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Baesler Names First Student Cabinet

BISMARCK, N.D. – Twenty North Dakota young people have been chosen as the first members of a Student Cabinet that will offer Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler their opinions and advice about educational opportunities and policy.

The members are:

- Bryer Samuelson, a fourth grader at Sunnyside Elementary, Minot
- Ethan Wood, a fourth grader at Lincoln Elementary, Lincoln
- Delaney Vilhauer, a fifth grader at Rita Murphy Elementary, Bismarck
- Molly Farstveet, a sixth grader at Lincoln Elementary, Beach
- Grace Vetter, a sixth grader at Cathedral Grade School, Bismarck
- Skyler Strand, a seventh grader at Wachter Middle School, Bismarck
- Isaac King, a seventh grader at Horizon Middle School, Bismarck
- Maggie Oberlander, an eighth grader at Valley City Junior/Senior High School, Valley City
- Sophie Lind, an eighth grader at Mandan Middle School, Mandan
- Thomas Iken, an eighth grader at Wachter Middle School, Bismarck
- Hannah Iron Eyes, a ninth grader at Century High School, Bismarck
- Francie Shaft, a ninth grader at Red River High School, Grand Forks
- Lynna Ngo, a 10th grader at South High School, Fargo
- Dawson Schefter, a 10th grader at Langdon Area High School, Langdon
- Peyton Cole, an 11th grader at Park River Area High School, Park River
- Cole Garman, an 11th grader at Mandan High School, Mandan
- Madelyn Jean, an 11th grader at Hankinson Public School, Hankinson
- Collin Poolman, an 11th grader at Century High School, Bismarck
- Philip Meidinger, an 11th grader at Kenmare Public School, Kenmare
- Lindsey Pouliot, a 12th grader at Beulah High School, Beulah

(continued)

Baesler announced the names of the new Cabinet members Monday. More than 80 students from across North Dakota asked to be considered. The Cabinet will include students in grades four through 12. They were chosen to serve for 15 months.

“We wanted to have a group of students who reflect a variety of school experiences. Some have had very positive experiences, while others have been more challenging. Some have had a lot of school and community involvement, and others have not,” Baesler said. “We want to know what we can do to improve the school experience, build upon what is already working, and change what is not.”

The group will have its first meeting with the superintendent at 10 a.m. April 22 in the State Library on the grounds of the North Dakota State Capitol. Supt. Baesler will have students observe the legislative process during the Cabinet’s first meeting if the Legislature is still in session.

Cabinet members were chosen from all parts of North Dakota. A map showing the Cabinet’s broad representation from all areas of the state can be viewed on the Department of Public Instruction’s website.

The group includes 11 females and nine males, coming from five elementary schools, four middle schools and eight high schools in 13 North Dakota cities. They will represent both public and private education in North Dakota.

Applicants were asked why they wanted to join the Student Cabinet, and what they believed was the biggest issue facing students in North Dakota. They were asked to list school and community involvement and provide letters of recommendation.

The cabinet members were evaluated and recommended to Baesler by a planning committee made up of Department of Public Instruction administrators. Baesler and the planning committee made the final selections.

“Our focus is, we want to encourage more student engagement of all students, to ensure that every North Dakota student is receiving quality opportunities during their K-12 experience,” Baesler said.

Here is some information about the diversity of the Cabinet’s membership:

--The 20 members are from schools in 13 cities – Beach, Beulah, Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Hankinson, Kenmare, Langdon, Lincoln, Mandan, Minot, Park River and Valley City.

--The students come from six Class A school districts (Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Mandan, Minot and Valley City) and six Class B districts (Beach, Beulah, Hankinson, Kenmare, Langdon and Park River).

--There are students from eight high schools: Beulah, Bismarck Century, Fargo South, Grand Forks Red River, Hankinson, Langdon, Park River and Mandan.

--There are students from four middle or junior high schools: Wachter Middle School, in Bismarck; Horizon Middle School, in Bismarck; Valley City Jr/Sr High School; and Mandan Middle School.

--There are students from five elementary schools: Sunnyside Elementary, Minot; Lincoln Elementary, Lincoln (which is part of the Bismarck school district); Rita Murphy Elementary, Bismarck; Lincoln Elementary, Beach; and Cathedral of the Holy Spirit Elementary School, Bismarck.

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