

MINUTES – Board Meeting

Thursday, October 9, 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, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. Sheila Schlafmann and Superintendent Kristen Baesler were absent.

Also present were ESPB Assistant Director Mari Riehl and Amy Bigelow from ESPB, Mark Openshaw from Office of Attorney General, Arlene Wolf from DPI, Erin Jacobson from ND RISE, and Eric LaRocque. ESPB Executive Director Becky Pitkin was absent.

Introductions were held.

Motion to Include Additional Agenda Items – Additions to the agenda include review of PAAC policy, a case for Samone Motley, and a request from Minot State University. Evan Kritzberger made a motion to approve the agenda with additions. Seconded by Patti Stedman. Motion carried.

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

CASES

Gayton, Denny – Mr. Gayton's file was reviewed due to self-disclosed offenses on his application for renewal. Patti asked if there have been cases like this previously that have come before the board. Yes, there have, since these offenses do not fall under the policy that allows Becky to issue a license without Board review.

Jenny Bladow made a motion to grant Mr. Gayton's renewal with requirement to self-report any further violations. Seconded by Patti Stedman. Jenny said it appears that these incidents are separate from what may happen in a school setting. Cory Steiner also pointed out Mr. Gayton has satisfied all court requirements. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Keaveny, Lisa – Ms. Keaveny's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from a district due to breach of contract. No response had been received, but Becky did receive a call from Lisa last night acknowledging the Request for Inquiry and that more information is needed. Assistant Attorney General Mark Openshaw did not have anything additional to add. In the past, the Board has issued a settlement agreement with letter of reprimand. It's not the Board's job to enforce civil penalties like liquidated damages.

Evan Kritzberger also remembers a case in the past where the individual had paid liquidated damages, but the district still asked for disciplinary action to be taken against

the license. He wanted to know if both would be possible.

Siri Coleman made a motion to send another Request for Inquiry to Ms. Keaveny seeking further information. Seconded by Evan Kritzberger. Siri doesn't feel there is enough information to take action and feels it's the Board's job to hear from both sides before making a decision. Evan added that this may be an area to have conversations in the future, when there could be two remedies and one is outside of the Board's control. Patti Stedman asked if Ms. Keaveny is teaching. At this time she's not on the MIS03.

Board members who voted in favor of the motion were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

LaRocque, Eric – Mr. LaRocque's file was reviewed after a Request for Inquiry was received from an individual. Cory Steiner reminded the Board there have been other Requests for Inquiry in past months that have involved the same person who filed this request.

Patti Stedman asked if there was a formal complaint outside of the district. No, there was not. Evan Kritzberger pointed out that on the Request for Inquiry, it asks for three individuals to substantiate the situation/incident and there is only one listed. He asked if we've received any other substantiating information. No, there has not been.

Patti Stedman made a motion to dismiss the case. Motion seconded by Angela Nagel. Patti said as a school board member, she wonders if this was an ethics issue why there was no investigation by the district. Also, there's a lot of he-said-she-said. Angela agrees with Patti and isn't sure there's enough information. Siri Coleman asked about the related cases in the past and if district information was requested. With one of the cases, the district was asked for information, and they did not find any violations. Cory Steiner feels this is an internal issue within the district and doesn't feel additional information is necessary. He believes dismissal is the right thing to do. Patti also reminded the Board there has been no formal complaint from a parent or student. Jenny Bladow wants to trust district superintendents regarding if there is additional information that needs to be submitted.

Board members who voted in favor of the motion were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Motley, Samone – Ms. Motley's application was reviewed due to self-disclosed offenses on her application for an interim substitute license. Assistant Attorney General Mark Openshaw reminded the Board of NDCC 12.1-33 that states if a conviction has occurred more than five years prior with no further violations it is considered evidence that the person has been rehabilitated. If the Board would deny a license based on any

of the prior convictions, they would need to justify how it would affect their ability to work as a teacher.

Patti Stedman made a motion to issue Ms. Motley's interim substitute license with the requirement to self-report any future violations. Seconded by Sarah Lerud. Patti said All of Ms. Motley's offenses are more than five years old and hopefully she won't have any more. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

ND RISE – As of October 5th there are 630 beginning teachers enrolled in ND RISE. They've also trained 190 new mentor teachers in the state this year. Survey data continues to generate positive feedback. ND RISE presented at the Bismarck Public Schools mentorship dinner and would like to do that more around the state. A professional development series is being offered to administrators and instructional coaches focusing on adult-to-adult communication and leveling up in that area.

Director's Report – The office is excited to partner with Shiloh Christian School for our Little Free Pantry for the month of October. Thank you to Siri Coleman for leading the food drive.

At the September meeting, the board requested to know more about DOT requirements for driving school instructors, and if our administrative rules should be reviewed for any changes. A meeting with DOT is pending. Information on their website shows that qualifications to teach DOT approved driving school are more stringent than ESPB requirements.

The office is issuing licenses for new teachers, so the licensure report will be updated and presented in the future. Reading legislation is still moving forward. We are partnering with Minnesota in some work, and they have developed an assessment for reading faculty. We will look at relevant pieces to use. VCSU piloting the reading test and results will be used as part of their feedback and as part of a research project for ETS.

Mari and Becky will be presenting at Central Region meeting next week in Minneapolis. Later in the week, Becky will also present at the Professional Practices Institute.

Program Approval Committee (PAAC) Update – PAAC met in September and Siri Coleman provided an update to the Board. TMCC received formative feedback report and they're working on their response. Update on where other universities are in the process. UTTC received grant funding for the Meadowlark Project; to help prepare students for special education Praxis II so individuals can eventually add special education to their ND teaching license. PAAC had additional questions for Lisa Azure at UTTC and Becky will be meeting with her to discuss these questions. Angela Nagel

made a motion to approve the September PAAC minutes as presented. Seconded by Dena Venneman. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

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

The September 2025 financial report showed \$106,117.82 in total income received, \$90,270.79 in total expenses, with a net income of \$15,847.03. The September 2025 license/financial items totaled 574. This number includes background checks, endorsements, late fees, licensing fees, and application fees.

Minot State CBEST Request – Minot State University has many students from California who have completed the CBEST test, and they are requesting that ESPB use the CBEST in place of the Core Academic Skills tests. In November 2023, the Board had previously approved to accept CBEST writing, but they are now asking for approval to use all three areas.

Jenny Bladow asked if allowing this leads to additional questions and wondered if there needs to be a work group to look to see if tests from other states need to be examined for use. Mari will visit with Becky about this.

Evan Kritzberger made a motion to approve the request from Minot State to use CBEST in place of Core with the stipulation that it's only for the next year (2025-2026), so the Board can examine options going forward. Motion seconded by Siri Coleman. Siri said she agrees with Evan that it can be allowed for a year, and gets nervous about approving the use of different tests going forward when there hasn't been the opportunity for further discussion and information. Board members who voted in favor were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Cory Steiner said this would be on a future agenda to discuss in totality, not just state specific tests.

PAAC Policy – PAAC met yesterday to review a policy that would allow an educator preparation program (EPP) to request a one-semester extension for their program review. PAAC wants to be sure to have policy that can apply to different universities, and to ensure there are appropriate circumstances to approve an extension. Language was carefully drafted, to leave the option for ESPB to decide if extension should be

granted. Becky consulted with CAEP to see if there was a policy that could be adopted and learned theirs is more for natural disasters or things out of a university's control.

Evan Kritzberger asked if this is to allow for an extension for one semester at a time, or one time only. Jenny Bladow said the intent was one semester only, with a timeline. All requests would be submitted to ESPB, then would come before PAAC for discussion. Patti Stedman made a motion to approve the drafted PAAC policy. Seconded by Angela Nagel. Board members who voted yes were Jenny Bladow, Siri Coleman, Dustin Hager, Evan Kritzberger, Sarah Lerud, Angela Nagel, Patti Stedman, Cory Steiner, and Dena Venneman. None opposed. Motion carried.

Board Member Reports

NDACTE – NDACTE met and is continuing to gather information on Core menu of options to demonstrate basic skills competency. They are submitting all data to be analyzed in October. Once a report is available it will come to the Board for review. Lisa Colon-Durham from ETS presented to NDACTE about Praxis Bridge.

Association of Non-Public Schools – Nothing new to report. Siri Coleman is trying to connect with non-public administrators/meetings, so she knows if there are issues to address.

Association of School Administrators – Watching interim special education committee. Conversations about possible regional level D facilities, how to serve highest need students, and how to transition students back into regular classroom setting. A bill passed last session that would give districts the option to use accreditation processes other than Cognia. Districts will need to know going forward if they will be able to transition to new process. Also, discussions about transition to InfiniteCampus, replacement for PowerSchool. There are a lot of moving pieces and it's going to happen very quickly in about a 6 month time period.

School Boards Association – School Boards Association held a meeting last night. They continue to discuss how to communicate to school boards about when cases should be brought before ESPB. Patti Stedman believes there will be more to report after convention the next few days.

NDUnited – Nothing new to report.

DPI – Not present.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:07am

Chair



Secretary/Executive Director

