

MINUTES – Board Meeting

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Teams

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) meeting was called to order at 8:00 am by Board Chair Cory Steiner. Board members present were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Dena Venneman. Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, and Arlene Wolf (DPI) were absent.

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Becky Pitkin and Mari Riehl from ESPB, Mark Openshaw from Office of Attorney General. Amber Haskell, Amy Flicek, and Lori Furaus all from ND United were present along with Michelle Griffin from UND. Other online guests also joined the meeting.

New board members are Katelyn Benning replacing Siri Coleman and Jennifer Jung replacing Sheila Schlafmann.

Introductions were held.

Motion to Include Additional/Amended Agenda Items – Items to add to the agenda include board case for Jeremy Lund, applicant requests from William Fleming and Michelle Arnold Nitengale, Becky is asking for guidance on three other individual situations, and moving Jennifer Pecoraro to admin cases. Patti made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Seconded by Angela. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion to Ratify June Licensure List – Patti made a motion to ratify the June licensure list. Motion seconded by Dena. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

CASES

Pedersen, Stetson – Mr. Pedersen's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent for alleged violation of the Code of Professional Conduct for Educators Commitment to the Student (67.1-03-01-02.) Patti asked if the board usually gets involved in these situations. Cory said it is normally a DPI issue when families have concerns about 504s being followed. Mark also questioned and added that it doesn't fall in our purview and there are other avenues for these types of complaints. Patti made the motion to dismiss the case. Jenny seconded the motion. Patti asked if we normally follow up to let them know how they can proceed with their complaint. Cory added it does look like a local issue but if they want to take it further, DPI is more suitable. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Chua, Diane – Ms. Diane Chua's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent for alleged violation of the Code of Professional Conduct for Educators. Patti asked if we still require the three witnesses to validate the complaint. Becky had looked in this and we are allowed to take the complaint with just one witness, as sometimes there is just one witness. Patti asked if there was a district investigation as she didn't see it in the materials. There was not one submitted. Patti made the motion to dismiss. Angela seconded the motion. Both Patti and Angela thanked the parent for the concern but hope they take the pathway of starting at the local level with their concern. Board members who voted in favor of dismissal were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Lund, Jeremy – Mr. Lund's file was reviewed after a phone call to ESPB informing ESPB of a Domestic violence-Assault; Felony C Violation of Statute 12.1-17-01.1 and also 15.1-13.26(5b). Becky shared Jeremy followed up and told her he checked himself into a facility. Cory asked Mark for more guidance as it is a felony. Mark reminded the board of the automatic revocation crimes – crimes against a child. This is one of those automatic revocation crimes. We offer a settlement agreement to suspend the license and postpone any additional action until the criminal case is heard. Upon the conclusion of the criminal case, if they are found guilty, board revokes. If they are not found guilty, then board revisits the case. Patti asked about the previous time Mr. Lund's file was reviewed last year and if they were related. Becky shared that the discharge with case from last year was heard by the board. Becky shared the board dismissed the case. Patti made a motion to offer a settlement agreement to suspend the license until resolution of the criminal case. When this case is resolved the board will revisit. Angela seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Pavlish, Landon – Mr. Pavlish's file was brought back to the board following a new criminal charge with a hearing date of August 26, 2026. Mark summarized that June 30, 2025 he was issued a settlement agreement. In clause 4 the settlement agreement states if criminal charges are brought forth, the board can revisit the case. Settlement agreement included a letter of reprimand and to complete the NASDTEC ethics course. Mr. Pavlish did complete these requirements. The charge is a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct - not one that warrants automatic revocation. The charge is from the action that the board previously discussed. Mark clarified that the disorderly charge describes a hazardous condition was created by this conduct. Cory asked Dena about participating in this case as she works for the same school district where Landon was teaching at the time. Mark summarized the options. Dena explained she heard about the case but was not on the board when it was first discussed. She feels she can participate without bias but would take the board's recommendation. Cory made the

motion to allow Dena to participate in the case. Jenny seconded his motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Mark clarified that if the board revisits, the current grooming rules would apply to the situation. Patti clarified what action the board previously took. Patti made a motion to reopen the previous case. Motion seconded by Katelyn. They both commented that with the new grooming rules that came in effect the month following his last case, this makes it worthy of reopening the previous case. Mark explained the board has all options on the table – similar to starting new with the case. Becky explained the new statute 67.1-03-01-02(7) as it defines grooming. The board unpacked the sexual misconduct section of this rule. July 2025 the rule became effective. Last month two cases were heard with this new law in effect. The board suspended both licenses until completion of the ethics course. The incident does go into the NASDTEC Clearinghouse when this occurs. Those were the only two times the board has heard such cases since the new law. Since Mr. Pavlish already completed the ethics course, discussion was held on how long the board would want to suspend, and what would then trigger the board revisiting the case. Patti clarified what options the board has if they don't want to "take the license." She was concerned with the length of time the suspension might be if the court case is not heard in a timely manner. Patti made a motion to offer a settlement agreement to suspend the license based on the violation of 67.1-03-1-02(7) until the criminal case concludes. Board will then revisit the case after the criminal case is resolved. Dustin seconded the motion. Dustin shared he is struggling with this. He asked if the board will be previewed to the information from the criminal case once the outcome is reached. Mark said yes the board will get information from the case. Patti questioned if the board doesn't suspend now but if the board could review after the case if he is found guilty. She also wondered if the board had not previously heard this case, would they know if a person in ND was found guilty of a similar misdemeanor, would the board know about it? She is struggling with how to handle the suspension or not. Becky reminded the board that last month there was not a conviction and the board suspended and required ethics course. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Fernandez, Ana Marie –Mark summarized how the board heard this case last month. The settlement agreement revoked the license following a complaint from Grand Forks Schools. The settlement agreement has not been signed. Mark explained that without her signing, we can't revoke the license without going to administrative hearing in accordance with Chapter 28-32. Normally the recipient has twenty days to respond to the settlement agreement. Becky explained that many attempts were made to try to communicate with Anna Marie. Becky was initially in communication with her but she has now gone silent. Mark explained the board can wait and allow more time if they wish. Angela made a motion to move to litigation due to lack of response, and Patti

seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Nelson, Malaun – Mark summarized how the board heard this case in December of 2025. He is currently incarcerated in Grand Forks - convicted of multiple charges that warrant the automatic revocation. Charges are now at the federal level. Mark has not had any success getting communication back on the settlement agreement. Mark is not certain when the trial is scheduled. There could always be a plea and the board could revoke as normal procedure, but he is asking how long the board would like to wait. Patti made the motion to move to litigation in accordance with 15.1-13-25. Dena seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Becky asked the board if they would like to issue an RFI as we have a teacher accused of misconduct in Minnesota. This person self-disclosed the information in a phone call to the office. Becky talked to the Minnesota attorney and a settlement agreement has been issued. Board would like Becky to issue the RFI.

Becky asked the board if they would like to ask for additional information from the district that filed a complaint. The teacher has not returned his letter of explanation and before moving forward, Becky asked for board approval to ask the district for any investigation they had completed. Board approved this.

The regular meeting recessed at 9:19am.

Administrative Subcommittee – Called to order at 9:19am by Cory Steiner, and reviewed by Administrative Subcommittee of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Administrative Subcommittee members present were Jennifer Jung, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner and Dena Venneman. Dustin Hager had left the meeting due to a medical emergency.

Kranz, Susan – Ms. Kranz's file was reviewed following a Request for Inquiry from a parent for alleged violation of the Code of Professional Conduct for Educators. Patti made a motion to dismiss and Jennifer seconded. Patti added that this should have been handled by the school district and that step was missed. Jennifer agreed that the school board should have been involved. Cory felt they could revisit if the school board does an investigation and they still want to bring this back. Board members who voted in approval were Jennifer Jung, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Pecoraro, Jennifer – Ms. Pecararo's file was reviewed following a Request for Inquiry from a parent for alleged violation of the Code of Professional Conduct for Educators.

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Becky added that DPI is aware of this situation. Cory made a motion to dismiss, Patti seconded. Cory added that if DPI investigation concludes, they could always revisit. Board members who voted in approval were Jennifer Jung, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman.

Dustin Hager returned to the meeting at 9:26am

Mayer, Kay – Ms. Mayer's file was reviewed following a Request for Inquiry by a parent for alleged violation of the Code of Professional Conduct for Educators. Patti made the motion to dismiss, seconded by Dena. Patti believes it should first go to the SPED unit before the board. Dena was in agreement. Board members who voted in approval were Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Administrative Subcommittee adjourned at 9:28am and the regular meeting resumed.

Capstone Update- Mark shared he knows we have a response due and the litigation team is involved and aware, but he has no other update. Confirmed they all received the Preservation of Records – to keep all communication records. Mark did clarify that they are not suing board members as individuals but rather just as their role as an ESPB board member. Mark welcomed the board to reach out to him with any questions/concerns.

9:31am adjourned for a break.

Meeting continued at 9:36am.

ND RISE – Erin and Marijke provided a summary of their activities this summer. They have completed two mentor trainings so far. Marijke attended and presented twice at the International Mentoring Conference in May. She shared her presentation with the board: From Mentoring Program to Career Pathway: The metamorphosis of ND RISE & the cultivation of dynamic educator leaders. She also had a poster presentation titled: The North Dakota RISE Ripple Effect: Mentoring as a Catalyst for Professional Growth & Longevity in Education.

Patti asked if mentors feel rejuvenated by participating in mentoring and remembering the reasons they became a teacher. Marijke explained they have quantitative data on the retention, and the qualitative data also supports the value the mentors and instructional coaches both feel on being involved in ND RISE.

Director's Report:

- **Teachers of Tomorrow:** They are not going to pursue legislation in ND, as student teaching is a barrier at this time.
- **Credential work:** Becky stated she and Mari have met with various stakeholders to gather feedback on the credentials (will be called endorsements) moving to

ESPB. They have met with the librarians, higher education institutions that offer principal and superintendent programs, NDCEL three times, and meet with the special education directors next week. They have received positive feedback.

- **Sexual Abuse Prevention:** Becky shared resources from the ND Children Sexual Abuse Prevention task force. The materials included are from the May 21 meeting. She also referred to a book for children called, Rosie's Big Secret.
- The state literacy conference is next week. There is a session especially for higher education faculty to review the expectations of the reading legislation. A recently edited self-assessment rubric will be shared as Phase 3 of the response to legislation, beginning in 2027.
- Becky shared her upcoming work with PE Standards and her recent presentation at the Secondary Math Conference.
- **ESPB Core Variance:** Mari shared information on the number of core variance reviews that have been completed by ESPB staff – about 550. Half of the reviews result in the person meeting the core requirement. This was a result of the board's motion in May, providing the variance for out of state applicants.

Action Items:

ESPB office has received information that a person with a CTE license is hired for next year for a job that is not CTE. Administrative rules state a CTE teacher with a bachelor's degree and who completed transition to teaching can test into a non-CTE area. However, this person had their transition to teaching waived by ND CTE. Patti made the motion to grant this exemption for transition to teaching. Angela seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Teacher request: National Board Certified Teachers are paid a stipend by a flow through grant by ESPB. They need to be a public or non-public classroom teacher. Michelle Arnold Nitengale is currently teaching Title I. She is asking for board approval of her stipend. Historically the board approved an instructional coach but this is a little different. Angela made a motion to approve. Jennifer shared she believes she is in the classroom actively working with students. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Teacher request: William (Jim) Fleming has had three Alternate Access Licenses and has not attempted either of the required Praxis tests yet. He wrote to the board to ask for an extension to test. Cory made the motion to deny the request and Dustin seconded. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

May Minutes, May and June License/Financial Reports – The May 2026 financial report showed \$134,147.45 in total income received, \$87,934.88 in total expenses, with a net income of \$46,212.57. The May 2026 license/financial items totaled 753. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, licensing fees, and application fees.

The June 2026 financial report showed \$183,460.24 in total income received, \$86,366.50 in total expenses, with a net income of \$97,093.74. The June 2026 license/financial items totaled 1,007. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, licensing fees, and application fees.

Jenny made a motion to approve the May meeting minutes, May and June license, and financial reports. Motion seconded by Patti. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

ProEthica – ProEthica is online professional development modules that support ethical decision making using relatable scenarios to examine professional risks. ETS is currently regenerating ProEthica to enhance it with updated content, module addressing ethics and AI. Pro-Ethica takes approximately 10 hours to complete. Becky is asking the board to think about ProEthica being accepted in place of one of a teacher's semester hour credits for renewal. So they could renew a five-year license with 5 credits and the ProEthica training, in place of 6 credits. This would require an administrative rule change. Board has the option to complete the training for free. They will discuss next month.

OSEL Collegiate License – ESPB office received a collegiate license from someone in Virginia. Office is unsure if we could/should issue an OSEL Collegiate License. Requirements for the current Collegiate License are outlined in Administrative Rule 67.1-02-02-15. Other State Educator License (OSEL) Administrative Rules are in section 67.1-02-06-03. Cory looked to Jenny for guidance. Jenny said she is leaning toward approving. This is another avenue to get others into the teaching profession. Jenny made the motion to accept the OSEL Collegiate License and approve on a state-by-state basis as determined by ESPB staff. Angela seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

ESPB Budget – The Budget subcommittee met earlier and ESPB shared their findings. Net income this year would be put into investments. Becky shared there was no special budget items this past year. Cory and Patti met with Becky and Cory recommended approving the budget. Patti made the motion to approve the ESPB budget as presented

and Dustin seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

ND RISE Budget – ND RISE is funded by a pass through grant from DPI. Cory and Patti also met previously as the subcommittee to discuss. Erin mentioned she would like to add an additional coaches' academy so that would be an additional cost for the upcoming year. Patti offered some suggestions previously on how to prepare the budget and better clarify items, however the subcommittee felt comfortable with the budget. Patti motioned to approve the ND RISE budget and Jenny seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Board Member Reports

NDACTE – Jenny had no updates as they do not meet over the summer

Association of Non-Public Schools – Nothing to report.

Association of School Administrators – Jennifer reported they have had discussions about the credentials moving to ESPB. She also shared the developments at the national level between the NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) and NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals). NDCEL will be joining NASSP (soon to be NPA – the National Principal Association). Cory added discussions have begun with legislators regarding the upcoming session.

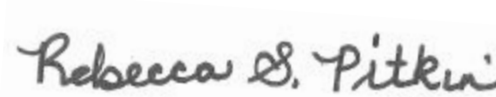
School Boards Association – Nothing to report.

DPI – No one present to report

Meeting was adjourned at 10:46am



Chair



Secretary/Executive Director