

**MINUTES – Board Meeting**  
**Thursday, January 11, 2024**  
Teams Meeting

The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) meeting was called to order at 8:00am by Board Chair Cory Steiner. Board members present by video conference were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Superintendent Kirsten Baesler.

Deb Follman was absent.

Also present were ESPB Executive Director Rebecca Pitkin, Amy Bigelow from ESPB, Allyson Hicks, Mark Openshaw, and John Schmitz from Office of Attorney General, Joe Kolosky from DPI, Amy Flicek from NDUnited, Michelle Griffin from UND, and other online guests.

Introductions were held.

**Additions/Changes to the Agenda** – Additions to the agenda include requests from Richard Jones and Lauren Buckley. Patti Stedman made a motion to accept the agenda with amendments. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Motion to Ratify December Licensure List** – Evan Kritzberger made a motion to ratify the December 2023 licensure list. Seconded by Amber Fridley. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**CASES**

**Docabo, Descartes** – John Schmitz from Office of Attorney General Civil Litigation Division reviewed the case. Board voted in January 2023 to issue an administrative complaint to revoke his license based on violation of NDCC 15.1-13-25 and Code of Ethics Principle I, number 6. Mr. Docabo was employed with Wilmac in Williston and had inappropriate communications with a student. Mr. Docabo was not cooperative and did not respond to settlement agreement to revoke. Historically, his lack of responses goes all the way back to the school district investigation. Office of Attorney General is looking to move to default judgment if no response. Mr. Schmitz is wondering if the Board has any additional questions. Patti Stedman asked if this has ever been done before. Allyson Hicks said no, typically teachers are very responsive to complaints. This teacher was in the US on a Visa. This disciplinary action would go into the NASDTEC Clearinghouse. Procedurally the Board and AG's office has made a number of documented attempts to contact Mr. Docabo by mail.

Kathy Lentz made a motion to revoke Mr. Docabo's license and accept the default order as proposed. Seconded by Patti Stedman. Kathy said it appears the Board has done all that can be done to contact this individual, and taking action to revoke and accepting the default order is the next step. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow,

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Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

John Schmitz left the meeting at 8:14am.

**Traughber, Courtney** – Ms. Traughber's file was reviewed due to self-disclosed background offenses on her application for an interim substitute license. Patti Stedman made a motion to approve the license application. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Patti appreciates when the applicants self-report so it's not something found on the background check. Mr. Traughber's last offense was in 2019 and she's satisfied court requirements. Siri agreed but asked if it should be included for Ms. Traughber to self-report any subsequent offenses. Patti agreed this should be included in motion. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Westby, Johnna** – Attorney Allyson Hicks provided clarification before discussion began. This offense did not involve school funds or Ms. Westby's position at a school. Misuse of funds from a family member when Ms. Westby was a guardian/conservator. This is not a formal complaint, but up to the Board to decide if they want to seek a formal response.

Siri Coleman disclosed that she is familiar with this person, but is not tied in any way personally or financially. Allyson asked if Siri personally knows Ms. Westby outside of mutual acquaintances. Siri does not. Allyson said unless Siri personally knows Ms. Westby, it would not necessarily fall under the ethics commission guidelines. North Dakota is small and teachers in the profession know of each other.

Sonya Hansana disclosed this special education unit serves the Hazen School district where she lives, but she does not know of this person. She has also not been an active board member in Hazen since June. Patti Stedman made a motion to allow Sonya to participate in the case. Motion seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Board members who voted in favor of allowing Sonya to participate in discussion and voting on this case were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Evan Kritzberger asked if the school district Ms. Westby is working with has someone who's reported on the MIS03. Joe Kolosky from DPI would be able to research this if needed. Evan Kritzberger made a motion to initiate a Request for Inquiry. Motion seconded by Kathy Letnz. Evan feels due to the significant amount of money involved, it would be beneficial for the Board to see documentation of court information and the ultimate resolution. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Regular meeting was recessed at 8:30am.

**Administrative Subcommittee** – Called to order at 8:30am by Administrative Subcommittee Chair Cory Steiner. Reviewed by Administrative Subcommittee of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Administrative Subcommittee members present were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner.

**Kranz, Susan** – Ms. Kranz’s file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from a parent. Patti Stedman pointed out there was a lot of information included in the documents submitted but appears that district followed their established procedures. The parent pulled their child from the district before things could be resolved, so she is hesitant to take action. Sonya Hansana agreed that the district did a good job of recording detailed information regarding the situation.

Kathy Lentz made a motion to dismiss. Motion seconded by Sonya Hansana. Kathy said the school has to protect staff and students that were present, and it seems they took the steps to do that. Cory Steiner agreed and said he would be leery of our Board getting involved before the school board had addressed. He is also in favor of dismissing. Administrative subcommittee members who voted in favor of dismissing were Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Kathy Lentz, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Regular meeting resumed at 8:35am.

Before attorney Allyson Hicks left the meeting, Becky asked her to provide information about social security numbers and if they’re required for licensure. Allyson said there is a law that says licensing boards must collect an applicant’s social security number, if they have one. This means if a person has a SSN, they are required to report it on application for licensure. Historically, ESPB has required SSN for licensure and ESPB has worked with applicants from outside the US to get a 40-day provisional until they have a SSN. Allyson said the board could ask for a Visa number as an option, but she also doesn’t want to see ESPB become a “license mill” for those outside the US who don’t intend to teach in North Dakota so they can use their license from ESPB to get into another state.

Allyson also addressed grooming legislation that’s proposed to be included in ND Code of Ethics. The Board will need to make some decisions about a plan going forward about grey areas and clear objectives of how to deal with those situations.

**December Meeting Minutes, Special Meeting Minutes, License, and Financial Reports** – The December 2023 financial report showed \$61,412.52 in total income

received, \$97,221.64 in total expenses, with a net income of minus \$35,809.12. The December 2023 licensure report documented 809 items issued. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, and application fees.

Siri Coleman moved to accept the December meeting minutes, special meeting minutes, license, and financial reports. Seconded by Angela Nagel. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Becky learned this week that she cannot put disciplinary action in the NASDTEC Clearinghouse until a settlement agreement has been signed. An individual asked for an extension on settlement agreement that was issued to suspend his license. While the settlement agreement was not signed this individual applied for a license in another state. Becky entered in the clearinghouse when it was signed, and this was caught by the other state due to the clearinghouse. Cory Steiner is pleased to hear the clearinghouse is working.

**Disability Waivers** – The Board has received a request for a disability waiver from Raylea Folstad. She is requesting waiver of the Praxis II mathematics test. Becky stated all necessary information has been received. Jenny Bladow made motion to approve the request for waiver of the Praxis II mathematics test. Seconded by Amber Fridley. Jenny said all information was included and appears Ms. Folstad is ready for next step. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Buckley Request** – Ms. Buckley is a military spouse that's currently living in Italy. She currently holds a probationary license and is asking for additional time to complete her required credits. She wants to keep her North Dakota license up to date, as she thinks she may return to ND in the future. Evan Kritzberger made motion to grant extension for one year from today's date to allow Ms. Buckley additional time to complete her re-education credits. Motion seconded by Angela Nagel. Evan said it's admirable that she wants to keep up her ND license even though she's not here and he hopes the Board can continue to support individuals in her situation. Angela agreed. Becky said this type of extension is allowed under Administrative Rule 67.1-02-02-04(2)(d) with Board approval. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Richard Jones Request** – Mr. Jones has an out-of-field endorsement for secondary mathematics and is in his second school year of holding the endorsement. He has taken the math Praxis II a number of times but has been unable to pass. At this time, he does not have the math courses needed for minor equivalency. He's asking to be allowed to

continue teaching secondary math. Administrative Rule 67.1-02-03-13(3) states an individual may hold an out-of-field endorsement for up to two years. Kathy Lentz appreciates the letter from his administrator. Cory Steiner said he isn't sure the Board has a lot of recourse if this is in administrative code and granting the extension would be going against what's in rule. There is nothing in rule that allows a person to have out-of-field endorsement for more than two years or for the Board to grant an extension beyond that period of time. Evan acknowledged that the math Praxis II test is very difficult. Board members had discussion about if an extension was granted, would it be limited to just the district where a person is currently employed. Patti Stedman and Sonya Hansana agreed that if this would be extended it wouldn't limit Mr. Jones from teaching in the specific setting he's in – he could teach math anywhere. Something the Board could explore in the future is a more limited math test that would allow someone to possibly just add lower-level secondary math courses.

Sonya also pointed out that an individual has an option to take math courses to help them add the minor equivalency or pass the test. Kathy Lentz wondered if this has to be decided today, if he can teach until the end of the school year. Mr. Jones is eligible to teach math through the end of the 23-24 school year with the endorsement he currently holds. Cory Steiner said that due to administrative code, he doesn't believe the Board has authority to grant any extension in regard to this request.

Becky reminded the Board they are talking about two different topics – first, this request and second, exploring the option of a limited math license and Praxis tests for that option. Kathy thanked Becky for that clarification. Kathy feels this individual does have the option to take coursework, but so far has chosen not to. She feels this person could take the coursework.

Cory asked if anyone has a motion: does the Board want to waive administrative code to allow Mr. Jones to continue or deny the request?

Patti Stedman made a motion to deny the request from Mr. Jones and follow Administrative Rule as written. Motion seconded by Jenny Bladow. Patti feels this one is tough and important for the school where Mr. Jones is currently working, however the Board does not have the ability to waive code, so the law needs to be followed. Jenny agreed. Sonya Hansana said she thinks this will come up more and more and she hopes that we continue to work toward for other pathways, in addition to what Board has already done. Board members who voted in favor of the motion were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Amber Fridley, Sonya Hansana, Evan Kritzerberger, Kathy Lentz, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Director's Report** – Becky has received a request from Social Services for a list of all licensed teachers. Working to run the report. A copy of the completed Department of Labor report and questionnaire has been provided to the Board. Our April meeting will be held face to face and an individual from Department of Labor will meet with the

Board regarding the report, as mandated by SB 2249. There is some idea that a universal board would be a possibility. Next week Becky will be attending NASDTEC Conference – 3 groups meeting over multiple days. Copies of the dyslexia and reading standards have provided in the Board materials for the month. They are in law already. A survey has been developed to get feedback from Higher Ed. Some universities are having all program completers do the ETS ethics course. Dr. Lynn Hammonds, DPI's consultant with apprenticeships, and Becky will be having weekly meetings with apprentices to support their learning. Testimony for the Administrative Rules hearing and satisfaction survey results have also been provided to the Board.

**Stakeholder Engagement/Collaboration** – Required for part of Executive Director Evaluation and has been provided to the Board.

**Teacher Support System** – TSS is working with Jennifer Abrams to provide a three-part book study. The first two sessions have been held with excellent feedback being received. Fall 2023 stipends have been processed using a new online process. This has streamlined the amount of time it takes to process stipend requests.

### **Board Member Reports**

**NDACTE** – NDACTE did not meet in December, so no new information. They will meet tomorrow.

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

**Association of School Administrators** – Administrators are exploring not just the para to teacher route to licensure, but also possibility of sub to teacher route. More funds will be coming available in the future. Exploring Center for Distance Education and virtual learning. There are some good things that are happening, though Cory believes that DPI will hear more about the negatives.

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

**NDUnited** – Not present. Becky and Mari met with Nick Archuleta about life license option and they are working to generate ideas.

**DPI** – Superintendent Baesler visited Arizona State University Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College with a group of stakeholders from North Dakota to learn about the model they are using. Looking to take another group of teachers down to observe this model. The group that visited AZ had a follow-up meeting yesterday to explore options to pursue in the future. Governor's task force on retention will be meeting again in February.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45am.