



Business Managers Honored at Completion Ceremony

On Friday, May 10, 2019, sixteen North Dakota school business managers were honored at the North Dakota Heritage Center for completing or being recertified in the North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program. Five of the ten new business manager graduates received the mastery designation – the program’s highest distinction. School board members and superintendents joined family members and friends in celebrating this significant professional accomplishment. Guest speakers included NDSBA President Holly Stromsodt, Bismarck Public Schools Business and Operations Manager and NDSBMCP instructor Darin Scherr, and Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler.

Established in 2013, the North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program provides business managers with practical education and training to help them successfully perform their duties and meet statutory and regulatory responsibilities. The program, which is offered over a period of two years, requires on-site and electronic participation. Courses are taught by superintendents, business managers,



ND School Business Manager Certification Program students and NDSBA staff: front row, left to right, Debbie Bucholz, Bowman County; Michele Grenier, Rolette; Darcy Lamoureux, Newburg United; Amy Betz, Garrison; Rebecca Duben, NDSBA. Back row, left to right, Patty VerDouw, NDSBA; Darin Scherr, Bismarck; Laura Dokken, Wahpeton; Wanda Kirsch, Elgin-New Leipzig; Dawn Hauck, Rugby.

school district personnel, and state officials with expertise in specific areas.

The certification program is administered by NDSBA in conjunction

with the North Dakota Association of School Business Managers.

NSBA Launches Center for Safe Schools

The National School Boards Association announced the launch of the NSBA Center for Safe Schools (CSS), a new initiative that provides critical resources to help education leaders, administrators, and the public enhance student and school safety. CSS focuses on four key areas — infrastructure, crisis and emergency management, whole child health, and cyber security — to create and maintain safe and secure learning environments for students, staff, and surrounding communities. CSS can be accessed at www.nsba4safeschools.org or by visiting www.ndsba.org and clicking the LINKS tab.

“Safety is a top priority for public education leaders and communities and the Center is a resource for them as they continue working to provide a

secure learning environment. The Center works with all involved in educating and empowering these stakeholders on the variety of factors that impact school safety,” said NSBA Executive Director and CEO Thomas J. Gentzel. “Empowering these stakeholders on the variety of factors that impact school safety requires extensive collaboration, and CSS is an excellent platform to engage everyone in the shared objective to ensure every child’s emotional and physical safety at school.”

A nonpartisan, national platform, the Center is the culmination of planning with member state school boards associations. CSS will collaborate with national, state, and local non-profit organizations in education to support CSS by providing insightful content and

resources on school safety and offer a forum for all school leaders involved in safety, including school board members, superintendents, school resource officers, school counselors, teachers, principals, community partners, and business representatives. Through networking and sharing best practices, CSS will serve as a needed resource to foster collaborative relationships and develop solutions best suited for the schools in the community.

The public may access CSS and its resource library, which include webinars and white papers. Additional services are provided to NSBA’s state associations as a member benefit and on a subscription basis to district employees, law enforcement, parents, and communities.



Legal Spotlight

A Refresher on Confidentiality Requirements of NDCC 44-04-18.27

by Amy De Kok, NDSBA Legal Counsel

During the 2017 session, the North Dakota Legislature added a new provision to Chapter 44-04 of the Century Code relating to open records and open meeting requirements. NDCC section 44-04-18.27 requires a public entity that receives applications from three or more qualified candidates for a vacant position to keep confidential the identities of the candidates and all associated records during the hire process. NDSBA issued guidance on the new requirements shortly after the 2017 session; however, the practical implications of the requirements have caused confusion for our member districts and a refresher seems appropriate.

The requirements of section 44-04-18.27 apply to any vacant position for which the public entity receives applications from at least three or more qualified candidates. Therefore, it not only applies to a superintendent and other contract positions but also to classified positions such as a cook or custodian. As long as the district receives applications from three or more qualified candidates, the requirements

set forth in the section apply. If the district only receives applications from two or fewer qualified candidates, then the confidentiality requirements do not apply and the process and related information is open unless confidential or exempt under other applicable law. Whether a candidate is qualified will depend on the position and circumstances. If a candidate is not qualified for the position, then the individual is not counted for purposes of compliance with section 44-04-18.27.

If a district receives applications from three or more qualified candidates for an open position, section 44-04-18.27 requires the district to keep the identity of the candidates and associated records confidential until the district designates three or more finalists for the position. Further, the statute requires the district to designate and further consider finalists before the district may issue an offer to fill the position. With respect to certified/contract employees, it is recommended that the board take formal action at a public meeting to designate candidates. As for classified staff, it is typical for a board to delegate hiring authority to the superintendent. It is recommended that the superintendent document in writing the designation of finalists for purposes of compliance with section 44-04-18.27 before further considering the finalists for the position. Once finalists are designated, the district is required to further consider the finalists before issuing an offer to fill the position. The statute does not specifically define what "further consideration" means; however, it could mean interviews, further discussion, further gathering of information, or simply additional review of the finalists'

application materials. If the district does not wish to consider any of the applications further or make an offer of employment for the vacant position, the district is not required to designate finalists and can end the process at that point.

Because there is an obligation to keep the identities of all applicants confidential until finalists are designated, the statute provides that the public entity or its designee are required to comply with all requirements for executive session to discuss confidential applications. In other words, to the extent the board wishes to discuss the applicants or any application materials at a board meeting, the board is required to go into executive session. Again, once finalists are designated, the process becomes open and there would be no basis to go into executive session unless otherwise provided by law. However, the identities of applicants not designated as finalists, as well as all related application materials, remain confidential as long as the district is in possession of the information.

Not only is the district obligated to prevent disclosure of confidential information to members of the public, the district is likely obligated to prevent disclosure of such information to other staff who do not need to know the information in fulfillment of their job duties. The school district business manager is the holder of all district records and should ensure that measures are put in place to avoid the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information. Please feel free to contact NDSBA for further guidance on compliance with section 44-04-18.27.

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NDSBA DUES STATEMENTS have been sent to district business managers. School districts in North Dakota have long benefited from the support, training, information, and legislative advocacy provided by the North Dakota School Boards Association. When public school boards join together, they make a difference in their own effectiveness and overall support for public education.

POLICY SERVICES RENEWAL INVOICES, along with an explanation of the different types of services available, will be mailed to each district's Policy Services contact at the end of June. Your Policy Services membership will ensure that you have the latest policy updates.

Keep your school district up to date by submitting payments promptly.

Early Career Awareness: A Key to Developing LifeReady Skills

By Jinghong Cai, NSBA Research Analyst

According to economist Paul Krugman, the belief that America suffers from a severe skills gap is “one of those things that everyone important knows must be true” despite his claim that “multiple careful studies have found no support for claims that inadequate worker skills explain high unemployment.” He calls this a “zombie idea — an idea that should have been killed by evidence but refuses to die.” But Kruger’s perspective is that of an economist rather than a business owner, and the issue will not die if schools do not teach students critical skills for life and career. According to the National School Boards Association (NSBA), every student should master six critical “LifeReady Skills” in preparation for the larger goal of success in life, including employment and education after K-12.

What are LifeReady Skills?

A Report of the Commission to Close the Skills Gap, a joint initiative with more than ten leading industry groups, identifies six “LifeReady Skills” as a set of critical skills that are essential for the success of students in most of their life’s endeavors. LifeReady skills include dependability, adaptability, critical thinking, decision making, customer focus, and teamwork. In other words, to get students ready for life, schools need to foster personal skills, applied knowledge skills, workplace skills, and people skills.

Can Early Career Awareness Foster LifeReady Skills?

Students often chose to go to college after high school because their parents told them so from a very young age. Statistics from the U.S. Department of Education show that the vast majority of American parents expect their children to earn at least a bachelor’s degree. “Parents see college as the launching pad for their children’s career success,” according to a national

survey conducted by American Student Assistance. However, when parents were asked why they expected their children to go to college, many said that they wanted their children to gain skills needed for future employment and good paying jobs.

As can be readily seen, LifeReady skills are not specific occupational skills but skills that equip students with great potential to succeed in college, career, and every endeavor of life. Career counseling experts, such as Dr. Julie Cerrito from the University of Scranton, suggest that childhood is a critical stage in the process of lifelong career development. America’s Career Resource Network recommends many career awareness activities for students—both at home and in school.

Evidence shows that:

- During elementary school, children develop an awareness of the world around them and who they are in relation to others. By sharing what they are good at, what they enjoy doing, and — more often than not — what they want to be when they grow up, students develop **decision making** and **teamwork skills**.

- When school districts transform the elementary classrooms by linking science projects to real life careers, students develop **critical thinking skills** by looking at the world through a problem-solving and innovative lens.

- Schools can work with parents to develop students’ **personal skills** through routine career awareness activities, such as asking parents to:

- Take their children to school on time and teach them the importance of punctuality.
- Involve their children in real-world examples of **decision making** and talk to them about how their decisions impact other people.

How Can School Leaders Foster

LifeReady Skills Through Enhancing Early Career Awareness?

NSBA and its partners encourage school districts to design and develop programs to enhance students’ career awareness. The Report of the Commission to Close the Skills Gap recommends school leaders “institute a campaign to promote middle-class, highly-skilled jobs and change the perception that the only good jobs are those that require a college education” as early as elementary school. How can schools change this perception and introduce all life-path opportunities to students?

Early career awareness can start from talking and programming:

- Talk with children, with parents, and with teachers. It is important for children to become aware of how their schooling is connected to a successful future. While in elementary school, parents and schools can help children to connect what they are learning in school to real-world situations and develop work-readiness skills such as **working and playing with others, making decisions, solving problems, and being a leader**.

- Program career awareness through technology, educators’ professional development, and partnerships with local community. Web-based career planning systems (e.g., Galaxy) can be a novel, fun, and educational approach for elementary school students to explore their future careers, according to Dr. Julie Cerrito. For educators, professional development enables them to transform the classroom experience and bring real-life, career-related projects to their students.

This article was originally published at www.nsba.org/News/2019/Early-Career-Awareness. NSBA’s LifeReady report can be found at <http://nsba.org/LifeReady>.

DPI & NDSBA to Host Board Member Boot Camp



The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and NDSBA will again be partnering to host Board Member Boot Camp on **July 22, 2019**.

The event will be held in the Brynhild Haugland Room at the State Capitol in Bismarck and is for new or veteran board members. There is no cost to

register, and you can do so at www.surveymonkey.com/r/LHLS5MC.

This training does not meet the requirements for new board member training required by law, but board members who attend this event qualify for points toward their NDSBA Board Member Service Awards. Topics to be covered include setting goals for your district, graduating students choice

ready, student and family engagement, the K-12 funding formula and school construction, the state-required three- and five-year plan, and the ND K-12 Strategic Vision.

Please contact Laurie Matzke at 701-328-2284 if you have any questions regarding registration.



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Board Member Boot Camp

Hosted by NDDPI and NDSBA
July 22, 2019
State Capitol, Bismarck

ND Rural School Summit

Hosted by NDDPI and NDSOS
September 25, 2019
State Capitol, Bismarck

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