

bulletin



OCTOBER 2024

Excellence in North Dakota public education through local school board governance VOL XLIX ISSUE 10

2024 Government Affairs Committee Resolutions Report

NDSBA's Government Affairs Committee (GAC) met on August 30 to act on resolutions for consideration by the delegate assembly at the annual convention. Participating committee members included Karl Lembke, chair (Bismarck); Patti Stedman (West Fargo); Marlana Knudson (May-Port CG); Jason Rohr (Jamestown); Robin Nelson (Fargo); Michelle Orton (Dickinson); LeeAnn Johnston (Devils Lake); Collette Hertz (Harvey); and Mike Lautenschlager (Lewis & Clark).

Resolutions remain as standing resolutions for four years unless significant legislative or staff action prompts an earlier review. At the end of four years, resolutions are dropped unless readopted by the delegate assembly. Seven resolutions were recommended for re-adoption as written, one resolution was recommended to be dropped, and one new resolution was submitted in 2024. The following are the recommendations of the GAC:

RESOLUTIONS THAT ARE FOUR YEARS OLD AND RECOMMENDED FOR READOPTION AS WRITTEN

A. FUNDING

1. STATE AID FOR GROWING SCHOOL DISTRICTS. NDSBA shall support legislation that modifies the Foundation Aid Program to allow the use of fall enrollment to provide adequate state support to districts with increasing enrollment.
Adopted in 2012; readopted in 2016 and 2020.
2. STATE TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION. NDSBA believes the cost of maintaining, supporting, and enhancing this system should continue to be financed with state dollars and there should be no transfer of the cost associated with this network back to the local school districts.
Adopted in 2004; readopted in 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020.
3. STATE FUNDING OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS. NDSBA supports the state ensuring program funding equity and full funding of special education costs to districts, including gifted and talented education, and to provide a permanent mechanism for the distribution of any surplus special education dollars.

Adopted in 2004; readopted in 2008 and 2012; amended and readopted in 2016; and readopted in 2020.

D. PERSONNEL

1. BUSINESS MANAGER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM. School boards support the Business Manager Certification Program by providing financial support through the use of school district funds to encourage business managers to participate in this voluntary professional development opportunity.
Adopted in 2012; readopted in 2016 and 2020.



E. NEGOTIATIONS

2. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. NDSBA shall oppose legislation mandating school boards to collectively bargain with employees other than those currently required by 15.1-16-01: "...public school employee(s) licensed to teach by the ESPB or approved to teach by the ESPB and employed primarily as a classroom teacher."
Adopted in 2008; readopted in 2012, 2016, and 2020.

F. PROGRAM

1. SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM. NDSBA shall work with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, and the North Dakota Congressional Delegation to encourage the USDA to amend their federal regulations related to the School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and "a la carte" food sales to allow for local control.
Adopted in 2012; amended and readopted in 2016; and readopted in 2020.

G. BOARD AUTHORITY AND BOARD MEETINGS

1. POSTING OF BILLS IN AN ALTERNATE FORMAT. NDSBA shall support state law changes to allow school districts the flexibility to post their bills using an electronic format such as the district's website.
Adopted in 2004; amended and readopted in 2008; readopted in 2012, 2016, and 2020.

Continued on next page



Annual Convention Registration

Registration for the 2024 NDSBA Annual Convention is open. Registration is available online only at ndsba.org under "My Membership" after logging into the portal.

Reminder: North Dakota Century Code § 15.1-09-32 requires new school board members to attend an in-service training workshop hosted by the NDSBA or its designee within one year of assuming office. NDSBA will host the workshop for new board members on October 24.

Registration for the New Member Learning to Lead Workshop is available, along with annual convention registration, at ndsba.org under "My Membership" after logging into the portal.

RESOLUTIONS THAT ARE FOUR YEARS OLD AND RECOMMENDED TO BE DROPPED

E. NEGOTIATIONS

1. DEADLINE FOR NEGOTIATIONS. NDSBA shall support legislation that would require and/or encourage contract negotiations to be pursued in good faith, diligently, and within a reasonable period of time in order to have an agreement reached between the school board and recognized representative organization by a specified deadline or impasse will be automatically declared.

Adopted in 2020.

NEW RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED FOR ADOPTION

A resolution to support the preservation of public dollars for public schools and oppose legislation diverting public dollars to non-public schools through the implementation of funding mechanisms such as voucher programs, education savings accounts, and tax credit scholarship programs.

WHEREAS, public schools are the backbone of society. A strong public school system contributes to lower unemployment, reduced crime, improved public health, and a strong workforce.

WHEREAS, public schools are democratically controlled. Public school boards are elected by the citizens of the district and accountable to district taxpayers. North Dakota law requires meetings of a public school board to be open and accessible to the public. In addition, members of the public are able to obtain any records of a public entity that are not confidential or exempt as a matter of law. Non-public school board members are not elected by the taxpayer. Similarly, non-public school boards are not required to hold their meetings in public or disclose their records.

WHEREAS, public school districts are open and accessible to all students. Public school districts are required to follow the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

As such, public school districts must identify and evaluate students who may have disabilities, vary instruction based on need, employ interpreters, and attend to any other accommodations and modifications required to make schools, facilities, and activities accessible for all students. Non-public schools are not held to these same standards. Similarly, non-public schools have the ability to deny a student admission for any reason.

WHEREAS, public school districts are subject to both state and federal accountability standards. Public school districts must implement high quality, valid, reliable, and fair annual assessments aligned to North Dakota state standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science. Public school districts are expected to demonstrate growth towards meeting and exceeding expected levels of student achievement. Similarly, all North Dakota public schools are required to collaborate with Cognia in the Continuous School Improvement process and create a strategy map of the specific schools' educational priorities. Public schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support are required to create additional

plans. All records of a public school district regarding accountability, support, and improvements are available to the public. Information regarding non-public school achievement data does not have to be made available to the public.

WHEREAS, funding for public school districts promotes equity among larger and smaller districts.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, NDSBA supports the preservation of public dollars for public schools and opposes legislation diverting public dollars to non-public schools through the implementation of funding mechanisms such as voucher programs, education savings accounts, and tax credit scholarship programs.

If your board votes to bring a resolution to the convention floor for consideration by the delegate assembly, the following process must be followed:

1. Have 400 copies of your resolution ready to distribute at the close of the first business session on Thursday afternoon.
2. At the second business session on Friday afternoon, the chair will ask if there are resolutions that were distributed on Thursday. At that time, a delegate from your board must come to the microphone and move the resolution. A delegate from a different board must make the second.
3. Once a motion and second have been made, your resolution will be discussed and voted on by the delegate assembly.



Superintendent Evaluations

North Dakota law requires school boards to complete a formative evaluation of superintendents

ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 15 [NDCC § 15.1-14-03]. This evaluation must take place at an open public meeting. One purpose of the November evaluation is to highlight areas of performance in need of improvement and provide an improvement plan and a timeline for expected enhanced performance. The law regarding superintendent evaluations states that if the superintendent is found to be unsatisfactory in any area, the board shall detail its findings in the report and make recommendations. This process allows opportunity for professional growth before the superintendent's formal evaluation, which must be complete **ON OR BEFORE MARCH 15, 2025**. A sample evaluation form is available on NDSBA's website, www.ndsba.org, under RESOURCES.

The *Bulletin* is the official newsletter of the North Dakota School Boards Association. It is published 12 times each year and is mailed as third class mail from Bismarck, N.D.



EDITOR
Taylor Lassiter

PUBLISHER
North Dakota School Boards Association
1224 West Owens Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58501

EDITING/DESIGN
Clearwater Communications

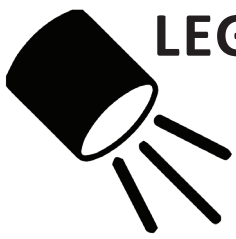
TELEPHONE 1-800-932-8791
LOCAL 701-255-4127
FAX 701-258-7992
WEBSITE www.ndsba.org
TWITTER @ndschoollboards

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Amy De Kok, Bismarck

OFFICERS
PRESIDENT
Patti Stedman, West Fargo
VICE PRESIDENT
Lucas Greff, Mott-Regent

PAST PRESIDENT
Karl Lembke, Bismarck

DIRECTORS
Nathan Berseht, Richland 44
Michelle Orton, Dickinson
Jim Rostad, Minot
Marlana Knudson, MayPort CG



LEGAL SPOTLIGHT

Understanding and Preventing Chronic Absenteeism



By Lexie Bergstrom, NDSBA Staff Attorney

With the return of the school year, the concern for chronic student absences returns as well. While occasional absences are to be expected, chronic absenteeism leads to several negative consequences. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% or more of the school year — about 18 days, whether excused or unexcused. This level of absence disrupts learning, leading to academic struggles, lower test scores, and an increased likelihood of dropping out. Absenteeism is more than just a student missing school; it's an issue that affects the entire school community, including the district's goals for student success and graduation rates.

According to North Dakota law on compulsory attendance (NDCC chapter 15.1-20), a parent or guardian who is responsible for a child between the ages of seven and 16 must ensure the child attends school for the duration of each school year. To be deemed "in attendance," a student may not be absent from school without excuse for: 1) more than three consecutive school days during either the first or second half of a school district's calendar; 2) six half days during either the first half or the second half of a school or school

district's calendar; or 3) 21 class periods. Every school district in North Dakota is required to have a policy that defines an excused absence and articulates the type of documentation that may be requested to verify a student's absence. NDSBA has sample policy FFB, Attendance and Absences, establishing these requirements.

In addition to the responsibility of parents to ensure their child(ren) attend school regularly, teachers and administrators are required to enforce compulsory attendance provisions. Any person who fails to ensure a student is in attendance as required by law is guilty of an infraction for a first offense, and guilty of a class B misdemeanor for a second or subsequent offense.

School districts play a crucial role in identifying, addressing, and preventing chronic absenteeism. It is imperative to create a supportive and welcoming school environment to encourage attendance. When families feel connected to the school and understand the importance of consistent attendance, they are more likely to ensure their children attend regularly. Regular communication with parents and students about the importance

of attendance and checking in when absences start to accumulate is key.

Additionally, it's helpful for schools to track attendance regularly and flag students who miss several days early in the year. Intervening at the first signs of absenteeism and learning why it's happening is crucial. Some students face significant challenges that prevent them from attending regularly, including health issues, family responsibilities, transportation problems, and housing instability. Working with school counselors, social workers, and community organizations can help address these barriers. Providing resources like free or subsidized transportation, meal programs, and access to mental health services can make a big difference.

Chronic absenteeism is an issue that impacts student achievement and overall district success. When districts work together with families and students, it makes a significant impact in reducing absenteeism and fostering academic success for all students. Feel free to contact NDSBA for additional information on this topic.



NDSBMCP Fall Training Courses

The North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program (NDSBMCP) will host a one-day training for business manager students on Wednesday, October 23, in Bismarck at the Bismarck Event Center. Human Resources I and Open Records and Meetings will be taught to first-year students, while Bidding, Purchasing, and Inventory and Asset Management will be taught to second-year students. These classes are available only for current and graduate students of the program. Students can find more information by going to the NDSBMCP webpage at www.ndsbmcp.org and selecting the NEWS tab at the top of the page.

NDSBA Seeking Student Artwork for Annual Holiday Card!

NDSBA is seeking holiday-themed student artwork to be featured on our holiday cards. Artwork should be landscape-oriented and 5.5x4.75 inches. The student whose artwork is chosen will be recognized in the December issue of the Bulletin and receive a \$50 Amazon gift card. NDSBA will also make a \$200 donation to the student's classroom.

Artwork can be submitted in two ways:

1. Original artwork can be mailed to NDSBA, 1224 West Owens Ave., Bismarck, N.D., 58501.
2. High quality scans (300 dpi or greater) of original artwork can be emailed to taylor.lassiter@ndsba.org.

All submissions should include the name and grade of the student, the name of the student's teacher, and the school district. Artwork must be received in the NDSBA office **by Thursday, December 5.**



1224 West Owens Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58501

PRE-SORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 419
BISMARCK, ND
58504

MARK your calendar

2024 NDSBA Annual Convention

October 24-25
Bismarck Event Center, Bismarck

2025 NDSBA Negotiations Seminar

February 6-7, 2025
BSC National Energy Center of Excellence,
Bismarck

2025 COSSBA National Conference

March 21-23, 2025
Atlanta, Georgia

2025 NDSBA Annual Convention

October 9-10, 2025
Bismarck Event Center, Bismarck



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.



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.



NDSBA
**NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

2024
**BOARD
CANDIDATES**

THE 2024 NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

JENNIFER CARLSON - FORDVILLE-LANKIN, CHAIR

AMANDA PETERSON - BISMARCK

VAL WAGNER - ELLENDALE

APRIL DUTCHUK - KILLDEER

SPENCER MARCHAND - HARVEY

The 2024 NDSBA board and officer election will take place on Friday, October 25 at the NDSBA Annual Convention. The ballot box will be open from 7:30 a.m. CT - 1:00 p.m. CT and can be found at the registration table. Only board members with delegate or alternate listed on their registration are allowed to vote. Please check the NDSBA Annual Convention webpage for the delegate allowance document that lists each district's number of delegates.

Candidates will make comments at the first business session on Thursday, October 24, and election results will be announced at the second business session on Friday, October 25.



NDSBA
**NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

2024
**BOARD
CANDIDATES**

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT



Lucas Greff - Mott/Regent School District

Lucas Greff has been on the Mott-Regent School Board for thirteen years. He has served as president and vice president of the board and has served on the Policy, Building, and Curriculum and Finance Committees in that time. He has sat on an interim senate committee for school choice and currently sits on the K12 coordination council. He is currently serving as the president for the Roughrider Area Career and Technical Center (RACTC)--a role he has held the past eleven years. Lucas grew up on his family farm and graduated from Regent Public School in 2000. He attended college at Valley City State and Dickinson State.

He joined the North Dakota National Guard in 1999 and is currently a serving member. Lucas has been married to his wife Angela since 2003 and they have six children ranging from ages three to 18. He currently farms on the family farm and is Active Duty Military for the National Guard out of Dickinson.

The NDSBA board of directors are expected to serve, be present, and hold responsibilities in many capacities within their role on the board while coinciding with service to your local board. How does your leadership style fit into this mix so that you are able to balance what is expected in terms of the time commitment and still be an effective member of both the NDSBA board and your local board?

This is a challenge. Most board members in our state are on their 2nd or 3rd term of volunteerism. It is a testament to the dedication that community members in our state have for the education of our youth. To that end I will continue to do my best to dedicate the time necessary to the NDSBA to fulfill whatever role I am asked to be in.

Outside of NDSBA events, we encourage interaction with your region, on top of your local board duties, to develop relationships and to be able to report to the NDSBA board and bring perspective into other committees. How do you serve now? How do you expect to serve as a director in consideration of regional oversight? How will you contribute to the NDSBA board of directors?

This is hands down my favorite part of being on the NDSBA board. Building a network of board members to work through the tough issues and to have someone to reach out to can make all the difference in retention of quality board members. In this past year, I have called or been called by over a dozen school board members from the SW region of the state and what I have found out is that no matter how odd your situation seems, another school has already dealt with it and can help you through.

No matter the length of time you have served, a particular situation can mean all the difference for growth and experience. What has been your biggest challenge thus far in your board service? What are you most proud of? How will either, or both, of these instances contribute to your NDSBA board of director service?

The biggest challenge has been understanding the balance of the superintendent and the board. In my decade of experience, we have had five superintendents and have experienced a whole range of responsibility swing - from the board being a rubber stamp to the superintendent's decisions to the board carrying the burden of responsibility of running the school. Finding the "sweet spot" where board members have a voice but don't get in the way of a superintendent's vision is the continual challenge.

While I have been on the board we have had success in retention of staff, hiring and development of a young superintendent, built a new elementary school and have seen double digit increases in math and reading scores. Being part of a great school and doing my part to keep it a great school is something I am proud of.

Over my service as a board member we have been exposed to many challenges from impasse, to new curriculum, to bond issues, to a covid school shutdown. Each challenge we have faced as a school has given us perspective and experience that can only be gained through adversity. Having been through these challenges and the successes I mentioned earlier give me a solid base to be a board member on the NDSBA.



NDSBA
**NORTH DAKOTA SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION**

2024
**BOARD
CANDIDATES**

CANDIDATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT



Nathan Berseth - Richland 44 School District

Nathan Berseth is a 5th generation North Dakotan who resides in rural Colfax, ND with his wife and daughter. Nathan works in Market Development for Bell Bank. He serves as board president for the Richland #44 school district and is also in his third term as a Richland County Commissioner. Nathan is President of the Midwest Council on Agriculture for former Congressman Collin Peterson. This board represents thirteen states of businesses and farmers. In Nathan's spare time, he farms and develops land for residential and commercial construction.

The NDSBA board of directors are expected to serve, be present, and hold responsibilities in many capacities within their role on the board while coinciding with service to your local board. How does your leadership style fit into this mix so that you are able to balance what is expected in terms of the time commitment and still be an effective member of both the NDSBA board and your local board?

Experience matters. Just like a student who becomes a better reader by reading more, board service usually gets better the more you serve. I've had the good fortune to serve on local, state and national boards. The balancing act between representation and leadership is constant and important.

Outside of NDSBA events, we encourage interaction with your region, on top of your local board duties, to develop relationships and to be able to report to the NDSBA board and bring perspective into other committees. How do you serve now? How do you expect to serve as a director in consideration of regional oversight? How will you contribute to the NDSBA board of directors?

North Dakota is home. My lifework has been connecting people across this great state. It isn't a matter of starting relationships in different regions, it is a matter of expanding them.

No matter the length of time you have served, a particular situation can mean all the difference for growth and experience. What has been your biggest challenge thus far in your board service? What are you most proud of? How will either, or both, of these instances contribute to your NDSBA board of director service?

Efficiency of a board increases when its members understand the oversight role. This requires prioritization of objectives and a willingness to work with each other to meet the objectives.

CANDIDATE FOR SOUTHEAST DIRECTOR



Jacob Kubela - Wahpeton School District

Jacob was born and raised in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and so have his two children who have inspired him to serve on his local school board. Jacob's wife works at the Wahpeton middle school and has dedicated her career to the learners in their community. Jacob owns two businesses in Wahpeton that he balances with serving on multiple local boards. His investment in his community is deep and spans wide. He is proud to serve the Wahpeton School District as a school board member because he believes education and our youth are our future and he is motivated to be a part of molding that future.

The NDSBA board of directors are expected to serve, be present, and hold responsibilities in many capacities within their role on the board while coinciding with service to your local board. How does your leadership style fit into this mix so that you are able to balance what is expected in terms of the time commitment and still be an effective member of both the NDSBA board and your local board?

I am very fortunate that my career is extremely flexible and that I have built a great relationship with my school superintendent in Wahpeton. I am a communicator, so we talk to each other on a weekly basis, regardless if there is an upcoming school board meeting or not. I am a person that will not commit to being on a board if I do not believe I can fully fulfill the role and take on the responsibilities that come with it. I'm excited for the opportunity to be a part of this board in addition to my local school board service.

Outside of NDSBA events, we encourage interaction with your region, on top of your local board duties, to develop relationships and to be able to report to the NDSBA board and bring perspective into other committees. How do you serve now? How do you expect to serve as a director in consideration of regional oversight? How will you contribute to the NDSBA board of directors?

I am involved in my community in many ways through the boards that I serve on, volunteering locally on a regular basis, and by just communicating with people when I am out in public. I strive to be a leader in my community, and I look forward to expanding that role regionally by following the same style and having conversations with people in other districts so I can bring quality information back to the NDSBA board.

No matter the length of time you have served, a particular situation can mean all the difference for growth and experience. What has been your biggest challenge thus far in your board service? What are you most proud of? How will either, or both, of these instances contribute to your NDSBA board of director service?

My biggest challenge has been balancing what is best for students and teachers with what is best for the school or school district. As a board member, I am a steward of the funds that our district utilizes, but I want to do everything I can to support our teachers and students in what they need. Making decisions that balance out both concerns has been challenging. With that said, I enjoy participating in those decisions and thinking through what is best for both, and it makes me proud when we are able to find a suitable solution. I am confident that I would be able to reflect on my local board decisions and apply the same work ethic to the NDSBA board's decisions.



CANDIDATE FOR SOUTHEAST DIRECTOR



Nikkie Gullickson - Fargo School District

Nikkie grew up and attended college in Wahpeton, but has called Fargo home since 1990, where she now resides with her husband Greg, three kids (one in college and two in high school) and three dogs. Nikkie has been surrounded by educators her entire life, so she has been aware of needs and opportunities in the education field for as long as she can remember. Nikkie is also an active PTA member and now serves at the national level. She has advocated at the local, state, and federal levels, meeting with officials and taking stances that will benefit the learners of her district and state. She has served on the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's task forces to support North Dakota students, and in Fargo, was on various task forces for FPS over the last several years. Some of those groups include Calendar Committee, Mill Levy, Building Usage Task Force, and participating in State of the Schools discussions. As a future NDSBA board member, Nikkie looks forward to the opportunity to serve on state committees and/or boards. She enjoys meeting new people and learning new things.

The NDSBA board of directors are expected to serve, be present, and hold responsibilities in many capacities within their role on the board while coinciding with service to your local board. How does your leadership style fit into this mix so that you are able to balance what is expected in terms of the time commitment and still be an effective member of both the NDSBA board and your local board?

My leadership style is inclusive, approachable, and I value all voices at the table. Together as a team, the best possible decisions (because no single person has all the answers or expertise) are made. I believe I can maintain a balance and participate fully on both boards because this is a passion for me. I am committed, and these roles complement each other nicely.

Outside of NDSBA events, we encourage interaction with your region, on top of your local board duties, to develop relationships and to be able to report to the NDSBA board and bring perspective into other committees. How do you serve now? How do you expect to serve as a director in consideration of regional oversight? How will you contribute to the NDSBA board of directors?

I would certainly work to develop those relationships through personal contact utilizing email, phone, zoom and/or personal visits to build familiarity and strong working relationships. I will contribute to the NDSBA board whatever skills/talents I have and do my best to build/seek/engage with stakeholders and systems to be an active, engaged, productive member of the team.

No matter the length of time you have served, a particular situation can mean all the difference for growth and experience. What has been your biggest challenge thus far in your board service? What are you most proud of? How will either, or both, of these instances contribute to your NDSBA board of director service?

COVID and the subsequent school closures is the top of the list. Likewise, approximately two years ago, there was great (nationwide) upset over the FPS board reciting the Pledge of Allegiance (or not) prior to board meetings - THAT was a learning experience for sure.

I am most proud of the team we have at Fargo Public Schools. We have a superintendent, administrative cabinet, board and so many others in our district that genuinely care about our kids, their futures, their families, our district, our community, our staff and each other. Because of the strength and talents of all those involved, I truly feel we can navigate whatever comes along and in doing so - we will do it as a TEAM. We have worked through difficult things, brought our individual strengths to the "table" and come out stronger on the other side. These qualities have helped build me into the servant leader I am today.

CANDIDATE FOR NORTHWEST DIRECTOR



Mike Lautenschlager - Lewis and Clark School District

Mike has been a school board member for just over 30 years. In that time, he has served as school board president, on several school board committees, the NDSBA Government Affairs and Legislative Committees, has previously held the NDSBA Northwest Director position for two terms, and has also served as NDSBA Vice President for two terms. Mike has always been ready to answer the call to serve when needed - he has presented at NDSBA conventions about reorganization, at Negotiations seminars about labor/management issues, participated in panels of varying local, regional, and state education topics, and has testified in front of the state legislature. Mike is a father to three sons and a grandfather to six grandchildren, who are the reason and the drivers as to why he serves. When not fighting the good fight, Mike is with them, his wife Ginger, or working hard farming.

The NDSBA board of directors are expected to serve, be present, and hold responsibilities in many capacities within their role on the board while coinciding with service to your local board. How does your leadership style fit into this mix so that you are able to balance what is expected in terms of the time commitment and still be an effective member of both the NDSBA board and your local board?

I make time for what is important. I attend conventions often helping present on different topics. This association has helped make me a better board member and I believe it's important to give back to things that help me. Serving on both goes together. I bring things learned in training back to my local board.

Outside of NDSBA events, we encourage interaction with your region, on top of your local board duties, to develop relationships and to be able to report to the NDSBA board and bring perspective into other committees. How do you serve now? How do you expect to serve as a director in consideration of regional oversight? How will you contribute to the NDSBA board of directors?

It's been my experience that I learn more from visiting with other board members than anything. I've done this for a long time and don't mind sharing my experience with others. It is how we learn and grow.

No matter the length of time you have served, a particular situation can mean all the difference for growth and experience. What has been your biggest challenge thus far in your board service? What are you most proud of? How will either, or both, of these instances contribute to your NDSBA board of director service?

The biggest challenge I've faced is reorganization and being sued twice because of it. The thing I'm most proud of is the patrons of our district supporting a bond issue to insure the buildings in our district can serve students for the future. In my years on the board I have experienced just about everything there is. Having this association and its members to reach out to has been invaluable and has prepared me to deal with these experiences.

CANDIDATE FOR NORTHWEST DIRECTOR



James Vannett - Nedrose School District

James is a DesLacs Burlington High School Graduate, so his roots in the NW region go deep. For the last eight years, James has served diligently on the Nedrose School Board as its president and its Negotiations Committee Chair, and accomplished the Be Legendary School Board Leadership Institute training with his board. Within the Nedrose community, he has been a booster member for the last eight years and a booster board member for four, for the last six years he has been a member of the local CTE committee, and he is currently serving on the Regional CREA/CRACTC Board. As a Member of the NDSBA board,

James would be diligent in standing up for Student Outcomes while keeping the state's policies and by-laws at the forefront. He would be committed to bringing regional thoughts and ideas whenever possible.

The NDSBA board of directors are expected to serve, be present, and hold responsibilities in many capacities within their role on the board while coinciding with service to your local board. How does your leadership style fit into this mix so that you are able to balance what is expected in terms of the time commitment and still be an effective member of both the NDSBA board and your local board?

Leadership entails numerous factors including knowledge, vision, motivation, and organization. Utilizing these leadership skills will allow for concurrently managing both roles. Good time management skills are vital to keep up with commitments of both boards. The work done on a state level will benefit our local school board and vice versa.

Outside of NDSBA events, we encourage interaction with your region, on top of your local board duties, to develop relationships and to be able to report to the NDSBA board and bring perspective into other committees. How do you serve now? How do you expect to serve as a director in consideration of regional oversight? How will you contribute to the NDSBA board of directors?

I currently serve as Board President as well as chair on our negotiations and community vision committees. I also try to make myself available by attending various school events and being the PA announcer at many high school volleyball, boys and girls Basketball games. I feel it is very important to be an involved member of our district.

I feel like I can contribute to the NDSBA board of directors by bringing my creative thoughts and ideas to the group. I am not afraid to ask the tough questions or receive critical feedback. An engaged board member fosters collaboration and team building. They have the ability to build consensus as well as the ability to compromise. I have experience in developing relationships throughout the community with my involvement with work, community events, and church.

No matter the length of time you have served, a particular situation can mean all the difference for growth and experience. What has been your biggest challenge thus far in your board service? What are you most proud of? How will either, or both, of these instances contribute to your NDSBA board of director service?

The largest challenge has been learning our school district was becoming a Targeted school due to poor test scores just prior to Covid. Then taking this information to Board meetings and really assessing our shortcomings. In our case, the majority of the poor test scores could be attributed to our transient population.

I'm most proud of taking diversity and challenges and really digging deep. We as a local board voted unanimously to enroll in the Be Legendary School Board Leadership Institute where we learned the most important thing of all: student outcomes will not change if we as leaders do not change! We also learned that the tools we put into our instructor's hands are our limiting factors.

I will use my position as the NDSBA NW Director to really listen to the needs of NW region districts, and bring their thoughts, concerns, and needs to the state board. I'll strive to make sure all districts have access to the tools needed to teach their students essential skills and have our graduates Choice Ready: "Post-Secondary Ready, Work Force Ready or Military Ready".