

MINUTES – Special Meeting
Thursday, February 20, 2024
Teams Meeting

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) meeting was called to order at 8:00am by Chair Cory Steiner. Board members present by video conference were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Deb Follman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Superintendent Kirsten Baesler.

Board members Amber Fridley, Kathy Lentz, and Angela Nagel were absent.

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Rebecca Pitkin, Assistant Director Mari Riehl, and Amy Bigelow from ESPB, and Allyson Hicks and Mark Openshaw from Office of Attorney General.

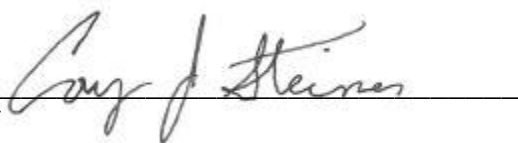
Gourneau, John – Mr. Gourneau has a teaching permit. This case came to the Board from the FBI and allegations are different from what has been seen in the past. To date, there has been no prosecution and no charges filed. Because this happened on a reservation, that is why it was investigated by the FBI. They reported that nothing in the investigation rose to the level of federal law it was sent down to the local prosecutor. Becky visited with that prosecutor and learned that there have been no charges filed yet. Allyson reviewed the Board's options: one is to do a full-fledged Request for Inquiry and hope to get a response before March meeting. The Board could send a settlement agreement, however because charges have not been brought forward, the likelihood of Mr. Gourneau signing is slim. The last option is to review the information received and the Board could decide this isn't something they want to pursue. Allyson recommends the board issue a Request for Inquiry and hope for a response before the March meeting.

Board members asked if Mr. Gourneau is still employed by a school district as a music teacher. It is the understanding of the office that the district was looking to mutually end his employment.

Siri Coleman made a motion to file a Request for Inquiry and request a response from Mr. Gourneau. Motion seconded by Deb Follman. Siri felt it was important to receive a response from Mr. Gourneau. Deb agreed. Cory Steiner agreed it's the Board's job to dig and get further information. It's in statute that a person has 20 days to respond to a Request for Inquiry, so hopefully information will be received before the March meeting. Deb asked if any district would be alerted if he tried to substitute teach in a different district. No, not at this time. The fact that he has a teaching permit instead of a license may be an indicator to a district, but they would have to know what to be looking for. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Deb Follman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16am.

Chair



Secretary/Executive Director

