

2025 NDSBA ANNUAL REPORT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to our 2025 North Dakota School Boards Convention!

Whether this is your first time at the convention or your 30th; there are multiple opportunities to learn and grow as a board member. Please explore the convention hall and visit with the vendors who support this event. During breakout sessions, participate and ask questions of our presenters. They represent the subject matter experts in their respective sessions and can be a treasure trove of information for you to develop as a leader in your community.

During the main hall events, be prepared to get up to date on the big events and legislative decisions that will affect your respective districts; and let the keynote speakers remind you of why you became a board member and what you and the board can do for your school.

2025 has been a banner year for NDSBA. Amy De Kok has proven to be an excellent executive director, and under her leadership, NDSBA will keep doing great things. The Business Manager Certification Program continues to show its value to every district that has utilized the service. Legal Direct has grown with the addition of KrisAnn Norby-Jahner as General Counsel, and we have officially taken the reins on the "Be Legendary" Board training, now called Students First Governance. Working with an agency, we have revamped this board training to reflect what we feel North Dakota boards have been asking for and to give each board the tools it needs to be successful. Policy Services is becoming a more crucial program for our member schools to participate in. Superintendent search support continues to be important to every school that needs the service.

School Board membership is a unique and challenging experience for every person who serves in that capacity, but it is a challenge worth accepting and committing to. Few positions in a community can have as direct an impact on the potential of your town as a school board member. You are a key component in the success and experience of every child in your community. The school is a large employer in many communities. The better job your board does, the better your school becomes, and the more successful your students and staff will be. Thirty years from now this year's kindergarten class won't remember that a bus route took an extra five minutes, that a sports co-op fought over team colors and who had more home games; but they will be the product of a caring and demanding third grade teacher, a veteran math teacher who challenged them, and a principal who had a lasting impact on them. This is possible through the policies, budgeting, and leadership you provide at the board level. Focus on student achievement and watch your students succeed!

On behalf of the NDSBA Board of Directors and our staff, welcome to the 2025 Annual Convention. Thank you for what you are doing for your communities, and please take this opportunity to learn, network, and grow as a board member and community leader in your district and in our state. Have a great convention!

Lucas Greff, NDSBA President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As we gather for NDSBA's 2025 Annual Convention, I want to begin with gratitude. Thank you for your unwavering support of the association and – most importantly – for your service on behalf of your students, staff, communities, and public education. The hours you invest in meetings, goal setting, policy work, and difficult decisions – often after long workday – make a real difference in classrooms across North Dakota. Your partnership keeps NDSBA focused, accountable, and effective.

We continued strengthening core services you rely on. Last year's launch of our membership management system and policy services software matured through 2024–25, and our new Business Manager Mentoring Program welcomed its first cohort – capacity-building work we'll keep expanding. Your feedback directly shaped these improvements; when you tell us what helps (and what doesn't), we adjust so you can govern with clarity and confidence.

We've just completed the transition of North Dakota's Be Legendary School Board Training Program to NDSBA and are relaunching it here at the convention as the **Students First Governance Program**. The original model – created by NDDPI with support and input from NDSBA and funded with ESSER dollars – now moves forward under NDSBA for the long term. The redesigned approach pairs a focused one-day Launch with two years of coaching, supported by evaluation instruments and a progress-tracking digital platform so boards can drive student achievement. The Legislature has also renewed support for this important work with funding in the 2025–2027 biennium. A competitive application period for the first cohort will open at the convention (limited spots are available).

NDSBA advanced a pro–public education agenda throughout the year and, as a member of North Dakotans for Public Schools (ND4PS), partnered in a statewide coalition to strengthen, protect, and celebrate North Dakota's public schools. Through ND4PS, we amplify the voices of boards, school leaders, and educators, share success stories, dispel misinformation, and oppose proposals that divert funding or reduce accountability – while supporting policies, people, and resources that help students thrive. We also represented North Dakota's interests nationally through the Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA) – leveraging leadership development, policy insights, and a strong peer network tailored to local boards.

In the year ahead, we'll keep our work tightly focused on what helps boards and their leadership teams move the needle for students. That means scaling the Students First Governance Program and aligning board development to clear, student-centered outcomes; continuing to improve the member experience by streamlining policy services, clarifying training calendars, and strengthening support systems; and sustaining effective advocacy with timely updates, practical tools, and proactive outreach so boards can navigate change while keeping students at the center.

To every board member, business manager, superintendent, and partner: thank you for your steady leadership and for the countless, often unseen ways you serve your districts – supporting students, empowering staff, strengthening communities, and standing up for public education. Your investment of time, trust, and expertise is the foundation of NDSBA's work, and it's an honor to serve alongside you.

Our team stands ready to help; please reach out whenever we can be of service.

Amy De Kok, NDSBA Executive Director

NDUC GROUP ACCOUNT

The North Dakota Unemployment Compensation (NDUC) Group Account is a service NDSBA offers to its members to assist with unemployment claims. Established under North Dakota law, the program allows districts to pool their deposits for the purpose of paying claims. School districts that belong to the NDUC Group Account deposit a percentage of their annual payroll with the Group Account. Money is on deposit with NDSBA but belongs to the districts.

Member benefits include monitoring unemployment claims as they are filed, payment of claims from the member district's required reserve, and reimbursement spread over a number of quarters to give districts an opportunity to include it in their annual budget.

All NDSBA members are eligible to participate in this program. A minimal annual administrative fee is charged to cover expenses. Contact NDSBA if you would like more information.

Julie Steidler, Operations and Policy Specialist

NDSBA POLICY SERVICES

NDSBA's Policy Services is a core benefit for North Dakota school districts, special education units, and CTE units. Beginning in 2025–26, the former Basic Membership has been retired; all members now subscribe to at least Required Membership to continue receiving Quarterly Policy Updates and legal guidance.

Membership Tiers:

- **Required Membership** – Provides all policies mandated by federal/state law and the policies needed for Cognia accreditation. Members receive Quarterly Policy Updates with legal guidance and may select up to ten complimentary policy templates annually. Additional templates beyond the ten complimentary may be obtained individually.
- **Total Template Membership** - Includes everything in Required Membership plus full access to NDSBA's complete policy catalog, exhibits, regulations, and supporting documents. A curated version tailored to the governance needs of multidistrict special education units is also available.
- **Webhosted / Maintenance Membership** – Adds secure hosting of the district's board-approved policy manual in a searchable, linkable online format. NDSBA manages formatting, applies updates, and supports integrations with board platforms to streamline publishing.

Policy Manual Review Service: This service is available to current Required and Total Template members seeking a comprehensive assessment of their existing manuals. Deliverables include a full analysis with adopt/amend/rescind recommendations, organized review files, sample motions, and step-by-step guidance for board action and implementation.

As of the end of August, 180 school districts, special education units, and CTE units are enrolled in NDSBA's Policy Services. Members access policies and resources via the secure portal using their login credentials.

Amy De Kok, NDSBA Executive Director

BUSINESS MANAGER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The North Dakota School Business Manager Certification Program is administered by NDSBA and the ND Association of School Business Managers. It was established in 2013, thanks to a grant from the ND Legislature. The program provides business managers with statutory and regulatory requirements, professional development, as well as guidelines to successfully complete their daily duties.

Students have five years to complete 20 courses and nine hours of professional development to attain program certification. Classes are a combination of online and in-person instruction. Students can test out of two classes. Graduates of the program are honored with a certificate of completion at a ceremony at the NDSBA Annual Convention.

Please contact Patty VerDouw at 800-932-8791 or at patty.verdouw@ndsba.org if interested in the certification program.

Patty VerDouw, Business and Policy Specialist

LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

The NDSBA Legal Services Program is an integral part of membership in NDSBA. School board members, superintendents, and business managers of member school districts are encouraged to utilize this service to obtain general legal information and resources on the numerous legal issues affecting their districts. NDSBA General Counsel KrisAnn Norby-Jahner and NDSBA Executive Director Amy De Kok provide general information and resources to member districts and their representatives about open meetings and open records, personnel matters, board procedure, negotiations, student discipline, staff evaluations, federal and state legal requirements applicable to schools, and when legal counsel should be hired. No separate fee is charged to member school districts for this service.

No attorney-client relationship is intended or created between NDSBA General Counsel and member districts or their representatives through the Legal Services Program. **The Legal Services Program does NOT include the following:**

- Direct legal advice, guidance, opinion or representation regarding a specific situation or set of circumstances
- Legal representation at the local level (board meetings, administrative hearings, or in court)
- Negotiation of contracts or negotiated agreements
- Drafting of legal documents
- Legal representation in litigation or administrative proceedings

Amy De Kok, NDSBA Executive Director and KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, NDSBA General Counsel

NDSBA LEGAL DIRECT

NDSBA General Counsel, KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, and NDSBA Executive Director, Amy De Kok, may be retained to assist member school districts on a fee-for-services basis. There is a demand for direct, customized legal services for public school districts that is not being fully met by our Legal Affiliates despite their best efforts. In addition, school districts are hesitant to retain private counsel even when recommended to do so due to the cost associated with private legal services. For these reasons, our members benefit greatly by having an option for discounted legal services available to them. NDSBA is in a unique position to provide this service to our members at below-market rates through our fee-based program, NDSBA Legal Direct. NDSBA Legal Direct is meant to supplement, not supplant, the services provided to our members by our Legal Affiliates.

The following fee-based legal services may be provided through NDSBA Legal Direct:

- **General legal counsel and advice:** NDSBA attorneys may provide direct legal advice and counseling to our member districts on the day-to-day legal issues and situations that arise in school operations.
- **Contract review:** NDSBA attorneys may be retained to draft, review and/or modify contracts member districts enter with vendors or other third-party service providers.
- **Negotiated Agreement review:** NDSBA attorneys may be retained to review district Negotiated Agreements. At a member district's request staff will provide a written analysis of the Negotiated Agreement.
- **Customized policy drafting:** NDSBA attorneys may assist member districts to customize school board policies and related regulations to tailor them to districts' needs.
- **Nonrenewal hearings:** NDSBA attorneys may counsel and assist member districts through the nonrenewal process (performance and RIF), including representation at due process hearings.
- **Customized training:** NDSBA attorneys is able to provide training and professional development to school boards and/or their staff through specially designed seminars and in-service training in areas such as student rights and discipline, personnel issues, anti-bullying programs, special education, weapons and threat assessment, discrimination and harassment prevention, complaint handling, equal opportunity, ADA, FMLA, FLSA, FERPA and student records, open records and meetings, staff evaluations, and similar law-related topics.

At this time, NDSBA Legal Direct expressly excludes the following services: litigation matters; discharge for cause hearings; matters that may be covered by insurance (NDIRF) or assigned to insurance counsel; matters where another member school district is adverse to the district requesting assistance; matters where the school district may be adverse to the interests of NDSBA; and matters where the member district is already represented by legal counsel on the matter.

Services are provided in exchange for a below-market hourly rate or on a flat-fee basis.

Amy De Kok, NDSBA Executive Director, and KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, NDSBA General Counsel

NDSBA LEGAL SERVICES AFFILIATION

As an extension of the NDSBA Legal Services Program, a Legal Services Affiliation is available to attorneys who provide support and legal services to public school boards in North Dakota. Purposes of the Affiliation are to:

- Promote a professional and mutually beneficial relationship between school attorneys and school boards of the state of North Dakota
- Disseminate legal information and analysis to members and promote the exchange of legal information and analysis among members
- Provide a state forum on legal issues faced by school attorneys incident to their primary function of providing legal counsel, advice, and representation to school boards
- Provide in-service training to its members.

To accomplish these objectives, members of the Legal Services Affiliation, as part of their dues, are provided with membership in the National Council of School Attorneys and/or the National School Attorneys Association. Members also receive the NDSBA *Bulletin* and a reduced registration fee for the annual School Law Seminar, held in conjunction with the NDSBA Annual Convention.

If your school district attorney is not a member of the NDSBA Legal Services Affiliation, please encourage them to participate. Membership information is available under Legal Services on the NDSBA webpage at www.ndsba.org.

Amy De Kok, NDSBA Executive Director, and KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, NDSBA General Counsel

ND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGERS

The North Dakota Association of School Business Managers (NDASBM) was founded in 1981 and is an affiliate organization of the North Dakota School Boards Association. The goal of NDASBM is to provide training, networking, and professional growth opportunities for business managers of public school districts, special education cooperatives, and vocational/technical education centers.

NDASBM is represented by eight regions throughout North Dakota. Present directors are:

Region I:	Brant Hebert – McKenzie County
Region II:	Dawn Hauck - Rugby
Region III:	Shauna Schneider - Langdon
Region IV:	Brandon Baumbach – Grand Forks
Region V:	Kendra Dockter - Richland
Region VI:	Kristi Grounds - Jamestown
Region VII:	Darin Scherr - Bismarck
Region VIII:	Rhonda Zastoupil – Killdeer

The NDASBM Annual Convention is held in conjunction with the North Dakota School Boards Association Annual Convention. The professional development event provides business managers with an opportunity to stay informed of legislative and regulatory changes, network with other business managers, and receive industry updates.

The NDASBM Spring Workshop was held at the Bismarck Career Academy this past May. The workshop held sessions on the NDSFARM account codes, TFFR updates, state funding formula & legislative changes, county auditors' roles, NDCEL updates, ListServ, and NDIRF HR Best Practices. The workshop ended with a NDASBM Business Meeting where Region IV, V and VII directors were elected.

In addition to the Annual Convention and Spring Workshop, members also attended various NDSBA hosted webinars throughout the year.

Directors met for the annual meeting in July for board reorganization and to plan the NDASBM Fall Convention.

The board will meet during the annual convention to begin planning next year's Spring Workshop.

Rhonda Zastoupil, NDASBM President

NDSBA Budget Worksheet

2025-26

		2023-24	2024-25	06/13/25	2025-26
	REVENUE	Actual	Approved	Balance	Proposed
4005	District Dues	\$750,249	\$761,882	\$760,301	\$796,876
4010	County Dues	\$2,200	\$2,000	\$1,600	\$1,600
4015	Multidistrict Dues	\$10,500	\$10,500	\$9,200	\$8,500
4020	Legal Services Affiliation	\$4,575	\$4,575	\$3,575	\$3,575
4023	Legal Direct Income	\$120,584	\$40,000	\$236,641	\$200,000
4025	Investment Income	\$31,582	\$30,000	\$87,873	\$75,000
4030	Admin Fees	\$20,000	\$22,000	\$65,300	\$68,000
4035	Seminar Registration	\$32,254	\$40,000	\$58,715	\$40,000
4040	Convention Registration	\$126,635	\$110,000	\$155,107	\$125,000
4045	Convention Exhibits	\$29,133	\$30,000	\$54,200	\$35,000
4047	Convention Sponsors	\$0	\$0	\$8,500	\$8,500
4055	Mileage Reimbursement	\$418	\$500	\$0	\$500
4057	Mentoring Program	\$0	\$0	\$18,000	\$15,000
4060	Fee for Services	\$6,750	\$10,000	\$21,750	\$10,000
4063	Business Manager Support	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$0
4070	NDSBA Publications	\$650	\$500	\$0	\$500
4075	Policy Services Projects	\$91,787	\$90,000	\$8,132	\$8,000
4078	Policy Services Subscriptions	\$55,438	\$50,000	\$154,005	\$132,000
4080	Supt Evaluation Income	\$10,800	\$10,800	\$10,625	\$10,000
4085	Training Grant Income	\$6,547	\$50,000	\$0	\$0
4090	BoardBook Subscription Income	\$24,750	\$26,000	\$33,250	\$33,000
4095	Miscellaneous	(\$469)	\$1,000	\$3,266	\$1,000
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,324,383	\$1,304,757	\$1,690,040	\$1,572,051
	EXPENDITURES				
5000	Equipment Purchases	\$8,845	\$10,000	\$9,766	\$8,000
5100	Office Supplies	\$8,293	\$7,000	\$4,370	\$5,500
5105	Conv/Seminar Supplies	\$5,879	\$6,500	\$0	\$6,500
5110	Computer Software	\$4,654	\$5,500	\$19,455	\$5,500
5120	Corporation Taxes	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
5140	Staff Expenses	\$27,086	\$25,000	\$12,298	\$20,000
5160	Board Member Expenses	\$38,465	\$20,000	\$22,057	\$20,000
5180	Board Meetings	\$2,980	\$3,000	\$290	\$3,000
5200	Contract Service	\$39,795	\$40,000	\$34,763	\$40,000
5205	Financial Services	\$15,130	\$15,000	\$19,509	\$19,000
5207	Envisi	\$0	\$30,000	\$45,000	\$32,000
5220	Insurance-Personnel	\$104,132	\$105,000	\$86,220	\$137,229
5221	LTD, Life, AD&D Insurance	\$2,928	\$3,500	\$3,296	\$3,800
5240	Telephone	\$4,164	\$3,750	\$3,218	\$3,500
5260	Postage	\$10,789	\$11,500	\$7,126	\$7,300
5280	NDSBA Bulletin	\$14,305	\$38,750	\$25,436	\$31,000
5300	NDSBA Seminars	\$13,815	\$17,000	\$15,025	\$17,000
5320	Convention	\$80,444	\$110,000	\$126,802	\$120,000
5330	School Board School	\$50	\$0	\$50	\$0
5360	Legal Services Expenses	\$395	\$1,200	\$1,736	\$1,200

NDSBA Budget Worksheet

2025-26

5362	Legal Direct	\$6,306	\$8,345	\$4,526	\$7,500
5365	Legal Services Affiliation Expense	\$3,780	\$5,435	\$7,560	\$5,500
5400	National Conf Registrations	\$4,675	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
5440	Office Salaries	\$588,412	\$625,050	\$599,148	\$721,312
5442	Staff Bonuses	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0
5445	Legal Direct Profit Sharing	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$27,500
5447	Health Savings Contribution	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$14,250	\$18,000
5450	Depreciation Expense	\$21,930	\$0	\$0	\$0
5480	National Association Dues	\$42,278	\$28,875	\$28,875	\$30,030
5500	NDSBA Publ Expense	\$657	\$5,000	\$0	\$750
5510	Other Publications	\$946	\$500	\$368	\$500
5520	Regional Meetings	\$7,365	\$10,000	\$3,139	\$7,500
5560	Insurance-Association	\$11,552	\$11,000	\$14,106	\$15,000
5580	Legislative Expenses	\$217	\$3,000	\$1,143	\$650
5600	Audit	\$9,675	\$10,500	\$11,685	\$11,750
5640	Medicare Tax Expense (1.45%)	\$8,532	\$9,136	\$8,688	\$10,459
5660	Social Security Tax Expense (6.2%)	\$36,481	\$39,063	\$36,822	\$44,721
5680	Federal Unemployment Tax	\$252	\$300	\$378	\$400
5700	ND Unemployment Tax	\$346	\$2,000	\$256	\$1,000
5740	Contingency	\$560	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
5765	Training Grant Expenses	\$7,713	\$30,000	\$0	\$0
5780	SEP Retirement Plan	\$29,384	\$31,253	\$30,701	\$37,441
5820	Policy Services Expenses	\$2,352	\$3,750	\$18,833	\$25,000
5825	Supt Evaluation Expenses	\$8,905	\$9,000	\$8,905	\$9,000
5833	BoardBook Subscription Expenses	\$19,500	\$20,750	\$27,417	\$28,000
5835	Threat Assessment Training Expense	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
5840	Building Expenses	\$25,484	\$30,000	\$29,407	\$31,000
5850	Business Manager Support	\$0	\$10,000	\$892	\$0
5855	Business Manager Mentoring Prog	\$0	\$0	\$8,689	\$8,500
5860	Barb Norby Scholarship	\$550	\$2,900	\$0	\$2,900
8002	Materials & Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
8006	Miscellaneous Expense	\$29,578	\$0	\$22,424	\$10,000
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$1,264,580	\$1,376,556	\$1,314,628	\$1,541,942
	REVENUE less EXPENDITURES	\$59,802	-\$71,799	\$375,412	\$30,109