As educators, we know that every decision made about our classrooms and schools is a political decision. We also know that in the coming year, South Dakotans will elect a new governor who will have a tremendous impact on those decisions. That is why it is crucial that as educators, we raise our voices and help elect the candidate who has demonstrated time and time again that providing a great education for all students, regardless of their zip code, is a priority. As SDEA President, I am pleased to announce that the SD-EPIC Steering Committee is recommending State Senator Billie Sutton to be the next governor of South Dakota.

Senator Sutton has been a tireless advocate for schools and children. He played a crucial role with the Blue-Ribbon Task Force ensuring bipartisan support for the half-penny sales tax for salary increases. Billie’s willingness to reach across the aisle has led to increases in education funding that may not have happened otherwise. He is a champion of our students from early childhood through post-secondary education. Billie knows the value of all educators: teachers and education support professionals alike. Public education could not find a better advocate for our students than Billie Sutton.

Marty Jackley, accepted the invitation to talk about their vision for public education in South Dakota. The recommendation is based on Billie’s responses during the interview and his proven record for public education.

The following are a few of Senator Sutton’s responses to the SD-EPIC Questionnaire:

**What is your vision for South Dakota?**

My vision is a South Dakota where every child has the same or better opportunities than we had. I want to see a South Dakota economy that encourages people to want to live, work, and raise a family in our state. We must strive for an economy that gives our people the opportunity to get ahead.

**What are your priorities for South Dakota?**

My priorities for South Dakota will be Education, Healthcare, Government Transparency, and Economic Development. As governor, I intend to provide more resources for education, develop our workforce with further educational...
I want to see every child have the opportunity to get a world-class education right here in South Dakota. I want more students pursuing bachelor’s degrees, associate degrees, and technical diplomas. By advocating for students to pursue all kinds of education, we are creating a stronger workforce and economy for the future of South Dakota.

Students and their families are not able to wholeheartedly pursue these opportunities if they are drowning in healthcare costs or paying over half their income in housing costs. By increasing access to healthcare and affordable housing, students and families can focus on their education and future, rather than stressing about their bills.

To ensure South Dakota can invest more resources in education, we must root out and quell corruption and complacency in state government. By cleaning up state government, we can ensure every tax dollar is being spent wisely, which will provide more funds to help students and educators succeed.

Economic and workforce development are essential priorities of mine, as well. I operate under the belief that education is workforce development and the most important factor to creating sustainable economic growth within our state. I’ll work to include education initiatives in plans aimed to boost our economy.

What are your priorities for public education, pre-K through post-secondary, in South Dakota? How will you achieve these goals?

I have several priorities for public education:

- We must work to get teacher pay competitive in our region if we hope to attract and retain the best and brightest teachers.
Teacher quality is of the utmost importance for the success of our kids, and I believe it is something that we all care deeply about. The first step must be to get teacher pay competitive with our surrounding states, which allows the free market to do its job. Competition with our surrounding states would allow our administrators and school boards to offer wages and benefits that attract and retain our best and brightest education students.

We also need to support higher education to make sure we are molding great teachers. The next way to support higher education is to work to keep the cost of higher education affordable, so when a student graduates, they are not saddled with insurmountable debt.

Teacher quality is a result of the economy and market that we create with our funding policies. I think we have great teachers here in South Dakota, and we have tremendous opportunity to attract more great teachers to come to our state as well, but not if we continue with the status quo and do not fight for change.

Teacher prep time in schools, mentoring, and professional development are also keys to teacher quality. We must respect and trust our teachers, and support them in their development as leaders.

I have supported increased teacher pay by serving on the Blue Ribbon Task-Force and subsequently voting for the recommended legislation in 2016.

- Lower tuition costs for higher education
- Prioritize more funding for scholarship opportunities
- Strengthen career and technical education in HS
- Offer tuition reimbursement for teachers looking to teach in rural communities
- I have and will continue to support early childhood education
- I also opposed bills that sought to divide our teachers and create a hierarchy of subjects, including HB 1234 back in 2012.

I will achieve these goals by reaching across the aisle to find common sense solutions to South Dakota’s problems just as I have done the last 8 years in the Senate. I am a consensus builder and pride myself on my ability to find common ground with my friends on the other side of the aisle. We must start treating education as an investment, not just numbers on a piece of paper.

How do you envision supporting teacher quality in South Dakota?

Teacher quality is of the utmost importance for the success of our students and our schools. We must start doing what it takes to give our students the best education possible. I will achieve these goals by reaching across the aisle to find common sense solutions to South Dakota’s problems just as I have done the last 8 years in the Senate. I am a consensus builder and pride myself on my ability to find common ground with my friends on the other side of the aisle. We must start treating education as an investment, not just numbers on a piece of paper.

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I get nostalgic this time of year when everyone is back to school. As our students return, our schools are shining from the work of custodians, buses have been tuned up over the summer, and our school secretaries have made sure everything is ready to go. For me, back to school is all about potential and possibilities, and even though I serve as SDEA President, I am a teacher first and foremost…and I miss the excitement of first day of school and I miss my students.

Thirty-eight years ago, I joined SDEA because of my students and because of your students. I wanted to join my voice with others to ensure that our students have the best education, educators, and schools—the schools that each one of them deserve. If there is one thing that I have learned over those years, it is that it takes more than my voice, your voice and all our voices—it takes our vote.

Those whom we elect establish policy and funding for our students and schools. They create an atmosphere locally and statewide as to whether or not public education is important, and whether or not those who serve in our public schools are valued and respected.

Through late spring and summer, SD EPIC—our political action organization—has been busy sending out questionnaires to ALL candidates and holding interviews for those who returned their questionnaires. The only questions asked, and the only topic considered, was education. Interview teams have made recommendations for the next Governor of South Dakota and for the 2019 SD State Legislature. This edition of the Educators’ Advocate/Voter’s Guide contains those recommendations made by our members.

The best thing that I can do for my students and for the students of SD is to vote, and to vote for candidates who support public education. The next Governor of SD will set the stage for education policy likely for the next eight years. The SD-EPIC steering committee recognized this as it was deliberating its recommendation and it is why its members recommended Senator Billie Sutton for governor. From a personal perspective, I have spent four years watching how Senator Sutton gets the work done. I have seen him effect change through the Blue-Ribbon Task Force to improve funding and teacher salaries and work to ensure that all students have access to early childhood education. I have watched him work across the aisle to help build consensus and work to do what’s best for our schools.

I know how much he believes in supporting education, pre-K—higher ed. As an educator, I want our Governor to care about students as much as I do. Billie Sutton is that person.

Use your voice. We cannot be passive. Because each one of you makes a difference, use your vote to make a difference for our students. Encourage your colleagues to vote and to register to vote if they are not; encourage your friends and family to vote. Voting is democracy in action, and education is the foundation of our democracy. We must be active participants in our democracy.

May this school year be full of learning and full of joy for you and the students you serve. Thank you for everything you do to make a difference. See you at the polls!

Find SDEA’s President on Twitter
@Mary_McCorkle

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ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

How to register:
Print the Voter Registration Form, fill-out the form, sign it and then submit it to your county auditor. Your Voter Registration form, with an original signature, must be received by the auditor 15 days before any election if you wish to vote in that election. South Dakota law does not allow you to submit your voter registration form via fax or email.

You can use this form to:
Register to vote in South Dakota
Change your registration name or address
Change your party affiliation
Cancel your voter registration. You may do this by filling out the bottom portion of the voter registration form.
Download a voter registration form at: https://bit.ly/1yROrht

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How to register:
Print the Voter Registration Form, fill-out the form, sign it and then submit it to your county auditor. Your Voter Registration form, with an original signature, must be received by the auditor 15 days before any election if you wish to vote in that election. South Dakota law does not allow you to submit your voter registration form via fax or email.

You can use this form to:
Register to vote in South Dakota
Change your registration name or address
Change your party affiliation
Cancel your voter registration. You may do this by filling out the bottom portion of the voter registration form.
Download a voter registration form at: https://bit.ly/1yROrht
Educators across the country have had a lot to say about what is going on in public education since 2016. Whether it was the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as the US Secretary of Education or walkouts for better pay and more resources for students, educators are stepping up and letting their voices be heard. A record number of educators will have their names on ballots, including three SDEA members in South Dakota. We asked them why they decided to run and what they hoped to accomplish if elected.

Deb Smith

Lyman County Education Association
Candidate for District 26B House

“I decided to run for office because I feel that SD needs a better balance in the legislature. A democracy does not function well without checks and balances, and to a large degree, the majority party in Pierre is not being held accountable. People often complain about politics, but the only way to bring about change is to become active, so my legislative bid is an attempt to perform my civic duty and strive to make the improvements that I’d like to see.

Being an educator has also been helpful because I can speak with knowledge about issues that affect our children’s education. I know firsthand how difficult it is to keep new teachers in SD when surrounding states are paying higher wages. I know that budget cuts make it difficult for teachers to attain the resources they need. I’m also keenly aware how difficult it is to pay back student loans when college costs keep rising. These are just several of the issues that need addressing in the legislature, and it will take a bipartisan effort to come up with solutions.”

If you would like to help Deb with her campaign contact her at Smith4House26B@gmail.com.

Ione Klinger

SDEA Retired
District 20 House of Representatives

“As an educator, I kept the membership and myself involved in the legislative process in Pierre. Now it is vital we have a balance in party representation. Both parties have good ideas and we need to work together and solve challenges facing our state. I recently retired and am ready to assist in the problem-solving effort and make our state an even better place to live.

Bill Adamson

SDEA-Retired
District 7 House of Representatives

“Two events changed my mind and convinced me that education needs another advocate in the legislature. I lobbied against HB 1199 to prohibit collective bargaining by employees in the South Dakota Board of Regents system. I was struck by the misinformation about the higher education system and in some cases outright hostility. The loss of collective bargaining would have resulted in an increased risk of job-loss. Without compensating for the risk with higher pay, the BOR system would have had difficulty attracting professors to move to South Dakota and would result in persistent understaffing of the university system with faculty that have terminal degrees. A stronger higher education system is essential for the future of South Dakota by promoting workforce development which is critical for a strong, vibrant economic growth, and high-wage job creation.

I find that having been an educator and public servant for 30-years portrays a positive image to most voters. Being an educator is associated with being a judicious and astute legislator who will treat all constituents fairly. Being an educator also has given me the insight and understanding of the importance of education in a modern, global society. Education is essential to the role of an informed electorate which is critical to the functioning of our democratic system. Education provides the basic knowledge of our constitutional form of government and democratic principles of freedom and liberty. Education developed democratic ideas and values and hence, is the soul of democracy.”

To help Bill’s campaign contact him at bill.adamson20@gmail.com.
Every vote is important. Voting early by absentee ballot ensures that your voice will be heard no matter what life throws your way. Voting absentee is simple. You can vote early at your local county court house or you may request a ballot by mail. You can obtain an absentee ballot application from your county auditor or by visiting the Secretary of State’s website at www.sdsos.gov.

**How to Request an Absentee Ballot**

Make sure you are registered to vote by checking the voter portal at www.sdsos.gov.

Download and print an Absentee Ballot Application and mail your original, signed application to your local county auditor.

Registered voters can vote in-person once Absentee Voting begins at their county auditor’s office by bringing along a valid photo identification card (ID). If a voter does not have a photo ID, they must be given the option to sign a personal identification affidavit and vote a regular ballot.

Together, we can make sure we elect officials who will stand up for kids and public education! Request your absentee ballot today!
TEN WAYS TO ELECT PRO-PUBLIC EDUCATION CANDIDATES

If educators want to see Billie Sutton and other pro-public education candidates get elected, then we must make sure our colleagues, family and neighbors know the candidates and VOTE. Here are ten ways you can help turn out the vote in November.

1. Ensure you and your family members are registered to vote
2. Talk to at least 10 family members and friends about the importance of voting for pro-public education candidates like Billie Sutton
3. Write a letter to the editor
4. Participate in a phone bank
5. Host a phone bank
6. Knock on doors
7. Send post cards to friends and family members
8. Drive someone to the polls
9. Volunteer to walk in a parade for a pro-public education candidate
10. Join the South Dakota Educators for Billie Sutton Facebook page to learn more about getting involved

If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved on a campaign for a pro-public education candidate, contact Sandra Waltman at sandra.waltman@sdea.org.

6
REASONS WHY EDUCATORS SHOULD VOTE BILLIE SUTTON FOR GOVERNOR

BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE
Billie fought to increase teacher pay with the half penny sales tax. He still does not see that as competitive among regional states. He will fight to keep you here and to attract good educators.

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION
Pillar of Billie’s education plan is to research the need for early childhood education in the State of South Dakota. Why are we one of only a few states that doesn’t provide state-funded preschool? SD is falling behind.

AFFORDABLE HIGHER ED.
Billie recognizes that higher education is way too expensive. Only two states give less in needs-based financial help than we do. Again, SD is falling behind.

CREATIVE ADULT ED.
He will encourage and foster creative education and training options like satellite classes, effective online degrees, and apprenticeship programs for non-traditional students looking to get a degree or change jobs.

KEEP GOOD TEACHERS
Billie understands the teacher shortage in South Dakota and wants to keep good teachers here for our kids. He also understand how education must be valued in order for good candidates to enter the education field.

KRISTI WILL KEEP EDUCATION ON THE BACK BURNER LIKE USUAL
Don’t Forget to Vote — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH!

Go to sdsos.gov for:
• Sample Ballots
• Early Voting
• Polling Locations
• Election Results