

# bulletin



SEPTEMBER 2024 *Excellence in North Dakota public education through local school board governance* VOL XLIX ISSUE 9

## The Danger of Eliminating Property Taxes - Keep It Local Strengthens Efforts

On August 2nd, the Secretary of State confirmed the validity of signatures for the measure to eliminate property taxes in North Dakota, establishing Measure 4 on the November ballot. Keep It Local, a coalition representing diverse organizations across North Dakota, opposes the measure and is intensifying its efforts to preserve essential local services and safeguard local control against the ballot measure.

With no plan indicated for how the funds will be replaced, the vital role property taxes play in funding essential services such as schools, public safety, infrastructure, and community services is in jeopardy. "North Dakota faces a critical decision that will shape the future of our local communities," said Keep It Local chair Chad Oban. "The measure to eliminate property tax threatens our ability to fund essential services locally, tasks our state legislature with covering a funding gap of approximately \$1.3 billion per year, and jeopardizes the quality of life we cherish in our neighborhoods and towns."

While it might seem appealing to homeowners, the potential consequences for local control and public schools are significant. Property taxes provide a stable and predictable revenue stream for essential services like education, public safety, infrastructure, and libraries. By tying taxation directly to property values, local governments are empowered to make decisions based on the specific needs and priorities of their residents.

Eliminating this funding source would shift the burden of funding K-12 public education to the state level. The State would have to decide how to allocate limited resources across communities with diverse needs. This could lead to a one-size-fits-all approach that doesn't adequately address the unique challenges faced by individual communities.

Property taxes are a major source of funding for school districts, and without this reliable revenue, schools would face severe budget cuts, potentially leading to:

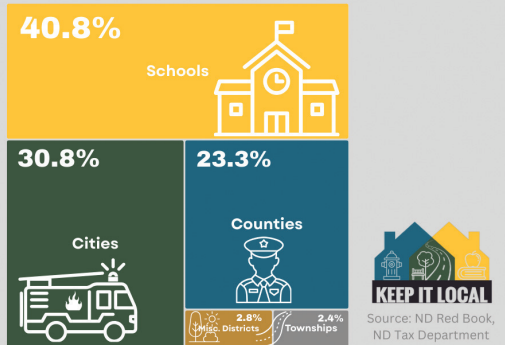
- *Reduced Educational Opportunities:* Cuts in funding could result in larger class sizes, fewer specialized programs, and reductions in vital school resources.
- *Teacher Layoffs:* Budget shortfalls could force school districts to lay off teachers, leading to overcrowded classrooms and a decline in the quality of education.
- *Deteriorating School Facilities:* Deferred maintenance and repairs would become more common, creating unsafe and unhealthy learning environments.
- *Increased Reliance on State Funding Formulas:* Eliminating local control over school funding could leave districts vulnerable to fluctuations in state support.

## Welcome!

NDSBA would like to welcome all the newly elected school board members who have been seated. Your board service will be challenging but rewarding. NDSBA is here to serve you as you serve the learners of your district. Be on the lookout for your new member packet and mark your calendars for the Learning to Lead (New Member) Workshop, previously New Member Seminar, on October 24!

### WHERE YOUR PROPERTY TAXES GO

Taxes Levied in 2021 - Payable in 2022

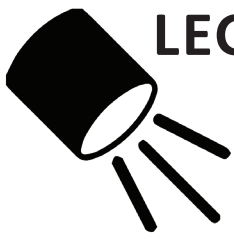


Local governments would struggle to maintain essential services like police and fire protection, road maintenance and public parks. This could lead to a decline in the overall quality of life for residents and a less attractive environment for businesses and families.

As the November General Election approaches, NDSBA encourages members to stay informed about the issues at stake and to engage in discussions about the future of local governance and fiscal responsibility. The Keep It Local coalition has gained significant support from a wide array of organizations and citizens across the state. Currently, the coalition has 89 members and continues to grow. NDSBA is one of these members, also serving as a steering committee member.

To receive updates directly from the campaign, visit [www.keepitlocalnd.org](http://www.keepitlocalnd.org) and provide the coalition with your contact information, or follow the coalition on Facebook [keepitlocalnorthdakota], Twitter [keepitlocalnd] and LinkedIn [Keep it Local ND].

If you are interested in assisting the coalition directly, it is in need of Letters to the Editor, faces and voices to join interviews and panels, distributors of brochures, and yards to position signs in. In the coming weeks, NDSBA will be sending emails, posting on social media and updating its website with information. Questions can be directed to [amy.dekok@ndsba.org](mailto:amy.dekok@ndsba.org) or [taylor.lassiter@ndsba.org](mailto:taylor.lassiter@ndsba.org).



# LEGAL SPOTLIGHT

## North Dakota's Corrupt Practices Law and How It Impacts School Districts

By Lexie Bergstrom, NDSBA Staff Attorney

North Dakota's Corrupt Practices Law, codified under NDCC chapter 16.1-10, plays a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of political processes within the state. This law is designed to prevent corruption in elections and political activities. It establishes broad implications, including its application to school districts, which are often caught in the crosshairs of political campaigns and advocacy efforts.

### Overview of NDCC Chapter 16.1-10

The Corrupt Practices Law prohibits various forms of misconduct in relation to elections and political activities. This includes but is not limited to, bribery, undue influence, and the misuse of public funds for political purposes. The law aims to ensure all candidates and political entities operate on a level playing field, free from coercion and improper financial influence.

Specifically, the statute makes it unlawful for any person or organization to promise or offer anything of value to a voter in exchange for their vote or to use public funds to support or oppose

a candidate, ballot measure or political party.

### Application to School Districts

School districts in North Dakota, like other governmental entities, are subject to the provisions of NDCC chapter 16.1-10. It impacts how school districts and their employees can engage in political activities, particularly during election seasons.

Under the law, school districts are prohibited from using public funds or resources to influence the outcome of an election. This includes using district facilities, funds or communications channels to support or oppose any candidate or ballot measure. For example, a school board cannot allocate district money to produce and distribute materials advocating for or against a particular candidate or policy referendum. Similarly, school employees are restricted from engaging in political campaigning during work hours or using district resources for such activities.

This legal framework ensures school districts remain on neutral grounds

during elections, where public funds are not used to sway voters. Violations of this statute can lead to significant consequences, ranging from fines and imprisonment to disqualification from holding any public office in the future. Additionally, any decisions made under corrupt circumstances can be invalidated, leading to further legal and administrative complications.

### Conclusion

As statewide elections approach, school districts should keep in mind the importance of adhering to these regulations. Remember, while districts can provide factual information about the impacts of a proposed ballot measure, they must be careful not to cross the line into urging voters to support or reject the measure. NDSBA has a template policy regarding political activities and school districts (ABBDA), ensuring compliance with NDCC chapter 16.1-10.

As always, please feel free to contact NDSBA for additional information regarding this topic.

## Annual Convention Registration – Now Open!

Registration for the 2024 NDSBA Annual Convention is **NOW OPEN!** Registration is available online only at [ndsba.org](https://ndsba.org). Each district should have their registration completed by the business manager. Please remember that early bird registration rates are only available until October 11!



## State Law Requires New Board Members to Attend Workshop

North Dakota Century Code § 15.1-09-32 requires new school board members to attend an in-service training workshop hosted by the North Dakota School Boards Association or its designee within one year of assuming office. NDSBA will host the Learning to Lead (New Member) Workshop for new school board members on October 24. Topics will include the roles and responsibilities of a school board member, board ethics, and school finance. A panel of experienced school board members will also present their experiences.

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# Convention Reminders

## Convention Delegate Designation

Convention delegates and alternates must be registered. Registration must be completed

**by October 11** to vote at Delegate Assembly. Only those registered as alternates **BY THIS DEADLINE** will be allowed to substitute for a registered delegate. Each district's delegate count can be found at [ndsba.org/ndsba-events/annual-convention](https://ndsba.org/ndsba-events/annual-convention).



## Committees

NDSBA is still looking for board members to serve as convention committee members. Please fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/UaLaHb7e7HKcDmLv7> as soon as possible if you are willing to serve on the Credentials, Ballot Counting, and Legislative committees.

## 2024 NDSBA Board Member Service Awards

A copy of a qualifying board member's points form must be received in the NDSBA office by Friday, September 20, for board members to be recognized at the 2024 Annual Convention. Forms are available under "Resources" on the NDSBA website. Also available on the webpage is a spreadsheet that may be useful to record board members' yearly activities.

When 100 or 200 points have accumulated, the form should be submitted to NDSBA, 1224 West Owens Avenue, Bismarck, ND, 58501 or by email to [taylor.lassiter@ndsba.org](mailto:taylor.lassiter@ndsba.org).

## 2024 NDSBA Legacy of Service Award

A qualifying board member's nomination form must be completed by Friday, September 20, for board members to be recognized at the 2024 Annual Convention. Forms are available under "Resources" on the NDSBA website. Also available on the webpage is the summary, qualification details and nomination procedures.

## Barb Norby Scholarship Nominations

If you would like to nominate a board member for this award, please email a short paragraph describing why your nominee is deserving to Amy De Kok at [amy.dekok@ndsba.org](mailto:amy.dekok@ndsba.org) by Friday, September 27. The scholarship recipient will receive the following year's registration and an expense allowance for the Consortium of State School Boards Associations' Annual Conference.

## Convention Rooms

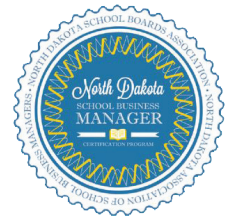
If you have sleeping rooms reserved at a Bismarck hotel for the 2024 NDSBA Annual Convention, please remember to call your hotel and list a specific name for each reserved room by October 4 or the rooms will be released. For the 2024 and 2025 hotel room rate sheet, go to the Annual Convention webpage.

# NDSBMCP 2024 Graduation to be Held During 2024 NDSBA Annual Convention

Students graduating from the North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program and students attaining recertification will be honored at the 2024 NDSBA Annual Convention on Thursday, October 24, after lunch in Hall A. Those honored will receive a special nametag at registration in recognition of their status.

In the coming weeks, graduates and recertified business managers will receive an email with more information. If you have questions about the program or graduation, please contact Patty Verdouw at 800-932-8791 or [patty.verdouw@ndsba.org](mailto:patty.verdouw@ndsba.org).

## Business Managers: Upcoming Course Trainings



The North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program (NDSBMCP) will host New Student Training courses for first-year students on September 26 and 27 at the BSC Career Academy in Bismarck and the Fall Training for first and second-year students on October 23 at the Bismarck Event Center in Bismarck. These classes are only available to currently enrolled and graduate students of the program. You can find course registrations and application forms to enter the program online at [www.ndsbmcp.org](http://www.ndsbmcp.org). For more information on the program, please contact Patty Verdouw at 800-932-8791 or [patty.verdouw@ndsba.org](mailto:patty.verdouw@ndsba.org).

## Mentor Programming

NDSBA is happy to announce the launch of its Business Manager Mentorship Program with former business manager, Kim Dressler, leading the way as mentor leader. The schedule of mentor meetings coordinate with the timing of the Business Manager Certification Program classes and will include a breakdown of six groups led by co-mentors. The program kick-off will begin on September 26 with a program social/dinner in Bismarck starting at 6:00 p.m. The location of the event will be emailed to program participants as it gets closer to the date.

This program is to ensure support and provide a platform for business managers to gain experience and knowledge in a more efficient and effective manner. Questions about the program can be directed to [taylor.lassiter@ndsba.org](mailto:taylor.lassiter@ndsba.org).



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# MARK your calendar

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## 2024 NDSBA Annual Convention

October 24-25, 2024

Bismarck Event Center, Bismarck

## 2025 COSSBA National Conference

March 20-23, 2025

Atlanta, Georgia

## 2025 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar

February 6-7, 2025

BSC National Energy Center of Excellence,  
Bismarck

## 2025 NDSBA Annual Convention

October 9-10, 2025

Bismarck Event Center, Bismarck



**NDSBA**  
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL  
BOARDS ASSOCIATION