

**STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 25, 2024**

State Board of Public School Education members met in the CTE Conference Room, 15th Floor at the State Capitol and via Teams on Monday, November 25, 2024.

State Board Members in Attendance:

Chair Sonia Meehl
Vice Chairman Mike McHugh
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom

State Board Member Present Virtually:

Board Member Jason Rohr
Board Member Levi Bachmeier
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler
Board Member Eric Nelson

Others in Attendance: Allyson Hicks (Asst. Atty General), Mark Openshaw (Asst. Atty General), Shauna Marchus (NDDPI Admin),

Others Present Virtually: Donna Fishbeck (NDDPI), Bob LaFavor (NDDPI IT), Melissa Hamilton (Office of Atty General)

Chair Meehl called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lyndsi Engstrom moved to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2024 - regular meeting. Mike McHugh seconded the motion. No discussion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Review the record, discuss, and take action on the annexation of property from the Williston Basin School District No.7 of Williams County to Eight Mile School District No.6 of Williams County in North Dakota (Copenen Petition)

Chair Meehl and Mark Openshaw read through the petition.

There was discussion regarding section (C)(2) and the language used related to taxes, levies and bonded indebtedness. Allyson Hicks clarified the terminology used and explained standard statutory language. The Board discussed the language in the petition and the intent of the County Committee regarding taxes.

Mike McHugh moved that the State Board's understanding of the County Committee's intent is that the property would be subject to all tax levies of the district being attached to, and no tax levies of the district being detached from. Jason Rohr seconded the motion. No further discussion.

NAME	VOTE (Yes/ No)
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom	Yes
Board Member Eric Nelson	Yes
Board Member Jason Rohr	Yes
Vice Chair Mike McHugh	Yes
Chair Sonia Meehl	Yes
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler	Absent – No Vote
Board Member Levi Bachmeier	Absent – No Vote

Motion Passed 5-0.

Levi Bachmeier joined the meeting virtually at 1:15 pm
 Superintendent Baesler joined the meeting virtually at 1:25 pm.

Board members listed relevant factors to be considered and added to the Findings of Fact. There was discussion and questions from members regarding what is included in the findings from the county. Allyson Hicks clarified that the County Committee’s findings in sections (O) and (I) will automatically be included unless the State Board removes them. She warned against making global statements about the benefits or detriments of educational opportunities, programs, or types of schools as a State Board.

Lyndsi Engstrom moved to remove the factors listed in section (I) of the County Committee findings related to neighborhood schools benefiting the children, and students receiving more attention in smaller schools. She noted that the factors related to the petitioner’s preference for a K-12 school and bussing convenience should be retained.

Eric Nelson seconded the motion. No further discussion.

NAME	VOTE (Yes/ No)
Vice Chair Mike McHugh	Yes
Board Member Levi Bachmeier	Yes
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom	Yes
Board Member Eric Nelson	Yes
Board Member Jason Rohr	Yes
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler	Yes
Chair Sonia Meehl	Yes

Motion Passed 7-0.

Lyndsi Engstrom moved to approve the Coponen petition for the following reasons:

- Transportation is provided by the Eight Mile School District No. 6 for the petitioners' children
- Petitioners are aware that their taxes will increase
- The per student valuation of petitioned property is reasonable
- The Williams County Committee unanimously approved the petition
- There was no opposition to the petition at the hearing before the Williams County Committee.

Levi Bachmeier seconded the motion. No further discussion.

NAME	VOTE (Yes/ No)
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler	Yes
Board Member Jason Rohr	Yes
Vice Chair Mike McHugh	Yes
Board Member Levi Bachmeier	Yes
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom	Yes
Board Member Eric Nelson	Yes
Chair Sonia Meehl	Yes

Motion passed 7-0. The Coponen petition is approved and will take effect July 1, 2025.

3. Final approval of the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for the annexation of property from the Nedrose Public School District No.4 of Ward County in North Dakota to the Minot Public School District No.1 of Ward County in North Dakota (McKibben Petition).

Mike McHugh moved to approve the McKibben Petition Final Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order. Lyndsi Engstrom seconded the motion. No discussion.

NAME	VOTE (Yes/ No)
Board Member Jason Rohr	Yes
Vice Chair Mike McHugh	Yes
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler	Yes
Board Member Levi Bachmeier	Yes
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom	Yes
Board Member Eric Nelson	Yes
Chair Sonia Meehl	Yes

Motion passed 7-0.

4. Final approval of the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for the annexation of property from the Williston Basin School District No.7 of Williams County to Eight Mile School District No.6 of Williams County in North Dakota (Schaefer Petition)

Levi Bachmeier moved to strike item 1 of section N of the Draft Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order from the Schaefer Annexation which mentioned smaller classroom sizes and opportunities for students to connect with teachers, based on concerns about the Board becoming involved in programmatic or parental preferences. Lyndsi Engstrom seconded the motion.

Discussion: The Board discussed whether it was appropriate to remove this section, given it had previously been approved as part of the annexation findings. Allyson Hicks confirmed the Board could amend these Findings of Fact, without affecting the previous approval of the annexation. The discussion also clarified that the language in a separate section (O) finding about the petitioner's preference for a smaller school setting was acceptable, as it reflects the petitioner's perspective rather than a definitive fact.

No further discussion.

NAME	VOTE (Yes/ No)
Board Member Eric Nelson	Yes
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler	Yes
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom	Yes
Board Member Levi Bachmeier	Yes
Board Member Jason Rohr	Yes
Vice Chair Mike McHugh	Yes
Chair Sonia Meehl	Yes

Motion passed 7-0.

Levi Bachmeier moved to approve the Schaefer Petition Final Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order as amended. Mike McHugh seconded the motion. No further discussion.

NAME	VOTE (Yes/ No)
Vice Chair Mike McHugh	Yes
Board Member Jason Rohr	Yes
Board Member Lyndsi Engstrom	Yes
Superintendent Kirsten Baesler	Yes
Board Member Eric Nelson	Yes

Board Member Levi Bachmeier	Yes
Chair Sonia Meehl	Yes

Motion passed 7-0.

There being no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Minutes taken and prepared by Shauna Marchus