

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN OPTOMETRY

CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD JULY 09, 2025

Date:	July 09, 2025
Time:	11:30 AM
Location:	Teleconference (Zoom)
Attending:	Members: Kathleen Rice (Chair, OD), Pamela Steffes (OD), Ethan Arndt (OD), Charles Rudstrom (Public Member) Staff: Ashley Carabajal (Licensing Examiner), Reid Bowman (Program Coordinator), Patty Burley (Assistant Attorney General)
Absent:	Sheryl Lentfer (OD)

1a. Call to Order: <u>Ethics Report</u>		
Brief Discussion:	<i>Each member of the board confirmed they had no ethical conflicts to disclose.</i>	
1b. Call to Order: <u>Review/Approve Agenda</u>		
Brief Discussion:	<i>No discussion to amend the agenda.</i>	
Motion:	<i>Motion to approve the agenda as written. (First: Dr. Steffes; Second: Mr. Rudstrom)</i>	
Recorded Votes:	<i>Dr. Rice – Y</i>	<i>Dr. Lentfer – Absent</i>
	<i>Dr. Steffes – Y</i>	<i>Dr. Arndt – Y</i>
	<i>Mr. Rudstrom – Y</i>	
Action Items:	<i>The board will follow the agenda as written unless amended later in the meeting.</i>	
2. <u>Deliberative Session</u>		
Brief Discussion:	<p><i>Assistant Attorney General (AAG) Burley joined the meeting at 11:34 AM to provide guidance to the board as needed. AAG Burley clarified that it was the board’s decision on whether to proceed to executive session or not. The board opted for a public meeting because the board was there to discuss regulations, not a specific applicant. AAG Burley let the board know that how they interpret the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) score reports can affect applicants in the future.</i></p> <p><i>The board discussed the PEPS Exam scores on the new NBEO Report and 12 AAC 48.0159(a)(1). Dr. Steffes pointed out the 12 AAC 48.015(a)(1) states parts I, II, and III of the written and practical examination must be passed within four years of applying for licensure. AAG Burley explained the NBEO is a national exam that caters to most states and that the NBEO gives a national version of a practical exam. Also noted was when all</i></p>	

applicants complete the exam, the department receive a score report directly from the NBEO showing if they passed or failed any part of the exams.

Dr. Steffes left the meeting at 11:45 AM. A quorum was maintained and the board continued with the discussion.

Dr. Arndt asked if the board was here to discuss if an overall passing score is sufficient for state licensure or if the applicants must pass all sections of the NBEO exams. AAG Burley stated a recent applicant passed the PEPS Exam (Part II) overall recently, which means they passed under regulations. However, Dr. Rice still agreed with Dr. Steffes that they did not pass under regulation. Dr. Rice also stated that the NBEO does not cater to other states as they do not have any state specific requirements. Dr. Rice asked AAG Burley if she spoke with the NBEO and AAG Burley discussed that the NBEO added the extra sections to the new score reports for the PEPS exam so that it was specific to the few states who have more specific requirements for examinations.

Dr. Rice suggested changing the regulations in the future to require applicants applying for licensure to pass all parts of part I, II, and III (PEPS) of the NBEO exams. Dr. Rice stated that Alaska has the highest scope of practice and should continue to have the highest standard of qualifications for licensure. AAG Burley explained that the board did not have to follow the legal advice given to them and can change their regulations in the future or have the courts decide.

Mr. Rudstrom believed the board's statutes and regulations regarding examinations were very specific and an applicant must pass all parts of the NBEO. Dr. Rice explained how the PEPS exam was broken down and still agreed with Dr. Steffes and is how she also interpreted it. Dr. Rice noted that taking this to court would be expensive and the board has already received legal advice regarding this matter. Dr. Arndt agreed that if they want all parts of the NBEO to be passed, the board will need to do a regulation change to specify this requirement; but stated that until the regulation changes, the board should take legal advice and accept an overall passing score for the part III PEPS Exam. Dr. Arndt also pointed out the state-wide freeze that has current regulations on hold until further notice.

Dr. Rice believed discussing this further with the entirety of the board present would be more beneficial. Dr. Arndt suggested setting up a future meeting to discuss this and potentially modeling other states who use the different sections of the PEPS exam score towards requirements for licensure.

Mr. Bowman asked AAG Burley if this motion covered everything the board had discussed. AAG Burley stated this would put future applicants in the same situation and the board would need to come back and approved each applicant. Ms. Carabajal confirmed that she recently received a batch of NBEO score reports with several potential applicants in the same position.

Mr. Rudstrom asked about the process of starting the regulation project. Mr. Bowman explained the typical process of a regulation project but made it clear that we were still under the administrative order from the Governor that prohibits the processing of any regulation projects; however, the board can continue to work on what changes they would like to see, and it can be submitted when the order is lifted.

	<i>Dr. Rice clarified that in the future any applicant who overall passes the PEPS Exam will count as passing the written and practical examination until the regulations are amended.</i>	
	<i>The board thanked AAG Burley for joining the meeting.</i>	
Motion:	<i>Motion to grant a license to applicant Dr. Gleneski. (First: Mr. Rudstrom; Second: Dr. Rice)</i>	
Recorded Votes:	<i>Dr. Rice – Y</i>	<i>Dr. Lentfer – Absent</i>
	<i>Dr. Steffes – Absent</i>	<i>Dr. Arndt – Y</i>
	<i>Mr. Rudstrom – Y</i>	
Action Items:	<i>Mr. Carabajal will grant a license to Dr. Gleneski as soon as possible.</i>	

Next Meeting:	September 25, 2025, at 9:00 AM
Adjournment:	12:17 PM