

**State Board of Education Business Meeting;**

Friday, October 8, 2021

Embassy Suites by Hilton Lincoln, Regents Ballroom A, 1040 P Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

[Link to Agenda and Attachments](#)

[Link to Video of Meeting](#)

Publicized notice of the 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.

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING, Friday, October 8, 2021, 9:00 AM.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER** – President Maureen Nickels called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

1.1. Roll Call

Roll Call showed the following attendance:

Maureen Nickels

Patti Gubbels

Robin Stevens

Patsy Koch Johns

Lisa Fricke

Deborah Neary

Jacquelyn Morrison

Absent: Patricia Timm

Commissioner Blomstedt was also in attendance.

1.2. President Nickels led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3. President Nickels announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act.

1.4. COVID-19 Meeting Protocol

Commissioner Blomstedt shared information on the COVID-19 Meeting Protocol.

**2. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

2.1. Agenda Overview and Consent Agenda Process

2.1.A. No agenda items were requested for removal.

**4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Maureen Nickels thanked those members of the Board that have attended the Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) Area Meetings. A special mention to those who have participated in the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) virtual meetings.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Patti Gubbels, second by Lisa Fricke to approve the Consent Agenda, without Agenda Item 5.2.A.

Lisa Fricke: Yea

Patsy Koch Johns: Yea

Deborah Neary: Yea  
Maureen Nickels: Yea  
Robin Stevens: Yea  
Patricia Timm: Absent  
Patti Gubbels: Yea  
Jacquelyn Morrison: Abstain

The motion passed.

### 3. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1. Sign Language Across the State

Ryan Foor, NDE Representative, introduced Whitney Mertens and Reese Pedersen, students interested in American Sign Language and the requirements and offerings within schools in the state.

President Nickels left the meeting at 9:38 a.m. and Vice President Patsy Koch Johns conducted the rest of the State Board Business meeting.

### COMMISSIONER'S REPORT (cont'd)

#### 2.2. Report on Rules

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24 is with the Attorney General awaiting approval.

Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 1 and Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 2 are with the Governor awaiting approval.

#### 2.3. Board Operations Information (NONE)

#### 2.4. Provide updates to the Board on first-year implementation of the Purple Star Schools Program

Lane Carr, NDE Representative, provided the Board with updates on the Purple Start Schools Program implementation.

#### 2.5. Provide updates to the Board on the three rounds of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds

Lane Carr, NDE Representative, and Commissioner Blomstedt updated the Board on the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

#### 2.6. Authorize the Commissioner to submit the Department's mid-biennium budget adjustments for Fiscal Years 2021-22 and 2022-23 on behalf of the Nebraska State Board of Education

Commissioner Blomstedt updated the Board on the mid-biennium budget adjustments for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Fiscal Years.

### 6. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1. **Policy Committee** – No report. The Committee did not meet this month.

6.2. **Legislative Committee** – No report. The Committee did not meet this month.

- 6.3. **Commissioner's Appraisal Committee** – No report. The Committee did not meet this month.
- 6.4. **AQuESTT Teaching, Learning and Serving Domain Committee** – Lisa Fricke, Chair, reported on the Committee meeting.  
The Committee on Teaching, Learning and Serving met to receive updates and information from NDE staff on two items.  
The first item was an update on the Math content area standards process. The process is in the beginning phases and the Committee will be bringing discussion on this topic to the Board at a future meeting.  
The second item was an update on the Praxis tests required for teacher certification. The Committee reviewed the history of the use of the tests in Nebraska and recent efforts to change policies related to use of the tests. The Committee briefly discussed other methods to determine basic skills competency for teachers and expects to bring discussion on the topic to the full Board at a future meeting.

Board Members discussed Praxis and if a statutory change was needed or if a regulation change would accomplish the same.

- 6.5. **AQuESTT Student Success, Access and Support Domain Committee** – Patsy Koch Johns, Chair, reported on the Committee meeting.

The Committee on AQuESTT Student Success, Access and Support domain met on October 5, 2021, and had one action item to approve the renewal of the Rule 11 waiver request for Morrill Public schools, the Committee recommended the approval of this item.

The Committee had one discussion item on Leading for Equity and Excellence Program (LEEP) State Policy Network. This year, the NSCTA conference provided a workshop on how to develop Diversity Equity and Inclusion Statements. A template/formula was shared at the conference to be utilized to create your own statement.

The Committee had two update items. 1) Melody Hobson provided a brief overview of the legal scope of the NDE and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; and 2) Zainab Rida provided a brief report on how the NDE is addressing School Mental Health. A 3-day institutes were conducted on September 28th through September 30th. 14 ESUs and 5 LEAs attended and participated in these institutes. The goal of these institutes is to help each of the ESUs to become a trainer of the Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Program modules, allowing them to host their own institute with schools within their service area who wish to develop a Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Program.

- 6.5.A. Motion by Patsy Koch Johns, second by Lisa Fricke to approve the Rule 11 teacher waiver request for Morrill Public Schools

Lisa Fricke:	Yea
Patsy Koch Johns:	Yea
Deborah Neary:	Yea
Maureen Nickels:	Absent
Robin Stevens:	Yea
Vacant	
Patti Gubbels:	Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Yea

The motion passed.

- 6.5.B. Leading for Equity and Excellence Program (LEEP)  
There was no further discussion on this item.

- 6.6. **Budget and Finance Committee** – Patti Gubbels on behalf of Maureen Nickels, Acting Chair, reported on the Committee meeting. The Committee discussed the amount of funds in the consent agenda items and specifically the number of staff needed to administer the additional Federal funds flowing through the NDE. The NDE gave support for the additional staff needed to complete the work related to the ESSER funds including how we determined the number of staff and what costs were associated with those staff. The additional employees will be fixed-term employees that will cover the three years of the ESSER grants. The NDE compared outsourcing this work versus doing it internally and felt that outsourcing wasn't a viable option due to technology use that schools are familiar with and the need to closely monitor these funds to verify compliance with Federal requirements.

The Committee also requested an explanation for how the schools receiving project award grants get selected. The NDE staff provided the following explanation: Superintendent's must first submit an application, then a needs assessment is used to determine which sites are a priority. All three schools receiving the project aware grants are TSI schools.

The Committee reviewed the Monthly Board travel expenses and had no concerns.

The Committee reviewed in-state travel authorization with no issues or concerns.

The Commissioner briefed the Committee that the full Board would be discussing the deficit budget request during the Friday Board Business Meeting.

6.6.A. Monthly Board Travel Expense Report

There was no further discussion on this item.

6.6.B. In-State Travel Authorization Reports

There was no further discussion on this item.

- 6.7. **Strategic Planning, Performance and Improvement Committee** – No report. The Committee did not meet this month.

## 7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

- 7.1 In accordance with Board Policy B9, set public comment time limits for Friday, November 5, 2021

Motion by Patsy Koch Johns, second by Patti Gubbels, pursuant to Board Policy B9, limit public comment time at the November 5, 2021 meeting to a maximum of one hour.

Board Members discussed the context of the motion and the Commissioner explained that there are other agencies the only allow an hour for public comment.

Lisa Fricke:	Nay
Patsy Koch Johns:	Nay
Deborah Neary:	Nay
Maureen Nickels:	Absent
Robin Stevens:	Nay
Vacant	
Patti Gubbels:	Nay
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Nay

The motion failed.

7.2. Discuss the development process/policy standards in the future

Jacquelyn Morrison discussed improving the standards development process either through the Policy Committee or an ad hoc Committee.

7.3. Discuss process for adding items to the agenda

Deborah Neary asked that this item be added to the agenda for discussion, but the questions were answered ahead of time.

7.4. Discuss contracts related to the Brain Injury Capacity Building Project

Deborah Neary asked that this discussion be postponed to next month.

7.5. Appoint the recommended individuals to fill vacancies on the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

Motion by Patsy Koch Johns, second by Deborah Neary to appoint the recommended individuals to fill vacancies on the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC).

Deborah Neary asked that this item be pulled from the Consent Agenda to provide background on the item and the process for appointing individuals.

Lisa Fricke:	Yea
Patsy Koch Johns:	Yea
Deborah Neary:	Yea
Maureen Nickels:	Absent
Robin Stevens:	Yea
Vacant	
Patti Gubbels:	Yea
Jacquelyn Morrison:	Yea

Motion passed.

## 8. INFORMATION ITEMS AND REPORTS

7.1 Vice President Koch Johns referred Board Members to review information items and reports.

## 9. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Deborah Neary appreciates the diversity of thought and backgrounds of peers.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Koch Johns adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the State Board of Education will be held Friday, November 5, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. at a location to be determined.