



bulletin



NDSBA
NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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Business Manager Certification Program Honors Record Number of Graduates and Recertification Students

Ten North Dakota business managers were recently honored at Bismarck State College for successfully completing the North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program. Fourteen additional students were recognized for recertifying in the program. Six of the ten business manager graduates received mastery in all coursework, the program's highest designation. Guest speakers included State Superintendent Kirsten Baesler; NDSBA Executive Director, Alexis Baxley; and 2022 graduate, Melissa Haahr.

The North Dakota School Business Managers Certification Program was created in 2013 and is administered by the North Dakota School Boards Association in partnership with the North Dakota Association of School Business Managers. The program provides business managers with practical education and training to help them successfully perform their duties and meet statutory and regulatory responsibilities. It is comprised of 20 courses, offered both in-person and online, that cover foundational materials such as business manager's role and



NDSBMCP graduate and recertification attendees: front row left to right – Brandi Wald, Napoleon; Marci Larson, New Salem-Almont; Denise Knatterud, Drayton; Melissa Haahr, Devils Lake; Lorie Werle, TGU. Back row left to right – Amy Maurer, Montpelier; Cathi Heuchert, Grafton; Barb Magnuson, South Prairie; Shari Hetland, Wyndmere; Lindsay Polk, Barnes County; Darcy Lamoureux, Newburg United.

responsibilities, school finance and operations, how to conduct a school election or a public meeting, and how to properly procure items for the district. Students are required to complete 61 credits to graduate within a five-year period. Most complete these requirements within two years. After

graduation, students must complete 15 continuing education credits every three years to remain in the program. Courses are taught by superintendents, business managers, school district personnel, and state officials with expertise in specific areas.

Help Serve ND Schools – Apply for the Family Engagement Cabinet

State School Superintendent Kirsten Baesler has invited North Dakota parents and family members of students to consider joining the Family Engagement Cabinet, a group that advises her about how the state's schools can strengthen educational efforts and community ties.

The Family Engagement Cabinet was founded in May 2019. Currently, the Cabinet has 18 members, and Baesler seeks to raise the number to 25. Members are chosen for 18-month terms. The Cabinet meets every three months at the state Capitol in

Bismarck. The new Cabinet's first meeting is planned for this August where they will discuss topics of their choosing, will be briefed on education initiatives and legislation, and help with family engagement projects. In the past, members have been invited to legislative hearings that relate to student learning and participated in training sessions and meetings.

Those interested in participating should fill out an application, which can be found on the Department of Public Instruction's website, and email a cover letter to dpiindianed@nd.gov.

If preferred, the cover letter may be mailed to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, c/o Family Engagement Cabinet, 600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 201, Bismarck, ND, 58505-0440. The application deadline is 5 p.m. CT on Wednesday, June 15, 2022.

Additional information about the Family Engagement Cabinet, including information about how to apply, may be found at www.nd.gov/dpi.



Legal Spotlight Practical Tips for Conducting Employee Exit Interviews

by Amy De Kok, NDSBA Legal Counsel

One of the most common questions our members have asked me recently is when and how to conduct exit interviews. An exit interview is an interview held with an employee about to leave an organization, typically to discuss the employee's reasons for leaving and their experience working for the organization. In the private sector, exit interviews for departing employees are a common practice. Many organizations take the position that gathering feedback from departing employees is critical and failing to do so will likely risk increasing turnover. People who leave may be brutally honest about their experiences without fear of immediate repercussions. Overall, the information collected in an exit interview can give a district a unique perspective on its operations and employee satisfaction. Discovering why employees leave should be an essential part of a district's

strategic planning, but many miss this opportunity. If a district can address workplace issues before they cause unhappy employees to quit, districts can avoid the cost and disruption caused by high turnover.

Exit interviews of departing employees can provide an opportunity for disgruntled or unhappy employees to vent their frustrations on their way out the door. Thus, employers should approach the process thoughtfully. Exit interview practices and policies vary widely from employer to employer, but it is generally agreed that the employer should have a formal policy regarding exit interviewing. The policy should include a general outline of the exit interview format. The degree of structure can range from a casual conversation with note-taking to a standardized list of talking points to a questionnaire or other survey instruments. In-person interviews are recommended, but the employer may also want to have the employee fill out a written survey first in order to guide the in-person discussion. In addition, it is recommended that exit interviews be reserved for voluntary separations only. Interviews of employees who are being terminated may not accurately reflect the workplace environment. Interviews of these employees may still be conducted, but the approach used may need to be modified to account for the specific circumstances leading to the separation. Finally, exit interviews should be extended to all voluntarily departing employees—not just key performers or long-term employees.

In terms of the actual interview,

the employer should designate an appropriate interviewer. Typically, this would be an HR representative; however, many school districts do not have a designated HR person. A neutral supervisor or mentor the employee trusts and who has good interviewing skills could be a good option. Another option is to outsource the exit interview to an independent third party. Regardless of the interviewer, there are key questions employers should touch on when conducting exit interviews. Employers should also ask some of the same questions in every exit interview to compare answers and look for common responses. Here are some of the recommended questions to ask in all interviews:

1. Why are you leaving?
2. What is the district doing right? Moderately right? Poorly? Very Poorly?
3. How could conditions be improved?
4. What would you do to improve the situation that is causing you to leave?
5. How do other employees feel about the situation? The district in general?
6. What isn't the district currently doing, that if it started to do, would improve things?
7. Please describe your general feelings about working here. If possible, please tell us why you are leaving.
8. What were three things you enjoyed most about working here?

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NDSBA Requesting Clinic Proposals

NDSBA is still accepting proposals for the 2022 NDSBA Annual Convention clinic sessions. The proposal submission form can be found at www.ndsba.org under QUICK CLICKS.

Consider sharing unique or successful things happening in your district or suggesting a speaker or topic you would like to see.

Submissions are due by June 1, 2022.

■ Legal Spotlight

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9. If you could change three things, what would they be?
10. Are there ideas that you have that you wish you could have implemented while you were here?
11. Please describe the three best things about working with your supervisor.

Again, these are recommended questions. It is possible that the specific circumstances will warrant only some or other questions. The interviewer should plan and prepare for each interview, and determine which questions are appropriate in each situation. In addition, before jumping into the exit interview, reiterate the purpose of the discussion and the value gained from candid responses. Summarize how the feedback will be analyzed and shared with leadership in the aggregate to enhance the employee experience. Also, while it is important to be on alert for allegations of harassment or discrimination or just bad management that an exiting employee may point out, interviewers shouldn't necessarily go looking for them. If the employee mentions hostility or harassment issues during an exit interview, the district should follow investigation procedures and other policy requirements in such situations.

Finally, while a district should be thoughtful and discreet in sharing data and information from employee exit interviews, it is important not to promise confidentiality. Records containing such information will generally be considered open records subject to public records requests under North Dakota law. Because of this, districts should determine how to best document the information learned during interviews and the identities of the employee's providing information or mentioned in the interviews.

Please contact NDSBA for additional information regarding employee exit interviews.



NDDPI and NDSBA to Host Board Member Bootcamp

On July 18, 2022, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) and North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA) will once again team up to host a one-day school board member training. The training will be an opportunity for board members to gain information and updates pertaining to current educational topics. New and veteran board members are encouraged to take part in the bootcamp. The bootcamp is free and will take place at the state capitol in Bismarck. The registration link can be found at <https://www.ndsba.laventurellc.com/2022bootcamp>.



Business Manager Certification Program Registration

There is still time to register for the Business Manager Certification Program. This program is not only for business managers, but also for those that assist the business manager with duties, such as payroll, the district budget, or school board meetings. Classes are tentatively scheduled to be held in Bismarck in August. If we do not receive enough students by July 1, the program may be postponed until summer 2023. This is a wonderful opportunity for new business managers looking to acquire the foundational skills to effectively perform their duties and for seasoned business managers looking to broaden their expertise. Please contact the NDSBA office if you have questions on the program or would like to register.

Opportunity for Attorneys Interested in School Law

The NDSBA Legal Services Affiliation is a group of school attorneys who provide support and legal services to public school boards in North Dakota. It is an extension of the NDSBA Legal Services Program and exists under the NDSBA Board of Directors.

All attorneys who are interested in school law are encouraged to join the Affiliation. Two membership options are available: FULL MEMBERSHIP (\$250) is available to attorneys who are now representing or within the preceding two years have represented a public school district in the state of North Dakota and that school district is a member of NDSBA in good standing. Full membership includes membership in the National School Boards Association Council of School Attorneys that is subsidized by NDSBA. **Membership in the national Council of School Attorneys is only available through NDSBA.**

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (\$125) is available to any attorney who has an interest in representing school districts and school law. This membership DOES NOT INCLUDE membership in the national Council of School Attorneys.

Membership information and application forms are available on the NDSBA webpage at www.ndsba.org under *Services/Legal Services/Legal Services Affiliation*.



BoardBook Premier

BoardBook Premier is available to North Dakota school districts, political subdivisions, and businesses. BoardBook Premier is a paperless meeting and document storage program designed by school boards and is the new standard in board agenda preparation and decision making. Visit www.ndsba.org for more information.



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Hazleton - Moffit - Braddock School District

Contact: Renae Malard
Email: renae.malard@k12.nd.us
Website:
<https://www.hmb.k12.nd.us/page/superintendent>
Deadline: until filled
Position Begins: July 1, 2022

Fort Yates School District

Contact: Ambrosia Ermenc
Email: ambrosia.ermenc@k12.nd.us
Website:
<https://www.fort-yates.k12.nd.us/openings>
Deadline: until filled
Position Begins: July 1, 2022



IgniteND Conference

June 6-8, 2022
Bismarck State College, Bismarck

2022 Governor's Summit on Innovative Education

June 9, 2022
Dickinson Middle School, Dickinson

North Dakota Indian Education Summit

July 7-8, 2022
State Capitol, Bismarck

Board Member Bootcamp

July 18, 2022
State Capitol, Bismarck

2022 NDSBA Annual Convention

October 27-28, 2022
Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck