

# School board: Governor’s teacher training effort could prove costly

By David Lias  
david.lias@plaintalk.net

During an informal luncheon meeting with members of the Vermillion School Board held earlier this month, District 17 legislators learned a valuable lesson.

Sen. Eldon Nygaard and Reps. Jamie Boomgarden and Tom Jones were told by board members that, when faced with the choice of local control or a state mandate, they much prefer local control.

The lawmakers met with Superintendent Mark Froke, Business Manager Sheila Beermann, and board members Mark Bottolfson, Chris Girard, Dave Stammer and Matt Lavin. Board member Shannon Fairholm was unable to attend the Dec. 15 luncheon, held at the Valiant Vineyards Winery in Vermillion.

Nygaard asked board members what they thought of the governor’s idea to allocate \$8.4 million that will not go directly to the districts but will be used for teacher training seminars.

“In my opinion, I believe it is best suited to be paid out as a one-time bonus to the teachers instead of through an educational process that will more than likely grant them credits and be a burden to the districts,” Matt Lavin, a member of the Vermillion School Board, said, “from the standpoint that we will continue to pay that education credit for the remainder of that teacher’s career. We really haven’t been told how that (funding) is going to be disbursed, how it’s going to be offered.”

The plans, while vague, appear to call for directly paying teachers to attend a number of professional development meetings.

In a state budget blueprint presented to lawmakers by the governor on Dec. 6, Daugaard announced that he has included more than \$8 million in one-time money that will be used to fund a two-year teacher training program.

The Investing in Teaching Initiative will provide financial resources to assist with the implementation of Common Core academic standards and a new teacher evaluation system. A portion of the professional development funding will be used to improve science instruction and to support SDMyLife, a software tool that helps students make career choices.

“How do you decide who gets it, because that wouldn’t cover all teachers,” Nygaard asked board members.

“Some will definitely take advantage of it, and some may not,” Girard said. “There’s not enough detail there for us to know how this will work.”

“The biggest concern is that we all want teachers to receive compensation for what they do,” Lavin said. “That’s not what any of us feels is inappropriate about this – it’s just how it’s going to be given to them and the fact that there may or may not have been any thought into what the additional costs over the

long term may be to the districts. Those credits earn them something – not just in what the state may provide through this program.”

“If we are going to provide this as a bonus to teachers,” Jones asked, “do you think one amount (is appropriate), no matter what level or tenure is with those teachers?”

“I’m in favor of it being across the board the same,” Lavin said. “Does a teacher whose been teaching for 30 years warrant more than somebody who has been teaching for three? They are both teaching. I know that there is a pretty strong opinion probably within the teachers union that seniority has value, and I guess my opinion is different than that.”

Nygaard said that at times, ideas concerning education funding are backed by different lobbying groups.

“You have all kinds of interested parties that are making money by putting these programs together,” he said. “I have great faith in what our administration and our teachers in this state can do if just given some funds to do it, because they’ve evidenced that in the high scores that our young folks return each year on ACTs.

“Is this a good position for District 17, at least on my side in the Senate, that this will need a lot more clarification and that you would rather have this funding plugged into your local budget?” Nygaard asked.

“Local control is always of the utmost importance,” Stammer said, “because one of the things mentioned about this is that in the second year (of the Investing in Teaching Initiative) the state would focus on implementing the Charlotte Danielson Framework for teaching. We’re doing that now, this year.

“We’re implementing a lot of that; we’re going to have some training coming up with it,” he said. “So, local control is always important, because what’s good for our district might not be good for another district.”

“We’d all be in agreement that some training dollars are important,” Froke said. “We have some things to address with Common Core and the Danielson model, and training on the counseling program SDMyLife. If the state had come out and said we are going to put \$1 million toward that, we would have felt good about it, but I was really taken back by this \$8.4 million. Most districts in the state didn’t give any raises last year, so staying with that theme, with what’s being done with the state employees, we can apply a number of dollars here with our own school district employees as well.”

In response to a question from Nygaard, the superintendent noted that the Vermillion School District is a leader in implementing the Charlotte Danielson Framework for teaching.

“I’m getting a number of requests from administrators for our policy and our instruments because nobody really knows how to deal with it yet,” Froke said.

# Magic, soap, careers and more: All part of ‘Dakota Life’

DAKOTA LIFE travels to the Black Hills, Sioux Falls, Salem and Sturgis in January to discover the great people and places in our state.

DAKOTA LIFE, SDPB TV’s long-running monthly magazine-style features program, crosses the state to showcase the wonder and diversity of our home state. The program premieres on Thursday, Jan. 5, at 8pm (7 MT) with encores on Friday, Jan. 6, at 10pm (9 MT) and Sunday, Jan. 8, at 1:30pm (12:30 MT). The program repeats several times throughout the month.

Thursday, Jan. 5, 8pm (7 MT)

Friday, Jan. 6, 10pm (9 MT)

Saturday, Jan. 7, 5:30am (4:30 MT)

Sunday, Jan. 8, 5am (4 MT)

Sunday, Jan. 8, 1:30pm (12:30 MT)

Sunday, Jan. 15, 10:30pm (9:30 MT)

Tuesday, Jan. 24, 1am (Midnight MT)

Saturday, Jan. 28, 5:30am (4:30 MT)

Sunday, Jan. 29, 5am (4 MT)

In January, DAKOTA LIFE will look at:

- “The Crazy Horse Journalism Workshop”: Native American high school students learn about careers in journalism.

- “A Magical Life”: A 90-year-old Sioux Falls resident shares stories of a long career in illusion.

- “Goat Soap”: A Salem hobby farm produces a line of handmade goat milk soaps and other

products.

- “For the Love of Lures”: A Sturgis man has more than 1,000 lures in his collection.

Tune in. We’re living the DAKOTA LIFE.

About South Dakota Public Broadcasting

South Dakota Public Broadcasting is a statewide multi-media network offering quality entertainment and lifelong learning via Television, Radio, Internet and Education & Outreach. For information about SDPB and the Friends of SDPB, go to SDPB.org or call 800-456-0766.

**PROFESSIONAL CARPET & UPHOLSTERY  
CLEANING & DISASTER  
RESTORATION SERVICE**

*Satisfying customers for 43 years!*  
Plan ahead! Call today for your appointment.

**LOUIE'S**  
*carpet cleaning, Inc.*

877-Louies3 (568-4373) • 624-2485



## WELDING BOOT CAMP

**This Welding Boot Camp** will introduce basic welding skills to prospective workers seeking careers in manufacturing. The 35 hour course will focus on the MIG welding process and include education on shop safety, steel cutting methods, shop related math skills, and the various welds needed to be successful in the local workforce.

**The ideal students** for this class are recent high school graduate seeking the skills to enter the workforce or the adult worker considering a career change. Immediate employment opportunities are available upon successful completion of this course. Those with a general interest in learning the basics of welding are also welcome to attend.

**The course will meet twice a week** in the evenings at the Vermillion High School shop beginning January 9, 2012 and continue through the end of February. Tuition is \$250. Tuition reimbursement is available for those who obtain welding jobs with Clay County employers.

**Advance registration is required.**  
To register for the class or to receive additional information, contact the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development at 605-624-5571 or [vcdc@vermillionchamber.com](mailto:vcdc@vermillionchamber.com)

**This class is being offered through a partnership of the Vermillion Area Chamber and Development Company, Masaba Mining Equipment and the Vermillion School District.**