



Kirsten Baesler
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Kirsten Baesler is the assistant secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Guided by the wellbeing of children, she is committed to working with families and states to provide each child with what they need to reach their highest levels of success. Kirsten is a passionate advocate for developing young people as citizens who have respect, courage, compassion, integrity, a sense of responsibility, and an appreciation of the unique nature of this great nation.

Previously, she served as the state school superintendent and the administrator of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. There, she oversaw the education of students in 168 school districts and 54 nonpublic schools across the state. Kirsten and her team led significant improvements in the graduation rates and academic success of the state's Native American students, improved access to personalized learning choices for students and their families, and led the nation in computer science and cybersecurity instruction in grades K-12.

Before taking office in January 2013, Baesler had a 24-year career in the Bismarck public school system – the state's largest school district – as a vice principal, districtwide technology integration specialist, library media specialist, elementary teacher, and instructional assistant. She has served on more than a dozen boards, including the Education Standards and Practices Board, the Career & Technical Education Board, the Teachers' Fund for Retirement Board, and the Board of University and School Lands, which manages state land holdings and oversees a \$7+ billion trust fund to benefit North Dakota's public schools.

Baesler earned two associate's degrees from Bismarck State College, a bachelor's degree in education from Minot State University, and a master's degree in library and information technology integration from Valley City State University, and has completed a certificate program in Educational Leadership at Harvard University. She has earned the Valley City State University's Distinguished Alumni Award and the Rising Star Award from Bismarck State College. Baesler is a native of Flasher, ND. She lives in Washington, D.C., and has three adult sons, a daughter-in-law, and three granddaughters.