

# Lisbon Superintendent of Schools' Annual Report

## To the Board of Education

### For 2017-2018



### Submitted by:

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Dr. Steven L. Johnson  
Superintendent  
July 10, 2018  
School Board  
2017-2018

Mark Qual, President	7354 134 <sup>th</sup> Ave SE Lisbon 683-2115 (Appointed 02-08-11)	06-18 Rural
Liz Anderson, Vice President	6937 140 <sup>th</sup> Ave Milnor 427-5883 (Elected 06-14-11)	06-20 Rural
Chad Johnson, Director	611 Lincoln St Lisbon 683-4647 (Elected 06-07-17)	06-20 City
Matt Webb, Director	1301 Webster St Lisbon 683-5274 (Elected 06-04-13)	06-19 City
Brenna Welton, Director	12547 HWY 27 W Lisbon 683-4319 (Appointed 9-9-15)	06-19 Rural
Lori Lyons, Business Manager	13543 69 <sup>th</sup> St SE Lisbon 683-5362 (hired 04-04-88)	

As we complete the 2017-2018 fiscal school year, it is time to highlight our accomplishments, needs, concerns, and future of the Lisbon Public Schools. As I start my 26th year as Superintendent of Schools, I feel fortunate to having worked with such effective staff members, principals, supervisors, faculty, board members and students. This past year could not have been possible without their support and abilities. I realize that great students and great staff members make for great schools! This can only be accomplished through a collaborative effort that includes our school board, administrators, teachers, parents, students and community.

A special thank you to Elinor Meckle for her fourteen years of service to the Lisbon Public Schools. She retired on June 8, 2018 after serving our district as our k-8 principals, Title I director and principal at Fort Ransom elementary school. She left the district in great shape. Her students, staff, administration and the Lisbon community will miss Elinor. We wish Elinor and her husband John the best as they move to Harvey to be closer to family especially their grandchildren.

I believe my administrative style has allowed the school board to make objective, informed decisions when dealing with school policies, while at the same time; the integrity of the chain of command has remained intact. Please recognize that not all issues within a school are yielding. Never lose sight of our mission as a school, **"All students will learn, experience success and be good citizens."** We need to work with the people that we have been given and find solutions to problems by working together to resolve those issues. The 4 C's of education for the twenty-first Century are Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity and Collaboration. As we move our staff toward the "project based learning" method of instruction over the next few years with the piloting our middle school SmartLab and other professional development opportunities, I believe we will better prepare our students to the transition to the world of work and advanced training.

**The following are areas that I feel should be highlighted over the course of the 2017-2018 school year:**

- 1.) **Our New Strategic Plan for the Lisbon Public School #19 2018-2023** (reviewed by the school board on June 12, 2018) Mission Statement: "All students will learn, experience success and be good citizens." NDCC 15.1-07-26 requires that all public schools develop strategic plans that address the following four areas: 1. Academic and Extracurricular Programs, 2. Instructional and Administrative Staffing, 3. Facility Needs and Utilization, and 4. District Tax Levies. Our new Three-and Five-Year plan will be posted on our website at [www.lisbonpublicschools.com](http://www.lisbonpublicschools.com)
- 2.) **Academic and Extracurricular Programs** – fall k-12 enrollment trends are shifting to declining enrollment. The slow loss of students must be monitored closing so that we can have "Smart Decline" providing effective staff

members with flexibility to provide course offerings to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. Student interventions and remediation for students who need remedial coursework has remained at about the same at 5% of our students. Student assessment data indicates that our students are higher than the state average in reading and science but math assessment indicates we are slightly below the state average. Our ACT/Workkey results are slightly above the national average. Student services and success indicators like extracurricular activities, counseling programs, gifted and talented programs, early childhood education, library, and special education have a number of indicators for student success. With declining enrollment, it becomes difficult to be everything for everybody as participation is the key to success. Our student participation in junior high activities is good but we see trends of students dropping out of activities as they get into high school. Questions remain on curriculum to meet the 4 C's of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking and Creativity. We have professional development to increase the project-based learning, innovative learning, SmartLab®, student centered learning, social/emotional learning, choice ready, MTSS interventions, and meeting the technology needs of our students and staff. We must continually ask four critical questions about learning – 1. What is it we expect our students to learn? 2. How will we know when our students have learned it? 3. How will the staff respond when student have not learned? 4. How will the staff respond when our students already know it?

- 3.) **Instructional and Administrative Staffing** – Instructional and administrative staffing continues to be a concern. In order to fill positions, we must compete with the larger urban district for qualified staff members or with local private businesses. To take Lisbon School District to the next level, we must find ways to attract, retain, and educate staff members to Lisbon. We need staff members, who have a shared mission, vision and values who will work in collaborative teams that will create continuous improvement for our schools and their classrooms. As our enrollment continually declines, it may be best to look at those effective staff who work for us to move them into curricular areas that better meet our needs through a grow your own program. Like a successful farmer, we need a succession plan for our administration. We need to keep our wage and benefit packages competitive with similar positions in other larger schools and the private sector. The essential question we need to discuss as a community is – “how do we work together to strengthen the recruitment, preparation, placement and retention of our outstanding rural teacher-leaders?”
- 4.) **Facilities needs and Utilization** -- The Lisbon School will maintain the structures and the campus we have and budget enough money to keep it in good shape has been the goal of the school board since 2003. We will look for effective ways to complete current facility needs and maintenance of our facilities. Projects that have been in our facility plans but have not been completed are: 1. Complete the inside of the bus garage with insulation and heat; 2. Remodel of the gymnasium area including expansion of the

lobby/concession area, weight room, and conference /meeting room; 3. Additional space in the elementary school for technology center; 4. Finish the interior of the stone church making it a conference and technology center including distance learning; 5. Parking lots, tennis courts, and other outside place needs updating; and 6. Providing more technology reducing the student-to-device ratio by providing more technology enriched activities and environment to improve and ensure students will be technology literate.

**5.) District Tax Levies** – Although much of the discussion for the future may sound gloomy due to declining enrollment, we are in the best financial position we have been in since I arrived in 1993. We need to be “Smart” with our declining enrollment to ensure our fund balances have enough money to meet our educational goals for our students. In comparison to the state school districts, Lisbon School District is 49<sup>th</sup> out of 135 high school districts for total mill levy at 95.49. Most school districts do not have a building fund so if you take those 20 mills out we drop to 96<sup>th</sup> out of the 135 school districts. Our per pupil expenditures continues to increase at about the same rate as inflation. In the rank order of high school districts’ our average cost per pupil is low. We only have five districts with a lower average cost per pupil. Our foundation aide per student has remained the same for the last three years. The Lisbon School District will continue to work with the State Legislative Branch to lobby for increased funding for the 2019-2021 biennium. Schools districts like ours with declining enrollments will have a much tougher time feeling the benefits of our current funding formula. I question whether the state has the will or the money to continue to support k-12 schools as much as they have in the past. Declining enrollment has caused us to go backwards because of the freeze on foundation payment. We have increases in taxable valuation, which has made up the difference on our declining enrollment in local property taxes.

The State of North Dakota will be facing many issues in k-12 education in the coming years such as declining enrollments in 45% of our rural districts; booming enrollments in the urban centers; wages to attract teachers and other school employees; school buildings and housing in areas that are seeing the enrollment increases; reduction in federal funding of mandated programs like Title I; ESSA; Special Education; ever increasing cost of funding North Dakota’s retirement systems TFFR and PERS, and healthcare.

The 2017-2018 Budget year has put our district on track to meet our fiscal goals. The school district is currently as fiscally sound as it as been in recent years. As planned, our fund balances for working capital have increased within our goal of our strategic plan. The combination of our special reserve, general fund and building fund balances gives us a more workable reserve for our district. I will make recommendations for our 2018-196 school budget during our August meeting.

North Dakota demographics are changing drastically with increased population of the elderly and student enrollment shifts from the rural areas of our state to the larger urban centers. How will these changes affect the Lisbon Public School System? What are the characteristics of a community and school that survive these population shifts?

What am I the most proud of for the 2017-2018 school year? Completing the track and field complex, SmartLab Learning pilot project, start of the Superintendent's Student Cabinet, many successful grants written by staff including the HS Library, community mentorship, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade broadcasting news, and the MS outdoor seating, STEM/Project based learning, establishment of School Foundation which will start funding Place-Based grant and scholarships, etc. all within budget using numerous funding sources without increasing local property taxes. I am also very proud of our students and staff for all the successes they have had over the 2017-2018 school year. I believe strongly in the value of our rural community and the role our school plays in our sense of community.

We are doing a great job of educating the youth of our district, at a reasonable cost. We must continue to work hard to keep the Lisbon Public School district one of the best systems in the State of North Dakota. The Lisbon District presents me with many rewards and challenges. As I start my 42nd year as a North Dakota educator, I look forward to meeting the District's future needs. The terms and conditions of my new contract expire on June 30, 2020. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at the office.