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Baesler Names Matzke as New Assistant Superintendent

BISMARCK, N.D., Feb. 16, 2016 – State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler has promoted Laurie Matzke to assistant superintendent, where she will oversee Department of Public Instruction programs that support students, teachers, and multicultural education.

Matzke has been manager of the department’s student support and innovation division and its director of federal title programs, which administers aid to school districts.

Her appointment takes effect immediately. Baesler said Matzke’s job title will be assistant superintendent for student support and innovation.

In her new position, Matzke will supervise the department’s divisions for academic support, federal title programs, teacher and school effectiveness, and American Indian and multicultural education.

Baesler said the change is part of an ongoing department reorganization that will make it easier for the agency’s divisions to collaborate on projects and provide academic and instructional assistance to students and teachers.

Among those projects is “Leveraging the Senior Year,” an initiative that helps high school students become better prepared for college, and the National Math and Science Initiative, a separate effort that offers intensive training for teachers in math, English and science instruction.

Matzke will also assist in the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, a sweeping new federal education law that gives states broad new flexibility in administering federal education programs.

“I’m excited,” Matzke said. “The best thing for me is that I work with four amazing directors, and that’s what makes me feel comfortable that this is going to be a success. We’ve put a lot of work into all the projects that we’re collaborating on. We’re not operating in isolation. All of the work we do is very collaborative.”

Matzke joined the Department of Public Instruction in 1993 as its coordinator for migrant and homeless education. She holds a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Valley City State University and a master’s in curriculum and instruction from California State University at Fullerton. Matzke taught first grade in Corona, Calif., southeast of Los Angeles, before returning to North Dakota.

“I have the utmost respect for Superintendent Baesler and the work that she is doing. I see how much effort is going into making education better. Everything is for the kids,” Matzke said. “I want to be a part of that. I want to be a part of where DPI is going.”

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