

## **MINUTES – Board Meeting**

Thursday, September 10, 2026

Microsoft Teams

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

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Becky Pitkin and Mari Riehl from ESPB, Mark Openshaw from Office of Attorney General, Arlene Wolf from DPI, Amy Flicek and Amber Haskell both from ND United, and other online guests.

Introductions were held.

**Motion to Include Additional Agenda Items** – Items to add to the agenda include Kristina Hausauer and a request from New Salem-Almont High School. Patti Stedman made motion to accept the agenda as amended, seconded by Angela Nagel. Following a voice vote, the chair declared the motion carried.

**Motion to Ratify August Licensure List** – Evan Kritzberger made a motion to ratify the August licensure list. The motion was seconded by Patti Stedman. Following a voice vote, the chair declared the motion carried.

## **CASES**

**Figuerroa, Jonathan** – Mr. Figuerroa's file is being reviewed due to a self-disclosed offense on his application for a substitute teaching license. Patti Stedman made a motion to grant the license with a requirements Mr. Figuero self-report any further offenses. The motion was seconded by Angela Nagel. Mark Openshaw explained if offenses occurred over 5 years ago, it is believed the person is rehabilitated. Patti Stedman believed this was a perfect example of a person who has been rehabilitated and deserves a second chance. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Eckmann, Michele** – Ms. Eckmann's file is being reviewed due to a self-disclosed license suspension. Becky Pitkin summarized she had an occupational board license denied so this is why it was brought to the Board today. Mark Openshaw highlighted in our administrative rules it says that if a person has had a license denied, the board may deny but do not have to do so. Cory Steiner asked if we had ever had this situation before and Becky couldn't think of a time when another occupational board license was denied and came before the Board. Patti Stedman questioned the most recent charge from 2024 as it was a bit confusing. Becky Pitkin clarified the two denials. Patti Stedman made a motion to grant the license with a requirements of Ms. Eckmann to self-report any further offenses. Sarah Lerud seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Paciaroni, Ann** – Ms. Paciaroni was a board case on May 14, 2026. The Board motioned to issue a settlement agreement stating the Board will reconsider the disciplinary complaint at the conclusion of the criminal case. Her license is currently suspended until the resolution of the criminal case. Mark Openshaw explained that her case has been resolved. The result was a deferred imposition and he explained that it works as a guilty charge. A probationary time exists through August 12, 2028. If she has no issues during this probationary time, then she will be deemed not guilty/dismissed. Patti Stedman questioned if we have heard any updates from Ann regarding how she is doing now. Several board members question if she has rehabilitated or taken responsibility for her actions. The Board has not asked for additional information. Becky Pitkin added the charge started as a felony and then pleaded down to misdemeanor. Patti Stedman asked if she could take the NADTEC ethics course before the license is reinstated. Evan Kritzberger made the motion to issue a settlement agreement to continue the suspension of the license requiring a letter explaining her resolution of the situation and to include any reference letters. Katelyn Benning seconded the motion. Mark Openshaw suggested the Board could table this until we get the desired letters. No Board members voted in favor. All opposed, motion failed.

Evan Kritzberger then motioned to table the current case until ESPB receives a letter from Ms. Paciaroni explaining the resolution of the situation and possible character/reference letters. Motion seconded by Katelyn Benning. Evan Kritzberger clarified that he first needs to know where she is at with resolving the issue that occurred. Patti Stedman added she hopes in the letter Ms. Paciaroni explains what actions she has taken to take responsibility for her actions. Cory Steiner added that he is not sure if the Board should just keep it suspended until 2028 when the probationary period ends. He added this is a difficult case. Becky Pitkin did clarify that there was a conflict of interest the first time this case was heard and Mark Openshaw stated that since it was deemed prior that an individual was allowed to participate in the case, that would follow through to this discussion of the case as well. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Breyer, Kensi** – Ms. Breyer's case is being reviewed due to a self-disclosed offense on her application for an interim substitute teaching renewal. Patti Stedman made a motion to grant the license with a requirement Ms. Breyer self-report any further offenses. She is currently a long term sub. Her license expires 9/19/26. Mark Openshaw added that this one is not beyond the 5 years of deeming as rehabilitated. Board would need to find she was unfit for the classroom or not rehabilitated if they are not wanting her to renew. Patti appreciated her letter and how she accepted responsibility for her actions. Dena Venneman also felt the letter was helpful. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Treleaven, Daniel** – Mr. Treleaven's file is being reviewed for a breach of contract complaint in 2021. At that time ESPB was unable to reach Mr. Treleaven and his license had expired, so the Board could not review the case. He is applying for a substitute teaching license renewal, and the complaint needed to be reviewed. Mark Openshaw clarified that since he paid his liquidated damages it cured the breach. Patti Stedman asked if we did have evidence the damages were paid. Becky Pitkin reported Daniel said he would be willing to go through his old statements if needed. Cory Steiner made a motion to grant the license. The motion was seconded by Katelyn Benning. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried. Jenny Bladow had to step away to take a phone call and was not present for the vote on the motion.

**Anderson, Alan** – Mr. Anderson's file is being reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was filed by West Fargo. No response has been received from Mr. Anderson after two letters with signed return receipts and multiple phone calls. Mr. Anderson is aware of the complaint. Patti Stedman recused herself from this case as she is a West Fargo school board member and believes she knows too much to be involved in this case. The complaint from West Fargo didn't include any investigation, but the district indicated they sent information to the West Fargo police department. The West Fargo police said they sent it to the FBI and BCI. The police reported to Becky Pitkin they are still waiting to hear an update. Mr. Anderson told Becky Pitkin on the phone that he would send the Board a letter of explanation and, to date, we have not received anything. Mark Openshaw explained the options the Board has before them. When in the court system, the Board usually suspends until a resolution. However, we don't know the status of the case in the system. Mark Openshaw added Mr. Anderson was given 20 days to respond and he has not responded. Becky Pitkin sent the letter to him on April 13, 2026. Dustin Hager asked questions regarding how the 20 day is determined. Mark helped to clarify and then explained options before the Board. Becky Pitkin asked about using a sheriff's service to deliver the letter. Evan Kritzberger motioned to offer a settlement agreement to suspend Mr. Anderson's license pending a response to the complaint and any character references. This settlement agreement will be delivered with the sheriff's service. If information is received the Board will revisit the case. Motion was seconded by Dustin Hager. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Brown Otter, Danielle** – Ms. Brown Otter's file is being reviewed due to a complaint filed by a district for breach of contract at Catholic Indian Mission/St. Bernard Mission School. Cory Steiner did add there was a previous case but today they are only discussing the materials related to this case. Cory clarified that she is currently employed in South Dakota as a school administrator. Becky Pitkin clarified there were no liquidated damages to be paid to cure the breach. Patti Stedman motioned to offer a

settlement agreement with a letter of reprimand. Angela Nagel seconded the motion. They both agreed it is difficult to do something, but they want to take some action on this case. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Daley, Devontae** – At the August 2026 meeting the Board passed a motion to request that Mr. Daley provide three character references to the Board for further review. The file is being reviewed because the applicant self-disclosed an offense on his interim substitute license application. Mark explained that he had been accused of a crime in Florida that, if it had resulted in a conviction or guilty plea, would trigger an automatic denial of a license in North Dakota. However, the case was ultimately dismissed. Since North Dakota law requires a conviction for an automatic denial, it does not apply here. Because he was not convicted, the license is not subject to automatic revocation.

If the Board would choose to deny Mr. Daley's application for licensure, they can do that under Administrative Rule 67.1-02-02-06(1) and NDCC 15.1-13-25(1)(c). Angela Nagel motioned to deny the license. Patti Stedman seconded the motion. Angela explains she feels this is just not ok for a teacher's behavior. Patti adds that this is troubling behavior, but she was pleased with his letter admitting what happened. Cory Steiner added it is just disturbing behavior to have him in front of students. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Angela Nagel, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. Sarah Lerud opposed. Motion carried.

Patti asked if there was any way that higher education could require students get a substitute teaching license earlier in their educational journey, so they don't wait until the end of the coursework and then find out they are not able to be licensed. Jenny said she would bring the issue to her NDACTE group.

**Basol, Seraphina** – Ms. Basol's file is being reviewed due to self-disclosed offenses on her application for a substitute teaching license. Cory Steiner disclosed that this is a Fargo Public School employee and he would leave it up to the Board to vote if he should participate. Jenny Bladow made the motion to allow Cory to participate in the case. The motion was seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, and Dena Venneman. Patti Stedman opposed. Motion carried.

Dr. Jennifer Jung also disclosed she works for Fargo Public Schools but does not know this person and believes she can be unbiased. Angela Nagel made a motion to allow Jennifer Jung to participate in the case. Jenny Bladow seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena

Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Mark reminded the Board that we have passed the 5-year point of her offenses. Angela Nagel motioned to grant the license. Sarah Lerud seconded the motion. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Hausauer, Kristina** – Ms. Hausauer's file is being reviewed after a request for inquiry was filed by a parent. The main complaint is the teacher is responding to students using AI and didn't return the parent's phone call. Patti Stedman made the motion to dismiss. Motion was seconded by Dustin Hager. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Administrative Subcommittee** – Called to order at 9:48 am and reviewed by Administrative Subcommittee of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Administrative Subcommittee members present were Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman.

**Pecoraro, Jennifer** – Ms. Pecoraro's file is being reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was filed by a parent. This case is related to the previous case from July, filed by the same individual. Sarah Lerud recused herself from this case as she is from Valley City and doesn't wish to participate in this case. Motion made by Patti Stedman to dismiss the complaint. Motion was seconded by Jennifer Jung. Administrative Subcommittee members who voted in favor were Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None Opposed. Motion carried.

**Haas, Melissa** – Ms. Haas's file is being reviewed after a complaint was filed by an individual. Cory Steiner motioned to dismiss this complaint and Dustin Hager seconded the motion. Administrative Subcommittee members who voted in favor were Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None Opposed. Motion carried.

Administrative Subcommittee adjourned at 9:56 am and a break was given until 10:01 am when the meeting reconvened. Evan Kritzberger stepped away from the meeting at 9:58 am.

**Director's Report** –Becky reviewed the directors report and highlighted the collaborative work completed with DPI to move the credentials to ESPB. The Joint Board's meeting is September 22. Becky also reviewed the Board's non-negotiables.

**Accreditation/Program Approval** – The executive director shared the following information relating to accreditation and program approval:

- **Turtle Mountain College** has received their formative feedback report and are working on their response. Co-Chairs for this state visit are Dr. Stacy Duffield (NDSU) and Dr. Jenny Bladow. Their visit is March 2026.
- **Mayville State University** has a national visit in Spring 2027 and Dr. Kim Marmon from University of Mary is the state representative.
- **University of Jamestown** submitted their reports in August and have a fall site visit date. This is a state visit, and the co-chairs are Dr. Katherine Terras (Certification Central) and Dr. Brittany Hagen (Mayville State University). Becky is attending state training, and presenting at the CAEP conference next week.

**ND RISE** – Marijke provided an update to the Board on the mentoring program. 640 mentor/beginning teacher pairs enrolled. The next training is Sept 24 and 25 and currently 64 are registered online. Coaches Academy - 43 have applied for this so far this year. Beginning teacher network grants have been awarded for the year. No total amount is available yet. Erin was part of a panel on teacher retention at the 2026 North Dakota Legislators Retreat on September 1.

**August Meeting Minutes, License, and Financial Report** – Jenny Bladow made a motion to approve the August meeting minutes, license, and financial reports. Motion seconded by Katelyn Benning. Following a voice vote, the chair declared the motion carried.

The August 2026 financial report showed \$144,927.43 in total income received, \$88,641.37 in total expenses, with a net income of \$56,286.06. The August 2026 license/financial items totaled 1685. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, licensing fees, and application fees.

**Board Request:** New Salem/Almont Schools is requesting more time for the Out-of-Field Endorsement. Patti Stedman motioned to deny the request. Motion seconded by Angela Nagel. Board members who voted in favor were Katelyn Benning, Jenny Bladow, Dustin Hager, Jennifer Jung, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Pro-Ethica** – Vouchers were provided for Board members to view Pro-Ethica. Pro-Ethica is online professional development modules that support ethical decision making using relatable scenarios to examine professional risks. ETS has recently regenerated Pro-Ethica to enhance it with updated content, a module addressing ethics and AI. Pro-Ethica takes approximately 10 hours to complete. ProEthica has multiple integration options including with teacher preparation programs, a possible requirement for alternative pathways to licensure, and/or used as district professional development. The Board had talked about the option of using Pro-Ethica as a reeducation option. Jenny

Bladow made the motion to approve using Pro-Ethica in place of 1 reeducation credit for teacher licensure renewal. Motion was seconded by Dena Venneman. Following a voice vote, the chair declared the motion carried.

### **Board Member Reports**

**NDACTE** – First meeting is coming up Sept 25. Nothing to report now.

**Association of Non-Public Schools** – Nothing to report.

**Association of School Administrators** – Dr. Jung described a board retreat coming up. Elem wants to work with Secondary to determine if they are going to come together as one group. Cory Steiner added the biggest 20 school districts meet soon so more info to come from this meeting.

**School Boards Association** – Nothing new. October convention is coming up.

**NDUnited** – Nothing new to report.

**DPI** – Arlene Wolf reported on Infinite Campus rollout. September includes so many reports due and things are very busy this time of year. School Site Visits are continuing for Superintendent Bachmeier. DPI is also working to update Pk-12 Strategic Vision. They are collecting information via a survey from Supt Bachmeier. Arlene shared results of the community survey helping to drive the Strategic Vision for the State.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:27am.

Chair



Secretary/Executive Director

