

State Board of Education & Early Development
Unapproved Minutes
September 18, 2019
William Egan Room, Atwood Conference Center, Room 106
550 West Seventh Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

Thursday, September 19, 2019

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 8:32 am. After the pledge of allegiance, the board adopted the agenda for September 19, 2019. Member Griffin moved to adopt the agenda and was seconded by Second Vice Chair Van Diest. There were no objections to the adoption of the agenda. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members at this meeting.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened at 8:37am

Tim Parker- thanked the board for allowing him to testify. Expressed his appreciation to the board for the relationship that the NEA has with the board. He mentioned the buy in from the 500 schools that the NEA represents and expressed the importance that the trust that flows from the board to the schools. He stressed the importance of the AK Ed Challenge and requested the board to continue the good work that they're already doing. He hoped that equity will be continued to work on. He also stressed the importance of the attracting teacher piece as retirement is why teachers are leaving the state. He praised the board and the department for their work toward safety and well-being. Teachers feel that they can jump into that particular type of work. Expressed concerns about the regulation process and funding. He challenged the board to not relax the standards to attract teachers. He asked the board to continue to put community needs first. There should be few barriers if a community wants to put a school. He asked the board to continue their focus on the culture of students. He asked the board to work to make sure that students feel welcome in the classroom. Continue to hold every good idea up to the lens of how does this improve student learning. That's how good things happen.

Lisa Parady- Alaska Council of the Alaska School Administrators- Echoed the remarks of Tim Parker regarding the Alaska Education Challenge. Seeing the work continue on the Alaska Education Challenge. is a positive step and she encourage the board to keep working. She touched on the CTE Equity piece of the Alaska Education challenge and gave an update on Code.Org. She encouraged the board to continue to work with schools that are understaffed and the understaffing issue is becoming the norm and not the exception. She complimented the department on their work toward alternative certification. She asked the board to continue to work with principals and superintendents as the understaffing issues extend not only to teachers but to principals and superintendents. Mentioned that almost half of her superintendents are in either their first or second years as superintendents. ACSA is bumping up their work to support new superintendents. She asked that the board work toward regulations that make it easier for teachers to get into the classroom while not compromising the integrity of the subjects that the students learn. She invited the board to Fairbanks to their superintendent conference on the 26-18 of September. She thanked the board for their service and mentioned that although views may be different, the commitment to students remains the same.

Nils Andreassen- Ex. Director Alaska Municipal League- He commented on agenda item 6. He asked that the league be allowed a second public comment period so that they can review it. They are concerned that delays in addressing major maintenance will decrease the capacity of school districts and project managers to ensure a quality and effective process. The AML is taking a greater interest in the relationship of local governments and the education that is being provided in the communities. He looks forward to the discussion and the continued work with the board.

Commissioner Johnson thanked those who presented public comment. He also acknowledged that Sean McGuire from KTUU was present at the meeting.

Public testimony closed at 9:02am

Work Session

Agenda Item 1. Legislative Update. Erin Hardin and Neil Steininger provided an update to the board regarding the work that the legislature has been doing since they adjourned. HB 39 and HB 2001 both have been signed. HB 39 includes the foundation stipends, special schools, school bond debt reimbursement, and other items. There were reductions proposed but in HB 2001 all funding was restored including Online With Libraries, Live Homework Help, and the Alaska State Council on the Arts. She also updated the board on the status of SB 19 and SB 2002 which were passed by the legislature during the last special session. SB 40 is being signed by Governor Dunleavy on September 19. The department is continuing to track legislation that is moving through the legislative process during the second legislative session of this legislature.

Agenda Item 2. Budget Update. Neil Steininger gave the board an update on the budget. He noted that the board packet was produced prior to HB 2001 being signed and noted to the board where changes had been made. The travel budget is the item that the department is monitoring most closely to ensure that travel is meeting the needs of the department as well as staying within the budget set.

Member Scott asked about the veto's to the MEHS pool and what it meant to the school and the pool. Neil answered that the amount of money is very limited and that MEHS is looking into how far in the year they will be able to operate the pool. Dr. Johnson suggested that Neil contact Member Scott directly regarding those questions.

Agenda Item 3. Mount Edgecumbe High School Update on Graduation Requirements. Superintendent Janelle Vanasse updated the board regarding the graduation requirements of MEHS. She mentioned that the board will need to approve these requirements at their next meeting. The MEHS board updated their flexible credit requirement and aligned it with the Alaska Performance Scholarship pathways. They also updated the specific studies requirement as well.

Member Kowalski thanked Janelle regarding the updates in line with the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

At 9:18am the board took a ten minute break and were back on the record at 9:28am.

Agenda Item 4. UAS School of Education Accreditation Update. Tammy Van Wyhe introduced Dr. Atwater and commended the University and Dean Atwater for their level of communication and continued work as they track the accreditation issue. Dr. Steve Atwater gave a presentation to the State Board regarding the status of the UAS School of Education Accreditation work and the work that the University of Alaska Board of Regents have been

conducting. Dr. Atwater presented a PowerPoint of eleven slides and took questions from the board. Dr. Atwater is doing outreach to identify graduates from the education program who are still residing and teaching in Alaska but unfortunately does not yet have that data. It will be available on October 1st. Current students are still working toward their program requirements and are still in Anchorage, but they are being served by the UAS and UAF distance programs. Of the 474 students who were enrolled in the program when it lost accreditation, there are 195 students still enrolled in the University of Alaska system. There is no current discussion to reestablish UAA's accreditation at this time. Due to the funding stepdown from the State of Alaska, the university is engaging in ongoing discussions to consolidate the three university systems under one single UA. Any changes would have to be accepted by the individual accrediting bodies that accredit each school. The Board of Regents is looking into considering a consortium to keep the three separate colleges.

He then took questions from the board.

Commissioner Johnson added that in the context that we're in as a state, the board can appreciate the open conversations that DEED has had with the University of Alaska system. He thanked Dean Atwater for his clear presentation to the board.

Chair Fields expressed his apprehension to "letting go" of the accreditation issue and asked Dr. Atwater when the next Board of Regents was scheduled for. He asked if the State Board Members who are on the Board of Regents joint committee attend the next Board of Regents meeting. Chair Fields would like the university to be bold and work toward creative ways to move forward and getting teachers to Alaska.

Agenda Item 5. State Board Committee Reports

Agenda Item 5A. Standards and Assessments. Member Stockhausen updated the board on the work of the Standards and Assessments committee. Standards and Assessment have been working to figure out what their role is with this committee. They have decided that their role is more of an educational role. The department is providing reports to the committee to inform them about the role of the standards and how assessments work.

Agenda Item 5B. Tribal Compacting. Member Kowalski updated the board on the work of the Tribal Compacting Committee. They have had two meetings. They have talked about the visioning conversations that have been had with stakeholders across the state. Some communities are already starting discussions around this issue and are looking at capacity when the time comes. The tribal compacting committee is now gathering questions from those various stakeholders and compiling them into a database and an FAQ's to inform the committee. They are also looking at some of the technical pieces that need to be adjusted with regards to updating regulations and statutes. They also talked about teacher preparation and that teacher preparation in the tribal school system looks different than in a western system.

Agenda Item 5C. Regulations. Member Van Diest updated the board their work on whether they want to keep, amend, or repeal the regulations that exist. They are moving forward with their work with the department. They have looked at chapter 6 article 5 and they have recommended revisions of ten regulations to comply more with ESSA standards. They also recommended the changing the names of the different report cards so the public knows the difference. Regarding school recognition, DEED will be working over the winter to model the school data to ensure that schools can meet the requirements of a "highest performing school" as reflected in Chapter 6 885. Most of the discussions that have come out of the regs committee have been questions from the committee to the department to help inform their decisions. They are beginning their work on the teacher certification regulations and have directed the board to work on these items during the winter. Member Van Diest noted that although we don't want

to lower the standards of education, we want to work toward alternative pathways for teachers to not only come to the state but to stay in Alaska once they have arrived.

Agenda Item 5D. Funding Formula. Member Scott updated the board on the Funding Formula committee work. The Funding Formula committee met to continue the discussions regarding entitlement in two areas, the district cost factors and entitlement. District cost factors is how location impacts the cost of K-12 education. This is specific to each district and the last time this topic was studied was in 2005 by ISER. The board is working with the department to determine whether or not a new study is needed. The department is working with the Department of Revenue to begin these discussions. They are also looking at options to survey school boards, principals, and teachers about what they are experiencing as far as what cost means to them. They also discussed updating the term “correspondence” to reflect the way that the program has grown. They are hopeful to communicate further with correspondence teachers to see what they would like to be called. Member Griffin asked about the school size factor and what its impact has been and how it could be adjusted. Commissioner Johnson explained that, while that item has not been brought to the Funding Formula committee, they are having internal discussions and will bring it to the committee once they have vetted the idea more fully. He stressed the importance of funding students instead of buildings in this increasingly mobile education environment.

Agenda Item 6. Adoption of Proposed Regulations

Agenda Item 6A. School Facility Planning and Construction Regulations. Tim Mearig mentioned that these regulations have been before the board before and that they are again before the board due to some technical issues that the Department of Law identified. He gave a history of the regulations and when they had seen the regulations updates as well as the public comments that were included. Member Van Diest asked about the issues it would raise if the board chose to keep the regulations open. Tim responded that it would cause delay in CFP applications if the board were to delay adoption. The Department will reach out to the Alaska Municipal League to address their questions but recommended that the board adopt the regulations.

Agenda Item 6B. School Facility Commissioning Regulations. Tim Mearig mentioned that these regulations have been before the board before and that they are again before the board due to some technical issues that the Department of Law identified. The board did not receive any public comment regarding these regulations.

The board took an at ease for lunch at 12:15pm and Chair Fields announced that they would resume with Agenda Item 8, adoption of proposed regulations.

At 10:35am the board took a break and were back on the record at 10:48am.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 7. Adoption of Proposed Regulations

Agenda Item 7A. School Facility Planning and Construction. Member Van Diest motioned and Member Kowalski seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt amendments to 4 AAC 31 School Facility Planning and Construction to implement administrative, process improvement, and resource limitation elements. Member Van Diest commented that she is comfortable adopting these regulations with the Department’s continued work with AML and if needed, they will look at these again. Member Griffin echoed Member Van Diest’s comments. Member Scott

expressed appreciation from the department to work with AML and cautioned the board with not forming any additional red tape. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 7B. School Facility Commissioning. Member Kowalski motioned and Member Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 31 School Facility Planning and Construction to implement requirements for commissioning on certain school capital projects. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

Agenda Item 8. Standing Reports. Written reports were provided from Student Learning & Educator and School Excellence; Mt. Edgecumbe High School; Libraries, Archives and Museums, and the Assistant Attorney Generals. Staff answered questions from the board regarding those reports. Member Kowalski and Member Griffin asked questions about the long term trend assessments Isaac Paulson of the DEED assessments team answered that the long term trend assessment is one of the studies that NAEP conducts but there are other studies as well.

First Vice Chair Hamilton asked Superintendent Vanasse for an update on the closure of the MEHS pool. They are working on a plan to close the pool. They have come up with a plan to operate classes this semester and close the pool on December 20th. They are working on logistical details at this time. First Vice Chair Hamilton thanked Superintendent Vanasse for her work to continue education for students and not sacrifice education funds in an attempt to keep the pool open.

Luann Weyhrauch, Assistant Attorney General discussed the board's role in the budget process and took questions from the board. Chair Fields suggested to the board that the board issue an official, voted on statement regarding the fact that they have approved the department's budget proposal as formulated by the Office of Management and Budget. Member Stockhausen expressed curiosity about maybe amending statute to clarify the board's role in the department's budget since it will become a recurring issue. Luann advised the board to work with the Governor's Office and OMB to tuck the repeal of the statute AS 13.07.150 into another bill.

Agenda Item 9. Commissioner's Report. Dr. Johnson briefly updated the board on Secretary DeVoss' visit. He thanked Alaskans and the way they interacted with her during her visit. He thanked the Department staff for their behind the scenes work, the Secretary's staff for their advanced work and the schools that she visited for their work to prepare for her visit. He reminded everyone that the agenda is light due to the safety summit. He encouraged the board to attend as much of the safety summit as they are able.

Agenda Item 10. Approve Special Assistant to the Commissioner. Member Griffin motioned and Member Scott seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Erin Hardin as Special Assistant to the Commissioner. Member Hamilton requested that we would move to executive session for personnel issues from this point forward. Dr. Johnson clarified that the board cannot take votes in executive session and discussed the way that the board could craft their agenda to address personnel issues. The motion passed unanimously after the discussion.

Agenda Item 11. Consent Agenda. Member Van Diest motioned and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the minutes of the June 7, 2019 board meeting, the July 24, 2019 board work session, and the August 21, 2019 board work session. There was no discussion. The motioned passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 12. Executive Session, FY2021 Budget Discussion. Chair Fields motioned and Member Hamilton seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development convene in executive session to discuss OMB's FY 2021 Guidance Memorandum and the FY 2021 budget priorities for the department. Under the Open Meetings Act, AS 44.62.310(c)(4), these are matters involving consideration of government records that by law are not subject to public disclosure. There was no discussion. The Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development went into executive session at 11:50am.

At 1:45pm, Chair Fields moved to come out of executive Session. There was no objection to move back on the record out of executive session and back into the board meeting.

Board Comments

Member Mainard- expressed her excitement to be at the meeting, and excited to work on the process. She was grateful for the budget process clarification.

Lt. Colonel Hammill- enjoyed the conversations over the last two days. He'll follow up with the Troops to Teacher program and will get more information back to the board.

Member Stockhausen- enjoyed the safety summit and she's excited about the leadership addressing some of those issues. The board is committed to improving student outcomes and she expressed her concern that so many principals and would like to see some sort of a formal tracking to see why they're leaving.

Member Kowalski- also expressed her concerns about the number of UA students that are no longer in the University system but is looking forward to the continuing work to find a solution.

Member Griffin- enjoyed the trauma summit and was encouraged by the educators rising presentation. Can't ignore the PEAK's ELA test scores and is disappointed that there was a drop in test scores overall. He was encouraged that some of the rural districts are improving their scores. He gave a shoutout to Hydaburg District for their largest percentage increase and to Petersburg for their work.

Member Scott- thanked the Commissioner for joining Secretary DeVoss and her visit to the Northwest Borough school district. She asked the department to give a presentation of the Alaska Education Challenge to the Mount Edgecumbe Advisory Board.

Member Van Diest- thanked the department for the work that went into the Alaska Education Challenge as it has focused the conversation and the work that the board does. She is excited that our stakeholders are engaged in the challenge and is looking forward to as a board for them to help districts and looking for innovative ways to meet those challenges. She is enjoying the safety summit and highlighted the importance of having students not only know how to read, but that they're also safe and assisted through their traumas. Welcomed Erin officially as the Special Assistant to the Commissioner

Dr. Hamilton- struggles with the shortage of teachers as well as the new superintendents. He expressed his gratefulness to the University system to ensure that students aren't left behind as they work through the accreditation process.

Chair Fields- stressed the importance of volunteerism and that to some future generations, it may not be as important. He encouraged the board to let people know what you volunteer for and what matters

to you and thanked the board for their service. He also highlighted Dr. Hamilton and Lorri Van Diest's service to the board as this could be their last in person meeting as their term is up in March.

Meeting adjourned at 1:58pm.