

**MINUTES – Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, December 8, 2022**  
Teams Meeting

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) meeting was called to order at 8:00am by Chair Brenda Tufte. Board members present by video conference were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Joshua Standing Elk, Patti Stedman, Brenda Tufte, and Superintendent Kristen Baesler. Cory Steiner joined the meeting at 8:48am.

Board members Andrea Fox and Ben Johnson were absent.

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Rebecca Pitkin, Mari Riehl, and Amy Bigelow from ESPB, Allyson Hicks from Office of the Attorney General, Joe Kolosky from DPI, Amy Fliczek from NDUnited, Jen Wallender from Western Governors University, and other online guests.

**Additions/Changes to the Agenda** – Additions to the agenda include cases for Brenda Kopyy and Joyell Bachler and a DPI Shortage report from Joe Kolosky at DPI. Becky noted the Bill will also need to approve minutes of both special meetings from November, in addition to regular minutes. Patti Stedman made a motion to approve the agenda with changes as noted. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. All voted in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

**Motion to Ratify October Licensure List** – Kathy Lentz made motion to ratify the November 2022 licensure list. Motion seconded by Amber Fridley. All voted in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

**CASES**

**Alicaway, Maria** – Ms. Alicaway’s file reviewed due to teaching without a valid license. Kathy Lentz made a motion to fine Ms. Alicaway \$100 and to file a Request for Inquiry on her administrator. Motion seconded by Joshua Standing Elk. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Joshua Standing Elk, Patti Stedman, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Espirituoso, Nera Yiena** – Ms. Espirituoso’s file was reviewed due to teaching without a valid license. Sonya Hansana made a motion to fine Ms. Espirituoso \$100 and to file a Request for Inquiry on her administrator. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Joshua Standing Elk, Patti Stedman, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

Joshua Standing Elk left the meeting at 8:16am.

**Knopp, Kayla** – Ms. Knopp’s file was reviewed due to teaching without a valid license. This was identified when her administrator was having difficulties completing her MIS03. Ms. Knopp formerly held an interim substitute license that still has a valid expiration date, but also held an alternative access license since then. A teacher cannot be the teacher of record or on an MIS03 while holding a sub license. Kathy Lentz made motion to fine Ms. Knopp \$100 and to send a Request for Inquiry to her administrator. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Brenda Tufte. None

opposed. Motion carried.

**McDonald, Leah** – Ms. McDonald's file was reviewed after she self-disclosed background offenses on her application for licensure. Board attorney Allyson Hicks reminded the Board that possession of marijuana has been significantly decriminalized, but perhaps Board should consider the dates of offenses.

Superintendent Baesler asked if a minor in consumption and a marijuana offense are similar according to the law. Allyson stated they are not. A marijuana offense is an infraction with a ticket is issued and a fine. An alcohol charge is still a misdemeanor. Siri Coleman made a motion to grant Ms. McDonald's license with the requirement that she self-report any future offenses. Seconded by Patti Stedman. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Decoteau, Tristan** – Mr. Decoteau's file was reviewed after he self-disclosed background offenses on his application for licensure. Kathy Lentz made a motion to grant Mr. Decoteau's license. Motion seconded by Amber Fridley. Kathy Lentz pointed out that Mr. Decoteau's first offense is now more than 5 years old. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Bachler, Joyell** – Before discussion began on this case, Brenda Tufte disclosed that Ms. Bachler is a former student of hers. Brenda does feel she can vote impartially. She will refer to remainder of Board whether or not there would appear to be a bias to an outside person. Amber Fridley made a motion to allow Brenda Tufte to participate in the case. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Those who voted in favor of allowing Brenda to participate in the case were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, and Patti Stedman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Ms. Bachler's file is being reviewed by the Board after a Request for Inquiry was received from New Salem-Almont School for breach of contract. She has accepted a position at University of Mary. Board members noticed there is nothing in the district's negotiated agreement that says a person cannot get out of a contract. Ms. Bachler submitted her resignation and the school board voted to deny her request. In the past few months with similar cases, the Board has voted to do a letter of reprimand for individuals who have breached a contract and moved to higher ed. Ms. Bachler is still working for Center for Distance Education, so if Board would vote to suspend her license, it would affect her teaching at CDE also.

Patti Stedman made a motion to issue Ms. Bachler a letter of reprimand. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Patti stated she feels at the very least, this needs to go in the clearinghouse. Sonya understands from a district perspective not having a teacher, but the teacher also did let her district know she needed assistance and didn't seem to receive that. Board members who voted in favor were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley,

December 2022

Page 3

Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Koppy, Brenda** – Ms. Koppy's file was reviewed for teaching without a license. Responses were received from both Ms. Koppy and her CTE director stating that Ms. Koppy was under the supervision of licensed staff from the time she was hired until her license was issued. Kathy Lentz made a motion to dismiss. Seconded by Siri Coleman. Kathy stated that based on the statement that was received from Ms. Koppy's administrator that she was supervised and working in partnership with licensed teachers and counselors, this feels different from previous cases. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Administrative Cases** – Reviewed by the Administrative Subcommittee of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Committee meeting was led by Cory Steiner and commenced at 8:49am. Administrative Subcommittee members present were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner.

Before discussion began, attorney Allyson Hicks asked the subcommittee members to refrain from using any student names they may see in the cases.

**Conley, Robert** – Mr. Conley's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent. Board members noted that the parent's report doesn't seem to match the reports of students interviewed. Sonya Hansana also pointed out that School Board Association law was referenced and seems that the rules there were followed. Patti Stedman stated she isn't sure it's Board's job to determine if something happened or if it didn't. The student whose parents filed Request for Inquiry is no longer attending the school.

Allyson said the Board's job is to determine if violations of Century Code or Administrative Code occurred. If they determine there was a violation of NDCC or Administrative Code, they should then determine the severity of violation, how to prevent it moving forward, and how to protect students.

No record of a police report, but it appears that it was reported to police in June 2022. Cory Steiner said he has empathy for the student but struggles to see how NDCC or Administrative Code was violated by the administrators named in the Request for Inquiry. If the subcommittee has further questions, they could request additional information. If committee doesn't feel there have been violations of Century Code or Administrative Code they could dismiss, or do a settlement agreement to issue a letter of letter of reprimand, suspension, courses required, ect.

Patti Stedman asked if no formal complaint was brought forth and that's why it was not investigated. If the administrators suspected there was more to it, did they not follow

December 2022

Page 4

mandatory reporter procedures by investigating further? Initial concern was brought forth in January 2022 and was investigated at district level that same month. Cory states he believes this is not within board's purview.

Sonya Hansana made a motion to dismiss the case. Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. Patti stated she thinks the reason this came before Board is because the parents don't necessarily know where to go to get help, but this isn't within the Board's scope. Administrative subcommittee members who voted yes were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Germundson, Jason** – Mr. Germundson's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent. This is related to the previous case for Mr. Conley. Sonya Hansana made a motion to dismiss. Motion seconded by Amber Fridley. Administrative subcommittee members who voted yes were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Hannig, Mark** – Mr. Hannig's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent. This is related to the previous cases for Mr. Conley and Mr. Germundson. Motion by Patti Stedman to dismiss. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Committee members felt this followed suit with the previous two cases. Administrative subcommittee members who voted yes were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Kathy Lentz left the meeting at 9:02am.

**Mailhot, Joshua** – Mr. Mailhot's file was reviewed by the subcommittee after it was identified that he was an administrator working without a valid license. It appears that he was hired in June 2022 with Grand Forks Public Schools. A 40-day provisional license was issued on September 27, 2022. Patti Stedman made a motion to issue Mr. Mailhot a letter of reprimand and \$100 fine. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Administrative subcommittee members who voted yes were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Tannahill, Kelli** – The Board issued Ms. Tannahill a Request for Inquiry at the November meeting after she had a teacher working without a valid license. In her response, Ms. Tannahill states that as soon as district learned the teacher didn't have a valid license she was working and paid as a paraprofessional. Patti Stedman made a motion to dismiss. Motion seconded by Amber Fridley. Administrative subcommittee members who voted yes were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

The Administrative Subcommittee meeting ended at 9:19am and the regular ESPB meeting resumed.

**DPI Shortage Data** – Joe Kolosky from DPI presented on teacher shortage data generated from the MIS03 reports. Shortage seems to be more than last year. DPI has to work each year to determine critical need content areas to report to the federal level. There is a bill that will be filed for this next session in an attempt to bring back teacher shortage loan forgiveness based on shortage area data. Right now, it's focusing on rural areas. The Board will see this information again in the coming months as they work to declare shortage areas for the 2023-2024 school year.

Siri Coleman left the meeting at 9:30am. The Board took a 10-minute break and resumed the meeting at 10:40am.

**November Minutes, Special Meeting Minutes, License and Financial Reports –**

The November 2022 financial report showed \$68,861.57 in total income received, \$78,876.63 in total expenses, with a net income of minus \$10,015.06. The November 2022 licensure report documented 869 items issued. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, and application fees.

Becky pointed out that the ending balance for November is not something to worry about, as it's extremely typical for our income ebb and flow for the year. Items to note in the budget include a flow-through grant for the Grow Your Own program, and increased technology fees for programming NDTeach for Frontline substitute license.

Budget is at 49% income and 40% of expenses 5 months into the fiscal year.

Cory Steiner moved to accept the November minutes, special meeting minutes, and November license and financial reports. Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. All voted in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

**ED Evaluation** – Brenda Tufte thanked the Board for their responses and very positive report. She received many comments on how well the Board works together and how well we are serving our stakeholders. Board members appreciate Becky's response and helping to provide flexible pathways to licensure. Cory Steiner thanked Becky for all she does. He states he's on a lot of boards and this is one of the most efficient. Becky was also commended for letting her team exercise their strengths. Superintendent Baesler expressed her gratitude and states she doesn't think she could have a better partner to work with in the relationship between DPI and ESPB. Brenda Tufte thanked Becky for her national association leadership and collaboration with other states.

All voted in favor of approving the Executive Director evaluation as written. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Director's Report** – Becky has met with stakeholders regarding changes to the Model Code of Ethics for Educators. In November, she has presented a professional

development workshop for Underwood School District on the Model Code of Ethics. December 11 to 13, Becky and ESPB Assistant Director Mari Riehl will attend the Professional Educator Standards Board Association meeting at the Nevada Office of Educator Development. A copy of the agenda for the PESBA meeting has been provided to Board members.

Becky has met with Senator Rust regarding amendments to the teaching permit bill. The changes have been submitted to legislative council.

**License Report** – This will move to the January agenda, so it can be examined in relation to shortage data. Becky would like everyone to be present for this information.

### **Board Member Reports**

**NDACTE** – The North Dakota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education is in discussion and working toward additional pathways to showing competency in reading and math in addition to the Praxis Core. Considerations we are looking into include its current function as a gatekeeper that prevents someone from investing time and money in teacher preparation courses if they have not shown proficiency in early program benchmarks. To address that concern if we move forward to a multiple pathway approach, the colleges plan to work collaboratively to gather data on students who do not pass Praxis Core and examine their success in coursework, field experiences, and Praxis Content and Principles of Learning and Teaching Praxis required for licensure. Additional considerations we are looking into are the role of the Praxis Core in earning a reading credential and required Title II reporting of Praxis Core and what that would look like without the Praxis Core scores to report. We are in discussion with ETS and the Department of Education and there is consensus in the workgroup to allow alternatives. It is on the agenda for our December 9<sup>th</sup> NDACTE meeting.

Another workgroup is exploring legislative sponsorship for financial support for student teachers willing to student teach in rural schools. This is still in the workgroup phase. Colleges of Teacher Prep are working collaboratively to review completer surveys and employer surveys of graduates in the field and analyzing that data.

**Association of Non-Public Schools** – Siri Coleman is not present. Becky did receive Attorney General's opinion that was requested last year regarding Teacher Support System mentoring for non-public schools. The Attorney General's opinion states that teachers at all schools, public and non-public, may participate as mentors and can receive grants as a part of this program. TSS Coordinator Erin Jacobson will present more about this next month.

**Association of School Administrators** – NDCEL Position Statements have just come out. They are in support of TSS mentoring not just for new teachers, but also for an additional year. They are also supporting removing the sunset clause on teaching permit. There has been some talk of short-term contract options for positions funded with grants.

**School Boards Association** – Nothing to report.

**NDUnited** – Not present.

**DPI** – The Governor's budget has added additional \$2.1 million for Teacher Support

December 2022

Page 7

System. Superintendent Baesler has been working with a number of legislators for the upcoming session. DPI is exploring offering continuing education options to teachers that could be used for license renewal if they are willing to have a high school student work with them. The high school student would get Learn Everywhere credit. Senator Bekkedahl is drafting a bill to pay student teachers, for individuals who would be student teaching statewide, not just in rural areas. A letter has been sent to US Department of Labor for an apprenticeship application. DPI is hoping to receive a response to the application by end of the year. A bill has been drafted to add additional funding for Grow Your Own programs. Superintendent Baesler has also added to the DPI budget for Grow your Own and Governor Burgum has added to that.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 am.

---

Chair

---

Secretary/Executive Director