

NDSEB EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday June 21, 2023

The North Dakota State Electrical Board Education Advisory Committee was called to order at 9:00 AM by Executive Director James Schmidt. The meeting was held in the conference room at the North Dakota State Electrical Board.

Committee members present: Ivan Mass – NDSCS Representative; Steve Mundahl – Journeyman Representative; James Schmidt – NDSEB Executive Director; Scott Halle – Training & Compliance Administrator; Brian Poykko – Professional Engineer Representative; Tim Pull – Master Electrician Representative; Jeff Kirstein, Adam Kidwell, Christian Opp – Related Apprentice Training Educators .

The agenda was reviewed, and no additional items were added to the agenda.

The minutes from August 23, 2022, were approved by a motion from Adam Kidwell second by Steve Mundahl .

Members present reviewed the committee members list and verified their contact information is current. Members terms expiring December 31st of 2023 are Adam Kidwell, Jeff Kerstin, Christian Opp, and Vance Vesey. Mr. Kidwell, Mr. Kerstin, and Mr. Opp agreed to sever another 3-year term if reappointed by the Electrical Board. Mr. Vesey was absent from the meeting.

Committee was updated on scholarship distribution of \$711,034.61 to date between all the programs, James also discussed putting some of the money from the fund into certificates of deposit as interest rates are now more favorable. Continuous apprentice registration definition was discussed, committee agreed that apprentices must be registered in current year they are working for funds to be applied toward the cost of their education.

The current policy for a related training apprenticeship program was reviewed by the committee and no recommendations were made for any changes at this time. Provider list of approved programs was reviewed, and all information is current, program audit process and timeline were discussed. The tentative audit checklist form was discussed by group and some minor changes made to form. Committee discussed what material is needed for audit and decided that a summary of changes would be sufficient rather than all documentation as provided at the initial approval, also a list of all instructors and their credentials. Committee decided that Scott Halle will visit and review each program on site every three years to ensure compliance with requirements, plans are to do these audits starting in March of 2024. Jeff Kirstein brought up that IEC Dakotas are potentially going to offer a DOL “Rapids Program” that will enable experienced non-licensed people an avenue to complete training and apply for a journeyman license, Jeff asked for committee feedback for opinion if this would be accepted in North Dakota. After considerable discussion about advantages and drawbacks of potentially accepting his program,

it was decided to put further discussion on hold until the end of the meeting as other information to be discussed would help in this decision.

Paula Glass entered the meeting and explained to the committee the apprentice registration process and how they are notified about the education requirements needed to be completed before they can take their journeyman examination.

Exam pass/fail percentages were reviewed and spreadsheet with accumulated data since 2012 for different groups of applicant's success was reviewed for perspective by committee members. Master and journeyman example exams were reviewed by the committee for feedback on questions, looking for input on difficulty and methods. Group opinion was that questions were appropriate and discussion about whether closed/open book combination or all open book questions was preferred was held. Committee agreed there are some things every electrician needs to know and that the format should continue as a combination of both open and closed book questions. Also discussed by group was possibility of electronic versions of the NEC being used for examinations, this is likely to be something necessary in the future as printed versions may eventually be discontinued. James explained how the NERA member states only allow the book format of the NEC to be used during an exam similar to what NDSEB allows. Also, the re-examination waiting period was discussed and all felt it was reasonable.

Next meeting date was suggested to be planned for next March or April, probably after program audits have been completed to discuss results.

Adam Kidwell exited the meeting at 12:00 PM

James discussed the Board policy for reexaminations and the waiting time between attempts and discussed changes from the last legislative session that concluded this past spring, including a study by the Labor Commissioner to examine board practices regarding foreign practitioner acceptance and continuing education practices. Committee reviewed the documents comparing requirements from other states for exams, licensing, and continuing education.

Tim Pull asked committee members their thoughts about the general state of the electrical industry in North Dakota, discussion was that skilled labor is difficult to find and most contractors are busy. James provided numbers of active wiring certificates in the state and numbers of licensed electricians and registered apprentices currently active in our licensing system.

Future work of the committee was discussed that may include possible new license categories, committee members will consider this for ideas and discuss at next meeting. PEP program discussion was resumed, and possible requirements were proposed to make clear what would be needed to complete. It was proposed that for acceptance the applicant would need 8000 hours documented experience before able to enroll in the program, then would need to complete the 372-hour educational program and accumulate another 4000 hours documented experience before qualified to apply for examination. Committee members also should think

about other avenues of delivery for exams, perhaps electronic methods for discussion at the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.