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Hello and Happy Summer!

I hope this brief column finds you and yours well and enjoying these beautiful days of summer. It is a wonderful time of year to catch up with our kids and/or grandkids, enjoy the great outdoors, do a little gardening, and immerse ourselves in terrific books and lake water.

I hope you're doing all that and more!

In my last column, I wrote about the 69th legislative session and celebrated our successful efforts to defeat 6 voucher bills that would have for the first time allowed public dollars to pay for private school tuition. We also supported legislation to make it possible for teachers to earn a lifetime teaching license in 25 years instead of 30 years.

“We successfully defeated 6 voucher bills that would have for the first time allowed public dollars to pay for private school tuition.”

We fought for 3% salary increases for non-education public employees for each year of the next biennium; we successfully lobbied the Governor to veto a bill that would have moved the PERS health plan from grandfathered status to an ACA compatible plan that would have shifted healthcare costs from the state to the state employees.

There were more wins, but there were also some setbacks, especially our inability to move the legislature to increase the per pupil payment by more than 2.5% for the next two years.

That one stings because it makes it harder for school districts to make adequate progress in addressing the teacher shortage in ND, as well as offer salary increases that our teacher workforce desperately needs. Rest assured that we will be laser-focused throughout the interim and next session to correct that oversight.

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One of the best things we have done so far this summer is to award over \$75,000 in scholarships to members and NDU members' children pursuing their educational goals. The ND United Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) organization and contributions to our Foundation are tax deductible.

**NICK ARCHULETA
ND UNITED PRESIDENT**



Legislative Wrap-up



JOEL CRANE
Press Secretary

We start this wrap-up of the 69th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota with an enormous note of gratitude toward all of you, the members of North Dakota United. At the start of this year's session, our union was facing historically fearsome headwinds in the form of legislative proposals to degrade, diminish, privative and destroy the systems of public education and public services in our state.

As evidenced below, our members, leaders and activists stepped up in numbers we've never seen before and made the difference in both turning away bad legislation, while also helping to pass several bills of merit that will benefit all North Dakotans.

Thank you for answering your union's repeated calls to action, both during session and beyond! And, as promised, let's recap.

Vouchers

Perhaps the biggest highlight from this session was our members' successful opposition to vouchers: our members led the fight to defeat not one, not two, but SIX private school voucher bills.

These bills, which would have used public dollars to pay for private school tuition, would have wreaked havoc on North Dakota's public education system. These programs tend to be wildly expensive, and had just one of these bills passed, it would almost certainly have planted a seed that would grow over time, leaving less money for the K-12 budget in the future.

Two bills had a real chance of becoming law. HB 1540 was introduced by Rep. Ben Koppelman (R-West Fargo), and it would have provided parents with roughly \$1,000-\$4,000 per child attending a non-public school, based on their family's income. This bill passed the House and Senate but was vetoed by Gov. Kelly Armstrong in the final weeks of session.

Governor Armstrong vetoed the bill because North Dakota United and other pro-public education groups were poised to refer the issue at the next election. In his veto message, he said, "Passing a voucher bill that caters to only a small segment of North Dakota's student population all but guarantees a voter referendum and threatens to derail the prospect of good school choice policy for years to come. We only get one bite at this apple, and House Bill 1540 bites off more than North Dakota citizens can stomach."

In other words, Governor Armstrong is pro-voucher, but he recognized HB 1540 was politically toxic. In his veto message, he encouraged lawmakers to approve SB 2400, which would have provided vouchers based on income to every student enrolled at a non-public school, ranging from \$1,000-\$3,500.

The bill also included \$1,000 for every K-12 student in the state to spend on educational services.

The bill, which would have cost \$110 million every year going forward, failed on the House floor by a vote of 78-14, defeated by a unique coalition of pro-public education lawmakers, fiscal conservatives and pro-home school lawmakers who did not want to send state money to homeschoolers, as they feared such an investment would come with homeschool teaching regulations.

In response to this and repeated past legislative fights about private school vouchers, North Dakota United, the North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders (NDCLE), and the North Dakota School Boards Association (NDSBA) have formed a coalition called North Dakotans for Public Schools, a grassroots group that will seek out policies that protect and defend our public schools from attacks.



ND United members join House Education Committee hearing during the 2025 legislative session.

Lifetime Licensure

The Legislature finally passed HB 1238, which lowered the threshold for educators to receive their lifetime teacher license from 30 years to 25 years. The bill, which originated from an idea that came from NDU members in Fargo during the last legislative session, originally called for 20 years, so 25 years was a compromise. Almost all the testimony delivered to the Legislature in support on this bill came from NDU members.

According to the Education Standards and Practices Board, "any teacher may apply online in their NDTeach account after July 20 for the lifetime license once they have reached 25 years of licensure in ND and met the reeducation requirements of the license they currently hold – they do not need to wait until their current license is up for renewal."



ND United members join Governor Armstrong at the signing of the Lifetime Teacher Licensure bill.

Book Ban

In addition to HB 1540, Governor Armstrong also vetoed two other bills we were tracking. The first was SB 2307, which would have required libraries to move “sexually explicit” content to areas not easily accessible to children. State’s attorneys would have been tasked with prosecuting violations, and state funds could have been withheld from schools or libraries in violation. The bill would have cost about \$2 million in the first four years.

Governor Armstrong called the bill a “misguided attempt to legislate morality through overreach and censorship and added, “if a parent doesn’t think [a given book] is age appropriate for their child, then that is a parenting decision.”

Our members helped lead the way on this issue. Minot Education Association’s Randi Monley and Bismarck Education Association’s Mariah Ralston, both NDU members and co-chairs of Right to Read ND, represented a vocal opposition to the bill; Bismarck’s Christine Kujawa was interviewed live on TV in response to the veto message. The Senate sustained the governor’s veto by a vote of 25–20.

State Employee Health Insurance

The third bill that Governor Armstrong vetoed was SB 2160, which effectively opened the door for future Legislatures to require state employees to pay a portion of their health insurance premiums, which they do not currently. Governor Armstrong said premium-free health insurance was one of the state’s “strongest and most useful recruitment and retention tools. ... SB 2160 disposes of that tool and replaces it with a more expensive alternative.”

Although the bill originally passed in the Senate by a vote of 44–2, the Senate failed to override the governor’s veto, by a vote of 31–15. Several lawmakers changed their vote because they heard directly from NDU members. Well done, all of you who spoke out on this important issue!

School Meals

Another disappointment was the defeat of HB 1475, which would have provided universal free school meals for all children in North Dakota's public schools.

The bill had broad public support (as demonstrated by a [poll we ran in December 2024](#).) and would have cost \$140 million. Instead of making free school meals universal, lawmakers voted to slightly expand the number of students who qualify for free school lunch, to students whose families are within 225% of the federal poverty line. That's an increase from 200%, which passed last legislative session.

Higher Ed Tenure

HB 1437, which started as a ban on tenure at two-year institutions of higher education, was amended to alter tenure and post-tenure review and signed by Governor Armstrong.

Despite this disappointing news, the Governor did act in response to more than 100 emails sent to his office by NDU members and supporters. SB 2003, the higher ed funding bill, was amended to strike language in HB 1437 prescribing the makeup of a "culminating post-tenure evaluation committee" and add due-process protections to post-tenure evaluation.

In the final version of SB 2003, the culminating committee language was added back in while due process protections remained. Our members and allies have now defeated significant attacks on tenure and academic freedom for the second consecutive legislative session.

Special Ed Study

HB 1530 was the direct result of North Dakota United's [Special Education Collective](#), born out of a survey they did of special educators from around the state. It's a bill that instructs Legislative Management to study the needs of special education teachers so the state can address the special education shortage and provide supports for special educators in the future. It was passed overwhelmingly and signed by the Governor!

PERS Investment

HB 1234 would transfer funds from the Strategic Investment and Improvements Fund (SIIF) to the Public Employees Retirement System (NDPERS) fund, holding true to funding the pension plan after closing it to new employees. The bill passed without much debate and has been signed by the Governor.

Letters to the Editor

NDU members made a powerful impact this legislative session, and that was reflected by attention in the media. Newspapers across North Dakota published dozens of letters from our members: 48 letters from NDU members were published at least 103 times.

Many letters appeared in multiple newspapers, ensuring our message was heard across the state. Of the 103 published instances:

- 70 opposed voucher bills
- 12 supported free universal school meals
- Nine opposed banning books
- 12 addressed other critical legislative issues

For perspective: Voucher proponents placed only 24 total letters, with just 14 supporting vouchers. NDU members clearly controlled the narrative on voucher schemes in our state. Well done!

Media Stories

ND United made waves in local media as well. “North Dakota United” was mentioned, and either President Nick Archuleta or one of our members were quoted, in at least 60 unique stories this legislative session. That’s an average of one story every other day.

Our members kept public education front and center throughout the session. Our constant presence in the media generated real pressure and helped shape the outcome of important bills.

Legislative Wins Can’t Happen Without You



From the negotiating table to the kitchen table, union wins don’t stop at the workplace. They show up in your paycheck, your healthcare, your time with family.

Together, we don’t just change our workplaces, we change our lives. But without your involvement, the fight for real improvements becomes that much harder.

COVER STORY:

ESP of the Year Joan Hall's Love for Kids is Real and Rewarding



JOEL CRANE
Press Secretary



Joan Hall's deep love for the kids she works with and her unwavering commitment to their success earned her the 2025–26 North Dakota United Education Support Professional of the Year award, a recognition Hall never expected but humbly embraced.

After school one day this past January, Joan Hall, a special education aide at Myhre Elementary School in Bismarck, received a call from a number that wasn't in her list of contacts.

"I was getting ready to leave, and I think Lori (Furaus) called me, and I didn't know who she was," Hall said. When Furaus introduced herself as a field consultant for North Dakota United, Hall said she didn't know what to expect.

"When she started talking, I'm thinking, they're going to want me to, like, come to a meeting or do something," Hall said, with a laugh. "And I was like, 'OK, I'll listen and see what happens.'"

The purpose of that phone call was to let Hall know that she had been nominated by her peers for the 2025-26 ND United Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year award and was selected as one of three finalists.



Hall's initial reaction was skepticism, she admits, because none of her colleagues had mentioned to her that they had nominated her. "(Lori) started talking about this nomination, and I seriously thought it was a scam," she said. "I didn't know if it was real, at first. And so, I just kind of waited and waited, and then I didn't hear anything. So, I thought, yeah, I don't know what that was. ... Then, one day I got a call again, and I'm, like, wait! This IS real!"

Imagine then her surprise as the process to select this year's ESP of the Year kept getting more and more real. Starting with a finalist ceremony at her school in February, which was attended by Bismarck Superintendent Jeff Fastnacht, members of the Bismarck School Board, NDU President Nick Archuleta and more.

"I would have been satisfied with the ceremony at my school for just being nominated," Hall said. "I was just glad to be nominated. I mean, it felt like a win right there. And, you know, all the, important people that came. I did not expect that at all."

"I would have been satisfied with the ceremony at my school for just being nominated."

Hall's fellow finalists for this year's awards were Brenda Muller, elementary secretary for Hillsboro Public Schools, and Laurie Holcomb, a special education paraeducator at South Middle School in Grand Forks. They also received individual recognition ceremonies at their schools during February and March.

"I think it's awesome that you guys do a celebration for all the nominees," Hall said. "I mean, to me, like I said, that would have been enough. ... The fourth graders all made cards for me and congratulated me. They were so cute, and even little first graders, you know, would say, 'I hope you win the award, Miss June.' ... It was great, I loved it."



After each finalist ceremony was held, the NDU ESP Advisory Committee met to discuss each nominee's qualifications. And a winner was announced, first at our ESP Conference in Bismarck on April 5 and then again at Delegate Assembly on April 12. This year's NDU ESP of the Year was Joan Hall.

Hall started off her speech at Delegate Assembly by thanking the two NDU members who had nominated her: Harlan Stewart, a paraeducator at Myhre, and Emma Schatz, a special education teacher at the school.

"Harlan's) my colleague and really, ... we're a family now," she said. "I've been taking care of his little boy since kindergarten. ... And then, Emma Schatz, a special ed teacher that I just started working with this year, and I was just so surprised that she nominated me for this. You know, we just met and just started working together."

She then reflected on her journey, starting with growing up in Bismarck and leading to working at Myhre for the past 25 years. "I grew up in a middle-class family. I was sent to Catholic school, (a) private school, and in our school, I just saw secretary, principal, teachers, and some nuns and priests. ... There was no inclusion, and so I was not familiar.

"Fast forward, I'm married (and) I have my own family," she continued. "We moved back to Bismarck, and I had been a stay-at-home mom. Both of my kids were in school, so I wanted to find a job ideally with school hours. If I could find a job in a school, I was really kind of a secretary, so that was my idea.

But I had a friend who said there's an opening at our school for a special ed aide, and (helping) this little boy in a wheelchair. And I said, 'Oh, I don't know anything about special needs children; I've never dealt with them.' She said, 'Just come and meet him. He's so cute, you know, just come and meet him and see what you think. And so, I went and met him, and he was so sweet, and he won my heart. And I said, 'OK, I'll give it a try.'"



Stewart read from his nomination letter at Hall's finalist ceremony while standing by his son, Ted.

“[Joan] began working with my child in kindergarten and has shown unwavering love and support every step of the way.”

“From a parent's perspective, Joan has become an important part of our family,” he said. “She began working with my child in kindergarten and has shown unwavering love and support every step of the way. My child, who has Down's Syndrome, can be stubborn, mischievous and defiant at times. Joan meets these challenges with respect and kindness because she sees beyond the behaviors to the sweet, caring child who simply wants to please.”

As much as winning ESP of the Year has meant to Hall, the biggest wins of her career come from the small moments of standing alongside a special-needs child and watching them succeed at a task they have struggled with accomplishing.

“If you're working on sight words with a student for weeks,” Hall said, as an example, “and maybe you have a stack of 10, 15 words, and you go over them and they remember, let's say, after a week like five out of the 15, and then you're so happy they remembered some. And then you just keep working. And then, one day, they just know them all. And it's such a win and you're just so proud that they love the celebration of their success. And yeah, I do, too. I love it, too.”



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FLAND Teacher of the Year Feole Enthusiastic About German Language, Culture



KELLY HAGEN
Communications Director

As a German teacher for Red River High School in Grand Forks, Erika Feole is likely familiar with an old saying by former German chancellor Otto von Bismarck, in which he cautioned against diving into all the messy details of how things are created, or “seeing how the sausage is made.” More probably, she can even translate the phrase “en Deutsch,” if asked.

But as an educator, mentor and leader in the field of foreign language studies, Feole regularly goes against this advice, teaching her students the value in exploring as many of the tiny details on how anything is made in this world, including literal sausage.

It was, therefore, kind of fitting that we had an opportunity to observe Erica practicing her craft of immersive teaching in early May by deep-diving into the history of a kind of sausage, namely currywurst.



“It was believed to be invented in 1949,” Feole tells her students. “It is German sausage covered in ketchup and sprinkled with curry powder and often served with french fries. This is a common street food that people would eat. It’s easy to eat with your hands, it’s not too messy, and it’s relatively inexpensive, which is really nice.”

Feole regularly “brings the heat” into her instruction by incorporating her own personal experiences, family heritage and the numerous cultural tchotchkes that she’s collected from multiple trips to Germany into her teaching.

And her process works, as evidenced by Feole having been named the 2024 Graciela Wilborn Foreign Language Teacher of the Year, which is awarded by the Foreign Language Association of North Dakota (FLAND).

“For me, German isn’t just another subject,” Feole said. “It’s something that is my life, not just something that I teach. And most of the stuff that you see around me, in my classroom, is my stuff – stuff that I have gotten on my trips (to Germany), stuff that I’ve gotten from my sister or my mom and dad.”

“For me, German isn’t just another subject. It’s something that is my life, not just something that I teach.”

Feole said her goal is to inspire students into being as excited as she is to learn more about German language and culture. Her enthusiasm for the subject can be contagious, she said, and she finds it helps to motivate student learning.

“Sparking curiosity in students, I think, is one of the key things,” Feole said. “The curiosity to want to learn a little bit more – and it can be hard with some students – but most want to be here, and if I can show my enthusiasm, I hope that basically gives them a little boost.”

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When Feole received the 2024 Graciela Wilborn award at the FLAND Summer Conference this past August, she continued what has become a family tradition. Her dad, Walter Wolf, taught German in Center, N.D., and won the same award in 2002, while Feole was one of his students. “During high school I took German for three years, and at that time, my dad was also my teacher,” Feole said. “He was a very active (FLAND) member, as well.”

Wolf didn’t just inspire one daughter into following in his footsteps and becoming a German teacher; he inspired two. Feole’s sister, Martina Dvorak, teaches German through ITV to area schools out of Mandan, and she also won the Foreign Language Teacher of the Year award in 2022.

“My sister also teaches ITV German,” Feole said, “She started German at (University of North Dakota), and so, we were both involved with German at UND. She became a teacher here at Red River as well, and then moved out west, back to the home area.”

Feole doesn’t just collect German mementos and knickknacks in her classroom; she’s also amassed an impressive list of titles and responsibilities, in all her roles as an educator and union member.

“I am a member of North Dakota United, Grand Forks Education Association, and the GFEA secretary,” she said. “With FLAND, I am also the treasurer. I am the president of North Dakota AATG, which is the American Association of Teachers of German. I'm also the GAPP coordinator for the German American Partnership Program between Grand Forks, Red River and Central High Schools, and the Lise Meitner Gymnasium in Remseck, Germany. So, it's a very busy time.”

“I am a member of North Dakota United, Grand Forks Education Association, and the GFEA secretary. With FLAND, I am also the treasurer. I am the president of North Dakota AATG, which is the American Association of Teachers of German.”

Just like the immersive learning experience she endeavors to provide all her students, Feole commits herself wholeheartedly in all she does. That level of involvement comes from always keeping an open mind toward any opportunities she's offered to help and starting from a place of “ja” instead of “nein.”

“I enjoy GFEA, it is a great soul thing for me, (and) it's a great professional thing for me,” Feole said. “I enjoy being with like-minded people. We have similar goals that we have for our district and for our state and for our country, and it's nice being around those same types of people.”

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Member Voices: Title I Funding is Essential to Student Success in North Dakota

Is it just me, or does it feel like public education is under attack?

SARA MEDALEN

Reading and math interventionist,
Sunnyside Elementary School in
Minot

As an academic interventionist in a Title I school, I'm deeply concerned about the dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education. Title I funding, which comes from the federal government, provides critical support to schools that serve high numbers of students from low-income families. These potential cuts to Title I funding threaten to strip away valuable resources that our students rely on every day.

According to an analysis by the Center for American Progress, 180,000 teaching positions could be lost, affecting 2.8 million students in low-income communities. This attack on public education, at the national level, will negatively impact our most vulnerable students, families, and communities.

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In the 2023–24 school year, 260 schools across North Dakota received Title I funding. These critical funds allow us as educators to provide the necessary resources for students to overcome challenges as early in their education as possible.

Cutting Title I funding would most harm the kids who are already facing numerous, substantial obstacles in their young lives.

It would also put extra stress on the school staff who would need to add to their already heavy workload if funding for small-group instruction, interventionists, paraprofessionals and social workers is taken away.

As a teacher, I can tell you: The needs are growing, not shrinking.

Title I funding impacts real kids with real lives, and the costs go well beyond academics. The funding is for the kindergartener who sat in my “Books & Braids” chair at 7:45 a.m., crying her eyes out about the police taking her dad to jail the night before. It’s for the student who said, “Mrs. M, I came to school today because I didn’t want to miss Run Club.” It’s for the student whose single parent works two jobs to make ends meet; who needs academic support not because of lack of effort, but because there’s often no one at home with the time or energy to sit down and help with reading or math.

It’s for the child in foster care who’s moved more times than we can count, carrying trauma that no eight-year-old should ever have to bear. It’s for the child whose parent is battling addiction, whose mornings are unpredictable, whose backpack might be empty, and whose heart carries far more than a young child should. It’s for the child whose family couldn’t afford preschool, who walks into kindergarten already behind; not because of ability, but because of access. And yes, it’s even for countless kids like my own son, who needed extra support beyond what the classroom alone could provide.

These are the faces of Title I. They are not just students, they are humans we teachers pour our hearts and souls into because we care so deeply about them and their families. These are students who deserve the same chance to succeed as anyone else, to build strong relationships with trusted adults, to gain confidence and skills, and to see a future that includes college or career opportunities.

These students are why Title I funding matters and why protecting it should never be up for debate.

As teachers, parents and community members, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed and as if we have no power to make changes at the federal level.

The truth is our collective voices *do* have power. There are small steps that we all can take as individuals, and we can also encourage our family and friends to do the same. By doing so, I promise, we all can make a big difference in this fight for our students in need! Here are a few ideas for how you can get involved:

- **Contact your elected officials.** Call, email or write a letter to your local and state lawmakers. Let them know why Title I funding and public education matter so much to you and your family.
- **Post on social media.** Share the amazing things happening in public schools and help others understand the very real impact of funding cuts to programs such as Title I. Our communities need to hear our stories about what’s happening in education, both the stories that make people smile and the challenges.
- **Write a letter to the editor.** Write a short letter to your local newspaper sharing your concerns about potential cuts to Title I funding. It can be scary to put your voice out there, so consider teaming up with friends or colleagues to write it together. Many people don’t realize where school funding comes from or how deeply those dollars impact students, schools and entire communities.

Fred (Mr.) Rogers once said, *“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”*

It’s time for all of us who care about kids, about community, and about the future to be those heroes and protect public education.

(Sara Medalen is an active member of both ND United and the Minot Education Association. She was the 2020 North Dakota Teacher of the Year.)



2025 Delegate Assembly Brings NDU Members Together

Each year, women and men from different communities across the state, public workers from our K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, city, county and state employees, retired workers and aspiring educators, come together for a gathering we call the North Dakota United Delegate Assembly. This annual convening is our union's primary business meeting, in which ND United members are able to elect state leaders, vote on important issues, and chart a course toward a better future.

This year's Delegate Assembly, held on Saturday, April 12, at the Gateway to Science Center in Bismarck, was no different. President Nick Archuleta, NEA Director Brenda Seehafer and Executive Director Chad Oban gave their opening remarks on the state of our union.

All three reflected on the extraordinary challenges that we all have had to face, and emphasized how our members have always risen, together as the state's top champion of great public education and great public services, to meet these obstacles.

Holcomb was nominated for this year's award by her friend and former co-worker Jennifer Olson, and her letter was read to the assembled crowd.

This year's featured guest speaker, NEA Foundation President Sara Sneed, then gave a rousing speech on the state of the world, and how National Education Association members can utilize assistance from their organization in order to stand firm in our beliefs and push back against those who oppose strong public education and services in our nation.

NDU-Retired: Active, Energized, and Making a Difference



KAREN ASKEROOTH
NDU-Retired President

Greetings to All!

I had the pleasure of sharing some NDU-Retired FABULOUS FACTS with the NDU Delegate Assembly and thought I would share with ALL the NDU membership and Retired Members.

FAB FACT 1: North Dakota United works to honor the service of NDU-Retired members with a secure, healthy, and productive retirement.

FAB FACT 2: NDU-Retired has over 1,600 members, which equates to 16% of North Dakota United's total membership.

FAB FACT 3: NDU-Retired members work to:

- strengthen public education, public services and healthcare, and their professions.
- Improve key federal and state programs, traditional pensions, and healthcare coverage for today's and tomorrow's retirees.
- help affect positive change for North Dakota's children, public educators, public employees, and communities.

FAB FACT 4: We are executing some exciting opportunities that have been available right now thanks to the NEA-Retired Organizing grant. NDU-Retired gave a free Lifetime NDU Retired Membership worth over \$500 at the Delegate Assembly. Congratulations to Angel Lindseth.

FAB FACT 5: We partnered with local associations in hosting retirement celebrations! Gatherings were held in Jamestown, Mandan, and West Fargo, sponsored by NDU-R and organized with the help of local leaders. It was very successful! The events were for soon-to-be retired members as well as any other board members and/or membership at large. These events are a unique celebration for the retirees and their families, including door prizes, a short explanation of our retired organization, our goals and activities, and provide an option for members to join.

FAB FACT 6: We have launched the NDU-Retired Book Club, which serves as a vibrant community where educators can continue to engage intellectually and socially. Each session, members gather to explore a diverse selection of literature, spanning genres and themes that resonate with their shared experiences and interests.

Discussions are rich and reflective, allowing participants to draw from their vast wealth of knowledge and perspectives gained throughout their careers.

This club not only fosters a love for reading but also strengthens connections among members, offering a supportive environment that encourages lifelong learning and camaraderie in a meaningful post-retirement chapter.

Each Book club lasts for 6 weeks, with 3 Zoom discussion sessions held every other week. The book club is free for NDU-R members. Please register today at courses at ndunited.org and check out all our upcoming book club selections!

In closing, you can see what an ACTIVE, ENERGIZED, AND FABULOUS group NDU-Retired is. Just go to ndunited.org and click the RETIRED membership and join this VIBRANT Retired GROUP.

You don't have to be retired to join, check out the information on the NDU web site.

Wishing you ALL a restful Summer and I look forward to seeing you all as FABULOUS MEMBERS of NDU-Retired.

In Solidarity,
Karen Askerooth
NDU-R. President

Register for Upcoming Leadership and Advocacy Summit

Registration is now open for the North Dakota United Leadership and Advocacy Summit, which is scheduled for July 31-August 1 in Bismarck.

This year's summit will be a great opportunity for member leaders to hone their organizing and advocacy skills to help build stronger locals. The summit will cover essential topics including:

- Building and strengthening your local association and worksite
- How to identify opportunities for growth and engagement
- Activating, motivating, and communicating with fellow union members
- And much more!

Register for the Summer Leadership & Advocacy Summit



[Register Here](#)



Betty Lu Lenthe Speech Education Grant Now Available



The North Dakota United Foundation is thrilled to announce the Betty Lu Lenthe Speech Education grant to our members. In recognition of the legacy of Betty Lu Lenthe, the grant promotes speech as part of the overall forensic program including speech, debate, and drama activities.

This grant is available to assist an individual member or group of members or their students in speech, debate, and drama activities. The award is open to individual members, students, student organizations, or educational institutions.

Applicant creativity in the use of the grant is encouraged. Potential uses include supporting individual or team travel to competitive regional or national events; summer drama workshops for students; or purchasing of specialized equipment for drama. More than one award may be made. It is anticipated that about \$1,000 will be available to support student activities in 2025.

All NDU Foundation grant opportunities available to further enhance public education and public service in North Dakota. Grants are open for application year-round, as long as funding is available.

Please visit <https://ndunited.org/foundation/scholarships-and-grants> to learn more about the Betty Lu Lenthe Speech Education Grant, as well as the variety of scholarships and grants offered by the NDU Foundation.

The North Dakota United Foundation is recognized as a public foundation by the IRS under section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. Donations to the Foundation may be tax deductible for federal and state income tax purposes. Contact the NDU Foundation today at 701-223-0450 or foundation@ndunited.org for more information.

North Dakota State TOY 2025 Day of Professional Learning



The North Dakota United Foundation proudly partnered with the North Dakota State Teachers of the Year Chapter to offer a Day of Professional Learning for former Teachers of the Year and finalists on April 7, 2025, at the Heritage Center in Bismarck. The day provided Teachers of the Year with an opportunity to network, share best practices, and participate in the ND legislative session.

This was truly a wonderful day of learning as the group spent some time at the ND State Capitol sitting in on the Senate Education Committee, participating in a Governor's office bill signing ceremony, and observing the passage of the school cell phone bill on the Senate floor.

They spent most of the day at the Heritage Center learning from each other. Seven of the state's best educators presented information on topics ranging from service learning to music in the classroom, to high impact teaching. The participants ended the day with plans to return to their schools and share all they had gained with their colleagues.

The Day of Professional Learning provided an opportunity for NDSTOY members to:

- highlight and explain experiences and expertise that hold the potential to strengthen teaching and learning in North Dakota;
- connect and collaborate with each other, and;
- consider ways that the NDSTOY Chapter can bring its vision and mission to life by sharing what we learn with colleagues across the state.

The NDU Foundation would like to thank the following event sponsors: Bravera Bank, Aspire Credit Union, North Dakota United, Cooling & Heating Unlimited, Horace Mann, Sanford Health, Railway Credit Union, United Printing, Grant County State Bank, Capital City Construction Inc., NRG Technology Services, and the State Bank & Trust of Kenmare.

