

**MINUTES – Board Meeting  
Thursday, January 13, 2022  
CTE Conference Room and Teams**

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) meeting was called to order at 8:01am by Chair Carly Retterath. Board members present were Siri Coleman, Andrea Fox, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Brenda Tufte.

Board members Ben Johnson, Joshua Standing Elk, and Superintendent Baesler were absent.

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Rebecca Pitkin, Assistant Director Mari Riehl, and Amy Bigelow and Lacey Hinsz from ESPB, Carl Karpinski from Attorney General's Office, Erin Jacobson and Marijke Leibel from Teacher Support System, Michelle Griffin, Joe Kolosky, Kelly Utke, Amy Flicek, Tracy Becker, Mark Wagner, Robin Travers, and other online guests.

**Additions/Changes to the Agenda** – Items to add to the agenda include a case for TiRay Azure and moving Aimee Zachrison to administrative cases. Patti Stedman motioned to accept the agenda as amended. Motion seconded by Cory Steiner. All voted in favor of accepting agenda as amended. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Motion to Ratify December Licensure List** – Sonya Hansana made motion to ratify the December 2021 licensure list. Seconded by Brenda Tufte. All voted in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

**CASES**

**Blue, Jason** – Mr. Blue's file was reviewed by the board for teaching without a valid license..Andrea Fox moved to fine Mr. Blue \$100 and to send him a letter reminding him to keep his license up to date. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Andrea Fox, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Azure, TiRay** – Mr. Azure's file was reviewed by the Board because he was listed as a contracted teacher on the MIS03 to DPI while holding a license that only allows him to substitute teach. Siri Coleman made motion to table the case and and initiate a Request for Inquiry on Mr. Azure's administrator. Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. Board members who voted in favor were Siri Coleman, Andrea Fox, Sonya Hansana, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Ditmars, Richard** – Mr. Ditmars was charged in March 2021 with sexual offenses and recently plead guilty to two offenses that fall under NDCC 15.1-13-26 that require a license be revoked. Sentencing is currently set for next week. Brenda Tufte made motion to revoke Mr. Ditmars' license under NDCC 15.1-13-26. Motion seconded by Cory Steiner. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Andrea Fox, Sonya Hansana, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Gabbert, Lanny** – Before discussion began, Brenda Tufte disclosed that she does know the administrator in Williston, where Mr. Gabbert was previously employed, but does feel she can still vote objectively. At the November 2021 meeting, the Board voted to initiate a Request for Inquiry on Mr. Gabbert. The case was originally brought to our attention by a reporter. In November, the Board also noted they wanted responses from the Williston, Ray, and Alexander school districts, which have been received.

Andrea Fox commented that she's concerned about the trend, not only in actions but in responses. Carly Retterath suggested that perhaps the Board wants to suspend Mr. Gabbert's license with a requirement to complete the NASDTEC ethics course before his license can be reinstated.

Andrea Fox moved to suspend until Mr. Gabbert's license with completion of the ethics course, at his own expense, along with a letter explaining why this is happening. Motion seconded by Sonya.

Cory Steiner said he doesn't see simply completing the course as enough. Becky noted that the prevention and correction course does include an essay at the end and would like the Board to consider adding this as a requirement. Attorney Carl Karpinski questioned the time period allowed for this and said the settlement agreement allows the board to add requirements.

After further discussion Andrea Fox withdrew her motion.

Cory Steiner made a motion to suspend Mr. Gabbert's license until the end of the school year, July 31<sup>st</sup>, and to require completion of courses in classroom management, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and the NASDTEC ethics course with the essay to come back to ESPB at Mr. Gabbert's expense. Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Andrea Fox, Sonya Hansana, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed, motion carried.

Sonya Hansana asked if after completion of these requirements and actions continued, would there be grounds to revoke the license. Attorney Carl Karpinski said this would be a board decision.

**Hennessey, Andrew** – Mr. Hennessey's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was filed by Milnor Public Schools after he was discharged for cause. A district is required to report to ESPB if discharged for cause.

After much discussion on the case Patti Stedman pointed out that there was no written improvement plan prior to Mr. Hennessey's employment being terminated.

Andrea Fox made a motion to require Mr. Hennessey to the NASDTEC ethics course

within 60 days. Motion seconded by Patti Stedman. The 60 days would start when the settlement agreement is signed. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Andrea Fox, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

Patti Stedman asked what would happen next if a signed settlement agreement is not received. This would then come back to the board for further consideration for disciplinary action.

**Kroll, Terri** – Ms. Kroll's file was reviewed by the Board after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent at Oak Grove. Carl Karpinski gave some background on his research of this case. A coach is currently being charged with some child related crimes out of Fargo, however, those charge have nothing to do with Oak Grove. The prosecutor is aware that he was a coach at Oak Grove, but nothing with his investigation is associated with Oak Grove. The coach in that investigation is not a teacher.

This complaint seems to be regarding how information that was disclosed to the school counselor, Ms. Kroll, was handled by the district when it was reported through the chain of command to the administrator. Kathy Lentz made motion to dismiss. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Board members who voted yes were Siri Coleman, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Brenda Tufte. None opposed. Motion carried.

Regular meeting was recessed at 9:20am and meeting of Administrative Subcommittee was called to order.

**Administrative Subcommittee** – Reviewed by Administrative Subcommittee of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Administrative Subcommittee members present were Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner.

**Zachrison, Aimee** – Ms. Zachrison's file was reviewed by the Board after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent at Oak Grove. Patti Stedman made a motion to dismiss. Motion seconded by Cory Steiner. They noted there doesn't seem to be an action that would warrant anything other than dismissal. Administrative Subcommittee members who voted in favor were Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Carly Retterath, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

The Administrative Subcommittee meeting was adjourned at 9:28am and the regular meeting was resumed at 9:35am.

**December Minutes, License, and Financial Reports** – The December 2021 financial report showed \$62,517.60 in total income received, \$78,257.34 in total expenses, with a

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net income of minus \$15,739.74. The December 2021 licensure report documented 842 items issued. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, and application fees.

We are over budget for technology, but under budget in some other areas. Lacey Hinsz will show some of the reports we are able to create with our new Power BI reporting tool. The budget subcommittee approved hire of part-time person and Becky will be meeting with them next week.

Siri Coleman moved to accept the December minutes, license, and financial reports. Seconded by Kathy Lentz. All voted in favor, none opposed. Motion carried.

**Licensure/ Shortage Areas** – Last month had shortage area report from DPI. To date ESPB has issued 17 permits, 114 alt access licenses, for the 2021-2022 school year and 33 disability waivers. Licensure isn't too much different from last year in regard to shortage areas.

**Director's Report** – On January 10<sup>th</sup> Becky attended a virtual conference with 19 other independent licensing boards, PESBA. Mari and Becky are working with Learning Policy Institute to look at InTASC standards to see if there is enough social/emotional learning embedded in the standards. A state team has been developed and they will report back to a national team. Physical Education standards have been updated and have adopted SHAPE standards with exception of standard that all PE teachers be able to perform every task in terms of activities. A piece regarding educator ethics has also been added.

A CTE subcommittee will meet Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss response to today's CTE presentation.

Brenda Tufte reviewed PAAC minutes from December 2021. PAAC will not meet again until this spring to approve.

**Teacher Support System** – Erin Jacobson and Marijke Leibel from Teacher Support System gave an overview of what they've been working on. Mentor stipends are being paid and they are trying a new online system, working with Kickup to streamline the mentor stipend process and piloting this with Fargo Public Schools. When paying stipends and disbursing other fund, TSS is working to keep regular funding separate from the GEER II funding that was provided by the Governor's office.

New mentors beginning mid-year have continued to be a challenge. New mentor groups started in October and January. Working with Iridium Learning to streamline training for mid-year mentors.

Coaches Academy will meet four times in January for a total of 12 hours. Mentors will participate in their 3<sup>rd</sup> of 4 webinars that are facilitated through Iridium Learning and

NDTSS. Genius hours continue for new teachers and three sessions will be offered this month.

**CTE Presentation** – Tracy Becker from CTE reviewed different alternate pathways to licensure, including alternative access from ESPB, CTE alternative access for CTE content areas of family and consumer sciences, agriculture, business, and tech and engineering, as well as licensure for trade and industry areas. A subcommittee of ESPB will meet Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss response to today’s CTE presentation.

**Stakeholder Engagement/Collaboration** – Becky has provided a report documenting stakeholder involvement, to support her upcoming evaluation.

**Data Spotlight** – Lacey Hinsz from ESPB has been working with our programmers, Nexus Innovations, to learn more about our new reporting software, Power BI. Power BI will allow us to expand the types of reports we are able to pull and the data we are able to gather. Lacey presented two of the reports we are now able to see.

**Board Member Reports**

**NDACTE** – NDACTE will be meeting tomorrow, January 14<sup>th</sup>. Syllabi for reading bill were due at the end of Fall 2021 semester. Brenda Tufte will remind NDACTE member to submit syllabi if they haven’t already.

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

**Association of School Administrators** – Winter conference in a few weeks. Hope to have information to report after that meeting.

**School Boards Association** – Nothing to report

**NDUnited** – Nothing to report

**DPI** – Student engagement survey launching next week.

Carly Retterath thanked the Board for their thoughtful conversation, especially as it relates to cases.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37am.

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Chair

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Secretary/Executive Director