

## Letter from the Director

Last summer, Senate Bill 7 and Senate Bill 315 were voted into law changing the face of education in many ways. While we have learned much about the new laws, many questions still exist. Some of those questions are related directly to the area of special education and the professionals who work in this area. I hope to provide a little more specific information in that area.

Senate Bill 315 or “PERA” (Performance Evaluation Reform Act) directly ties student performance to teacher evaluation. By the 2015-2016 school year up to 50% of a teacher’s evaluation will be based on student growth. The evidence of student growth will be gathered from a variety of sources that may include standardized assessments, district based assessments and administrator/ teacher approved teacher made evaluations. All classroom teachers will have student growth as a component of their evaluation including special education teachers. Psychologists, social workers, and speech language pathologists are not included in this group.

Senate Bill 7 includes several provisions such as mandated school board training, school and collective bargaining procedures prior to a strike, the requirement of a survey of learning conditions to gather feedback from students in grade 6-12, and changes to how tenure is granted to teachers. A significant component of the law is where Senate Bill 7 converges with Senate Bill 315. Beginning this year, reductions in force will be based on teachers’ performance rankings. The school board in consultation with the bargaining unit will establish a sequence of dismissal list. The list will be based on teacher groupings per their teacher evaluation ratings. While this is just a very brief overview of Senate Bill 7, it is important to note that special education cooperatives such as Four Rivers Special Education District must comply with this law as well.

There is no way to go into detail on either of these laws in just a few paragraphs. It is important to note that cooperatives and special education teachers are included these major changes. If you would have more questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.