

## State Board of Education Minutes of Meetings

June 1-2, 2017

State Board Meeting Room, State Office Building, Sixth Floor, Lincoln, NE 68509-4987

[Link to Agenda and Support Material](#)

[Link to Video of Meeting](#)

*Publicized notice of the work session and business meeting was given by posting notice on the Department's website; emailed to news media requesting notification, and posting a copy of the agenda in the Office of the Commissioner of Education, which gave the date, time, and location of the meeting.*

**1. CALL TO ORDER** - In the absence of President Patricia Timm, Vice President John Witzel called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

**1.1. Roll Call**

Present Board Members:

Rachel Wise

Maureen Nickels

Patrick McPherson

Molly O'Holleran

John Witzel

Lisa Fricke

Patsy Koch Johns

Absent Board Members:

Patricia Timm

Also Present:

Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner

**1.2.** Vice President John Witzel announced the placement of the **Open Meetings Act information**

**2. BOARD REPORTS, DATES AND DISCUSSIONS ITEMS**

**2.1. Meeting participation and joint meetings with policy partners**

Board Members reported on the approved travel meetings attended during May 2017.

**2.2. Discuss requests for meeting attendance**

Board Members reviewed Board Member requests for meeting attendance. Action for approval of upcoming meetings will be taken during the June 2 business meeting.

**2.3. Monthly Board Travel Expense Report**

Board Members were reminded to review the Travel Expense Report provided in the Board materials.

**3. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT AND AGENDA OVERVIEW**

**3.1. Consent Agenda process**

Commissioner Blomstedt reminded Board Members to submit any questions on Consent Agenda items for additional information before taking action to approve on June 2 during the business meeting.

**3.2. Report on Rules**

Commissioner Blomstedt noted that Rules 1 and 19 were approved by the Governor and Rules 21 and 24 were pending approval by the Governor.

**3.3. Board Priorities and Policy Research**

Donlynn Rice, Department of Education representative, reported on the NASBE grant for Early Childhood education and announced that the Commissioner had been nominated for NASBE Policy Leader of the Year. She also thanked the Board for their work and announced her retirement from the Department.

Vice President Witzel recognized the work of Donlynn Rice and read the Board Resolution noting Donlynn's work in the Department during her employment.

**4. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**4.1. AQuESTT - Teaching and Learning Domain Committee**

Maureen Nickels, Board Chair of the Teaching and Learning Domain Committee reported that there were no action items brought before the Committee for action in June. There will be items recommended for action by the Committee for the August Board meeting including ACT standard setting and NeSA language Art settings.

## **4.2. AQuESTT - Student Success and Access Domain Committee**

### **4.2.A. Transitions**

#### **4.2.A.1. Action Item: Approve accreditation of schools for the 2017-2018 school year in accordance with the provisions of Rule 10, (92 NAC 10), Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools**

Freida Lange, Department of Education representative, spoke to the accreditation of the 245 public school districts for the 2017-18 school year; 82 nonpublic schools; and accreditation of 5 special purpose schools.

Molly O'Holleran, Chair, reported the Committee's recommendation to accredit these schools during the June 2 business meeting.

#### **4.2.A.2. Action Item: Approve accreditation for a school, currently classified as an approved school, to operate as accredited in the 2017-2018 school year in accordance with the provisions of Rule 10, (92 NAC 10), Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools**

Freida Lange, Department of Education representative, spoke to the process of moving from approved to accredited status for the Nelson Mandela School in Omaha.

Molly O'Holleran reported the Committee's recommendation to accredit this school during the June 2 business meeting.

### **4.2.B. Educational Opportunities and Access**

#### **4.2.B.1. Action Item: Approval of Early Childhood Education Grant applications**

Melody Hobson, Department of Education representative, reviewed the Early Childhood Education Grant application process.

Molly O'Holleran reported the Committee's recommendation to approve the grant applications during the June 2 business meeting.

## **4.3. Policy Committee**

**4.3.A. Action Item: Approve proposed revisions to State Board Policy B17, Hearing Officers**

In the absence of Patricia Timm, Scott Summers, Department of Education representative, reported on the proposed revisions to B17, Hearing Officers. The new language gives the Commissioner authority to appoint hearing officers in Enrollment Option appeals.

The Committee recommends approval of Board Policy B17 during the June 2 business meeting.

**4.4. Legislative Committee**

**4.4.A. Discussion Item: Final 2017 State Legislation Report and Interim Studies**

Rachel Wise, Chair, reported on the meeting of the Legislative Committee. Brian Halstead, Deputy Commissioner, provided an update and debrief of the 2017 Nebraska Legislative Session.

**4.5. Strategic Planning, Performance and Improvement Committee**

**4.5.A. Discussion Item: Annual Review of the Implementation of the Priority School Progress Plans**

Druid Hill was represented by Mark Evans, Superintendent of Omaha Public Schools; Melissa Comine, Executive Director for Omaha Public Schools; and Cherise Williams, Principal of Druid Hill Elementary. Druid Hill gave a presentation on their continuous improvement efforts. Presenters noted that student referrals to the office dropped resulting in 21 more days of instruction. Staff pointed out that success for improvement included the efforts of the community, students, teachers, and family engagement.

Rachel Wise also noted that Santee Community Schools staff presented to the Committee on progress with their improvement plan.

Vice President Witzel called for a break at 3:06 p.m. The meeting resumed at 3:22 p.m.

Commissioner Blomstedt will recommend to the Board in August that Druid Hill leave priority status. He will also recommend that Santee Community School continue their efforts for improvement in priority status.

**4.6. Budget and Finance Committee**

**4.6.A. Action Item: Accept the 2016 State Single Audit Report**

Bryce Wilson, Department of Education representative, reported on the results of the State Single Audit Report which resulted in one recommendation to the agency.

John Witzel, Chair, reported that the Committee recommends acceptance of the Audit Report during the business meeting on June 2.

**4.7. Commissioner's Appraisal Committee**

**4.7.A. Action Item: Approve the revision of the Commissioner's Contract to reflect the annual increase given to all state employees**

John Witzel, Chair, spoke to the amendment to the Commissioner's Contract noting that the Commissioner's salary increase be reduced to 1% from 2.75% at the request of the Commissioner to align with the state contract for all employees.

The Committee recommends approval of the Amendment during the business meeting of the Board on June 2.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice President Witzel adjourned the Work Session at 3:54 p.m.

**State Board of Education Meeting**

June 2, 2017, 9:00 a.m.

State Board Meeting Room, State Office Building, Lincoln, Nebraska

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - In the absence of President Patricia Timm, Vice President John Witzel called the meeting to order at 9:01 p.m.

- 1.1. **Roll Call**

Present Board Members:

Rachel Wise  
Maureen Nickels  
Patrick McPherson  
Molly O'Holleran  
John Witzel  
Lisa Fricke  
Patsy Koch Johns

Absent Board Members:

Patricia Timm

Also Present:

Matthew Blomstedt, Commissioner

- 1.2. Vice President John Witzel led the **Pledge of Allegiance**.
- 1.3. Vice President John Witzel announced the placement of the **Open Meetings Act information**

2. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

- 2.1. **Motion Passed:** Approve the minutes of the May 4, 2017, State Board Retreat as published passed with a motion by Patrick McPherson and a second by Rachel Wise.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

- 2.2. Motion Passed:** Approve the minutes of the May 4-5, 2017, State Board of Education meeting as published passed with a motion by Lisa Fricke and a second by Patsy Koch Johns.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- 3.1.** Commissioner Blomstedt recommended removal of Consent Agenda Item 8.6.4 for separate action.

**Motion Passed:** To approve the Agenda as recommended by removing Consent Agenda Item 8.6.4 for separate vote passed with a motion by Patsy Koch Johns and a second by Maureen Nickels.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

- 4.1. Request for Appearance – None**

**4.2. Other Public Comment**

- Vic Stevenart, from Omaha. Speaking to the science curriculum and concern that it is not based on facts or local control. (handout)
- Doug Kagan, Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom. Speaking to the science standards not having content, difficult to grade, and urged the Board not to accept the standards (handout)

- Paul LaBehren, from Fremont. Speaking to the science standards and his knowledge of scientific scrutiny; standards do not lead students to facts; concerns about global climate change; and these standards produce bias, not facts.
- Rachel Pinkerton, LEAP. Speaking to the common core devastation in classrooms. She referenced a NEA article on 6 things good about Common Core; and science standards deny children fact base knowledge. (handouts)
- Dennis Schleis, Nebraska Taxpayer for Freedom. Speaking to the science standards as not acceptable for Nebraska children; they do not allow creation to be taught and encouraged members to vote against the standards. (handout)
- Carole Julian, LEAP. Speaking to new science education standards. Appalled about the tie to National Guidelines for Science Standards and that the standards are based on performance, not content or facts. (handout)
- Paul Meyer. Speaking in protest to the science standards based on global warming, leaving out creationism, and dumbing down Nebraska kids with these standards.
- Larry Storer. Speaking in agreement with previous speakers. Feels we are dumbing down our children and is concerned special education federal laws are tearing down the walls. The state needs to clarify laws and listen to taxpayer and interested parties.
- John Dockery, Omaha. Speaking with concern with adopting science standards, concerns with comprehensive health education standards; and getting more information to the public before approving the standards.

5. **HEARINGS** - None

6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion Passed:** Motion to enter into Executive Session to deliberate and receive advice from Legal Counsel on contested cases at 9:46 a.m. passed with a motion by Patsy Koch Johns and a second by Rachel Wise.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

At 9:46 a.m., the Board moved into Executive Session to deliberate and receive advice from legal Counsel on contested cases.



**Motion Passed:** Motion to adjourn the Executive Session and resume the business meeting of the Board at 9:59 passed with a motion by Patsy Koch Johns and a second by Rachel Wise.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

At 9:59 a.m., the Board adjourned the Executive Session and resumed the business meeting.

## 7. ACTION ITEMS

### 7.1. Full Board

**7.1.1. Motion Passed:** Adopt the Hearing Officer's Proposed Findings of Fact, Recommended Conclusions of Law and Recommended Decision affirming in the Option Enrollment Case No. 17-04, Keehn v. Scottsbluff Public Schools and legal counsel prepare passed with a motion by Patrick McPherson and a second by Maureen Nickels.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

### 7.2. AQuESTT - Student Success and Access Domain Committee

#### 7.2.1. Transitions

**7.2.1.1. Motion Passed:** Approve accreditation of schools for the 2017-2018 school year in accordance with the provisions of Rule 10, (92 NAC 10), Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools passed with a motion by Molly O'Holleran and a second by Patrick McPherson.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**7.2.1.2. Motion Passed:** Approve accreditation for Nelson Mandela School a school, currently classified as an approved school, to operate as accredited in the 2017-2018 school year in accordance with the provisions of Rule 10, (92 NAC 10), Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools passed with a motion by Molly O'Holleran and a second by Rachel Wise.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**7.2.2. Educational Opportunities and Access**

**7.2.2.1. Motion Passed:** Approval of Early Childhood Education Grant applications passed with a motion by Molly O'Holleran and a second by Rachel Wise.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**7.3. Policy Committee**

**7.3.1. Motion Passed:** Approve proposed revisions to State Board Policy B17, Hearing Officers passed with a motion by Rachel Wise and a second by Lisa Fricke.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**7.4. Budget and Finance Committee**

**7.4.1. Motion Passed:** Accept the 2016 State Single Audit Report passed with a motion by Maureen Nickels and a second by Molly O'Holleran.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**7.5. Commissioner's Appraisal Committee**

**7.5.1. Motion Passed:** Approve the Amendment to the Commissioner's Contract to reflect the annual increase given to all state employees passed with a motion by Molly O'Holleran and a second by Patrick McPherson.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**8. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**8.1. Identify items for separate vote**

Melody Hobson, Department of Education representative, spoke to increased services and limited providers as the reason for the increase in contract amount.

**Motion Passed:** Motion to approve 8.6.4 passed with a motion by Rachel Wise and a second by Maureen Nickels.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**8.2. Approve consent agenda**

**Motion Passed:** Motion to approve the remainder of the Consent Agenda passed with a motion by Rachel Wise and a second by Maureen Nickels.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**9. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Commissioner Blomstedt recognized the service of Brent Gaswick, Team Leader of Network, Education, and Technology Team. Brent will be leaving the Department to take an elementary principal position in Nebraska City.

**9.1. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Presentation**

Commissioner Blomstedt gave a presentation to the Board on the work done to date and what the next steps in the process will be. He stressed that ESSA is about equity and making sure we are serving students across Nebraska and working to close the achievement gaps. The final draft will be presented to the Board in August before seeking approval from the Governor.

Vice President Witzel called for a break at 10:41 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:53 a.m.

The Commissioner discussed the process of seeking Legislative input with the Board.

**10. BOARD REPORTS, DATES AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**10.1. Motion Passed:** Approve meeting participation passed with a motion by Rachel Wise and a second by Molly O'Holleran.

Patricia Timm	Absent
Rachel Wise	Yes
Maureen Nickels	Yes
Patrick McPherson	Yes
Molly O'Holleran	Yes
John Witzel	Yes
Lisa Fricke	Yes
Patsy Koch Johns	Yes

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Vice President Witzel adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m. The next meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Friday, August 4, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the Nebraska State Office Building, Nebraska Department of Education, Sixth Floor, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509. A work session will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. at the Nebraska State Office building, Nebraska Department of Education, Sixth Floor, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509.