

**2026 NDSBA WINTER SUMMIT:  
GOVERNANCE & WORKFORCE  
BSC NATIONAL ENERGY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
BAVENDICK STATE ROOM**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2026**

**8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Breakfast**

**8:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. Recognition Process During Negotiations**

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

**9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Issues in a Non-Negotiation Year**

*Seth Thompson, Attorney/NDSBA Legal Affiliate, Vogel Law Firm*

**10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Break**

**10:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. Experienced HR Panel Discussion**

*Moderator: KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, NDSBA General Counsel  
Judith Billehus, HR Director, Williston Basin School District No. 7  
Amanda Denevan, Assistant HR Director, Williston Basin School District No. 7  
Stacey Geiger, HR Director, Bismarck Public School District  
Brittnee Nikle, HR Director, West Fargo Public School District*

**11:15 a.m. - Noon**

**Staying in Your Lane (and Working Together):  
Board-Administration Roles**

*Moderator: Amy De Kok, NDSBA Executive Director  
NDSBA Board Members:*

*Nathan Berseth, Richland 44 Public School District  
Michelle Orton, Dickinson Public School District  
Patti Stedman, West Fargo Public School District  
Lynn Carlson, Finley-Sharon Public School District  
Carrie Zachmann, Beach Public School District  
James Vannett, Nedrose Public School District*

**Noon**

**Adjourn**

**Thank you to our sponsor!**



**2026 NDSBA WINTER SUMMIT:  
GOVERNANCE & WORKFORCE**  
**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6**  
**BAVENDICK STATE ROOM**

---

**8:30 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.**

**Recognition Process During Negotiations**

Amy De Kok, Executive Director, and KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, General Counsel for NDSBA, explain the required first step in the negotiations process: the school board's formal recognition of the appropriate negotiating unit and the representative organization. Participants will review statutory timelines and board responsibilities, including when to issue notice to negotiate and how to handle petitions, posting requirements, and the board's decision and notice of recognition so negotiations can begin on schedule.

**9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.**

**Issues in a Non-Negotiation Year**

*Seth Thompson, Attorney/NDSBA Legal Affiliate, Vogel Law Firm*

This session will provide legal and practical guidance on common issues school boards and administrators should watch for during years in which their board and education association are not engaged in negotiations. Issues might include vague language or disagreements about language in the negotiated agreement; problems with implementing provisions in the negotiated agreement; areas of the negotiated agreement the board may want to consider in future negotiations; areas of the negotiated agreement the board may want to discuss with the education association before future negotiations; monitoring and tracking the implementation of certain sections of the negotiated agreement; maintaining and improving relationships; knowing each party's role in interpreting and implementing provisions of the negotiated agreement; etc.

**10:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.**

**Experienced HR Panel Discussion**

*Moderator: KrisAnn Norby-Jahner, NDSBA General Counsel*

*Judith Billehus, HR Dir., Williston Basin; Amanda Denevan, Asst. HR Dir., Williston Basin; Stacey Geiger, HR Dir., Bismarck; Brittnee Nikle, HR Dir., West Fargo*

Panelists in this session are experienced Human Resource (HR) leaders from school districts across the state of North Dakota. They work in school HR roles every day and can provide practical pointers, tips, and compliance guidance in a wide variety of employment topics: recruiting, hiring and retention; employee relations and problem-solving; compliance and risk management; collaboration and communication; values, culture, and student impact; policy and handbook development and monitoring; legal compliance minefields; etc. This is a moderated panel that will include a wide range of moderated questions, but we also invite audience questions.

**11:15 a.m. - Noon**

**Staying in Your Lane (and Working Together): Board-Administration Roles**

*NDSBA Board Members: Nathan Berseth, Richland 44; Michelle Orton, Dickinson; Patti Stedman, West Fargo; Lynn Carlson, Finley-Sharon; Carrie Zachmann, Beach; James Vannett, Nedrose*

In this panel discussion, moderated by Amy De Kok, the NDSBA Board of Directors will discuss how effective boards and superintendents keep governance and management roles clear while working as a unified leadership team. Panelists will share real-world examples, common friction points, and practical strategies for communication, decision-making, and accountability. Attendees will leave with takeaways they can apply to strengthen trust, clarify expectations, and support productive board-superintendent relationships.