NDSBA Announces Annual Convention Keynote Speakers

Thursday Afternoon Keynote Speaker

Thursday’s opening session begins with Rocky Bleier, Vietnam Veteran and former Pittsburgh Steeler. Bleier’s story, a gripping tale of courage on both the football fields of America and the battle fields of Vietnam, has held audiences in rapt attention for years.

Before Bleier’s rookie season with the Steelers would end, he was drafted by the United States Army. At the height of the Vietnam War, Bleier was thrust into combat early and was seriously wounded when his platoon ran into an ambush. Receiving wounds from both rifle fire and grenade fragments in his legs, he was barely able to walk and his professional football career seemed to have ended before it began.

For more than two years, he drove himself. Little by little he overcame obstacles and fought his way back. He not only made it back to the Pittsburgh Steelers but also eventually became a starting running back on the team that won four Super Bowls and became the greatest football team of the 20th century. Bleier’s motivational message details how ordinary people can become extraordinary achievers.

Friday Morning Keynote Speaker

Dr. John Draper has enjoyed a wide variety of experiences in his lifetime. He has been a newspaper reporter, construction worker, jailor, actor, timber buyer, musician, small business owner, choir director, soccer coach, Sunday school teacher, and door-to-door aluminum siding salesman.

For the last 30-plus years he has been a middle and high school teacher, assistant principal, principal, Executive Director of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools, CEO of the Educational Research Service in Washington, D.C., and now serves as a nation-wide consultant with the National School Public Relations Association. NSPRA is a membership organization helping educational leaders increase public support for schools and school districts. Dr. Draper earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Montevallo in Alabama and his Doctorate from Samford University. He is most proud of his doctorate from the school of “hard knocks” earned as a middle school assistant principal in charge of discipline for 1400 students. He has done keynotes for hundreds of school districts and education associations across the nation. Dr. Draper’s presentation, “Crucial Conversations About America’s Public Schools,” takes a look at the urban myth of failing public schools and the crucial conversations required to build community support for public schools.

Friday Afternoon Keynote Speaker

Ed Massey is a Northern Kentucky native and lives in Boone County with his wife Anita and three daughters. Ed is a partner in the firm of Blankenship Massey & Associates, with two thriving offices in Erlanger, Kentucky, and Dry Ridge, Kentucky.

Convention Delegates Designation

Convention delegates and alternates must be clearly noted on the district’s registration form, which must be received in the NDSBA office no later than October 13 in order to vote at Delegate Assembly. Only those registered as alternates by this deadline will be allowed to substitute for a registered delegate.

Convention Rooms

If you have sleeping rooms reserved at the Ramkota Hotel for the 2017 NDSBA Annual Convention, you must give them a specific name for each reserved room by October 4 or the rooms will be released. Contact Ramkota reservations at (701)258-7700.
In addition to his legal practice, Ed has been involved in education since 1989, when he began substitute teaching in Covington Public Schools and Boone County Schools. In 1996, Ed was elected to the Boone County Board of Education where he continues his service today. In addition, Ed is a Past President of the Kentucky School Boards Association and the National School Boards Association as well as a director on the board of the National PTA. Currently, Ed serves as a director on the board of the New York Says Thank You Foundation.

In his spare time, Ed serves as a deacon in the Hebron Baptist Church and is an avid NASCAR fan. He follows his driver, Tony Stewart (#14), each week. Ed’s experiences as a teacher, parent, board member and lawyer have provided incredible insight into adaptive leadership, effective boardmanship, and teamwork.

NDSBA Hires New In-House Legal Counsel

Amy De Kok

NDSBA is excited to announce that we have hired Amy De Kok as our new in-house legal counsel. Amy will join us full-time on September 18. Those of you attending the School Law Seminar on Thursday, October 26, will have an opportunity to meet Amy.

Prior to joining NDSBA, Amy was an attorney and shareholder with the law firm of Fredrikson & Byron, P.A., a position she has held since 2010. Over the past several years, Amy’s practice has focused on representing and advising school districts throughout the state of North Dakota on a wide variety of issues, including employment issues, teacher termination/discharge, contract negotiations, school board policy interpretation and application, school facility construction and improvement, and bond referendum procedures. In addition, a large part of Amy’s current practice involves representing business clients in complex commercial litigation matters, with an emphasis on contract disputes, employment law matters, and property law matters. Prior to joining Fredrikson, Amy practiced at a commercial litigation law firm in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Amy earned her bachelor’s degree from North Dakota State University where she graduated with highest distinction. In 2005, she earned her juris doctor degree from William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota.

North Dakota ESSA Update

by State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler

North Dakota is one of 16 states that have already submitted plans for implementing the federal Every Student Succeeds Act to the U.S. Department of Education. It is the product of months of hard work from our ESSA planning committee, which is made up of teachers, school administrators, parents, and representatives of education stakeholder groups.

Our committee last met on August 14 to discuss our response to the U.S. Department of Education’s review of our plan. We were pleased that the department is recognizing the primary role of local school boards and states in crafting these plans. The department requested more elaboration and detail on some points, which we will be glad to provide.

Because we took the initiative in submitting our plan early, we expect to have a fully approved ESSA plan by mid-September, only a few weeks after most of our North Dakota schools have begun the 2017-18 school year. Most states are not submitting their plans until September, and they may not have final approval until the school year is almost completed.

I want to emphasize that our plan is a living document. We have set up nine subcommittees to review its implementation and suggest improvements.

We look forward to continuing our good working relationship with the Department of Education as this process goes forward. All of us are keeping in mind that its purpose is to improve the education of our students and to make our education system more accountable to the students, parents, and taxpayers that it serves.
Governor Burgum to Seek Innovative Education Task Force Members

The inaugural Governor’s Summit on Innovative Education held at Legacy High School in Bismarck in June brought together more than 400 participants to help shape the future of education in North Dakota. The Summit featured innovative education practices and ideas shared by national and local presenters.

“With technology changing every job, every industry and every organization, we have the opportunity to transform education to help students succeed in the 21st century economy,” said Governor Burgum. He added that North Dakota is in a unique position to reimagine our education system given strong support by the legislative and executive branches and Department of Public Instruction leadership on SB 2186, the “Innovative Education” law. The new law empowers parents, teachers, and administrators to build an educational experience that promotes project-based learning, job shadowing, internships, flexible scheduling, and similar practices based on each district’s unique needs and circumstances.

At the conclusion of the summit, the Governor pledged the creation of an innovative education task force to provide an opportunity for stakeholders from across the state to reimagine education to meet the rapidly changing needs of the 21st century economy.

A formal application will soon be circulated and interested individuals are strongly encouraged to apply.

Note from NDSBA: NDSBA will notify our members once the application is available. We anticipate it will be ready by mid-September at the latest. We hope school board members will consider applying.

North Dakota School Counselor Association Seeks Nominations

The North Dakota School Counselor Association is seeking nominations for the NDSCA Outstanding Counselor Award, which will be presented in February at the association’s Midwinter Conference.

Nominees must be current members of NDSCA, a school counselor who spends at least half-time engaged in counseling activities in a North Dakota school, has a minimum of five years of counseling experience, and holds a current ND Professional Guidance Credential.

Nominations may be made by any school or community member and are due by January 5, 2018. Nominations can be made online at http://ndsca.schoolcounselorawards.org.

Welcome New Board Members!

Congratulations to all newly elected school board members and welcome to your first issue of NDSBA’s Bulletin!

As new school board members you will be exposed to many issues and concerns that may or may not be district related, but the board must remain focused on the common goal of promoting student achievement. If you as a board prioritize issues based on the impact they will have on achievement in your district, you will find they can be addressed with greater objectivity and fewer problems.

Again, congratulations and welcome aboard!

NDSBA Service Award Program

NDSBA recognizes board members for their professional development, service, and participation. Awards are made in two categories based on a point system: Veteran Board Members (100 points) and Master Board Members (200 points). Members who have participated in National School Boards Association events receive their award “with distinction.” Awards are presented at NDSBA’s Annual Convention.

Business managers should maintain scoring forms for board members and update them each year. Business managers should send a copy to NDSBA when 100 and 200 points have been earned. Forms are available at www.ndsba.org under the “services” link. Also available on the webpage is a spreadsheet that may be useful to record board members’ yearly activities. Some service activity or participation areas may not be listed on the form. If you have a board member who participates in something that is not listed or you have other questions about point categories, please call the NDSBA office.

A copy of the qualifying board member’s form must be received by NDSBA no later than Friday, September 15.
Students Report on Bullying, 2014 vs. 2005:

- 43 percent witnessed bullying, down from 66 percent
- 7 percent say they perpetuated bullying, down from 21 percent
- 5 percent were hit, kicked, or slapped, down from 22 percent
- 7 percent were threatened, down from 19 percent
- 9 percent were the subject of rumors, down from 34 percent

As reported in American School Board Journal, August 2017, via Pediatrics, June 2017