

INDIANA STATE PSYCHOLOGY BOARD

Minutes

March 20, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Dr. Hale called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. in W064, Indiana Government Center South, 402 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana and declared a quorum in accordance with Indiana Code § 25-33-1-3(g).

Board Members Present:

Gregory Hale, Ph.D., Chair

Jere Leib, Ph.D., Member

Amber Finley, JD, Consumer Member

Board Members Not Present:

Stephen G. Ross, Psy.D., Vice Chair and Board Liaison

Vacant

State Officials Present:

Monika Talbot, Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General

Katie Bancroft, Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General

Cindy Vaught, Board Director, Professional Licensing Agency

Dana Brooks, Assistant Board Director, Professional Licensing Agency

Brad Repass, Litigation Specialist, Professional Licensing Agency

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the agenda as amended.

Finley/Leib

Motion carried 3/0/0

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes of January 9, 2026, as amended.

Leib/Finley

Motion carried 3/0/0

IV. REPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ryan Eldridge, Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, presented the consumer complaint report via zoom. He reported that they currently have 21 open investigated files since the beginning of the year with an average investigation time of 11.34 months. There are currently 3 cases where litigation was opened with an average duration of 3.52 months.

Mr. Eldridge stated that the Attorney General's Office is trying to resolve their investigative matters efficiently and using the Board's liaison officer to help clarify standard of care issues. He stated that their office receives on average ten to thirty complaints at a time covering billing, consent, standard of care, etc. He stated that one area of concern has not stood out as far as a trend. Most complaints are closed as there is not enough evidence of a violation.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

A. Chandra Coles

Cause No. 202512-PSY-0004

Re: Petition for Review of Denial

Parties Present:

Respondent present

Margie Addington, Court Reporter, Accurate Court Reporting

Participating Board Members:

Gregory Hale, Ph.D., Hearing Officer

Jere Leib, Ph.D.

Amber Finley, JD, Consumer Member

Board Witness:

Brad Repass, Litigation Specialist, Indiana Professional Licensing Agency

Case Summary: On or about November 19, 2025, Dr. Cole's application for licensure was denied as she did not meet the educational and residency requirements for licensure. On or about December 3, 2025, Dr. Coles submitted an appeal to the Board's decision. Dr. Coles submitted Exhibit 1- 3 which is documentation regarding her program. The documentation outlines her clinical training, credit hours, and transcripts. She stated that she completed a residency program, which had face-to-face seminars, in Arizona and Florida as part of her program. She also completed a practicum and internship in the state of Indiana under licensed Indiana HSPP supervisors. She stated that she understands her program could be considered "non-traditional" but feels that her program is equivalent to the requirements.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to grant Dr. Coles' appeal and approve her application for licensure.

Hale/Leib

Motion carried 3-0-0

VI. PERSONAL APPEARANCES

A. Probation

There were no probation appearances.

B. Reinstatement

1. Alan Colquitt, PhD, License No. 20040761A

Dr. Colquitt appeared as requested to discuss the reinstatement of his license that expired in 2022. He provided CE and a statement for the Board to review. He stated that his work has been primarily in HR and leadership, and he also started consulting practice in 2024.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve Dr. Colquitt reinstatement of his psychology license pending passing the Indiana jurisprudence examination.

Hale/Finely
Motion carried 3-0-0

2. Kristen Merkitch, PhD., License No. 2004373A

Dr. Merkitch appeared as requested with counsel, Josh Timmons, to discuss the reinstatement of her license that expired in 2022. She provided continuing education and a statement for the Board to review. She stated that she has been working in the state of California, since her license expired, primarily in the area of telehealth. She stated that she is not able to join PsyPact as California has not joined.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve the reinstatement of Dr. Merkitch pending passing the Indiana jurisprudence examination.

Hale/Leib
Motion carried 3-0-0

C. Application

1. Amber Beal (4th Attempt)

Dr. Beal did not appear as requested. Board staff noted they have not received any recent correspondence from Dr. Beal regarding her appearance. Her application is at the year mark and will be abandoned. In order to receive approval to retake the examination she will need to submit a new application.

2. Ed Connor, PhD, License No. 20042263A (HSPP)

Dr. Connor appeared as requested to discuss his HSPP application. Dr. Connor graduated from the University of Denver in 1993, and he informed the Board that he can no longer obtain signatures regarding his training as his supervisors have either retired from practice or are deceased. He is currently licensed in the state of Kentucky, where he has practiced for many years. He also expressed confusion as his understanding was, he had already been granted the HSPP status. He stated that he received a letter from the Indiana Supreme Court which listed him as having the HSPP, but he then received a letter from the Circuit Court that he did not have the credential. He stated that when he reached out to the Professional Licensing Agency and they did not have the HSPP listed on his license. Dr. Connor stated that when this confusion started, he ceased practicing with the courts until this matter was resolved. He provided an overview of his education and training and provided the Board with a copy of his resume. The Board expressed concerns as it sounded like he had been operating since 2008 as an HSPP without the credential. Dr. Connor stated that he had never been informed that he did not have the credential and was unaware it was a separate application process. Ms. Vaught stated that at the time he obtained his Indiana license, applicants were provided with a packet of written instructions which outlined the HSPP as a separate application. Dr. Connor stated that has never had a consumer complaint filed against his license, and he has been practicing as an HSPP in Indiana as he thought he had the credential. The

Board expressed concerns regarding the length of time he had been working as an HSPP without the license credential.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to deny Dr. Connor's HSPP application and refer the matter to the Office of Attorney General for investigation.

Leib/Finley
Motion carried 3-0-0

3. Malik Muhammad (PhD)

Dr. Muhammad did not appear as requested. He emailed the Board to say he would be unable to attend the meeting and provided a letter for the Board's review and consideration. Upon review of his correspondence the Board still requires that Dr. Muhammad to personally appear. Dr. Muhammad will be rescheduled for the May 8, 2026, meeting.

4. Crystal Sandoval-Vanaria (4th Attempt)

Dr. Sandoval-Vanaria did not appear as requested to discuss her next examination attempt. She emailed the Board requesting the Board review her study plan without her appearance. After review, the Board accepted her study plan and advised her to delay attempting the examination for a while to allow her to better prepare for passing the examination.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve Dr. Sandoval-Vanaria to sit for the EPPP examination for the fourth time.

Hale/Finley
Motion carried 3-0-0

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

VIII. APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW

A. Limited Scope Temporary Psychology Permit

B. Psychology by Examination/Reciprocity

1. Daniel Lanni (PhD)

Dr. Lanni's application for psychology licensure was submitted for review. He graduated from Georgia State University in 2025. He stated that his university will not confer his degree on their transcript, and they provided a letter on official letterhead instead that lists his degree is conferred. The Board reviewed the letter and program.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to accept the letter from Georgia State University and approve Dr. Lanni to sit for the EPPP examination.

Leib/Finley
Motion carried 3-0-0

2. Paulina Stephens (PhD)

Dr. Stephen's application was submitted for review of licensure equivalency. She graduated from California Southern University and is currently licensed in Illinois. She indicated on her application that neither her program or internship were APA or APPIC approved at the time of completion. A copy of Illinois' license application was provided to the Board so they could review what she needed to demonstrate to Illinois to obtain licensure. She noted on her application she has taken and passed the EPPP examination.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve Dr. Stephens' application for psychology licensure.

Hale/Leib
Motion carried 3-0-0

3. Jayden Varline (PhD)

Dr. Varline's application was submitted for review of her program. She attended the University of Wisconsin and obtained a Ph.D in Social Welfare and Criminology in 2025. Dr. Varline listed on her application that her program or internship were APA or APPIC approved at the time of completion. She provided a copy of her program syllabus and clinical training information. The Board noted that her program does not appear to be a clinical psychology program as it is more Behavior Health training.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to deny Dr. Valine's application for psychology licensure.

Hale/Finley
Motion carried 3-0-0

C. HSPP Endorsement

1. Markley Carrie French, PhD, License No. 20044005A

Dr. French's application for an HSPP was submitted for review of her practicum hours and supervisor equivalency. She graduated from Spalding University in 2024 and is licensed in Missouri and Kentucky. She obtained her Indiana psychology license by reciprocity in 2025.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve Dr. French's HSPP application.

Hale/Leib
Motion carried 3-0-0

2. Joseph Laski, PhD, License No. 20044010A

Dr. Laski's application for an HSPP was submitted for review of his practicum and post-doctoral training hours. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame in August 2025. The Board noted that he completed 600 post-doctoral hours and the rest have been supplemented by his practicum. He is required to show 1600 hours of training.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve Dr. Laski's HSPP application.

Finley/Leib
Motion carried 3-0-0

3. Christopher Percifield, PhD, License No. 20044044A

Dr. Percifield's application for HSPP was submitted for review of his practicum and post-doctoral training hours. He graduated from Indiana State University in August 2025. The Board noted that he completed 700 post-doctoral hours and the rest have been supplemented by his practicum. He is required to show 1600 hours of training.

Board Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve Dr. Percifield's HSPP application.

Hale/Leib
Motion carried 3-0-0

D. Continuing Education

There were no continuing applications for review.

IX. INDIANA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION REPORT

Dick Rhoad presented the report from the Indiana Psychological Association.

Mr. Rhoad stated that there are several bills that affect psychology, though not directly. HB 1271 addresses the payments of Health claims, HB 1266 is a study regarding a one-year master's degree program for the mental health profession, and SB 189 which follows the federal No Surprise Act for disputing payments for health carriers and out-of-network providers

He stated that the Bowen Center has started researching psychology licensure. He stated that they put out a Playbook for the Mental Health Counseling licensure last year with mixed feedback responses. Mr. Rhoad stated that he informed them that the data they are using is from 2022 and is not complete information for psychology. He stated that he does provide them with information and clarification.

Mr. Rhoad provided an update on the standardization of APA Master level psychologists. He stated they have completed their final draft of their model, and public comment on the draft was last week. Mr. Rhoad stated that the final recommendation will be available at the end of year. Dr. Hale stated that the ASPPB has provided negative feedback on the proposed APA standardization, and that the feeling from the profession is mostly negative. Mr. Rhoad stated that the APA and the ASPPB are both approaching this matter at different angles so there is bound to be disagreement.

Mr. Rhoad stated that the PCSAS (Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System) reached out to him again regarding the Board's consideration of considering them an equivalent standard like the APA. He stated that he understands that would require an administrative code change, and that this change has been supported by the university programs. The Board noted that they would like to have them appear to discuss their request.

X. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Vaught stated that there will be a date conflict for the IPA CE Fall conference and the November Board meeting. The Board moved their meeting to November 13th.

She also reminded the Board that licensure renewal is this year, and notices will start going out in May.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, and having completed its duties, the meeting of the Indiana State Psychology Board adjourned at 11:34 a.m.