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Excellence in North Dakota public education through local school board governance ■ VOL XXXVII ISSUE 6

Take Advantage of the ND Teacher Support System Mentoring Program

During the 2011-12 school year, the North Dakota Teacher Support System (NDTSS) provided support for 175 first-year teachers and their mentors. Their research shows the program to be of great value and NDTSS would like to extend it to more new-to-the-profession teachers next year. If your school district missed this opportunity last school year, school boards might ask their administrators to explore participating in the program for 2012-13. Following are frequently asked questions about the program.

Can all teachers new to our district participate?

NDTSS can only support first-year-to-the-profession teachers and is not able to serve teachers in private schools.

What does NDTSS provide?

- Mentor training
- Administrator training
- Online class for first-year teachers

- Seminars for first-year teachers and mentors
- Travel expenses for program training and seminars



- Structured program for all participants
- Stipends for mentors
- "Flip"-type video camera for first-year teachers

- Up to \$600 per mentor/mentee pair to pay for substitutes for program activities (most mentor pairs do not require all of the sub time available)

Who selects the mentor and what criteria should guide the decision?

The administrator selects the best individual to mentor this new teacher and NDTSS makes sure they are trained and ready to mentor.

The following are factors that are considered assets but are not always necessary:

- Close proximity of working locations of the mentor and mentee
- Similarity of job descriptions

The best mentors have:

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Credibility with peers and administrators
- Demonstrated curiosity and eagerness to learn
- Respect for multiple perspectives
- Outstanding instructional practices

What if I don't have a good mentor match available in my school?

There are a variety of potential arrangements including:

- The mentor is a full-time teacher in the same or another building within the district
- The mentor is from a neighboring district or possibly a distance away
- The mentor is a retired teacher (in which case they could mentor more than one new teacher)
- The mentor is a part-time teacher (possibly mentoring more than one new teacher)

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NDSBA Hires In-House Legal Counsel

After an extensive search, NDSBA is pleased to announce the hiring of Annette Bendish as legal counsel. Annette replaces Gary Thune who has provided legal services to the association since 1980 and will retire from his role as counsel to NDSBA on June 30.



to graduate from UND's School of Law. Her background

Annette is a Mandan native and graduate of Mandan High School. After graduation, she attended the University of North Dakota and earned a bachelor's degree in financial management with a minor in public administration. She went on

includes work in public employment law, open meetings/ open records, legislation, and administration law. Most recently, Annette worked at the Public Service Commission where she focused on electric generation and transmission issues in North Dakota.

Annette is active in the local bar association and the State Bar Association of North Dakota (SBAND), currently serving on the SBAND's Social Media and IT Committee. She lives in Bismarck with her husband, Michael, and their two children.

Annette's office is located in the NDSBA office building and she is available to assist school districts weekday mornings.



from the director's chair

■ by Jon Martinson, NDSBA Executive Director

Measure 2 Rejected by Voters

North Dakotans turned out in record numbers to vote for candidates and ballot measures. Voters overwhelmingly rejected Measure 2, probably because the measure was ill-conceived, over-reaching, unworkable, and radical. It also failed to clearly state how the legislature would cover local government expenses.

Contributing to the defeat of M2 was an unprecedented coalition of 93 organizations composed not only of "special interest groups" such as cities, counties, townships, and education associations, but also business and industry groups including realtors, power cooperatives, home builders, electric cooperatives, banking associations, Farmers Union, Grain Growers, retailers, Stockmen's Association, and the

North Dakota Chamber of Commerce. Coalition members communicated continually with their membership to explain Measure 2, implications if it passed, and reasons to oppose the measure. This significant grassroots effort demonstrated that diverse groups coalescing around a common goal can be a powerful force.

It is apparent after reading editorials and blogs that voting against Measure 2 was not an indication that the status quo is acceptable. A *Bismarck Tribune* editorial stated, "The vote against banning property taxes should be interpreted as giving lawmakers the breathing room needed to reform the state's tax system in a way that works." As one blogger put it, "Many, probably most, of the people who voted against M2 think that we DO need property tax reform. They just were smart enough to understand that M2 was a terrible way to change how we pay for services."

Empower the Taxpayer suffered a humiliating defeat. They also lost their case in the North Dakota Supreme Court a few days prior to the June primary election. The high court promptly decided to affirm the lower court's decision to dismiss Empower's lawsuit.

Given the fanaticism of some members of Empower the Taxpayer, it would not be a surprise to hear sometime next year ... "They're baaack."

MENTORING

Continued from page 1

- Instructional coaches can mentor as part of their job duties
- We have an online program available for mentoring math, science, or special education teachers
- We can help connect with a mentor in some specialty areas (such as music and media/library)

What are duties of an administrator in the program?

Besides selecting, enrolling, and supporting the mentors and new teachers, administrators complete a onetime one-to-two hour online training (available any time) to help understand the program. Principals also verify completion of program activities.

How much are mentors paid?

Mentors can earn up to \$800 per semester/\$1600 per year on completion of all activities.

When and where is mentor training going to be held?

In an effort to get mentors trained before school starts if at all possible, we have the following training scheduled:

- Tuesday and Wednesday, August 7-8 at Grand Forks Canad Inn
- Wednesday and Thursday, August 8-9 at Williston Airport International Inn
- Monday and Tuesday, August 13-14 at Fargo Doublewood Inn
- Tuesday and Wednesday, August 14-15 at Bismarck Doublewood Inn
- Wednesday and Thursday, August 15-16 at Minot Grand International Inn

Knowing that schools may have late-hires, the following are later sessions:

- Monday and Tuesday, September 10-11 at Fargo Doublewood Inn
- Wednesday and Thursday, September 12-13 at Bismarck Comfort Inn

How do I enroll my mentor/mentee pairs in the program?

You may enroll your participants on the ESPB website home page under "What's New."

Once NDTSS receives the enrollment, they will communicate with the mentor and new teacher to take care of all arrangements.

For more information contact NDTSS Coordinator Laurie Stenehjem at: lstenehj@nd.gov or 701-328-9644.

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REMINDER

Under NDCC 15.1-19-18, all school districts must adopt and submit their bullying policies to DPI before July 1, 2012. Bullying policies may be emailed to Valerie Fischer, vfischer@nd.gov.

State Longitudinal Data System Update

By: Steve Snow, Director,

Management Information Systems at DPI

The State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) project continues to move forward. Success of the project is a direct result of partners who have worked collaboratively to build a comprehensive data system. This system will put critical information in the hands of decision makers.

A series of training sessions will be held across the state as part of the system roll-out. Training takes the first step toward effective Data Driven Decision Making by training users on basic access and data available in the SLDS.

Currently access to data will be at the district level and will provide to authenticated users:

- State assessments with growth model
- ACT scores
- Post-secondary remediation data (currently these do not identify students; however, data is available and efforts are underway to develop useful reports for program evaluation using identified students)
- NWEA assessment data for those districts that have signed the data release agreements (for more information on those districts that have signed and those that still need to sign agreements, contact Steve Snow)
- Drop out and graduation rates (the SLDS team is working with DPI to align the students contained in official rates identified in the SLDS)
- Attendance data
- Student course information including grades

A majority of districts have signed the NWEA data release agreements allowing the state to load assessment data directly from the vendor. NWEA has requested an additional email confirmation from districts that will allow loading of historical data as well. If you have a signed data release on file, DPI should have sent you an email asking for a positive reply so the historical data can also be loaded into the

SLDS. If you have any questions on this process, contact Steve Snow to ensure your data will be released.

The SLDS development team is working on:

- Teacher level access (a pilot program with a few schools is scheduled for Fall 2012)
- Electronic Transcripts (eTranscripts) will be piloted with a few schools in Fall 2012
- A better user experience by continually refining the look and feel of the SLDS portal
- Increased assessment data; AIMSWeb is the next major assessment to be loaded; those who administer AIMSWeb should have signed a data release agreement
- An integrated feedback system in the SLDS portal
- Improved performance as we move from beta to full release

There is a natural comparison between the SLDS and ViewPoint. For those districts that have ViewPoint, the SLDS can supplement the district-level data with state-level data. As the SLDS matures, those districts should consider a shift from ViewPoint to the SLDS. For those districts that do not have ViewPoint, the SLDS can immediately fill the need for a data warehouse by providing much of the functionality and information needed.

Tighter integration between PowerSchool, SLDS and STARS blurs the line between systems making it difficult to determine whom to call with problems. With this in mind, a joint EduTech, ITD and DPI team was established to review problems and jointly develop a solution. A user needs to open a "trouble ticket" with the EduTech help desk and it will be resolved by the joint team.

As the SLDS continues to move forward, communication is the key. The SLDS development team is working hard to keep everyone informed on the progress. If you have questions at any point, feel free to contact Project Director Steve Snow at (701) 328-2189 or fsnow@nd.gov.

Gary Thune Retires as NDSBA Legal Counsel

Gary Thune has served as legal counsel to NDSBA for over 30 years. He was recruited by NDSBA from his practice



in Grand Forks, and consequently, Gary moved his family to Bismarck because he had a desire to specialize in school law, which became his passion. Well, OK, golf is his passion, but he

really enjoys school law. So much so that he is known statewide as the go-to person in the field of education law. In 1997, Gary was elected president of the National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys, and he quickly became known nationally as a leading expert in school law.

Gary has never wavered on his approach to legal issues confronting school boards--telling them, "I won't always tell you what you want to hear, but I will always tell you the truth based on the law as I see it." His goal has always been to provide school districts with sound legal advice to keep them out of court, and if they must go to court, to put them in the best position to win. An example is the "Kenmare case." The Kenmare School District needed a speech language pathologist but could not attract one within the confines of their negotiated salary agreement. The board proceeded to impasse and fact finding. The Kenmare School Board was sued over this issue by the teachers' union. Gary successfully argued the case in district court and again in the North Dakota Supreme Court. During the 2007 Legislative Session, legislators passed HB1177 allowing teachers to be hired off the salary schedule (not just speech language pathologists, as the courts narrowly defined the issue). This will be particularly useful these days in North Dakota's oil country.

Due to his integrity, expertise, and good humor, Gary has enhanced the reputation of NDSBA through his presence as legal counsel. On behalf of member districts, NDSBA offers Gary heartfelt gratitude for his work on our behalf. We will miss Gary's presence and involvement in our activities and wish him an enjoyable retirement from full-time law practice.

your Q our A

By Annette Bendish,
NDSBA Legal Counsel

Q: No one filed for an open position on our school board. If the individual who receives the most write-in votes does not accept the office, is the individual with the next highest vote total elected?

A: No, the person with the next highest vote total does not take office automatically. The person who won the election needs to refuse to take the affirmation or oath of office or resign the position after taking the oath. The position is then handled as a school board vacancy under North Dakota Century Code section 15.1-09-05.

Q: An individual was elected to our school board who is not a resident of our district. Can that individual take office?

A: Yes, provided that the individual is a qualified elector, meaning the individual has resided in the precinct for at least thirty days preceding the election, is eighteen years or older, and is a resident of this state at the time the individual takes office (N.D.C.C. §16.1-01-04).

The North Dakota Supreme Court has determined the statutory language

requiring a person to be a qualified elector to be "eligible to an office," does not prohibit a candidate from seeking office when the person is not a qualified elector. It does, however, prohibit a person who is not a qualified elector from holding the office, unless the legislature determines otherwise. The Attorney General has also issued a letter opinion addressing this situation that can be found at: <http://www.ag.nd.gov/Opinions/1997/Letter/97devl01.pdf>.

Q: When do we give the oath of office to our new school board members?

A: Five days after a school district election, the business manager of the school district shall provide to each elected individual written notice of the individual's election and of the duty to take an affirmation or oath of office (N.D.C.C. §15.1-09-17). Ten days after receiving notice of the election or appointment and before commencing duties an individual elected as a member of or appointed to a school board shall take and file with the school district business manager an affirmation or oath of office (N.D.C.C. §15.1-09-25). If the individual refuses to take the affirmation or oath of office as required, the individual's action is deemed to be a refusal to serve and failure to qualify for the office.

Q: Do we have to have a special meeting to declare the result of the election?

A: It depends when your next regular meeting is scheduled. Within three days of the election, the school board shall examine and count all election returns and declare the result of an election (N.D.C.C. §15.1-09-15). However, if the election is held under an agreement with a city or county, the returns must be examined and counted and the winners declared as defined in that agreement. If your regular school board meeting is within that time frame, you do not need to have a special meeting.



mark
your calendar

2012 NDSBA Annual Convention
PRE-CONVENTION
NDSBA New Member Seminar
NDCSA School Law Seminar
Thursday, October 25, 2012
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

ANNUAL CONVENTION
October 26-27, 2012
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

2013 NDSBA Annual Convention
October 24-26, 2013
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck