



# bulletin



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Excellence in North Dakota public education through local school board governance ■ VOL XLII ISSUE 7

## Board/Teacher Negotiators Declare Impasse

The North Dakota Education Fact Finding Commission conducted more impasse hearings in June than in any previous June. Hearings have been held in Rolla (Mt. Pleasant School District), Dunseith, Grand Forks, and Williston.

Given that the state has no money for teacher raises, it's surprising to

hear that so many school boards and teacher negotiators are challenged to come to an

agreement. The boards in Turtle Lake-Mercer and Fargo have also declared impasse, and the Fact Finding Commission has scheduled hearings this month. In addition, the Bismarck School Board and Mapleton School Board have declared impasse.

The 2017 Legislative Session provided funding for schools this biennium at the same per pupil level as the second year of the 2015-17 biennium which was \$9,646. Given that school districts' carry over funds are restricted to a maximum of 35 percent plus \$50,000, there really is no additional money.

The Fargo teachers' union declared impasse citing classroom safety and salaries among their leading issues of concern. The board and teachers are nearly \$12.7 million apart on salary proposals and school board member Dinah Goldenberg is opposed to

putting classroom safety issues in the negotiated agreement since it belongs in policy saying, "We just don't feel the contract is the appropriate place."

Bismarck teacher contracts are at impasse over classroom safety and a more clear definition of the work day. Bismarck Superintendent Tamara Uselman said she was "Disappointed

“ Raises shouldn't be granted if there isn't money available. We want our elected boards to be responsible with the budgets they control, and the school board seems to be. ”

*Grand Forks Herald*

that the two teams couldn't find the middle ground they needed, but I respect the efforts of the BEA and the efforts of the district negotiators.”

In response to the impasse in Grand Forks, which is mostly about money, the *Grand Forks Herald* editorial board pointed out that the school board represents the taxpayers; the Grand Forks Education Association represents the teachers. "Raises shouldn't be granted if there isn't money available. We want our elected boards to be responsible with the budgets they control, and the school board seems to be." The editorial board concluded that the teachers request for a salary increase of five percent the first year and three percent next year "is excessive when we suspect few private-sector employees could dream of such a guarantee. Actually, we suspect most government employees in the state won't be getting raises either."

In Rolla, there is no new money, student enrollment dropped slightly, and property valuation went down a bit. Board/teacher negotiators at Mt. Pleasant went to impasse over dollars. Teachers were represented at the table by experienced teachers who wanted a percentage increase, while the school board offered a flat \$750 increase for all teachers. In their report, the ND Fact Finding Commission recommended an increase of \$826 across the board the first year and a staggered increase the second year of the contract. Board member Kerry Lentz was satisfied with the end result because, "the Fact Finding Commission's recommendation was more aligned with what the board was offering in terms of a flat across-the-board salary increase and an increase of \$76 beyond our offer.

School boards are encouraged to resist teacher negotiators' efforts to put policy issues in the negotiated agreement, because each time this happens, school boards give up some of their authority to govern their school districts.

Hopefully negotiations will conclude soon, teachers will have signed their contracts, and districts will have all their teaching positions filled when students return this fall



### Convention Reminders

Resolutions must be received in the NDSBA office no later than 4:00 on **Monday, August 14.** If you are interested in serving as a convention committee member, please contact NDSBA by **Friday, August 18.**

# Projected 2018 NDIRF Rate Increase Information

by Steve Spilde, NDIRF CEO

As a self-insurance pool owned by its political subdivision members, the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund (NDIRF) has always made it a priority to maintain open communication with members. We know this is especially important regarding news that will affect annual budgets, so we are contacting you as soon as possible.

Since the beginning of the year, NDIRF has been informing members of our unprecedented claim-loss experience in 2016 (following an equally unprecedented claim-loss experience in 2015 – up by over 1/3 each year) and referring to the likelihood of a rate increase to address these new levels of claim-loss.

We now have all the data and recommendations required from NDIRF's actuarial consultant, and

the approval of the NDIRF Board of Directors, to be able to advise members that NDIRF will be seeking a rate increase on most lines of coverage, effective for coverage renewals on and after January 1, 2018.

The practical effect for NDIRF members is that, if approved by the North Dakota Commissioner of Insurance, the rate adjustments sought will increase the cost of NDIRF coverage on average from 10 percent to 15 percent for 2018 renewals, based on filed rates and dependent upon the particular mix of coverages selected by individual members.

NDIRF is not taking this step lightly and has waited until evidence demonstrating the need for it is conclusive. While NDIRF is in a very strong financial position, prudence dictates that the

claim-loss experience of the past few years should be considered a trend to be dealt with rather than financed by member equity that has been built over many years into NDIRF's secure foundation. As you know well from your long participation in the Fund, a general rate increase is also unprecedented, and if the current claim experience trend proves to be temporary, the positive impact of that circumstance would quickly be turned back to the benefit of members.

Thank you for your NDIRF membership. If you have questions, please feel free to contact CEO Steve Spilde at [steve.spilde@ndirf.com](mailto:steve.spilde@ndirf.com); or by phone at 1-800-751-9107; or Risk Services Manager Brennan Quintus at [brennan.quintus@ndirf.com](mailto:brennan.quintus@ndirf.com); or by phone at 1-800-751-9105.

## Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act

NSBA supports the "Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act" (H.R. 2353). This bipartisan legislation reflects the concerted effort among our school districts, communities, business and industry, and institutions of higher education to ensure that our students are prepared to succeed in the modern workforce.

H.R. 2353 includes measures to help our school districts and states strengthen both academic and technical skills of students, particularly with the combination of core academic subjects and integrated career pathways. As many of our school districts work to expand partnerships to offer students a well-rounded curriculum that addresses both college and career readiness, the need to modernize career and technical education (CTE) as an integral part of the curriculum is a priority for our members. Further, the bill's focus on building sustainable relationships among community stakeholders, local needs assessments, and the continuous alignment of programs of study with the skills that are in demand in each state, region, or local economy will help address the nation's growing skills gap.

NSBA's Center for Public Education has conducted research, titled *Career and Technical Education: Building New Pathways into the Labor Market*, that includes data about career clusters, demographics of students enrolled in CTE, best practices, and success stories. The research findings show that advanced courses with an occupational focus make a difference in student outcomes. While the vast majority of high school graduates do go on to college, some do not, which was the focus of the Center's "Path Least Taken" series. One of the major findings of that analysis was the outsized impact CTE coursework had on the future outcomes of the students who did not attend college. High school graduates who earned at least average grades and a certificate or license in their occupation field achieved comparable, if not better, employment and social outcomes than the average college student.

The research clearly shows that obtaining a mix of academic knowledge and technical skills developed in high school, plus a professional certificate or license, is key to career readiness for our nation's students. H.R. 2353 will help school districts across the country offer programs to students that are aligned with the in-demand jobs in their local communities.

*Charlotte Blane for NSBA*



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# from the director's chair



■ by Alexis Baxley, NDSBA Executive Director

Hello, and let me introduce myself: I am Alexis Baxley, your new executive director. I officially began work with NDSBA on July 1, and I am honored and excited the Board of Director has entrusted me with this incredible organization.

Quite likely this is not news to any of you, but you have an amazing group of professionals working for you at NDSBA. In my two short weeks with the organization, I have been impressed by the skills, effectiveness, and passion this staff possesses, and I couldn't ask for a better team. I want to assure you that the focus, direction, and quality of services you have come to expect from our association will remain unchanged throughout the transition.

We are also lucky enough to be keeping Jon Martinson from his retirement plans for a little while. Jon has committed to staying on full time with NDSBA through July and then on an as-needed basis to ensure we have a smooth and seamless transition. I am so grateful to have time with Jon as I begin this journey; he leaves awfully large shoes to fill. In the meantime, let me assure you that the NDSBA programs you have come to rely on will continue uninterrupted.

You may or may not have already read my bio and the kind words Jon wrote about me last month, but I wanted to tell you a little about myself as well. When it became public that I had accepted this position, I heard a fair amount of, "Petroleum to education? That's a weird transition!" But I want you to know

I've made my career in association management and lobbying, and I have been blessed to work with and learn from some of the most talented executives North Dakota has to offer. I've spent time working with agriculture, tourism, information technology, nonprofit, coal, and petroleum associations. While the subject matter has varied greatly, the goals and operations of each organization have been surprisingly similar.

I'd like to share with you a brief story I told the Board during my interview: Fresh out of college, I began the first position of my career on January 5. That year's legislative session began on January 6. I was shown my desk and directed to the Capitol to take notes at a number of hearings. At 21 years old, I couldn't have been more overwhelmed; the drinking from a firehose metaphor would be accurate here. But, by the time the 80 days were up, I was hooked. I knew I still had a lot to learn, but I could not have been more excited to dive in.

I feel now as I felt then. While education is new to me, I could not be more excited to drink from the firehose and work for you. With the support of the board, the staff and an incredible membership, we will continue to do great work on your behalf. I look forward to meeting you all at our Annual Convention in October, and please don't hesitate to call or email in the meantime. I can be reached at *alexis.baxley@ndsba.org*, 800-932-8791, or in Bismarck at 255-4127.

## Department of Public Instruction and Agriculture Department to Promote North Dakota Foods

State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler said the Department of Public Instruction and the state Agriculture Department will team up this fall to encourage schools and child-care centers to serve more North Dakota-produced food.

At two "Put Our State on Your Plate" conferences last year, participants asked for marketing and technical help to promote locally produced food, Baesler said. Deb Egeland, DPI's assistant director for child nutrition, said the agency subsequently obtained a \$75,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to help in offering that aid.

Egeland said the grant will pay for special promotions and aprons for schools and child-care facilities, hiring a farmer and marketing partner for technical assistance, and providing smaller local grants to pay for Farm to School and Farm to Preschool activities.

Baesler and state Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring said DPI and the NDDA will be partners in encouraging North Dakota schools and child-care centers to serve locally grown and processed foods on September 28, which is Pride of Dakota School Lunch Day, and during North Dakota Farm to School Month in October.

Pride of Dakota is a NDDA program that promotes North Dakota products, services, and businesses.

"Farm to School programs show our young people the importance of North Dakota agriculture and emphasize its crucial role in producing food for the family table, the school cafeteria, and the child-care center," Baesler and Goehring said in a joint statement.

Students at schools with strong Farm to School programs tend to eat more school-prepared meals, waste less food, and are more willing to try locally grown fruits and vegetables, a 2015 USDA survey showed. The programs increase food purchases from farmers, ranchers, food processors, and manufacturers within the state, the survey said.

### Notice: NDSBA Northwest Director Opening

NDSBA is seeking candidates to fill the Northwest Director position on our board. We will be mailing application forms to all school board members in the northwest region (Bottineau, Burke, Divide, McHenry, Mountrail, Pierce, Renville, Rolette, Ward and Williams Counties) for the election held at our Annual Convention on October 26-27.

NDSBA also wishes to thank current NW Director Roger Johnson for his service. Roger was not reelected this spring, and will be stepping down from the NDSBA Board of Directors following the Annual Convention.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## ND School Business Manager Certification Program—New Session Begins

Eighteen students were in attendance for the kickoff of the ND School Business Manager Certification Program (NDSBMCP) summer classes held on July 13-14. The majority of the class was comprised of business managers with less than two years' experience. Courses included Business Manager Roles and Responsibilities, State Funding and Reporting Systems, Federal Funding and Reporting Systems, Introduction to School Finance, and Introduction to School Operations. Instructors were experts in their fields and brought practical information for students to use in their respective districts.

Students have five years to complete all the courses, but the majority of students complete the 61 required credits and graduate within two years. The 2017 district attendees were: Debbie Bucholz, Bowman County; Melissa Gauthier, Cavalier; Lenita Larson, Central Valley; Kent Anderson, Dickinson; Loree Prosser, Emerado; David Drapeaux, Fort Yates; Amy Betz, Garrison; Connie Marcellais, Glenburn; Tiffany Smith, Maddock;

Josephine Espino, Mandaree; Andrew Lehr, Napoleon; Darcy Lamoureux, Newburg United; Rachel Bopp, Northern Cass; Michele Grenier, Rolette; Dawn Hauck, Rugby; April Sondeland, Valley-Edinburg; Laura Dokken, Wahpeton; and Alyssa Conitz, Wishek.



Some of the feedback we've received from these students is, "I really enjoyed both days of classes" and "I found the classes to be very informative and helpful, as were your real-world examples of issues we may run into."



**2017 NDSBA Annual Convention**  
October 26-27, 2017  
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

**2018 NDSBA Annual Convention**  
October 25-26, 2018  
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

Thank you to all school districts that encourage and support participation of your business manager in this certification program. New NDSBMCP class registration will be offered again next spring. More information on the program can be found at <http://ndsbmcp.org/>.



### McClusky School District

Part-time Superintendent

Contact: Andrea Lauer

(701)-363-2470

Email: [Andrea.lauer@k12.nd.us](mailto:Andrea.lauer@k12.nd.us)

Deadline: August 11, 2017

To make position full-time, this opportunity can include any of the following teaching positions:

- Pre-school
- Physical Education/health: K-12
- Music: K-12
- Math: 7-12
- Para: K-12

Salary: based on background and experience