

**STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
April 27, 2026**

State Board of Public School Education members met at the Hughes Educational Building Board Room 2, at 806 N. Washington St., Bismarck and via Microsoft Teams on Monday, April 27, 2026.

**State Board Members in Attendance:**

Chair Sonia Meehl  
Vice Chair Mike McHugh  
Board Member Morgan Forness  
Superintendent Levi Bachmeier  
Board Member Jason Rohr

**State Board Members in Attendance Virtually:**

Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom  
Board Member Eric Nelson

**Others in Attendance:**

Mark Openshaw (Assistant Attorney General), Janet O'Hara (RRVEC)

**Others in Attendance Virtually:**, Shauna Marchus (NDDPI Admin), Adam Tescher (NDDPI), Melissa Hamilton (Attorney General Paralegal),

Chair Meehl called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. CST. Shauna Marchus conducted the roll call. Chair Meehl noted that a quorum was reached with 7 board members in attendance.

**1. Approval of Meeting Minutes: March 23, 2026**

Jason Rohr moved to approve the minutes from the March 23, 2026, meeting. Morgan Forness seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**2. REA Audit Presentation: Red River Valley Education Cooperative (RRVEC)**

Janet O'Hara, director of RRVEC, provided an overview of the RRVEC's operations, finances, and initiatives. She explained that RRVEC serves 21 school districts across northeast North Dakota, supporting more than 14,000 students and 1,155 teachers with a small staff and fiscal support from North Valley CTC. The latest audit reported no issues. This year's priorities include strengthening leadership due to frequent superintendent turnover, supporting member schools, support implementation of state initiatives and legislative mandates, and expanding professional development offerings, particularly in technology and AI. RRVEC continues to deliver a wide range of services, including professional development tied to legislative requirements, AI training for educators, LETRS literacy training for more than 520 teachers, career exploration events, and book studies. The cooperative also creates data dashboards for each district to support strategic planning and communication. Several districts in the region have earned recognition as Blue Ribbon schools or are ranked in the top 10% statewide, while all 21 districts have completed Science of Reading training. RRVEC recently secured a workforce grant focused on drone and autonomous systems pathways, supported by strong partnerships with UND and Mayville State. Challenges include limited funding, staffing constraints, and uncertainty surrounding state initiatives, as well as a significant statewide shortage of math teachers, which affects districts and statewide professional development efforts. O'Hara also highlighted the positive impact of therapy dog programs implemented in several schools.

One board member asked for clarification of the challenge shared in the presentation related to REA communications. Janet suggested that this could be improved by sharing duties more broadly and using virtual meetings more effectively. A related concern was raised about siloing and duplication of services across REAs. Janet noted that differences in REA size and regional needs make shared staffing difficult, though statewide mandates like the science of reading and math training have increased consistency in some areas. Janet was also asked whether limited staffing was due to finances or shortages; she replied both, noting that REA staff are often recruited by districts, putting the REA in a difficult position. When asked about board composition, she said districts may appoint a board member, but all current representatives are superintendents because meetings occur during the day. A financial question was raised by the Board regarding the ending fund balance. Janet reported that the balance is about \$572,000, approximately one year of expenses, and explained that the board tends to be conservative. She stated that she has proposed ideas to spend some of it down, but in-person professional development has declined due to substitute shortages, which has reduced spending. Finally, when asked what position she would add if possible, she said a technology specialist, as she currently handles many tech and clerical tasks herself and schools in the region often lack tech coordinators.

Mike McHugh moved to approve the RRVEC Audit Presentation. Jason Rohr seconded. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**3. Grand Forks Air Force Base School Board Appointments**

Supt. Bachmeier moved to approve the appointment of Lucelyn Edwards to the Grand Forks Air Force Base Public School Board. Mike McHugh seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Final approval of the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for the annexation of property from the Parshall Public School District No.3 of Mountrail County to the Lewis and Clark Public School District No.161 of Mountrail County in North Dakota (Andes Petition)**

Mark Openshaw noted one correction to page 9 stating that the taxable valuation of the property \$5,080 is divided by four students, instead of five as stated at the hearing, which results in a calculation difference, with the per student taxable valuation now being \$1,270.

Mike McHugh moved to approve the final Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for the Andes Annexation Petition with the calculation correction as noted. Morgan Forness seconded. No further discussion.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>VOTE (Yes/ No)</b>
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom	Yes
Vice Chair Mike McHugh	Yes
Board Member Morgan Forness	Yes
Superintendent Levi Bachmeier	Yes
Board Member Eric Nelson	Yes
Board Member Jason Rohr	Yes
Chair Sonia Meehl	Yes

Motion passed 7-0

The meeting was adjourned at 1:41 p.m. CDT

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



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Sonia Meehl  
Chairwoman

5/18/26

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Date



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Levi Bachmeier  
Executive Director & Secretary

5/26/2026

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Date

Minutes taken and prepared by Shauna Marchus