

MINUTES – Board Meeting

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Teams

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, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Superintendent Kirsten Baesler.

Amber Fridley, Angela Nagel, and Sheila Schlafmann were absent.

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

Introductions were held.

Motion to Include Additional Agenda Items – Additions to the agenda include disability waiver requests from Toriana Berg, Kiefer Langan, and Addison Olson. An updated legislative bill chart, HB 1238 amendment, extension request from Mark Thomas, and an applicant request for late fee waiver will also be added. Patti Stedman made a motion to approve the agenda with additions. Seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion to Ratify February Licensure List – Siri Coleman made a motion to ratify the February licensure list. Motion seconded by Sarah Lerud. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

CASES

Jeffries, Cameron – Mr. Jeffries's file was reviewed due to self-disclosed background offenses on his application for an interim substitute license. Patti Stedman made a motion to grant the license. Seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Patti feels Mr. Jeffries has addressed his past offenses and that none of them would hinder him working with students. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Berg, Nicole – Ms. Berg's file was reviewed by the board after a Request for Inquiry was received. Before discussion began attorney Mark Openshaw informed the board that Ms. Berg has previously had a restraining order in the past against the person who filed the Request for Inquiry. Patti Stedman asked if the first incident listed in the report was investigated. Materials submitted by Ms. Berg state that it was investigated and that nothing was found, however none of those documents were submitted. Patti asked if those documents should be requested.

Evan Kritzberger made a motion to dismiss. Motion seconded by Sarah Lerud. Evan said whenever the board receives cases like this there is immediate concern. He said based on the response submitted and the fact that the individuals who were listed on

the Request for Inquiry as witnesses to the events wrote statements that they did not substantiate the complaint deems that this should be dismissed. He also stated that learning a previous restraining order was in place also supports his motion. Sarah agreed. Siri Coleman wondered if, to be thorough, the district should be asked for their investigation. Evan said he would be ok with amending his motion, as he can see Siri's point. Jenny Bladow asked if anything was ever reported to ESPB in 2018. Nothing was ever filed with ESPB in 2018, though phone calls have been received in the past. Patti stated the board needs to be sure that all allegations have been addressed and see the investigation and findings. None voted yes. Board members who voted no were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. Motion failed.

Evan Kritzberger made a motion to contact Ms. Berg's school district and ask for any information pertaining to this case, including documentation of any investigations completed back to 2018. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Baker, Bernadette – At the February 2025 meeting the board passed a motion for each of the three Requests for Inquiry to send a letter to Ms. Baker's school district asking if there was a formal investigation into the complaints and the findings. Information has been submitted. Patti Stedman made a motion to dismiss. Seconded by Dustin Hager. Patti said all three incidents seem to go back to the award ceremony and is he-said-she-said. Dustin had nothing to add. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Siri Coleman made a motion to dismiss all three Requests for Inquiry filed against Ms. Baker. Motion seconded by Sarah Lerud. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Reed, Amanda – Ms. Reed's file was reviewed due to self-disclosed background offenses on her application for an interim substitute license, based on board policy. Attorney Mark Openshaw reminded the board of factors to keep in mind of items that they should consider, including if a conviction is more than 5 years old a person is consider rehabilitated. All of Ms. Reed's offenses are more than 5 years old so if the board decides to take disciplinary action, they will need to cite the reason. Jenny Bladow made a motion to grant Ms. Reed's license with the requirement to that she self-report any future offenses. Seconded by Siri Coleman. Siri feels with time passed and how Ms. Reed has sought rehabilitation, she feels renewal is appropriate. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Hurley, Erin – Ms. Hurley was a board case in April 2024 when the board voted to issue a settlement agreement to revoke her license for being in violation of NDCC 15.1-13-25(1)(c), NDCC 15.1-13-25(1)(j), NDAC 67.1-03-01-02(3) and NDAC 67.1-03-01-02(4). She has not returned the settlement agreement. She's slated for jury trial in May. A plea deal is anticipated prior to the trial, which would include a voluntarily surrender of her ND license. If there is not a plea prior to the trial, the board would know the outcome shortly after the court case is concluded. If Ms. Hurley doesn't sign the settlement agreement or voluntarily surrender her license the board could move to administrative hearing. Mark Openshaw recommends that the board wait another month before acting. Becky also shared that Montana is aware of the case and waiting to hear the outcome, as Ms. Hurley lives near the North Dakota/Montana border.

Cory Steiner made a motion to table the case until the outcome of the criminal case. Seconded by Patti Stedman. Mark added that the original settlement agreement could be sent again. Siri Coleman doesn't feel sending again would produce a different outcome. Board members who voted yes to the motion were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Mark Openshaw provided an update on some past cases. There has not been an action on the summary judgement yet for Rhawnie Marcellais, so the license has not yet been automatically revoked. When that summary judgement is issued, it will come back before the board to accept. Dr. Sherlock Hirning has completed the course required by the board. The board voted to issue a conditional dismissal, so that case has been resolved.

February Meeting Minutes, License and Financial Reports – Evan Kritzberger made a motion to approve the February meeting minutes, February license and financial reports. Motion seconded by Sarah Lerud. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

The February 2025 financial report showed \$81,076.50 in total income received, \$78,914.60 in total expenses, with a net income of \$5,151.90. The February 2025 license/financial items totaled 759. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, licensing fees, and application fees.

Board Meeting Dates – These have been provided to the board.

Disability Waiver Requests –

- **Rodrigo, Doreen** – All necessary documents have been submitted. Ms. Rodrigo is requesting a waiver of Core reading and writing tests. Has had 8 attempts for Core reading, and 6 attempts at Core writing. She's passed Core math, SLP, and

special education tests. Jenny Bladow made a motion to grant the waiver request. Seconded by Siri Coleman. They stated all required information is in place. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

- **Williams, Frank** – Mr. Williams has requested a waiver for Praxis II Elementary Education test, code 5017. He was granted a waiver from his university for the Core and has passed the PLT. He's made three attempts at the elementary test. Patti Stedman made a motion to grant the disability waiver request for Mr. Williams. Seconded by Jenny Bladow. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.
- **Langan, Kiefer** – Mr. Langan is requesting a waiver for Core writing and social studies content. He has passed the PLT. Siri Coleman moved to approve the request for waiver of Core writing and social studies content tests from Mr. Langan. Motion seconded by Jenny Bladow. Siri stated everything is in place. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.
- **Berg, Toriana** – Before discussion began Sarah Lerud disclosed that Ms. Berg was a student in her school, but she does feel she can be impartial. Cory Steiner made a motion to allow Sarah to participate in the case. Seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried. Ms. Berg has requested a waiver request for the elementary content and PLT tests. She was granted a university waiver for her Core. All required documents have been submitted. Jenny Bladow motion to grant Ms. Berg's waiver request. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Jenny believes all requirements for the waiver have been met. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.
- **Olson, Addison** – Ms. Olson has requested a waiver request for the elementary content and PLT tests. Core tests have been successfully completed. Ms. Olson has more than 3 attempts at each test she's requesting to be waived, and all other waiver components have been submitted. Jenny Bladow made motion to grant Ms. Olson's request. Seconded by Patti Stedman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Request for Extension from Mark Thomas – Becky reminded the board that rules state a 2nd probationary license cannot be issued, but the board can vote to grant extended time to complete required credits. Mr. Thomas has asked for an extension until September 2025. His license expires March 19, 2025. Patti Stedman disclosed that Mr. Thomas is a West Fargo employee where she is a school board member, however

she does not know who this person is.

Becky stated in the past extensions of approximately one month have been granted. Patti Stedman made a motion to extend Mr. Thomas's license expiration date until June 30, 2025. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Patti feels this amount of time will allow Mr. Thomas to complete his required credits, as it includes a month of time after the end of the current school year. Board members who voted yes to the motion were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Request for Late Fee Waiver from Katheleen Webster – Ms. Webster has submitted her application for renewal and was assessed the late fee due to her license lapsing. She's submitted a request for waiver of the late fee. Cory Steiner made a motion to deny the request for waiver of the late fee. Seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Cory said it's well documented that Ms. Webster was made aware of the late fee, so he doesn't see reason to waive the fee. Board members who voted yes to the motion were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Patti Stedman, and Cory Steiner. None opposed. Motion carried.

Director's Report – Take from Becky's report. Becky met with Lieutenant Governor Strinden and Maria Neset about alternatives to the Core. ETS has a program that will be implemented soon called Bridges that will help individuals bring up their score on a specific section of the test to help them meet the requirements. A new legislative management study for NDACTE is being developed to analyze alternative methods used. Audit report completion letters have been provided for board review for (insert years).

Legislative Update – Becky provided an update on bills ESPB is watching, including the "accelerated degree" bill to see what happens. The current bill states each institution decides which occupational areas it applies to. School psychologist compact passed.

Amended HB1238 – Senate has approved the change from 20 years to 25 years for life license and it was approved unanimously. Now it moves back to the house for approval of the amendment.

ND RISE – Erin Jacobson and Marijke Leibel testified in February to the House Education committee and this past Monday to Senate Education on HB 1018 that includes ND RISE funding. ND RISE has been accepted to present in July at Visible Learning Conference. Coaches Academy met on March 3 and 4. They will meet again on April 8 and 9. Board members are invited to join on April 9th for Symposium Presentations.

Board Member Reports

NDACTE – Jenny Bladow anticipates that by next meeting NDACTE they may have a

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proposal to submit related to the Praxis Core pilot study.

Association of Non-Public Schools – Continuing to watch legislation.


Association of School Administrators – Watching many bills closely. Education savings accounts are a hot issue. Additional education funding has been cut from 3% to 2%. A joint letter will be sent to legislators letting them know the impact of this.

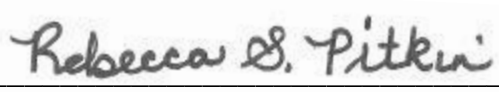
School Boards Association – Also continuing to watch legislation.

NDUnited – Watching session. Delegate assembly will be held in April.

DPI – Staying on top of legislation. Quarterly ESSA meeting will be soon. It's been a decade since ESSA replaced NCLB. Superintendent Baesler said it was 5 years ago today since her first press conference related to Covid.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:38am.


Chair


Secretary/Executive Director