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NDSBA
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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NSBA Releases Report Addressing LifeReady Skills for Students

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) recently released *A Report of the Commission to Close the Skills Gap*, a joint initiative with more than ten leading industry groups. NSBA announced the report at its Annual Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to an audience of more than 5,000 school board members from across the country. The report is available at <http://nsba.org/LifeReady>.

The report identifies six "LifeReady Skills" and features recommendations to help school districts ensure that students have every opportunity to learn these important skills. The NSBA Commission to Close the Skills Gap believes that high school graduates who have these LifeReady skills will be better prepared for or have the tools to succeed in college, career, and life.

The LifeReady Skills highlighted in the report include:

- Dependability and reliability
- Critical thinking
- Customer focus
- Teamwork

For the first time in decades there are far more jobs that exist across the nation than interested or qualified workers to fill them. As of January 2019, the number of job openings reached a high of 7.3 million, and that number is expected to double in the next five years. Entry and mid-level positions that need a high school diploma, yet do not require a college degree, have the largest number of vacancies.

NSBA convened the leadership of major business trade and membership organizations to form the NSBA Commission to Close the Skills Gap and highlight this growing issue, which has created a workforce crisis.

"As the leading advocate for public education, this issue is of serious

concern to NSBA and school board members across the country," said NSBA Executive Director & CEO Thomas J. Gentzel. "School board members are in a unique position to take action. The business and trade association members on the commission are committed to working with us to ensure that all students can graduate with the skills they need to succeed no matter what life choices they make."

Industry members on the Commission include the American Health Information Management Association, American Hotel & Lodging Association, American Public Transportation Association, Center for Energy Workforce Development, Manufacturing Institute, National Restaurant Association, National Retail Federation, Society for Human Resource Management, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

North Dakota Board Members Attend National Conference



Holly Stromsodt, NDSBA and Finley-Sharon Board President (center) participates in the State Presidents' Walk at the NSBA National Conference.

A number of school board members from North Dakota, NDSBA board members, and NDSBA staff attended the National School Boards Association Annual Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on March 29-April 2. Attendees had the opportunity to attend more than 250 education programs and hear from keynote speakers Sir Ken Robinson, Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., and Michele Gay.

NDSBA President Holly Stromsodt, NDSBA Past President Jim Johnson, and NDSBA Executive Director Alexis Baxley also had the opportunity to participate in the NSBA Delegate Assembly. Board

Continued on page 3

2019 Annual Convention – Request for Clinic Topics



The 2019 Annual Convention Clinic Session proposal form is available online at www.ndsba.org (under Quick Clicks) to submit suggestions for a convention clinic session and/or presenter. The deadline for session proposals is **May 1, 2019**. For additional information, contact Alexis at alexis@ndsba.org.



Legal Spotlight

When is a Committee Meeting a Meeting?

by Amy De Kok, NDSBA Legal Counsel

One of the most common questions I get from school

board members, administrators, and business managers is: "Do we have to notice our committee meetings?" School boards seem to struggle with this issue quite often as it relates to board committees. This topic is particularly timely as it is negotiations season, which means board negotiations committees are frequently meeting with teacher representatives. Before addressing this issue, it is important to note the public policy behind the open meeting requirements.

Generally, all meetings of a public or governmental body, board, bureau, commission, or agency of the state or any political subdivision of the state must be open to the public. All requirements regarding open meetings must be viewed from this standpoint. When the office of the Attorney General is considering whether a violation has occurred, it will generally construe the requirements in favor of public accessibility. Keeping this public policy in mind when thinking about these issues helps boards better understand the purpose of the requirements and when/how they apply in a given circumstance. In addition, the public's right to observe and monitor the

performance of governmental functions through attendance at public meetings applies to all stages of the decision-making process--from gathering information, to deliberating, to making a final decision. A gathering of a quorum of the members of a governing body of a public entity to discuss or receive information regarding the business of the public entity is a "meeting," even if the members merely listen and do not interact or participate in the discussion and even if no decision is being made.

The open meetings law defines "governing body" to include "any group of persons, regardless of membership, acting collectively pursuant to authority delegated to that group by the governing body." The delegation can be any group of people, including people who are not members of the original governing body, and no formal motion is needed, as long as it is apparent that it is the collective decision of the governing body to delegate any part of its public business to two or more people. Therefore, any committee created by a school board also must adhere to the open meetings requirements, including notice to and access by the public. The board may create the committee for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, representing the board at negotiations, planning for facility improvements or construction, information gathering, or hiring of staff.

Any time a quorum of the committee gets together to discuss whatever public business has been delegated to it, a meeting occurs under the open meeting laws and triggers the requirements to notice its meetings, allow public access to the meeting, and prepare minutes. It is important to note that it is not required that the group be authorized to take final action on an item of public business. Rather, the group need only be authorized by the governing body to take some action, including information gathering or holding discussions, for the group to be a "governing body" by delegation. Indeed, NDSBA typically recommends that a board not authorize a board committee to take final action but only to make recommendations to the full board for final action by the board. Again, any doubt whether a committee or other group is subject to the open meetings law should be resolved in favor of opening meetings of the group to the public.

Please feel free to contact NDSBA with any questions regarding open meetings requirements.

North Dakota Offering Biliteracy Seal

North Dakota students who can speak at least two languages are now eligible for a new seal on their high school diploma called the "Seal of Biliteracy." North Dakota recently qualified to offer the seal on the diplomas of this year's graduating high school seniors.

State School Superintendent Kirsten Baesler says school districts can apply for seals of biliteracy on behalf of students who want to have the seal. Applications are available at www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/1618.201819NDSBApp.pdf. Students may demonstrate the required fluency by taking a language exam.

The Seal of Biliteracy offers separate silver and gold seals, with the gold seal demonstrating stronger language skills.

Fluency in English and a second language is needed to qualify for a Seal of Biliteracy. Students who learn English as a second language also qualify. Speakers of Native American tribal languages and students who are skilled at American Sign Language can qualify. Students may earn additional seals for each additional language that they master.

"Developing language proficiency and cultural competency strengthens our students' ability to be productive in this global world," Baesler said. "North Dakota's adoption of the Seal of Biliteracy sets a standard of the value in learning world languages, as well as maintaining native and heritage languages and cultures in our schools, homes, and communities."

In addition to having a seal on their diploma, students who receive a Seal of Biliteracy also have the honor noted on their high school transcript. North Dakota is the 36th state to adopt a Seal of Biliteracy.

Hot Topics in HR

Dickinson – June 17, 9:30-3 p.m. MT
Bismarck – June 18, 9:30-3 p.m. CT
Fargo – June 19, 9:30-3 p.m. CT

The HR Collaborative is offering three regional training sessions in June. See their website for the tentative agenda. The ND Insurance Reserve Fund (NDIRF) is sponsoring a discount for first-time attendees to an HR Collaborative Session. If you are attending one of our trainings for the first time, you can attend at half the cost! Go to www.hrndgov.org to register today!

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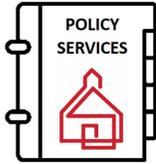
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Policy Updates

Policy Guides District Governance

by Rebecca Duben, Policy Services Director



Setting board policies is a primary job of school boards. Policies provide guidelines and principals for the district to chart a course of action by

furnishing guidance, structure, and vision. Policy is the voice of the school board that carries echoes of past board decision-making but also provides guideposts for the future. Without policies, the operations of a district would be inconsistent and inefficient.

As a starting point, a school board must have a policy that outlines the process of policy adoption. There are significant factors to consider when developing and revising policy. The board should adopt a policy detailing the processes to ensure achievement of this task. AdvancED recommends NDSBA's policy template **BDA, Procedure for Adopting Board Policy** that assists the board to approach policymaking in a concise and consistent way. NDSBA Policy Services offers this policy template to its district members to assist in this key board responsibility.

By consistently using a defined approach to policy adoption and by asking the right questions, a board can see beyond immediate circumstances and formulate sound policy on the basis of agreed-upon criteria. Certain questions

should be asked when considering policy adoption:

- Does this policy support the mission and goals of the district?
- Does this policy advance the educational interests of the district and its students?
- Is this policy required to be in compliance with state or federal law, or are there recent changes in education that have prompted this policy?
- Will there be a cost, in human and fiscal terms, to implement the policy now and in the future?
- What steps must be taken, and who is responsible for implementation and enforcement of this policy?
- How can a board evaluate the effectiveness of the policy?
- Is the policy understandable and clear?
- Is this policy related to other board policies?

Boards should continuously monitor and evaluate policy effectiveness to gauge the district's progress toward its goals and to ensure compliance with law. Policies also need to be communicated, understood, and followed to be of any value.

There are state and federal laws that dictate boards annually review and disseminate specific policies to staff, students, and parents. All of this can

be an overwhelming task; however, the board is not alone in this process. Superintendents are responsible for helping the board evaluate its policies in relation to the district's programs and operations. They should alert the board to changing circumstances such as recent issues, adjustments to programs or functions, or new legislation that would affect the district. NDSBA has created a chart of all our policy templates that lists the obligations for district employees. This chart is available to our Policy Services members on the Policy Services website, and can be found in the January 2019 *Policy Ponderings* under Resources.

Policymaking takes time, patience, and careful consideration from all those involved, but it is crucial for healthy board operations. By having a well-prepared set of written policies, your board will be able to clarify school operations, provide direction to staff, and establish controls and efficiencies for the district.

NDSBA Policy Services is here to assist you during the process with step-by-step guides and videos on policy adoption, parliamentary motions, samples of policies, and our knowledgeable staff to answer any questions you may have. We encourage you to contact our office at 1-800-932-8791 or via email at rebecca.duben@ndsba.org.

Business Manager Certification Program Accepting Applications



The North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program is now accepting applications for new students to begin courses this summer. Application forms are available online at <http://ndsbmcp.org/index.php/handbooks-and-forms/> and will be accepted until **June 1, 2019**. For more information on the program, including cost of tuition, prospective students may download a program brochure at <http://ndsbmcp.org/index.php/handbooks-and-forms/>. Please contact rebecca.duben@ndsba.org regarding the program.

Book Rooms for 2020 NDSBA Convention

NDSBA's 2020 Annual Convention will begin on Thursday, October 29, with the Law Seminar and New Member Seminar. Regular convention activities will begin that afternoon and conclude on Friday afternoon, October 30.

The Ramkota began taking room reservations for the 2020 Annual Convention on January 1, 2019. Call the Ramkota at 701-258-7700 for room reservations. Secure your room early.

Legislative Updates



The 2019 Legislative Session will wrap up in the next couple of weeks. Be sure to watch your email and the *May Bulletin* for our legislative wrap-up.

Members Attend National Conference

Continued from page 1

members from across the country debated and adopted beliefs and resolutions to guide NSBA for the coming year. Additionally, Beth Branham, South Carolina, was officially named as NSBA president for the coming year.

Board members from the following districts attended this year's conference: Belcourt, Beulah, Bismarck, Dickinson, Fargo, Garrison, Grand Forks, Hankinson, Jamestown, Kenmare, Mandan, Mandaree, New Town, Oakes, Parshall, West Fargo, White Shield, and Wilton.

If your board is interested in attending next year's NSBA Annual Conference, please mark your calendars for April 4-6, 2020, in Chicago, Illinois. Please contact NDSBA at 800.932.8791 or 701.255.4127 if you have any questions about the NSBA Annual Conference.



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NEW LOCATION! **2020 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar**



NDSBA's 2020 Negotiations Seminar will be held at the **BSC National Energy Center of Excellence** on the

Bismarck State College Campus.

NDSBA room blocks are available at these nearby hotels:

Hampton Inn & Suites*

2020 Schafer Street
\$109/night
(701)751-5656

Home2 Suites*

1122 West Turnpike Avenue
\$109/night
(701)752-3400

Links to NDSBA room blocks at these hotels can be accessed from our Negotiations Seminar webpage at www.ndsba.org/index.php/negotiations-seminar/

*Be sure to **request rooms in the NDSBA block** if you call for reservations.



2019 NDSBA Annual Convention

October 24-25, 2019
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck

2020 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar

February 6-7, 2020
BSC National Energy Center of Excellence, Bismarck

2020 NDSBA Annual Convention

October 29-30, 2020
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck



Glenburn School District

Contact: Alexis Baxley
Phone: 701-255-4127
Email: alexis.baxley@ndsba.org
Application: www.ndsba.org
Deadline: May 1, 2019
Position Begins: July 1, 2019

NDSBA includes member school superintendent vacancies in The Bulletin upon request. Email your vacancy information to alexis.baxley@ndsba.org.