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North Dakota
Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum
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Burgum announces Innovative Education Task Force members

BISMARCK, N.D. (Oct. 10, 2017) – Gov. Doug Burgum today announced the members of the Innovative Education Task Force, created by executive order last month to underscore North Dakota’s commitment to leading the nation in innovative education.

The Task Force, which is comprised of education, youth development, business and community leaders, is charged with creating a system of identification and support for schools and districts implementing innovative practices. Members are also tasked with providing direction on how state government can empower districts to adopt student-centric learning practices designed to support a 21st century economy impacted by rapid technological change. The 15-member Task Force includes:

- Kathryn Froelich from Selfridge, cultural coordinator with the Missouri River Educational Cooperative, who also brings experience working with Native American communities and tribal colleges.
- Stacey Duffield of Fargo, professor of teacher education at North Dakota State University, who began her career as a high school English teacher and brings understanding of how K-12 can work in tandem with higher education to prepare teachers for 21st century instructional methods.
- Mary Jean Dehne, executive director of the nonprofit Legacy Children’s Foundation in Fargo, which supports high school graduation for diverse and at-risk student populations.
- Jeff Ubl, president and principal architect of Übl Design Group, a parent, and business leader from Bismarck who serves on the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce.
- Sonya Hansana, member of the Hazen school board and Oliver-Mercer special education board who was highly recommended by school and business leaders.
- Sen. Donald Schaible of Mott, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, who represents southwest North Dakota and has served on his local school board for more than 20 years.
- Rep. Cynthia Schreiber-Beck of Wahpeton, vice-chair of the House Education Committee and a business owner with 15 years of teaching experience.

- Jessie Erickson of Grand Forks, a parent, teacher and instructional coach who is dedicated to the utilization of technology in the classroom.
- Cody Mickelson of Jamestown, a teacher who is dedicated to the implementation of innovative, authentic experiences for his students.
- Denise Burbag of Williston, who promotes civic engagement as a social studies teacher.
- Maggie Barth leads the Innovation School in Bismarck, a private school dedicated to innovation in education.
- Michael Gilbertson, secondary principal of New Salem-Almont Public School District, who brings experience working in career and technical education and is a voice for rural school districts.
- Superintendent Cory Steiner from Northern Cass, who is leading efforts to implement experience-based high school learning opportunities and working with his school board to be the first district to submit an innovation plan as allowed by Senate Bill 2186.
- Allen Burgad of West Fargo, who brings experience working in small and large school districts and recognizes the unique nature and tools available for districts of all sizes.
- Tamera Uselman of Bismarck, superintendent of North Dakota's largest school district, Bismarck Public Schools, who oversees numerous innovative efforts such as Legacy High School's "flex mod" scheduling approach.

"The incredible caliber of this group reflects a highly qualified pool of more than 150 candidates who have a passion for our students and our future," Burgum said. "This group brings a depth of experience, diversity and leadership that will help North Dakota lead the nation in education and help our students succeed in a rapidly changing economy."

The core mission of the Task Force is to advance innovative initiatives in education, empowering authentic learning experiences that prepare students to be contributing global citizens and lifelong learners. The Task Force will also seek to highlight best practices and provide state government direction on policy development and alignment with the educational needs of the 21st century.

In addition, the Task Force will help strengthen collaboration between teachers, students, parents, administrators, business and community leaders to foster genuine grassroots transformation.

The first meeting of the Innovative Education Task Force will be Oct. 12 at 9:30 a.m. at the State Capitol, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck.

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