensure assessments are aligned to application-based instruction. Performance of proficiencies must be demonstrated in a non-standardized capacity.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. Development of performance assessments to replace traditional standardized tests for state and federal accountability requirements

5. Wrap-Around Supports

North Dakota has a number of educational entities that exist outside of the school district system. These include but are not limited to: The Department of Public Instruction, Career and Technical Education Department, EduTech, Center for Distance Education, Regional Education Associations (REAs), special education units, ITV consortiums, Board of Public Education, and other regionally based organizations and governing boards.

The state has a proud history of local control. Needing to balance the individual autonomy owed to community school districts with the need for improved collaboration at the state level among non-district entities, North Dakota needs to improve the collaboration and communication of all educational stakeholders.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. The North Dakota Legislative Assembly create a K-12 Coordinating Council to promote collaboration across all K-12 educational entities in North Dakota in order to best support K-12 education.

6. Incentive Innovation Funding, Grounded in Teacher Leadership

Current funding mechanisms in North Dakota result in funding increases being overwhelmingly funneled toward operational expenses. In order for the state to better invest in district initiatives aligned with student-centric instruction, a targeted pool of funds should be sheltered to support these initiatives and supplement the traditional funding formula.

Similar models have been implemented in states such as Iowa that have intentionally invested in teacher leadership compensation systems. Leadership compensation is not merit pay, which is based on past performance and often heavily reliant on standardized test results. Instead, teacher leadership compensation systems are forward-looking and designate specific leadership positions that provide educators professional development opportunities or added compensation for additional work outside of standard contract language. The dollars must be invested in or used to compensate current teachers, providing career track opportunities or added professional development. To be eligible for leadership funds, individuals must already be employed by a school district and complete a competitive application process. Contracts should last no more than two years to ensure continuous alignment between current district goals and educator skillsets.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. The governor should budget for, and the legislature should appropriate funds necessary to establish a Teacher Incentives for Leadership in Education (TILE) program to provide career track and professional development opportunities for educators aligned to district initiatives forwarding student-centric learning, recognizing so much of the work educators do outside of their contractual requirements currently goes uncompensated.

7. Communications Strategy, Feedback Solicitation

Marketing and comprehensive communication is both a strength and area for continual growth for North Dakota schools. Despite boasting one of the highest public school approval ratings in the nation, more can be done to better educate community members on the unique needs of and opportunities for today’s learners. Being a small state, much communication occurs on an organic basis. In order to systemically build capacity and shared vocabulary across the state, the Task Force recommends every district review this report and provide feedback to the governor’s office.

Endorsed Action:

1. Individual members of the Task Force will continue to message the “why” for personalized learning policies, as outlined in the purpose statement.

8. Higher Ed Collaboration

One of the most common concerns voiced during conversations on new educational systems is the perceived reluctance or refusal of institutions of higher education to accept proficiency transcripts or other non-traditional assessments. Nationally, there has been a movement away from standardized tests and rigid transcript requirements to determine admission eligibility. To ensure all students, regardless of learning pathway, have equal access to higher education in North Dakota, formal recognition by the State Board of Higher Education will help address real or perceived risks associated with personalized assessment.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. Development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Public Instruction and State Board of Higher Education, recognizing proficiency-based transcripts and other nontraditional assessments as equally valid as traditional measures when determining admissions.

9. Data Synthesis

In today’s data-driven environment, sharing data around new practices is imperative to ensure successful initiatives can be scaled and replicated. The IETF recommends that districts identify key data metrics, ranging from behavioral referrals to extracurricular participation, to help inform their decisions and ensure new innovative systems do not throw “the baby out with the bathwater.”

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. Districts define, track and share key performance indicators resulting from the new instructional systems they implement.

10. Disseminate Proficiency Scales

Letter grade assessment can often be subjective, measure non-academic factors, and fail to be aligned to learning standards. Instead, the IETF recommends the utilization of standards-based grading, grounded in common proficiency scales. By aligning teaching, learning, and assessment around namable proficiencies, educators can have a clearer picture of what should consume their instructional energy and students will be able to more fully name and demonstrate their learning in a way that can be more easily transferred between grades and subjects. Much good work in the state has been done in the development of proficiency scales; those efforts should be expanded and distributed across the state.

Endorsed Policy Recommendations:

1. Increased dissemination and adaptation of proficiency scales to be utilized and modified locally to support standards-based instruction and assessment.

Closing

Innovation is happening across the state of North Dakota. This report should not be interpreted as stating or implying that innovative practices are not occurring or that educators have not done enough to support student development. On the contrary, systems, many derived at the state level, must be re-tasked to meet the needs of today's students and educators.

The IETF has chosen 10 topics to highlight, knowing full well that innovation is truly defined at the community level. This report is not exhaustive. If anything, it attempts to affirm those continuing to push for student-centered learning and assure those working in the educational trenches every day that they are not alone in fulfilling the collective obligation of the state to develop its most precious resource: its young people.

This report was unanimously approved on December 6, 2018.

Task Force Member Narratives

In order to best honor the individual perspectives, key learnings, and recommendations of each Task Force member, each voting member was invited to submit an optional narrative of up to 500 words, recounting their individual experience.

Maggie Barth

As technology advances sweep the job market at an exponential rate, we no longer have the luxury of timidly discussing the problems with our education system. On January 1, 2001, the 21st century began. This happened during my freshman year of college. I have since graduated from college, gotten married, remained so for 13 years, had children, become frustrated with the resistance to change within the public school system, and started a small, independent elementary school. This school is focused on creativity, collaboration, communication, social and emotional well-being, and critical thinking. These are buzzwords within education... commonly called “21st century skills”. Even though we have been living in this century for 17+ years, we are still using this phrase to generate hype about the necessary changes needed within education. Educators feel trapped by the “box” that is traditional education... a system that was set up before the turn of the 20th century. We don’t need hype, we need support for a learner-centered system that offers flexibility and freedom for students and teachers.

We are at a pivotal time in North Dakota... a time that has the possibility to go down in our country’s history as the perfect storm in changing the tides of traditional education. We are a small and civil state, full of people with caring hearts for our children and their future. It is my hope that the words, recommendations, and experience of the members of this task force, as well as what we have learned throughout this year, will be trusted by our elected North Dakota officials as they face decisions concerning our current K-12 students and their futures. Truly, the future of our state rests on their young shoulders. As powerful adults, we must be bold and brave to give our young people a modern system of education and we must do it now. We cannot eliminate uncomfortableness as change is often difficult... but change is necessary in order to grow.

Educating students within an old-fashioned box isn’t working. Invite our young people and others who have seen how our traditional system can look and feel different into the conversation. We need to think beyond the box and create something new. Only then will our young citizens have the opportunity to radically impact and change the new and modern world in which we live. It can be done, but the urgency for change is real and palpable. We must act swiftly with courage and conviction... future generations are counting on us.

Denise Bervig

I cannot express how blessed I feel to have been chosen to participate in the Innovative Education Task Force and shared in the variety of discussions about education in North

Dakota. Having a diverse group of members on the task force allowed me the chance to hear how other stakeholders view our educational process. For example, visiting with entrepreneur, Maggie Barth, showed me the lengths individuals will go to in order to foster a unique approach to educational opportunities; conversations with school board member, Sonya Hansana, introduced me to the viewpoint of an elected educational leader and the challenges they face in their capacity; and finally, in speaking with Governor Burgum, I learned of his dedication to research, discussion, and action to recommendations which would move North Dakota into the forefront of 21st Century education movement.

Having educational leaders from other states share their experiences, challenges, and give us their advice was very helpful. While many other state school superintendents had difficulty convincing their state leaders about the importance of personalized learning and competency-based assessments, I am encouraged that North Dakota does not have that issue, as members of our state legislature and governor are some of the biggest cheerleaders for this innovative movement. Also, I appreciated the fact that personalized learning could look different in different districts, which allows for area stakeholders to become invested in the schools and the educational processes.

Visiting Harrisburg, South Dakota, gave our group the chance to see personalized learning in practice. As an educator, I am often presented with wonderful pedagogical ideas, but need to see them in person in order to visualize how I could implement them in my own classes. The Harrisburg trip let me make these connections. The students were so engaged in their own learning, and as an educator, I was truly impressed by how articulate they were when expressing how their learning had changed since the implementation of personalized learning at Harrisburg, with one middle school student expressing, “I used to go to the same sessions as my friends, and I realized that wasn’t best for my learning.” Talk about being self-aware. This sense of metacognition was not unique among the students I observed and spoke with at the elementary, middle school, and high school.

Finally, conversing with students at each meeting enabled me to understand their frustrations, fears, and expectations in their K-12+ experiences. The students were honest in expressing what works and what does not in education today, and too often we do not give them an opportunity to have a voice in a realm that dominates their social, emotional, and academic lives.

Allen Burgad

We would like to thank Governor Burgum and Policy Director, Levi Bachmeier, on the tremendous vision and work in creating and leading the Innovative Education Task Force for the great state of North Dakota. It is also important to recognize the legislators, educators, business leaders, and entrepreneurs who served on this committee. Your invested interest in our students of North Dakota is evident by your compassion and collaboration throughout our series of task force meetings.

As we visited various schools across North Dakota, our committee members witnessed students across our state being engaged in innovative learning opportunities. These experiences were a critical component which helped lead our state’s education task force to capture this great work and establish a common vision along with a network of supports to advance future learning goals for our students. Throughout this work, it was evident that our stakeholders are deeply committed to the future of education.

Within our committee’s work, we embraced an important belief and value that “all students can learn and will learn.” However, we also recognized that it is our responsibility to understand that the pace and speed that students learn will vary. Therefore, we felt that it is important for stakeholders at the state, local, and collegial levels to recognize this variable in learning by adjusting our current industrial age educational systems with a more innovative and real-world application approach.

Throughout this process, the task force was cognizant on the importance of providing our students a guaranteed and viable curriculum that also connected to real-world applications. As the committee continued to engage in extended discussions with students and educators across North Dakota, a common theme became clear. This common theme was the importance of developing student agency and life skills that prepare our students for post-secondary education as well as future careers. Within this pathway of learning, it was also noted that providing students “voice and choice” on demonstrating their learning is a critical component in building student efficacy and meeting the social-emotional learning needs for all students.

A continued focus of the members who served on this task force was to develop a beginning with an end in mind. Therefore, this committee has planted the seed for growing and developing this vision. However, planting the seed and growing the vision to fruition for our students is a responsibility that we embrace as educators, stakeholders, and leaders. We are blessed by the past efforts in education and very excited about the future opportunities for our students in the great state of North Dakota.

Mary Jean Dehne

North Dakotans pride themselves in a robust work ethic, determined excellence, and collaborative teamwork to ensure our citizens have an exemplary quality of life not found elsewhere in the nation.

Members of the Innovative Task Force from a variety of career sectors and communities around our state demonstrated these attributes during the past year. An open-minded exploration to comprehend the infrastructure needed to align education practices with learner interests and shifting job market demands in North Dakota was a critical goal of our team. Producing and retaining educated young adults is an essential stronghold to protect our states’ economic and social well being. North Dakota’s future lies in our student’s success.

The discovery and study of best practice policies and strategies from innovative schools across the nation assisted the Task Force in compiling recommended initiatives and policies to personalize education in North Dakota. States such as Maine, Iowa, South Dakota and California offered an open book review of the education models and policies that are creating trailblazing results for their K-12 students. Collaboration with these national innovators has provided the Task Force with evidence-based ingredients to bring a metamorphosis of change to renaissance education practices that currently fail to prepare our next generation to lead our state. North Dakota's future lies in learner-centered, inspired education.

Profound learning and insight from the plethora of wisdom and experience in the chairs that surrounded me during our meetings deepened my understanding of the complex issues we unraveled. Listening and learning from the collective Task Force team brought renewed understanding and hoped that the emergent needs of our K-12 learners today, and in the future, will be met! Aligning the education of our students to the workforce demands in our state and nation, competency-based graduation reform, and teacher leadership incentives, are personal exit learning highlights of our work together. Developing learning pathways that blend a student's capacity to master information at their instructional pace with high-interest content and competencies will reshape North Dakota's education model to produce world-class innovators, entrepreneurs, and engaged citizens!

I am honored to have been one voice at the table to rethink and reshape how the greatest state in the nation educates our children. Thank you Governor Burgum and Levi for your courage to lead us in this pivotal moment to change the trajectory and potential success for every North Dakota learner.

With honorable gratitude!

Stacy Duffield

Reflecting on the work of the Innovative Education Task Force and both our collective mission and my individual responsibility, the importance of equity rose to the forefront. I grew up in ND and began a career in education in 1991. I taught in both rural and city schools and now help to prepare teachers through the teacher preparation program at North Dakota State University. Through these experiences, I have seen the vast differences among schools and classrooms. Over the past year, the Innovative Education Task Force visited several schools for our meetings and heard from numerous educators, and I saw the potential growing to truly bring resources and support to all ND schools.

The task force witnessed exciting and innovative practices happening in classrooms and schools across our state. We saw dedicated educators doing incredible work to ensure students learn and are ready to achieve their goals outside the classroom. These practices all summed up to personalized learning to meet the needs of students. Personalized learning is not a new concept. It developed from practices we have long known are good for students such as differentiation, project-based and hands-on learning, problem and challenge-based

curriculum, anchoring experiences in real-life, and building strong connections with the larger community. Personalized learning requires students and educators to focus on achieving key competencies aligned with meaningful learning goals and assessing learning in authentic ways to determine not only what students know but also what they can do. Many ND educators are already engaging in these powerful practices; however, I was struck by the need for this impactful work to spread so that all students can have rich and valuable experiences. We have an opportunity to leverage the growing momentum, learn from one another, and support our colleagues to enable all schools in ND to provide the very best experiences for their students.

North Dakota may be a small state in population, but our size is a strength that allows for collaboration and flexibility. We have robust networks through our administrator organizations and regional educational cooperatives, and we have strong leaders in small and large schools ready to share their successes and lessons learned. While the Innovative Education Task Force has completed its charge, I am excited to see the work continue through excellent leaders in ND schools, our Department of Public Instruction, and many other organizations who are committed to providing all ND students with an equitable and meaningful education.

Jessie Erickson

It has been an honor and privilege to serve on Governor Burgum's Innovative Education Task Force. During the past year I have seen first-hand what schools across North Dakota, Minnesota and South Dakota have been doing to change instruction and impact student learning in a more meaningful and engaging way.

My biggest take away from this year of study and discussion, is that no two schools are the same. Each innovative school undertaking is underpinned by the composition of the community, the learner and families they serve, and the creative ambitions of their staffs. Therefore, there is no cookie-cutter formula for success. However, there are commonalities.

First, each innovative community understands that the factory model of instruction no longer works for their learners, their community's future or the global economy. We can no longer place learners in neat rows, lecture all day, and require rote memorization. Education needs to now be rooted in problem solving, critical analysis of the abundance of information available to us, communication skills, collaboration skills and creativity. We need to prepare our learners to be creative problem solvers for today. Waiting for them to be ready tomorrow is too late.

Secondly, innovative schools have successfully reimagined what school could be. The 8:00 to 4:00, bell-driven, mass-production model isn't going to work in today's global and rapidly changing world. Today, the moment students memorize or learn something, there is new information available to either prove or disprove a long-standing belief.

For example, let's consider the "planet" Pluto. I, like many adults over the age of 25, memorized the planets in our Solar System. We knew and understood without a doubt that there were nine planets orbiting the sun. This "truth" survived 75 years, almost a century, and it is now been reputed by science. Do we hold true to our educational experiences and science texts that teach that Pluto is indeed the ninth planet, or do we embrace new understandings and scientific achievements to impart current understanding on our learners? How many more "learned or memorized truths" will be changed in our children's futures?

Finally, these innovative schools understand that learners come to school with differences in readiness, backgrounds, experience, cultures, family dynamics, and talents. We need to allow learners different pathways to a successful future that recognize their diversities and celebrate them.

By treating all learners the same, we do not provide equity. However, by providing all learners the tools, skills, choices, autonomy, and voice in their learning process and by encouraging them to be creative problem solvers in their own futures, we provide equity. And, in doing so, we build stronger communities, as well as state and global economies.

I would like to close with two questions: Is the way we were taught "good enough" for our learners today? Do we want a "good enough" learner experience for our children and future leaders, or do we want an outstanding learner centered experience?

Kathryn Froelich

The Innovation Task Force Committee brought together a group of 15 "like minded" educators who wanted to make a difference in the future lives of our ND students. The time spent visiting with students and observing innovative strategies used in those schools has re-energized my belief that a student-centered approach to educating our future citizens is needed in our dynamically changing world.

Lessons learned:

- Education needs to empower students to be reflective, independent, self-motivated learners.
- Schools need to provide a teaching and learning climate that honors creativity, innovative thinking, considering the social cultural context of each community.
- All schools need to be supported with current, relevant and equitable resources.
- Bridge the gap between k-12 and post- secondary education, for example early college high school
- Need to track the success of "personalized individualized instructional" practices.
- Creating a platform for collaboration between industry, business, and education is vital.
- Compensation and retention of teachers continues to be of great concern especially for rural districts.

- All schools need supportive services for social/emotional challenges with students. Communities in Schools is one approach.

As an enrolled member of the MHA Nation, it was important for me to learn about how innovation is changing the face of ND school systems and challenges created by those changes. It is my fear that our tribal schools, many located in the most impoverished regions of our country, will “be left behind”. Therefore, one of the last visits was to Fort Yates Public Middle School where the Task Force Committee experienced the complexity of how tribal schools are different from mainstream school systems.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to Governor Burgum and Levi Bachmeier for the opportunity to be a part of this innovative movement.

Michael Gilbertson

Innovation in the world of education is moving at a break-neck speed and North Dakota stands on the frontline as a leader. We have the ability to set our course and do what is best for our children. Innovation looks different in every individual district; the main thing is we, as adults, need to take a step out of our comfort zone and try new things. Everyday our students come to us with new ideas and dreams. It is our purpose and duty to meet them where they are and continue driving them forward.

Sonya Hansana

Being asked to serve on the Governors Innovative Education Task Force has been a real privilege. I have shared many of my experiences with my own school board and shared my excitement with them about the possibilities of the direction for education in North Dakota.

I believe that the work that our Task Force has done to identify areas in education, with student centered learning, and the directive that we will send to the legislature, can help form a plan to have all our students learning and moving at their pace and still achieving the same goals in the end. We want to help and encourage all learners to achieve the best they can no matter the pace and to be ready for the future.

Encouraging learners to experience education at their own pace, by using a personalized learning curriculum, promotes taking responsibility in their education and gives them the power to choose how they learn. When empowering students this way, there is more of a commitment to their education. It has shown that students helping students learn is a great tool in the schools and helps to grown a strong “team” feel in the schools as well.

With collaboration from other schools that have student based learning in place, we can establish curriculums that work in all schools, tweaking it to fit their specific needs, but with the same end result in mind, to have career ready graduates.

Personalized learning or individualized learning, only works if you have administration and staff that are working to make this happen as well. With the collaborative help of schools that have programs in place already, schools can do professional development and in-services to work on answering questions and help get our schools working towards a program for personalized learning. With funding from the State for education programs or with grants, there could be relieve of some of the financial burden that goes along with changing the curriculum.

This is an exciting time for education in North Dakota and I'm hoping that the time we have spent this past 15 months, has laid the ground work for continuing to pursue a new way of thinking about education for the children in our State and to give them every chance to get the best education that they deserve.

Cody Mickelson

Very few facets of life remain unchanged and North Dakota has seen first-hand how quickly change can occur. Like the rest of the nation, North Dakota has demonstrated a unique ability to innovate and overcome many challenges to achieve success.

The future of North Dakota begins with the quality of learning that occurs throughout a student's education. Innovation is among our most powerful assets and is reliant on the education that students receive. The adversities that we face in the future may not be prescriptive of the framework we have developed for the present. Our students will need to reach further for success.

For our students to be successful and competitive in their futures, they will need to be able to learn independently and continuously, applying their learning to unconventional problems. It is important that students are engaged in building individual skills that help them achieve in an increasingly demanding and changing economic climate and essential that they acquire a competitive skill-set during their education in order to be ready for their choices beyond high school.

To drive this change, North Dakota has a wealth of talent in classrooms across the state. It is vital that we also cultivate and develop our educators to be creative, critical, and independent. The educators in our classrooms have the ability to empower students with opportunities based in personalization, problem-solving, and hands-on education, developing the independence and resilience needed for our students to achieve and carry North Dakota forward in the future.

While there are fundamentals that educators and schools should not forget or devalue, there exists an urgency to develop, implement and scale methods that raise the quality of learning in our schools. The future of North Dakota and its ability to be a competitive in a demanding and changing world climate will be a reflection of the kind of education we provide out students.

Rep. Cynthia Schreiber-Beck

To reflect on the accomplishments of the Task Force I reviewed the Executive Order and followed with information (although brief – in a question/response format) that I consider to be appropriate to encourage the adoption of personalized learning. From my perspective, informed and innovative leadership will advance PK-12 education in North Dakota to the level of a world-class system that will continue to evolve for the benefit of the students. My thank you to the Task Force member, to Governor Burgum, and to Levi for his leadership.

Were the objectives of Executive Order 2017-15 met?

In brief, yes the objectives of the Executive Order were met. My opinion is based on: the presentations from experts; the summaries provided by the committees; observations from field trips; discussion results and the ranking of the initiatives by the task force.

What is the goal of education?

The goal is for students to become productive members of society.

Why the focus on personalized competency based education; why advocate for implementation?

The data reveals the implementation of personalized learning is effective in increasing achievement scores and student success, including soft skills, while reducing behavior issues, absenteeism, student apathy and various issues identified within the traditional educational system. (Lindsay Unified School District, Lindsay CA).

Additionally, personalized learning is a component of the North Dakota strategic vision for education and personalized learning allows for all students to receive the right instruction at the right time meeting the effective and equitable requirement.

Is personalized learning actually a change?

Personalized learning is a modification in the delivery of education that focuses on how learning occurs. Throughout life, learning occurs through necessity and interest. In the early years, there are milestones for achievement (i.e.: acquiring the skills to build upon for developmental achievements such as developing the skills to walk or communicate)

Personalized learning allows for all students to have a personalized plan for learning, synonymous with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) --- delivering lessons on the right skills at the right level at the right time to accelerate student growth with strong guidance from teachers based on data, involvement and setting expectations. Personalized learning is not all student choice nor is it based on the exclusive use of technology.

Will the implementation of personalized learning require additional funding?

No and yes --- one response (size) does not fit all districts.

Currently there exists pockets of personalized learning throughout North Dakota without an increase in funding. The adoption of personalized learning may involve redirecting existing funds. Depending upon the implementation process, additional funding may be necessary – again, the need may vary from district to district.

Will the implementation of personalized learning require additional policy changes beyond SB2186?

As implementation occurs, there will be the opportunity to identify necessary changes to the state education policies.

Cory Steiner

Throughout the work on the Innovation Task Force, members were able to visit schools and engage in conversations with learners and educators throughout our state and region. When our team debriefed these site visits to Garrison, Oakes, Watford City, Standing Rock, and Harrisburg, the words used by members of the task force were fantastic, unbelievable, and amazing. Personally, I left these visits knowing we have an opportunity in North Dakota to do something special, but the time is now. I know this to be true because we have the most gifted educators in the country who are passionate about relationships, teaching, and learning. We have parents who are willing to engage in this journey if provided genuine opportunities for involvement. We have leaders in the state and in our districts who have embraced the opportunity to make a change in a system rooted in tradition, but lacking in results. We have an opportunity to build a learner-centered educational system by empowering our learners through an innovative approach to education.

Another theme which was prevalent in the task force was equity. As a task force, we believe every learner deserves a world class education; therefore, it is our responsibility to develop a system which respects the individuality of all learners. It is our duty to help learners develop the skills necessary to be choice ready. As members of the task force, we were challenged with learning more about what innovation can be in our state. During many of our meetings, discussion focused on personalized learning and the model built by the Lindsay Unified School District. The district has been using a personalized approach to learning for 10 years. Their results are nothing short of spectacular. Despite being learners who come from poverty and a lack of education, they are achieving everything research tells us they shouldn't. Learners who have similar conditions don't achieve like the students at Lindsay. There is only one difference and that is the district's commitment to meeting every learner where they are in their journey. They realized equity was the key to innovation. If we believe every learner deserves a world class education, we do everything in our power to make this happen.

Innovation is about providing learners the opportunity to know what they are learning, how they were learning it, and how it relates to what comes next. Innovation is giving learners the power to write their own narrative. It is giving learners the power to own their learning. It is empowering learners to lead. An innovative system will be filled with stories of success and resilience. Innovation is about not only what we are doing, but how we can continue to grow. It is about building on our strengths while understanding our reality. Innovation is our opportunity to create a better world now and in the future.

Mark Vollmer

Innovation is more than a vague term. As a late-comer to the Governor's Innovative Education Task Force, I have been so impressed with the work that has been tasked to the group. This group of educators and leaders have witnessed excellent examples of how innovative practices can improve educational opportunities for all students at all levels – not only in other states, but also in several North Dakota school districts.

Our current education system is based on history and tradition. While research indicates a need for educational practices to evolve, our schools have changed very little since the early 1900s. Change is never easy. Therefore, innovation is a term that causes trepidation among school officials throughout the state.

Through my time on the task force, I have learned that innovation is not a one-size-fits-all approach to educational reform. True innovation is as unique as the individual school districts who explore better ways to reach students. Innovation, by definition, changes by location and by need – What might be considered as innovative in a small district may not be necessary in a larger district, and vice-versa.

Innovation is not a denial of local control. In fact, the practice of innovative education supports the notion of local control by allowing school districts to identify concerns and provide creative opportunities for enhancement. The committee recognizes that such decisions are best left to community stakeholders who hold a vested interest in the success of education in the community.

One thing is certain – we are educating students for a brave new world. In this age of social and technological change, the World Economic Forum estimates that 65% of our students will work in careers that do not yet exist. In this new world, collaboration, creativity and innovation will be crucial to our success. Student self-assessment of work will also be an important part of the change continuum. Simply put, we need our students to be creative, innovative thinkers who are active participants in the learning process.

As educators, we can embrace the opportunity for change or we can attempt to hold on to archaic methods that fail to prepare students for the future. The Governor's Innovative Education Task Force has allowed educational leaders to explore options for developing a world-class educational system in the great state of North Dakota. Under the leadership of Governor Burgum, the committee has participated in exhilarating conversation that has created a platform to support systemic change in North Dakota schools.

Innovation is more than a vague term – Innovation is the future of education.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A- IETF Agendas

**Innovative Education Task Force
Thursday, October 12, 2017; 9:30 AM
North Dakota State Capitol**

- Greetings from Governor Burgum, Superintendent Baesler
- Group Introductions: Putting the Puzzle Together
- Defining Innovation and Success for the Task Force
- Approval of Task Force Charter
- Resources for Innovation
 - Ted Dintersmith
 - Bush Foundation
- First Challenge: Sharing and Recognizing Innovation
- Awards for Next Innovative Summit
- Next Steps and Adjournment

**Innovative Education Task Force
11:00a December 5, 2017
Garrison High School**

11:00a	Welcome, Ice Breaker, Approval of Advisory Groups
11:30	Visit with Garrison Students + Lunch
12:30p	Supt. Baesler: Overview of K-12 Strategic Plan
1:00	Finalizing Vision
1:45	Escape Room: Current Landscape
2:30	Exploring Barriers
3:15	Next Steps

Innovative Education Task Force Meeting
January 29, 2018
Oakes Public School Library
804 Main Ave, Oakes, ND 58474

10:30-11:00 a.m.	Welcome, overview of OPS Flex-Mod schedule and innovative practices
11:00-11:30 a.m.	Review Competency based education article, group discussion
11:30-12:00 noon	Presentation from Career and Technical Education Department on Career Ready Practices
12:00-12:45 p.m.	Lunch with Oakes students
12:45-2:15 p.m.	Presentation by Knowledge Works on state and national efforts for Competency Based and Personalized Learning
2:15-3:45 p.m.	Presentation from Legacy High School team on Competency Transcript
3:45-4:00 p.m.	Questions, requests, and recommendations for next meeting. Adjourn.

March 26th: Site Visits to Harrisburg, SD:
Freedom Elementary, South Middle School, Harrisburg High School

Innovative Education Task Force Meeting
May 9, 2018
Fargo South High School- Room C-42
1840 15th Ave. South, Fargo ND 58103

10:00-11:00 a.m.	Welcome, group reflection from Harrisburg, SD school visit
11:00-11:30 a.m.	Presentation from Maine RSU 2 on district leadership for personalized learning
11:30-11:45 a.m.	Group Discussion
11:45-12:15 p.m.	Presentation from Ohio Marysville School District on district leadership for personalized learning
12:15-1:00 p.m.	Lunch and presentation from students on Fargo Public School's Red River Rage robotics team
1:00-2:00 p.m.	Presentation by EdLeader21 President and Co-Founder Valerie Greenhill state and national efforts for Competency Based and Personalized Learning
2:00-2:30 p.m.	Presentation from DPI on personalized learning within North Dakota's K-12 strategic plan
2:30-3:15 p.m.	Presentation from Ms. Virginia Barry, former New Hampshire Education Commissioner, on state support for personalized learning
3:15-3:30 p.m.	Discussion of Innovative Education Award Winners



GOVERNOR'S SUMMIT ON
**INNOVATIVE
 EDUCATION**
 JUNE 6-7, 2018 | NORTHERN CASS
 SCHOOL

AGENDA

- 8:30 INTRODUCTION TO NORTHERN CASS SCHOOL**
CORY STEINER Northern Cass School District
- 8:45 OPENING REMARKS**
GOVERNOR DOUG BURGUM
- 9:05 WELCOME**
SUPT. KIRSTEN BAESLER North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
- 9:15 VIDEO FROM SIR KEN ROBINSON**
TED DINTERSMITH What School Could Be
- 9:30 ROUND ONE**
CONNECTIONS - TRAVIS JORDAN Beulah Public Schools
FRONTLINE INNOVATION AWARD
COLLABORATIVE ROUND TABLE
- 10:00 ROUND TWO**
SCHOOL RETOOL - ERIN SPIES & CRYSTA SCHENCK
 Liberty Middle School & Northern Cass Elementary
CAREER PATHWAYS - JEFF FASTNACHT Ellendale Public School
STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD
COLLABORATIVE ROUND TABLE
- 10:45 ROUND THREE**
CULTURE MATTERS - JASON 'CAPTAIN CULTURE' MARKUSEN Legacy Elementary
COLLABORATIVE CULTURE AWARD
COLLABORATIVE ROUND TABLE
- 11:15 ROUND FOUR**
4C'S TRANSCRIPT - TOM SCHMIDT Legacy High School
NEAR-SITE CLINIC - ROBERT LECH Jamestown Public Schools
DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION AWARD
COLLABORATIVE ROUND TABLE
- 11:45 ROUND FIVE**
HARRISBURG JOURNEY - TRAVIS LAPE Harrisburg School District
BUILDING CAPACITY - DAVID FLOWERS West Fargo Public Schools
COLLABORATIVE ROUND TABLE
- 12:15 LUNCH**
- 1:15 BREAKOUT SESSION ONE**
- 2:15 BREAKOUT SESSION TWO**
- 3:15 30 HOUR CHALLENGE PRESENTATIONS**
- 4:30 CLOSING REMARKS**

Innovative Education Task Force Meeting

August 7, 2018

North Dakota Capitol- Coteau Room

600 E Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58505

1:00 PM Welcome, Administrative Update on Reimbursement, Work Groups
Presentation by Melissa Stanley, Minot Public Schools, on
Personalized Learning Opportunities at MPS

1:45 PM Distribution of Submitted Topics for Discussion
Small Group Breakout Work

2:45 PM Break

3:00 PM Large Group Synthesis, Prioritization

4:00 PM Discussion of Priority Initiatives in Small Groups

5:00 PM Break

5:30 PM Social at Governor's Residence

6:30 PM Dinner and Large Group Discussion of Priority Initiatives

Innovative Education Task Force Meeting

October 3, 2018

Room #251 Rough Rider Center

2209 Wolves Den Parkway, Watford City, ND 58854

10:30 AM Welcome, submissions overview, K-12 unification presentation
Presentation by Levi Bachmeier, Governor's Policy Director

11:00 AM Agenda formation for afternoon

11:15 AM Lunch with Students

12:00 PM Commence afternoon work time

3:00 PM Next Steps and closing, followed by tour of Rough Rider Center

Innovative Education Task Force Meeting

October 30, 2018

Fort Yates Middle School Board Room

9189 ND-24, Fort Yates, ND 58538

10:00 AM Welcome, tour, presentation and conversation on tribal education

11:30 AM Review submitted initiative theme surveys by IETF members

12:00 PM Lunch with students and ND Turnaround Arts showcase

1:00 PM Presentation from DPI on personalized learning work

1:30 PM Iowa TLC System presentation- Lora Rasey

2:15 PM Discussion on specific statutory recommendations

2:45 PM Discuss report creation, timeline; synthesize "why"

3:45 PM Thank you, next meeting discussion, closing

Innovative Education Task Force Meeting

December 6, 2018

Conference Call

9:00 AM Welcome, adopt final report language

10:00 AM Discuss next steps, gratitude, adjourn

APPENDIX B- Initial Vision Themes

The Innovative Education Task Force will boldly create a framework for 21st-century education embodying innovative values, measurements, and tools that prepare students for future success.

Values	Measurements	Tools to Succeed
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personalized 2. Builds agency 3. Relevant 4. Promotes equity 5. Values student voice and choice 6. 21st-century economy focused 7. Global citizen development 8. Educator empowerment 9. Life-long learning 10. Connectivity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic achievement 2. Collaboration skills 3. Applied creativity 4. Critical thinking skills 5. Fluency in written, spoken, and digital communication 6. Student perception: belief that students are ready for next steps 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technology 2. Community partnering 3. Authentic project-based learning 4. Professional development 5. Shared lesson repositories 6. Experiential learning opportunities 7. Innovation portfolio/template 8. Resources (technical assistance, financial) 9. Competency-based education

APPENDIX C- August 7 Task Force Initiative Submissions

1. Statewide proficiency outcomes
2. Opportunities for LEAs to do site visits
3. Enhanced collaboration
4. Creating a network of resources that align with schools and visions
5. Messaging/communications from Task Force
6. Identify metrics for essential skills (4Cs)
7. Creating a team for alternative assessment
8. Create tool kit model guideline as a resource
9. Raising awareness/supporting/engaging parents on PL journey
10. Creating communication pathway for the community to break down barriers
11. Explore teacher education collaboration, including tribal college level
12. Funding for districts to support visits to PL systems and schools
13. Potential REA engagement
14. Amass data supporting “why” of personalized learning
15. Statewide proficiency scale resource bank
16. Performance-based tests
17. Evidence based local measures
18. Re-focusing, re-messaging around standardized tests
19. Funding for resources
20. LMS economies of scale, purchasing power
21. Incentive funding pool
22. Promote and support REA engagement
23. Ensure schools are centers of community
24. PD cohort; PL cohort
25. Support of non-traditional transcripts for college admissions
26. Partner with HE for research on what works
27. Mental health support
28. Century Code revision- flexibility for course requirements within disciplines
29. Identify strengths-based practices (aggregate highlights from each district)
30. Incentive funding for districts
31. Communities in Schools- mental health support
32. LMS for districts
33. State testing requirements and accreditation (age v. ‘grade’)
34. Roadshow for Task Force Sharing
35. Transcript letter from NDUS
36. On-line provider (NDCDE engagement)
37. Data/research (from Lindsay, CA and others)

38. Personalized learning pathways- credit for experiential learning
39. Measures- growth v. proficiency
40. Technology should just be the cost of doing business; provides support for all
41. Collaborative efforts between school districts (resource/time/etc)