

**MINUTES – Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, February 8, 2024**  
Teams Meeting

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) meeting was called to order at 8:00am by Board Vice Chair Kathy Lentz. Board members present by video conference were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Superintendent Kristen Baesler. Dustin Hager joined at 9:30am.

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Rebecca Pitkin, Mari Riehl, and Amy Bigelow from ESPB, Allyson Hicks and Mark Openshaw from Office of Attorney General, Amy Flicek from NDUnited, Michelle Griffin from UND, outgoing Board member Sonya Hansana, and other online guests.

Introductions were held.

Becky thanked outgoing Board member Sonya Hansana for her time on the Board. Sonya also thanked the Board and said it was a honor and privilege to have served.

**Additions/Changes to the Agenda** – Additions to the agenda include cases for Scott Klaudt and Mitchell Meier, a disability waiver request from Chelsea Harper, a letter from a teacher, and discussion of teaching without a license. Patti Stedman made a motion to approve the agenda. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. Motion carried.

**Motion to Ratify January Licensure List** – Evan Kritzberger made a motion to ratify the January 2024 licensure list. Motion seconded by Deb Follman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. Motion carried.

## **CASES**

**Duda, Hollyanne** – Before discussion began Patti Stedman stated that she sees Ms. Duda is a West Fargo teacher based on her email address, but she states she does not know Ms. Duda and is not familiar with any part of this case or this individual. Patti does feel she can be impartial. Kathy Lentz made a motion to allow Patti Stedman to participate in this case. Motion seconded by Jenny Bladow. Board members who voted in favor of allowing Patti Stedman to participate in this case were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Ms. Duda's file was reviewed after she self-disclosed background offenses on her application for renewal. Evan Kritzberger made a motion to grant the license. Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. Evan stated he also wanted to amend his motion to require Ms. Duda to self-report any subsequent offenses. Patti continued to second. He stated she fulfilled all terms set forth by the courts and based on her letter of explanation it appears that the offenses have led Ms. Duda to make positive changes. Her license did expire in December but the expiration date was extended to February 9, 2024, to allow time for Board review. Board members who voted in favor of granting the license were

Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Bilyeu, Angela** – Ms. Bilyeu’s file was reviewed by the Board after a Request for Inquiry was received from a school district due to breach of contract. Attorney Allyson Hicks wanted to point out a couple of facts that have been important to the Board in the past. Ms. Bilyeu had signed contract with Alexander Public Schools in April 2023. In July 2023 she signed contract with McKenzie County School District. Ms. Bilyeu paid her liquidated damages to Alexander Schools and they did cash that check. Evan Kritzberger asked if she negotiated the resignation and the district accepted her liquidated damages payment, is there anything the Board can do or is that in legal-sense binding? Allyson said typically yes, the payment and acceptance of the liquidated damages indicates acceptance of the resignation. There is no copy of the teaching contract between Ms. Bilyeu and the Alexander School District, so the Board doesn’t know what the terms were for sure. In the past, the precedent has been if the liquidated damages were paid, the case was resolved.

Siri Coleman made a motion to dismiss. Seconded by Kathy Lentz. Siri said based on the information received it appears Ms. Bilyeu has cured the breach and done what she needed to do to be released from her contract. Kathy agrees. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Beckstrom, Karson** – Mr. Beckstrom’s application was reviewed by the board due to self-disclosed background offenses on his application for an interim substitute license. Offenses occurred a significant time ago, when the applicant was much younger. No offenses since 2012. Kathy Lentz made a motion to issue Mr. Beckstrom’s license. Motion seconded by Deb Follman. Kathy stated all offenses are over 10 years old. Patti Stedman asked if there could be an amendment to self-report any subsequent offenses. Kathy did not feel that was necessary in this case. Deb felt he has taken positive steps to move forward. Siri Coleman asked if it was the amount of time since the offenses occurred that is impacting her motion to not have Mr. Beckstrom self-report? Kathy said yes, since it’s been 12 years, she doesn’t feel it’s necessary. Patti stated that she disagrees with that and since it’s drug and alcohol related it should be reported. Cory Steiner agrees, but can also see Kathy’s perspective that it’s been so long with no charges. Board members who voted yes were Deb Follman and Kathy Lentz. Board members who voted no were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. Motion failed.

Patti Stedman made a motion to issue Mr. Beckstrom’s license with the condition that he self-report any subsequent offenses. Seconded by Amber Fridley. Evan agrees with both sides and appreciates Kathy’s perspective, but feels to honor the profession as a whole it’s important to have him self-report. Cory Steiner appreciates everyone’s perspective and said a Board will never fully agree and that’s the sign of a well-

functioning board. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Tande, Levi** – At the June 27, 2023 special meeting the Board voted to suspend Mr. Tande's license until the outcome of criminal proceedings and if convicted of anything related to the factual basis of the case that it then be revoked under NDCC 15.1-13-25(1)(c, j) and Administrative Code 67.1-03-01-2(3,4,and 6). Last month attorney Allyson Hicks learned that Mr. Tande was charged with additional offenses for materials prohibited. A few days later those charges were rolled into the previous case and Mr. Tande pled guilty. Based on the previous settlement agreement, revocation would be required.

Jenny Bladow made motion to revoke Mr. Tande's license. Motion seconded by Deb Follman. Jenny stated the Board needs to follow what's in the settlement agreement. Deb also stated Mr. Tande has pled guilty to the charges. Siri Coleman asked if there is any difference if he pled guilty or was found guilty – Allyson said no, as settlement agreements are drafted such that there is no way to get around the revocation if he's pled guilty, found guilty, nolo contendere, pled to lesser charges, ect. Board members who voted yes to revoke Mr. Tande's license were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Meier, Mitchell** – The Board voted in April 2023 to suspend Mr. Meier's license until he's completed the NASDTEC ethics course at his own expense. To date, the signed settlement agreement has not been returned. In September 2023 the Board voted to move to litigation. Allyson would like to know how the Board would like to move forward. Evan Kritzberger asked what options are available, which Allyson reviewed. Mr. Meier's current license is valid until November 2026. She reminded the Board that if a license is suspended with a condition, after that condition is met the suspension is lifted. The Board has the options of suspending until a certain date, revocation with reapplication after two years, imposing a fine, or requiring coursework.

Before discussion continued Amber Fridley disclosed this is a Dickinson Public Schools case, where she's employed. Allyson asked a few follow-up questions. Did Amber know Mr. Meier? No. Did a student or administrator talk to her about the case? No. Siri Coleman made a motion to allow Amber Fridley to participate and vote in this case. Seconded by Patti Stedman. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Cory Steiner reviewed the Board's options again. He's dissatisfied with Mr. Meier's lack of response to the original settlement agreement. Cory asked if as Board chair he is allowed to make a motion. Allyson said yes.

Cory Steiner made a motion for revocation of Mr. Meier's license. Motion seconded by Evan Kritzberger. This would mean Mr. Meier would need to reapply with a new background check after at least two years have lapsed if he wishes to be licensed again. Evan agreed that he is not satisfied with this person having an active license. If an individual wanted to resolve the issue they would have taken initiative to do so. Patti Stedman asked if the previous settlement agreement said if they could teach again if they completed the ethics course, doesn't this path of action seem severe? Allyson said the point of a settlement agreement is to avoid litigation. Now we're moving to litigation, since the settlement agreement was never signed.

Many Board members struggled with the lack of response and didn't understand why Mr. Meier didn't just sign the settlement agreement to resolve things. Will not go into the NASDTEC Clearinghouse until either the settlement agreement is signed or reviewed by administrative law judge and findings are accepted. Allyson anticipates that would take a minimum of 6 months. His license cannot be suspend in the meantime since there is no signed settlement agreement or administrative law judge decision. Board members who voted yes to revoking Mr. Meier's license were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Deb Follman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Regular meeting was recessed at 8:54am.

**Administrative Subcommittee** – Called to order at 8:54am by Administrative Subcommittee Chair Cory Steiner. Reviewed by Administrative Subcommittee of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Administrative Subcommittee members present were Deb Follman, Amber Fridley, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner.

**Klaudt, Scott** – Mr. Klaudt's file has been reviewed by the Administrative Subcommittee a few times in the past. In November 2022 the Administrative Subcommittee voted to suspend his license until June 30, 2023. The settlement agreement was never returned. At the September 2023 meeting the subcommittee voted to suspend Mr. Klaudt's license for one year through litigation. Again, this settlement agreement was not signed. Suspension date has now passed. Allyson suggests the Board suspend until a certain event occurs, such as a date after hearing, a date that would apply no matter when the hearing is.

Patti Stedman made a motion to suspend until end of school year after order is adopted. Seconded by Deb Follman. Cory Steiner agrees – this case has been heard multiple times and the applicant gives little recourse after not responding. Administrative Subcommittee members who voted in favor were Deb Follman, Amber Fridley, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

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Administrative Subcommittee meeting adjourned and regular meeting resumed at 8:59am. Amber Fridley left the meeting at 9am.

Dustin Hager joined the meeting at 9:30am.

**Discussion about teaching without a license** – When a license lapses for any amount of time an applicant is assessed a \$100 late fee. In the past, if a person was teaching without a license their case was reviewed by the Board and they were often fined. Now that desk audits are coming out it's being discovered that teachers are teaching for months at a time without a valid license. How long is too long for a person to teach without a license with just the \$100 late fee? Does the Board want to see any of these?

Another scenario is where a person has a license but it's not for the content area they're teaching. There are options for plan-on-file or an out-of-field endorsement to help with that situation, but some individuals have been teaching out of their content area all school year. If a district has filed an exemption for a subject area, do we leave that alone when they have the option to file for out-of-field endorsement?

Attorney Allyson Hicks said some boards give applicants the option to pay the late fee if a license has lapsed up to 30 days. The Board fine for teaching without a license is up to \$250 and is in statute, so would have to be a legislative change.

Desk audits are sent out from DPI and often are not responded to.

Deb Follman was in disbelief and said she's so disappointed to hear this is happening and will be bringing it up at the elementary principals meeting she's currently attending. Cory Steiner agreed it's unacceptable and said it should be top priority for districts. Patti Stedman asked who the desk audit goes to in a larger district? Both the superintendent and the building principal.

Allyson said drafting additional administrative rules could be an option. Superintendent Baesler added that it's not just in this area that's not addressed. When the MIS03 is submitted the principal must sign off that all state and federal requirements are being met, and that a violation of that affirmation is against Century Code and could be a misdemeanor offense. Often times DPI gets complaints, and they reach out to the districts. Sometimes they hear back and sometimes they don't. If it's not corrected the issue is forwarded to the state's attorney in the corresponding county for investigation and it's up to them if they can move forward. At that point DPI's authority and resources are exhausted. If a district filed an exemption and it could be fixed, do we move forward with the exemption or do we take the time to try to fix it?

Superintendent Baesler said there is a rewrite of STARS coming up and much of that process will have the ability to be automated in the future. Deb Follman wanted to clarify

again – are districts receiving the letters stating there are unlicensed teachers or unqualified teachers, and they're just not responding? Yes, sometimes that is happening. Cory said this isn't an ESPB issue, it's an issue in the field.

Evan Kritzberger made a motion that once ESPB is aware that someone is teaching without a license that the educator be notified by email and with a letter and that it also come to the Board. Motion seconded by Jenny Bladow. Patti Stedman agreed that it's a good idea to keep track to help determine the reasons why individuals are not renewing on time to help find a solution. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Dustin Hager abstained from voting due to coming in the middle of the conversation. Motion carried.

The meeting recessed at 9:50am.

The meeting resumed at 10am and Cory welcomed new Board member Dustin Hager and asked him to introduce himself. Dustin is a member of the Rugby Public School Board.

**January Meeting Minutes, Special Meeting Minutes, License, and Financial Reports** – The January 2024 financial report showed \$115,753.21 in total income received, \$71,927.35 in total expenses, with a net income of \$43,825.86. The January 2024 licensure report documented 1321 items issued. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, and application fees.

Patti Stedman moved to accept the January meeting minutes, special meeting minutes, license, and financial reports. Seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

ESPB is currently at 51% of income and 54% of expenses. The office did invest in a dedicated desk space for Kelly, ESPB's part time employee. Attorney fees continue to rise.

**Disability Waivers** – The Board has received requests for disability waivers from Alma Guevarra, Alona Galgo, and Chelsea Harper.

- **Alma Guevarra** – Ms. Guevarra has requested exemption from Core reading and math and Praxis II English content tests. Jenny Bladow made a motion to approve, seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.
- **Alona Galgo** – Ms. Galgo has requested exemption from Core reading and writing and Praxis II math and PLT tests. Kathy Lentz made a motion to approve. Motion seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Jenny asked about the number of

attempts at the tests for this individual, as she hasn't taken all tests three times. Cory pointed out that if there is severe anxiety, taking the tests multiple times won't always be beneficial. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

- **Chelsea Harper** – Ms. Harper has requested exemption from the Core writing and Praxis II elementary education test. Jenny Bladow made a motion to approve waiver for Core writing. Seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried. The Board did not waive the elementary education test at this time due to not seeing a score for an attempt at this test.

Evan asked if a waiver has ever been granted when someone hasn't attempted a test – no, it has not.

**License Report** – ESPB Assistant Director Mari Riehl reviewed the different types of non-traditional license types and how many have been issued over the past 5 years.

**Shortage Areas** – Becky believes the last time all areas were not declared as shortage areas was 2017. This information is used for TFFR return to teaching, as well as content areas for alternate access licenses. DPI presented information last month about their shortage data. Dustin Hager made a motion to approve all content areas as shortage areas for the 24-25 school year. Seconded by Kathy Lentz. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Letter from Student Teacher** – It's in administrative rule that if someone is an elementary education major, they need student teaching in elementary education. An individual has an alternate access license for elementary education, with a kindergarten endorsement and is teaching kindergarten. Due to administrative rules she needs to student teach in elementary education. For many years the elementary license has been for grades 1-8. Becky will provide additional information for the Board to consider and April it will be an item on the agenda to consider changing the elementary license so it's for grades K-8. This could increase flexibility for districts.

**Director's Report and NCTQ Report** – The Science of Reading work continues. National Council on Teacher Quality report published before reading standards had been adopted, which has since been done. A survey is going out to higher ed so they can report what is being done to meet the standards. Program approval requirements have been drafted. Apprenticeships have continued to get a lot of attention. This week Becky and Mari have shared licensure options with a group of administrators and with individuals at Career and Technical Education. Retreat will be June 5 and 6.

**Math Praxis Test** – ETS has Algebra I and Geometry Praxis II test options that would allow someone to have just those high school algebra or geometry courses on their license and not the higher level math courses. This may help middle school teachers who are offering high school credit for advanced 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. Is this something the Board is willing to consider? Could allow for further flexibility.

Evan Kritzberger made a motion to move forward with exploring options for Algebra I and Geometry Praxis test options. Seconded by Jenny Bladow. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Teacher Support System** – Erin Jacobson from Teacher Support System wanted Board feedback on some key questions. During her time at TSS, Erin has been through legislative session three times and feels like she's always re-introducing TSS and explaining what they do. Is it time for TSS to change their name? TSS has been working with marketing company The Good Kids to determine some key areas based on survey data. Possible new names include ND RISE, Empowered Educators ND, or InspirED ND. Erin asked that Board members also complete the survey and has sent the link.

Evan believes it's not a waste of time and that it's important to stay relevant. Superintendent Baesler agreed and said it's admirable TSS wants to do this. She also suggested they look at what programs are being offered moving forward.

This month a new course is being offered using the Global PD platform. TSS is working with the Native American Educational Leadership program and will be meeting with the group 4 times over the semester to visit about different mini courses being offered. In February, sessions 5 and 6 of the 6-part professional development series with Jennifer Abrams will be held. Final online check in with Coaches Academy participants will be held at the end of February. Board members Angela Nagel, Deb Follman, and Siri Coleman have all expressed interest in being part of a subcommittee of ESPB. They will plan quarterly meetings to gain additional input from ESPB members.

### **Board Member Reports**

**NDACTE** – A subcommittee of NDACTE will be meeting to continue conversations about competency-based education. NDACTE student conference will be on April 5<sup>th</sup> at University of Mary

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

**Association of School Administrators** – Cory Steiner wasn't able to attend January Association of School Administrators meeting, but knows that there's been discussion of non-renewal deadlines. Personalized Learning Institute will be June 12-13, 2024.

**School Boards Association** – Patti Stedman shared that she's been appointed to the governor's task force on retention. If there is anything the Board wants Patti to share, please reach out to her.



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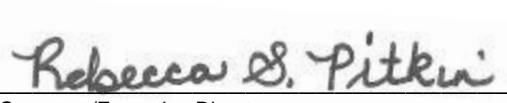
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**NDUnited** – Not present.

**DPI** – Superintendent Baesler thanked Becky and ESPB for having her at the National State Director's of Teacher Education meeting. ND has been invited nationally to participate in the investigation of policies and impact it has on student achievement.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25am.

  
Chair

  
Secretary/Executive Director