

MINUTES OF THE NEBRASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
State Board Meeting Room, Nebraska State Office Building, Lincoln, Nebraska
January 5, 2018

[Link to Agenda and Attachments](#)
[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

President Timm called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

1.1. Roll Call

Present: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, McPherson, Wise, Blomstedt
Absent: O'Holleran

1.2. President Timm led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Timm announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2.1 Motion to approve the minutes of the December 7-8, 2017, State Board of Education meeting minutes as published by Witzel, second by Wise.

Voting Yes: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, McPherson, Wise
Absent: O'Holleran

Motion passed.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 Motion to approve the Agenda by Koch Johns, second by Nickels.

Voting Yes: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, McPherson, Wise
Absent: O'Holleran

Motion passed.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

4.1. Request for Appearance

4.1.A. Nebraska Students Returning to the Classroom after a Brain Injury. Sharon Royers, Retired OPS Administrator and Board Member for the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska relayed her personal story of a concussion injury. Her experience compelled her to inform others of the work of the Brain Injury Alliance and the Return to Learn program. (Handout)

4.2. Other Public Comment

- Rachel Pinkerton, speaking to the UNL campus culture issue and the ACT scores being a symptom on malignant leftism; and the need to respect viewpoint diversity.

President Timm called for a break at 9:20 a.m. The meeting resumed at 9:26 a.m.

5. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT AND AGENDA OVERVIEW

5.1. State of Nebraska Schools, Strategic Plan Discussion

Commissioner Blomstedt continued his report to the Board from December 2017. Discussed the strategic priorities, scheduling regular reviews and updates, having an objective external review, and prioritizing.

5.2. Legislative Priorities

Deputy Commissioner Halstead provided information on the legislative Priorities and Concepts document, noting three additional items added since December (priority schools, school finance, and early childhood education).

Chairperson, Rachel Wise, asked the Board to consider accepting the document as a tool for direction in January in communicating the legislative framework, positions, and authorities for NDE staff.

5.3. Orientation

In an effort to keep the Board members current on the various board directives, bylaws, and processes, Executive Director for the State Board, Ryan Foor, will provide brief orientations during monthly Board meetings.

5.3.A. Annual policy and procedure orientation – Ryan Foor

Various items from the Board Policy Reference Manual, parliamentary procedures, Committee work, and Sparq training with the Board were reviewed.

5.4. Consent Agenda process

Commissioner Blomstedt reviewed the process for items on the Consent Agenda.

5.5. Report on Rules

Commissioner Blomstedt reported that Rules 24, 11, and 21 are up for hearing.

5.6. Board Priorities and Policy Research – No report

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6.1. Discussion Item: Discuss process of the definition of civic-readiness

Commissioner Blomstedt updated the Board regarding his meeting with Senator Groene, the concern for the criminal penalty piece in statute, reviewing public comments, and the proposed work of the Board at the February committee meetings.

6.2. Discussion Item: Discuss proposed revisions to Rule 11 (92 NAC 11), Regulations for the Approval of Pre-Kindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the Issuance of Early Childhood Grants

Melody Hobson, Department of Education representative, reviewed the proposed changes to Rule 11 regarding the readiness of 5-year olds for Kindergarten.

7. 2018 ORGANIZATION OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

7.1. Election Process and Procedures

Motion by Timm, second by Wise: To indicate the Commissioner, as Secretary of the State Board, to preside over the nomination and election process; and that a roll-call vote will be used during the election after which the Commissioner will declare the result.

Voting Yes: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, McPherson, Wise
Absent: O'Holleran

Motion passed.

7.2. Election of Board President

Commissioner Blomstedt opened nominations for Board president. Rachel Wise nominated John Witzel. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed.

Patrick McPherson stated for the Record: *I find it interesting that once again this year, as was the case last year, that I was not contacted by either of the parties destined to win the positions of Board Chairman and Vice*

Chairman to even ask for my vote or announce that they were running. Apparently, the decisions for leadership have been made.

With that said, I'd like to suggest that the juxtaposed leadership try to be a little more transparent, more pro-active, more respectful and less insulting in the future. I don't believe that sitting behind closed doors in a room before a board meeting and making a decision that the board will only give citizens 3 minutes to testify rather than the 5 that they came understanding they would have a very open process. Nor do I think an excuse that "we really don't have sufficient time because we need to get on to lunch" is very respectful of the citizens who sent us here. I also, don't feel that it is very professional to insult and/or ignore board members as has been the situation in my case with the leadership we are about to elect.

I hope that this juxtaposed "new" leadership will be a little more pro-active in the coming year as it appears to me that all we've seen is reaction and sometimes little of that when appropriate. I've seen little leadership in discussing anything other than what is brought to the board by the administration and this isn't a criticism of the administration'.

Despite efforts by some to ignore or hush my comments, concerns or questions, I will continue to ask questions and make suggestions. For example, I've been asking for the last four months why we haven't followed through with this board's obligation to select another priority school to replace Druid Hill? When will that happen? We see abysmal ACT scores at some of schools and have virtually no discussion about them.

I hope the 'new' leadership will make some changes in 2018.

Voting Witzel: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, Wise

Voting No (Abstain): McPherson

Absent: O'Holleran

Commissioner Blomstedt announced that John Witzel was elected president.

7.3. Election of Board Vice President

Commissioner Blomstedt opened nominations for Board vice president. Maureen Nickels nominated Patricia Timm. There being no further nominations, the nominations were closed.

Voting Timm: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, Wise

Voting No (Abstain): McPherson

Absent: O'Holleran

Commissioner Blomstedt announced that Patricia Timm was elected vice president.

President Witzel called for a break at 11:12 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:25 a.m.

7.4. Discuss Board Committee Membership

President Witzel announced that Committee membership would remain the same for now. Requests for memberships on committees can be submitted to President Witzel. Some Committee restructuring may take place.

8. HEARINGS – None

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

10. ACTION ITEMS

10.1. Full Board

10.1.A. Action Item: Accept Legislative Committee report on legislative priorities
State Board President

Motion by Wise, second by McPherson: To accept the Legislative Committee report on Legislative Priorities.

Voting Yes: McPherson, Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, Wise
Absent: O'Holleran

Motion passed.

11. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

11.2. Approve consent agenda as published

Motion by Fricke, second by Nickels: To approve the Consent Agenda as published.

Voting Yes: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, McPherson, Wise
Absent: O'Holleran

Motion passed.

12. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS - None

13. BOARD REPORTS, DATES AND DISCUSSIONS ITEMS

13.1. Meeting participation and joint meetings with policy partners

Board Members each reported on the meetings attended since the December 2017 meeting.

13.2. Discuss requests for meeting attendance

The following requests were added to the Meeting Participation list:

McPherson: Student Mobility Workshop, NASB Legislative Issues Conference, NRCSA
Legislative Form, and South Sioux City convocation
Wise: South Sioux City Convocation
Fricke: South Sioux City Convocation
Witzel: South Sioux City Convocation
Koch Johns: South Sioux City Convocation

13.4. Action Item: Meeting participation

Motion by Fricke, second by Timm: To approve the amended Meeting participation list with the additional requests as noted in Item 13.2.

Voting Yes: Witzel, Timm, Koch Johns, Fricke, Nickels, Wise
Abstain: McPherson
Absent: O'Holleran

Motion passed.

15. ADJOURNMENT

President Witzel expressed appreciation for the service of Timm as the 2017 president of the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Friday, February 2, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. A work session will be held on Thursday, February 1, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. in Lincoln, Nebraska.