

Press Release: South Dakota School Superintendent's Association (SDSSA)

Release date: December 9, 2020

Re: Appreciation for Budget Address

South Dakota School Superintendents Applaud Governor Noem's Budget Proposals.

The Executive Board of the South Dakota School Superintendents Association issues the following statement in response to Governor Noem's Budget Address and her leadership in response to the financial needs of our public schools:

We are genuinely grateful to the Honorable Governor Kristi Noem for proposing a budget that includes legislation directly in line with the "Blue Ribbon Task Force Recommendation" and allocates an additional \$11 million dollars to specifically address the one-time shortfall of enrollment declines as a result of the pandemic. The increase in state aid does the following:

- Allocates funding to the schools for the "Teacher Target Salary" to increase by 2.4%, .9% above the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and increases teacher pay above the 2016 law that moved teacher's salaries in South Dakota out of "51st" in the nation, and allows our public schools to compete for the best and brightest teachers in our region to stay in South Dakota. The proposal recovers the .5% that was lost during the 2018 budget shortfall, the .3% lost in 2019, and returns the "Teacher Target Salary" to near the 2016 legislative targets.
- Any move above CPI gives the school districts a greater chance to compete with neighboring states for our best and brightest teacher candidates.
- The allocation of this money is carefully monitored by the Joint Appropriations through the work of the School Finance Accountability Board, assuring that the allocations go to improved teacher salaries while fiscally supporting the education programs in each district.

This positive news comes following the Governor generously working with schools to address the extra costs of the pandemic during 2020, including \$500 per student and significant additional money to Title I schools based on the poverty level of their school families.

Finally, Governor Noem, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health, coordinated efforts on such things as "Internet Connectivity" for all families, and on-site Covid "Rapid Testing" for all schools.

School superintendents want the public to know that we are grateful for the opportunity to participate in the legislative process, including the invitations to address various legislative committees during the session.

We want the public and our elected officials to know that we appreciate their support for public schools.

Gratefully submitted on behalf of the SDSSA Executive Board,

Mark Naugle, Custer, SDSSA President

Summer Schultz, Dell Rapids, SDSSA Vice-President

Jennifer Lowery, Tea Area, SDSSA Secretary

Brian Jandahl, Elkton, SDSSA Treasurer

Terry Nebelsick, Huron, SDSSA Past President