



— State of —  
**North Dakota**  
*Office of the Governor*

**Doug Burgum**  
*Governor*

April 25, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Today, in the spirit of government-to-government collaboration, we took collective action to protect public dollars and ensure the best possible learning environment for students in Belcourt Public Schools.

These actions, including the suspension of school board members, were taken with a shared commitment to the communities and students we serve.

The State Auditor's Office is currently conducting a citizen-requested audit of the financial records of Belcourt Public Schools. The audit was initiated through a petition process that required 195 valid signatures of qualified voters.

Under state law, the governor may suspend a school board member if it's determined, in consultation with the state superintendent of public instruction, that it's in the best interest of the state and school district pending the results of the audit. The Turtle Mountain Tribal Council pursued similar action regarding board members who oversee tribally controlled federal dollars.

State and tribal involvement in the affairs of local school boards is pursued only after careful consideration. In this instance, given the concerns raised by citizens involved in the petition process and credible reports of threats and demands made by certain school board members, action was warranted. We look forward to resolving this situation in a way that provides stability and safety for parents, educators, school district employees and especially students, and ensures proper oversight of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,

**Doug Burgum**  
Governor

**Jamie Azure**  
Tribal Chairman

**Kirsten Baesler**  
State Superintendent