



## **Regular Board of Education Meeting**

Educational Service Unit 7, Oak Room

2657 44th Ave

Columbus, NE 68601-8537

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Posted Locations:

- Columbus Telegram Newspaper
- Columbus Telegram Website
- ESU 7 North Building Front Door

Posted Date: 02/07/2026

Attendance Taken at 5:30 PM.

Bob Arp: Present

Joyce Baumert: Present

Amy Blaser: Present

Marni Danhauer: Absent

April Emeigh: Present

Don Graff: Present

Beth Kabes: Present

Clark Lehr: Present

Dawn Lindsley: Present

Doug Pauley: Absent

Richard Stephens: Present

Jack Young: Present

Present: 10, Absent: 2.

### 1. **Call the Meeting to Order**

## LEADERSHIP • SERVICE • SUPPORT

Notice of this meeting was given in advance according to State Law 84-1411, by giving notice of the meeting to the public on ESU 7 website [www.esu7.org](http://www.esu7.org) and posted at location of meeting. Notice of this meeting was also given in advance to all members of the Board of Education of Educational Service Unit 7. Availability of the agenda and purpose of the hearing was communicated in the advance notice of the meeting and in the notice to the members of this hearing. All proceedings of the Board of Education of Educational Service Unit 7 were taken while the convened hearing was open to the attendance of the public.

Board President, Dawn Lindsley called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### 1.1. Notification of Open Meetings Law

This meeting has been preceded by reasonable advance notice and is hereby declared to be in open session. A copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted in the meeting room.

### 1.2. Roll Call

### 1.3. Absent Board Members

Board Members Doug Pauley and Marni Danhauer will be absent. They notified of their absence prior to the meeting.

Reminder - cannot reply to the emailed meeting notification or text. Must email Marci ([mostmeyer@esu7.org](mailto:mostmeyer@esu7.org)) or text/call (402) 809-1566

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve Board member absences.

Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve Board member absences as presented Passed with a motion by Clark Lehr and a second by Amy Blaser.

Marni Danhauer:	Absent
Doug Pauley:	Absent
Bob Arp:	Yea
Joyce Baumert:	Yea
Amy Blaser:	Yea
April Emeigh:	Yea
Don Graff:	Yea
Beth Kabes:	Yea
Clark Lehr:	Yea
Dawn Lindsley:	Yea

Richard Stephens: Yea

Jack Young: Yea

Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

#### 1.4. Pledge of Allegiance

### 2. Board Code of Ethics and Oath of Office

Annually, Board Members participate in the Oath of Office and sign their Code of Ethics.

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely and without mental reservations, or for purpose or evasions; and that I will faithfully and impartially perform the duties of the office of member of the Board of Educational Service Unit No. 7, according to law, to the best of my ability. And I do further swear that I do not advocate, nor am I a member of any political party or organization that advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States or this State by force or violence; and that during such time that I am in this position I will not advocate nor become a member of any political party or organization that advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States or this State by force or violence. So help me God.**

Board members, Bob Arp, Don Graff and Richard Stephens recited the Oath of Office and signed the Code of Ethics.

### 3. Dissemination of Conflict of Interest Forms

Annually, The Code of Ethics form will be disseminated to the Board for signature and Conflict of Interest forms to those who may have a potential conflict of interest.

### 4. Board Vacancy - District 8

Board Member Doug Pauley, submitted his resignation on **February 11, 2025**. NEB. REV. STAT. § Section 32-562 requires the vacancy to be accepted by the rest of the board. Further, Section 32-574 states, "Unless otherwise provided by law, all vacancies shall be filled within 45 days after the vacancy occurs unless good cause is shown that the requirement imposes an undue burden."

District 8 includes the following school districts, Clarkson, Columbus, David City, Lakeview, Schuyler. The term will expire December 31, 2028.

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take all action necessary to accept the resignation of District 8 Board Member Doug Pauley, and adopt a procedure for the appointment of a new member to the Educational Service Unit 7 Board of Education to fill the vacancy thereon created by the resignation of Doug Pauley.

Discuss, consider and take all action necessary to accept the resignation of District 8 Board Member Doug Pauley, and adopt a procedure for the appointment of a new member to the Educational Service Unit 7 Board of Education to fill the vacancy thereon created by the resignation of Doug Pauley Passed with a motion by Jack Young and a second by Joyce Baumert.

Marni Danhauer: Absent

Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea  
Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

5. Approval of Agenda

The sequence of agenda topics is subject to change at the discretion of the Board.

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve the agenda as presented.

Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve the agenda as presented Passed with a motion by Beth Kabes and a second by Jack Young.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea  
Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

6. Virtual Conferencing for December 2025-March 2026

Nebraska Revised Statute § 84-1411 authorizes virtual meetings for educational service units if the requirements of subdivision (2)(b) are met.

The Board voted to have a virtual conferencing option for the following board meetings: December 2025, January 2026, February 2026, and March 2026.

7. Welcome Visitors

8. Public Comment

The Board has the discretion to limit the amount of time set aside for public participation.

Citizens wishing to address the Board on a certain agenda item must complete the Request to be Heard Document prior to the start of the board meeting. Citizens wishing to present petitions to the Board may do so at this time. However, the Board will only receive the petitions and not act upon them or their contents.

9. Approval of the 2026-2027 Services Plan

The ESU 7 Executive Committee Chair attending, Chad Denker, will make a summary report to the Board on the plan for ESU 7 Services for 2026-2027.

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve the 2026-2027 Services Plan as presented.

Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve the 2026-2027 Services Plan as presented Passed with a motion by Amy Blaser and a second by Joyce Baumert.

Marni Danhauer: Absent

Doug Pauley: Absent

Bob Arp: Yea

Joyce Baumert: Yea

Amy Blaser: Yea

April Emeigh: Yea

Don Graff: Yea

Beth Kabes: Yea

Clark Lehr: Yea

Dawn Lindsley: Yea

Richard Stephens: Yea

Jack Young: Yea

Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

Dr. Chad Denker from David City Public Schools reviewed the 2026-2027 ESU 7 Service Planning process and service plan.

Superintendents/Principals met in December to express the needs of the schools by using the Data Digs process. We had the opportunity to see what the services each school used in the past year. He showed the priorities of the Superintendents, Principals, etc. We looked at how each school district prioritized their needs and this does give a final score. What services do we need to add? It was determined a Literacy Coach was needed. Dr. Denker gave appreciation to the Chief Administrator, Marci Ostmeier.

Board Vice-President, Beth Kabes asked if all schools participated in the December meeting. Dr. Denker indicated one or two didn't participate this year. Administrator Ostmeier said they have a chance to join by zoom.

10. **Consent Agenda**

Unless removed from the consent agenda, items identified within the consent agenda will be acted on at one time.

If any Board member wishes to discuss an item, it must be removed from the consent agenda at which time the remaining items will be acted upon.

Consent Agenda Includes:

- Minutes from the previous meeting(s)
- Presentation of the bills
- Policy review with no recommended changes
- Other routine agenda items

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to approve the consent agenda with exception of Article I, Section 2, B and Article I, Section 3, C as presented Passed with a motion by Jack Young and a second by Beth Kabes.

Marni Danhauer: Absent

Doug Pauley: Absent

Bob Arp: Yea

Joyce Baumert: Yea

Amy Blaser: Yea

April Emeigh: Yea

Don Graff: Yea

Beth Kabes: Yea

Clark Lehr: Yea

Dawn Lindsley: Yea

Richard Stephens: Yea

Jack Young: Yea

Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

10.1. Minutes

**This is a consent item.**

10.2. Presentation of Bills # 81208 through #81345 totaling \$975,263.22

The summary of bills for the current month total: \$975,263.22 - Bills #81208 through #81345

General Activity Fund total: No activity

	Amount	Vendor	Description
81214	\$9,749.20	Amergis Healthcare Staffing	Bridges contracted services
81224	\$8,031.19	Chartwells Dining Services	Title IC Suenos Summit Oct 2025
81234	\$10,953.53	Eakes Office Solutions	Copier Maintenance agreements
81285	\$6,357.40	State of NE DAS State Accounting	Network Service Charges
81335	\$7,775.47	Renaissance Learning, Inc.	Educlimber Software Flow Through

**This is a consent item.**

10.3. Reading of Article I, Section 3, D Orientation of New Board Members

**This is a consent item.**

10.4. Reading of Article I, Section 3, G Compensation of Board Members

**This is a consent item.**

10.5. Reading of Article I, Section 4, G Removal from Officer Position

**This is a consent item.**

10.6. Reading of Article I, Section 4, H Filling a Vacant in Officer Position

**This is a consent item.**

10.7. Reading of Article I, Section 5, B Appointments

**This is a consent item.**

10.8. Resignations  
Resignation:

- Brooke Kavan, Professional Development Coordinator, is resigning effective June 30, 2026.

**This is a consent item.**

- 10.9. Excess Lodging  
Excess Lodging:
- The Grants Department had excess travel to report:
    - Disability and Other Developmental Disabilities (DADD) Conference, Long Beach, CA (January 14-17, 2026)
      - Stephanie Foreman - \$602.59

**This is a consent item.**

- 10.10. 2026-2027 NASB Dues

**This is a consent item.**

11. Reading of Article I, Section 2, B Duties and Function of the Board

**This is a consent item.**

This item was removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

There is a question about whether the second sentence of Role of Individual Board Members should be moved to this policy. Administrator Ostmeier will reach out to the attorney regarding revisions.

12. Reading of Article I, Section 3, C Role of Individual Board Members

**This is a consent item.**

This item was removed from the consent agenda for discussion.

There is a question about whether the second sentence of this policy should be moved to duties and functions of the Board. Administrator Ostmeier will reach out to the attorney regarding revisions.

13. Board Spotlight - Emergency Operations Team (EOT)  
Emergency Operations Chair Dan Ellsworth, will present the Emergency Operations Team (EOT) Spotlight.  
Director Ellsworth gave a review of the Standard Response Protocol Flip-Book. This Flip-Book contains Emergency Operations protocols. Helps to have one common language and has a tab for each protocol. Director Ellsworth showed the contents of the Emergency Operation buckets that are located throughout the ESU 7 buildings.

14. Treasurer's Report  
Review the breakdown of the Treasurer's Report.

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.

Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented Passed with a motion by Bob Arp and a second by Joyce Baumert.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea

Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

15. 2024-2025 Audit Report

The 2024-2025 Romans Wiemer and Associates Audit Report is attached for the Board's review.

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to accept the 2024-2025 Audit Report as presented.

Discuss, consider and take all necessary action to accept the 2024-2025 Audit Report as presented Passed with a motion by Clark Lehr and a second by April Emeigh.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea

Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

Administrator Ostmeier gave an overview of the audit report and reviewed the opinion letter and no issues were found. The auditor looks at key things. Administrator Ostmeier explained the changes in Net Position and what this figure means. We have good internal

control over segregation of duties. The Board commented that the staff responsible for this work be commended.

16. New Hire: Crystal Ernst, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027

Crystal Ernst, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027.

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve the contract for Crystal Ernst, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027 as presented.

Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve the contract for Crystal Ernst, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027 as presented Passed with a motion by April Emeigh and a second by Amy Blaser.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea  
Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

Director Ericson reviewed her experience and credentials and explained the criteria for salary.

17. New Hire: Kristine Hackett, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027

Kristine Hackett, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027

**\*\*ATTACH SIGNED CONTRACTS BELOW**

**Administrator Recommendation:** Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve the contract for Kristine Hackett, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027 as presented.

Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve the contract for Kristine Hackett, Professional Development Coordinator for June 22, 2026-August 31, 2026 and school year 2026-2027 as presented Passed with a motion by Jack Young and a second by Joyce Baumert.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea  
Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

Director Ericson explained that this position has an emphasis on Early Childhood. Kristine Hackett is coming from a school district.

#### 18. April 2026 Board Meeting Time

The Board - Employee Recognition Dinner is scheduled on April 20, 2026, beginning at 5:00pm. It is recommended to change the Board Meeting time to 4:00pm to accommodate the Annual Board Recognition Dinner.

**Recommendation:** Discuss, consider and take any action necessary to approve an April 20, 2026, Board Meeting Time of 4:00pm.

Discuss, consider and take any action necessary to approve an April 20, 2026, Board Meeting Time of 4:00pm Passed with a motion by Clark Lehr and a second by Bob Arp.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea

Dawn Lindsley: Yea

Richard Stephens: Yea

Jack Young: Yea

Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

19. **Administrator's Report General**

- Spotlight Funding Revisit
- ESUCC Update
- Professional Development and Print Shop Report - Director Ericson
- Special Education Report - Director Clay
- Technology Report - Director Ellsworth
- Upcoming Events
  - ESU 7 Board Recognition Dinner
    - **Monday, April 20, 2026 at The Oak Room of Columbus**
      - Board Meeting 4:00-5:00pm
      - Social Hour 5:00-6:00pm
      - Dinner 6:00-8:00pm
  - NRCSA (Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association) Legislative Forum
    - February 26, 2026 - Lincoln
    - Deadline to Register: February 19, 2026
    - Registered: Marci Ostmeyer, Dawn Lindsley
  - Budget & Finance Workshops
    - March 10, 2026 - Seward
      - Deadline to Register: March 5, 2026
      - Registered: Marci Ostmeyer, Clark Lehr
    - March 24, 2026 - West Point
      - Deadline to Register: March 19, 2026
    - April 7, 2026 - Ogallala
      - Deadline to Register: April 1, 2026
    - (Amplified) April 8, 2026 - Kearney
      - Deadline to Register: April 1, 2026
  - NASB (Nebraska Association of School Boards) Member Golf Outing
    - June 10, 2026 - Kearney Country Club
  - School Law Seminar (more info to come)
    - June 10-11, 2026 - Kearney
  - 2026 Elections
    - Filing Deadlines
      - Incumbents: **July 15, 2026**
      - Non-Incumbents: **August 3, 2026**
    - These are the districts up for election in 2026
      - Richard Stephens - District 1 (Richard has chosen not to run again)
      - Amy Blaser - District 3
      - Jack Young - District 5 (Jack has chosen not to run again)

- April Emeigh - District 7
- Joyce Baumert - District 9 (Joyce has chosen not to run again)
- Don Graff - District 11

The Emergency Operations Team is funded through levy dollars.

Administrator Ostmeyer explained the NASB invoice that will be coming next month. This was an unexpected charge, but we did receive an invoice for \$612 for mileage and goal-setting facilitation.

Board member, Beth Kabes asked if other ESU's experienced this same issue. Board member, Joyce Baumert asked if Administrator Ostmeyer talked to Marcia Herring. Administrator Ostmeyer said she did not contact Marcia Herring and asked the Board if they would like her to do so. Board member, Bob Arp asked if there was a signed agreement. Board member, Beth Kabes says to just pay it and learn from it. Board member, Dawn Lindsley commented about preserving the relationship. Board member, Amy Blaser asked if NASB had volunteered to split the bill. Administrator Ostmeyer indicated they had not. Board member, Bob Arp feels it is not worth straining the relationship. Administrator Ostmeyer shared that in her email from NASB that they stated they did not communicate this well.

Administrator Ostmeyer gave an update on ESUCC.

Director Ericson gave an update on the two new hires, Kristi Hackett and Crystal Ernst. Print Shop is in the process of ordering supplies for the department. Annual Consultations start the week of February 23. Director Ellsworth is working on building a spreadsheet for drop off orders and Rich Stuart is working on the billing system.

Director Clay gave a report on Special Education and projections for next year are coming along. We are planning to hire another Psychologist.

Directors Clay and Ericson gave a review of the changes made to the February staff meeting.

Director Ellsworth gave a review of Erate and talked about the Print shop spreadsheet to replace the FileMaker database. The goal is to update schools and teachers all in one spot. Network Nebraska Advisory Group (NNAG) Director Ellsworth has been nominated to lead this group.

Four of our schools use Striv. He talked about the difficulties with it. We were able to detect the bugs with this.

19.1. Goal Update  
Goals - Attached for your Review

Goal 2: By July 2026, the ESU 7 board will attend at least two professional/personal learning events annually.

- Attached Below

Goal 3: By July 2026, the ESU 7 board will attend the corresponding school district board meetings at least once every two years to report the tailored services provided by ESU 7 and the outcomes measured.

- Completed:
  - Cross County - October 13, 2025
  - Schuyler - October 13, 2025
  - High Plains - November 10, 2025
  - Humphrey - November 10, 2025
  - Lakeview - November 10, 2025
  - Palmer - December 8, 2025
  - David City - January 14, 2026
  - Howells-Dodge - January 14, 2026
  - Shelby-Rising City - January 19, 2026
  - Leigh - February 11, 2026
  - Columbus Public Schools - February 16, 2026
  - Twin River Public Schools - February 16, 2026
  - Central City - February 16, 2026
- Scheduled:
  - St. Edward - March 9, 2026
    - Dan Ellsworth and Richard Stephens

Marci reviewed the last four School Board meetings. CPS, Leigh, Central City, Twin River

19.2. Facilities Update

The Administrator will provide a facilities update during this item

We are hoping to have a proposal on the Learning Academy HVAC next month.

19.3. Personnel

Mayra Garcia who had given her notice previously and is now staying at ESU 7.

19.4. Legislative Update

During this item, the Administrator will provide a Legislative Update to members of the Board.

In the month of February, the Administrator and Superintendent Executive committee members visit our Senators. Administrator Ostmeyer reviewed the three main topics of discussion.

20. **Committee Reports**

20.1. Negotiations Committee Report  
Reports of activities and discussions from the Negotiations Committee will take place during this item.

**Committee Recommendations:**

**General Staff:** Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve a \_\_\_\_ Total Compensation Package increase for the general staff group, excluding the Administrator and paraprofessionals, for the contract year of 2026-2027.

**Paraprofessionals:** Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve a \$ \_\_\_\_ per hour increase to the base of the paraprofessional salary schedule for the Cen7ter, Bridges and Learning Academy paraprofessionals for the contract year of 2026-2027. This increases the base to \$ \_\_\_\_ per hour for Cen7ter and \$ \_\_\_\_ for Bridges & Learning Academy.

Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve a \$1.00 per hour increase to the base of the paraprofessional salary schedule for the Cen7ter, Bridges and Learning Academy paraprofessionals for the contract year of 2026-2027. This increases the base to \$18 per hour for Cen7ter and \$19 for Bridges & Learning Academy Passed with a motion by Don Graff and a second by Joyce Baumert.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea  
Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea

Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

Discuss, consider, and take any necessary action to approve a 4.5% Total Compensation Package increase for the general staff group, excluding the Administrator and paraprofessionals, for the contract year of 2026-2027. Passed with a motion by Don Graff and a second by Bob Arp.

Marni Danhauer: Absent  
Doug Pauley: Absent  
Bob Arp: Yea

Joyce Baumert: Yea  
Amy Blaser: Yea  
April Emeigh: Yea  
Don Graff: Yea  
Beth Kabes: Yea  
Clark Lehr: Yea  
Dawn Lindsley: Yea  
Richard Stephens: Yea  
Jack Young: Yea  
Yea: 10, Nay: 0, Absent: 2

Board member, April Emeigh asked for clarification about the word base. It was explained it is part of a salary schedule.

21. Conference Report

Conference Attendees will report on their learnings.

Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB) Legislative Issues Conference - January 26, 2026

Board member, Dawn Lindsley went to the President's retreat. NASB Board Governance Standards will be shared with the Board.

22. Board Announcements

During this item, Board Members can make any announcements.

This Friday at noon, they are doing a conference call to update schools on the progress of the legislation.

23. Adjournment

Board President, Dawn Lindsley adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.