

Lisbon Superintendent of Schools' Annual Report

To the Board of Education

For 2018-2019



Submitted by:

Dr. Steven L. Johnson
Superintendent
July 9, 2019
School Board
2018-2019

Mark Qual, President	7354 134 th Ave SE Lisbon 683-2115 (Appointed 02-08-11)	06-21 Rural
Liz Anderson, Vice President	6937 140 th 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 th St SE Lisbon 683-5362 (hired 04-04-88)	

As we complete the 2018-2019 fiscal school year, it is time to highlight our accomplishments, needs, concerns, and future of the Lisbon Public Schools. As I start my 27th 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 "Goodbye" to board member Matt Webb. Matt has served the Lisbon School District since July of 2013. Tonight will be his last school board meeting as a member. Thank you Matt. We also will welcome newly elected school board member Lance Gulleson. Lance was elected during the June board elections. He will serve the Lisbon School District as one of our City representatives for a three-year term (06-22). Welcome Lance.

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 our 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 our middle school SmartLab®, more individualized instruction, STEM 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 2018-2019 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 Three-and Five-Year plan is posted on our website at 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 21st 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 marginal 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 21st 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. The quality of our education system cannot exceed the quality of our teachers. 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. We had ten teaching openings this summer. I am proud to announce at this time we have filled nine of those openings. We continue to look for teachers who are classroom ready, school ready and community ready. My hope is that with proper supports our new staff members will blossom and grow. We have also been working with VCSU on moving some of our current staff into classes to keep them approved to teach dual credit courses. Dual credit courses give our students and parents a value added high school experience and lowers their expenses when they do attend college. Mr. Adair also worked with VCSU and added Intro to Teaching for our juniors/seniors as a dual credit course. We hope that we can get more high school students in becoming teachers. Like a successful farmer, we need a succession plan for our administration and school board. Educational leadership both administratively and on the school board is an important key

of keeping our community strong. 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. Last year, we were able to complete the bus garage with insulation and heating system, new storage building at the outdoor sports complex, cement around the tennis courts by the middle school for increased parking, sanding and repair of middle school gym floor, and numerous technology updates for our students. The budget proposed for 2019-2020 will dedicate over \$200,000 for updated technology and support for our students/staff. Lastly, the school board has hired Foss Architecture +Interiors to look at additions and remodeling of our middle school and elementary school. For the elementary, this project would create one main secure entry, additional classroom space, storage space, library space, administrative offices, and flexible areas for small group/technology, mechanical upgrades and update code requirements. For the middle school, this project would create one main secure entry (ADA Compliant), administrative offices, and small group meeting area, remodel existing office area, and update code requirements. The estimated costs of the project is over \$3.2 million. If the school board elects to proceed with the project, we will be more details to the projects together in August including timetable, finance options, drawing, and budget suggestions.

5.) District Tax Levies – Although much of the discussion last year seemed gloomy due to declining enrollment, the fact is our enrollment has only declined by about two students over the past year. Since I arrived in 1993 our average three high enrollments and our average three low enrollments for k-12 is about 150 fewer students. That is sizable! We need to be “Smart” with our 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 49th 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 96th 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 payment per student will increase by 2% in each year of the next biennium. This is the first increase we have seen in four years. Despite all of these issues, we are in good financial standing. Our taxable valuation has seen some growth and we continue to live within our means.

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. I worked hard working with the 66th Legislative Assembly. It is a little early to tell how well their work on k-12 education will do to meet our needs.

The 2019-2020 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 2019-2020 school budget during our next three meetings.

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 2018-2019 school year? The SmartLab® Learning project that continues to grow, Superintendent's Student Cabinet, many successful grants written by staff including the Sources of Strength, Sensory Pathway, The Village School-based mental health, Bronco News, Fine Arts committee, Lego Robotic League, scholarships, two groups selected for the Tech Showcase including Bronco News and SmartLab® Middle School and our latest Place-based grant which will connect Parkside residents with 4th grade students on history of Lisbon. All of these projects came 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 2018-2019 school year. In a sense, we get to celebrate those successes each month with our POP moments. 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 43rd year as a North Dakota educator, I look forward to meeting the District's future needs. The terms and conditions of my contract expire on June 30, 2020. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at the office.