

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
March 19 & 20, 2018
In-person meeting originating in Juneau, Alaska

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 11:11 a.m. All board members were present. The board, staff, and public recited the Pledge of Allegiance. No members reported conflicts of interest. The board approved the agenda unanimously.

Commissioner Johnson swore in Chair James Fields. He was reappointed for a new term.

Chair Fields swore in new board members Lorri Van Diest, Sandra Kowalski and Tiffany Scott.

Public Comment

Tim Parker, NEA President thanked the department for working closely with teachers and spoke about student learning. He welcomed the new board members, spoke about the Education Challenge and national board certified teachers. He wished the board a fabulous meeting.

Alec Burris, UAA Student Government President, served from 2014-2016. He welcomed the new board members and the student representatives. He wanted to advocate for the University budget. He spoke about the connection between K-12 and higher education in the state. He spoke about students at the university who have to take remedial classes in higher education to catch up. He indicated that he wants to see students prepared when they go into higher learning.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1. ESSA update. Commissioner Johnson spoke about innovation and the best plan that we can get for Alaska students. As soon as the plan is submitted we want to continue conversations. Margaret Mackinnon, Federal Programs Coordinator, spoke about some of the minor changes. She talked about disproportionate rates, inexperienced teachers, and ineffective teachers; and how we can work on more equitable access. She indicated that we are continuing to work with the US Department of Education and are waiting for plans to move forward. There was some discussion about native languages and the data based on students identified as English learners. This is data that we have been collecting and reporting for a number of years.

Brian Laurent, Data Management Supervisor, spoke about the accountability system changes and the indicators of academic achievement. He indicated that there will also be a growth component. Four and five year graduation rates will be an indicator of the system, with an emphasis on meaningful differentiation. The U.S. Department of Education wants to include all schools, including alternative schools. The state plan was re-submitted on February 28, 2018. We are continuing to answer questions and clarify with the U.S. Department of Education.

Member Himschoot spoke about the English learner process and setting growth targets for kids. Chair Fields asked how many that would be and what that looks like for the department. Bob Williams, Director of School Excellence, suggested that capacity is always a concern and that schools are designated by graduation rate. Chair Fields talked briefly about the legislative session.

Agenda Item 2. School Construction & Major Maintenance List. Heidi Teshner, Director of Finance and Support Services and Tim Mearig, Technical Engineer in Facilities, spoke about the school construction and maintenance list.

Chair Fields asked about the six year plan and maintenance items. He asked about districts that have resources to do the basic applications, but when it comes to something like code violations, often consultants are brought in for that. Chair Fields asked if there was a better way to do this that will save the districts and state money? Tim Mearig suggested that we have a strong system in place for identifying, but there are challenges when the funding is not available. Another challenge is that there is an assumption with the list process that it encompasses all needs. He suggested that it would help if there was a way to capture the full needs of the district.

Agenda Item 3. Legislative and budget update. Heidi Teshner, Director of Finance and Support Services and Marcy Herman, Legislative Liaison, reviewed some of the pending bills related to education.

Board members discussed their concerns with SB104. There was some discussion on how the department would help to shape the bill. The bill does provide three positions to the department.

Member Thompson asked if we are moving towards a statewide curriculum after the pilot process and also asked who determined the curriculum. Commissioner Johnson said that we would form a group from around the state of teachers, parents and some students. Member Lorrington asked about diversity of the program and was curious how we are going to decide if this curriculum will work for schools in Tok and Anchorage. They discussed the standards that are being set and how will it work in all the schools. It was indicated that the local school board would make those decisions and that the board will be identifying what an effective curriculum looks like. Commissioner Johnson indicated that we would not be dictating a curriculum, just helping to implement one that would be effective.

Member Hamilton asked about the Mt. Edgecumbe Aquatic Facility and there was some discussion from the board about how the pool could be huge opportunity for rural Alaska.

Agenda Item 4. Overview of SERRC's Services and Alaska's Education Challenge.

Commissioner Johnson introduced Sheryl Weinberg, Executive Director, and Melissa Griffith from SERRC. He also welcomed Heather Parker from the Governor's office. Sheryl Weinberg talked about the history of SERRC and how their program fits into the Education Challenge. Member Hamilton thanked SERRC and their staff. Member Himschoot said what a broad ripple SERRC has had. Member Kowlaski thanked the staff from SERRC and talked about them, the areas of innovation and asked about after school programs.

Agenda Item 5A. Anvil City Science Academy. The board reviewed the charter school's request for renewal of its charter. Lisa Leeper from Anvil Charter reviewed the philosophy of the school. Member Hamilton commented on how well they had done on their PEAKS assessment and overall student achievement. The board was impressed with their science education and scores. Chair Fields thanked them for being on-line.

Agenda Item 5B. Winterberry Charter School. The board reviewed the charter school's request for renewal of its charter. Darrell Vancek and Principal Erikson reviewed the philosophy of the school. Member Himschoot indicated that she was able to visit and talked about the art and the woods programs. The board addressed their concerns about Winterberry's math scores. The principal responded that they are bringing someone in to address that and are currently working on staff development.

Paul Prussing, Director of Student Learning, talked about the contract and suggested that he would make a brief next year on this school. The board will establish a process for the future. Chair Fields asked about the school's wait list of 72. Principal Erikson said that they do have a growing wait list. The teachers loop with their students all the way up to 8th grade. They use the arts in all areas, with an emphasis on community and interpersonal relationships. He also talked about their skills in analytical and critical thinking.

Agenda Item 6A. Updating Regulations to Align with the New State Plan (ESSA). Margaret Mackinnon, Federal Programs Coordinator and Rebecca Hattan, Assistant Attorney General spoke about the draft regulations.

Commissioner Johnson said that we are hoping that we have a plan approved soon, as we will not be able to implement this plan in the school year and that we will need to start working on the regulations. Margaret Mackinnon, Federal Programs Coordinator, said that the U.S. Department of Education has been responsive. Member Himschoot is concerned about the timeline with it coming up in April and it is the end of the school year. Commissioner Johnson said that we will continue to work on our communication strategies and leadership. He suggested that we continue to engage our partners.

Agenda Item 7A. World Languages. Sondra Meredith, Administrator for Teacher Certification, Bob Williams, Director of Educator and School Excellence, and Rebecca Hattan, Assistant Attorney General spoke about the teaching background and language expertise with a mentor in the district.

Sondra Meredith, Administrator for Teacher Certification indicated that we have not had any new public comment on this, although there may be some additional concerns from the districts and the department. Member Kowalski talked about the content examination process and asked if they can talk about Yupik and Alaska native languages. The board discussed Type M and Type I certificates for Yupik and other languages. Sondra Meredith explained the process in which we examine foreign transcripts. There is no English language requirement. She indicated that it is left for the district and the individual. With our current teacher shortage, we want to make sure that they have a Bachelor's degree.

Agenda Item 7A. Chart of Accounts. Heidi Teshner, Director of Finance and Support Services and Elwin Blackwell, School Finance Manager, spoke about the Chart of Accounts. There was one public comment from ALASBO, which talked about technology codes and supply codes for each of the technology items. ALASBO wanted to partner with us. There was some discussion on the Chart of Accounts and the need for it to be updated.

Agenda Item 8. Bylaws Update. Chair Fields briefly discussed an overall review and talked about some of the changes. He indicated that this was a better bylaws document and that NASBE had done a review. It was discussed that the board needed to look at them as a group and have a vote. The next step is to come up with Standing Rules. Standing rules are more flexible and easier to change. The bylaws will be discussed at the May 31, 2018 meeting.

Agenda Item 9. Alaska's Education Challenge. Deborah Riddle, Division Operations Manager, talked about the goals, timeline, and milestones that we need to accomplish those goals. There was some discussion about which stakeholders would work best with our group. The department has been meeting with Jerry Covey and Bernie Sorenson to meet some of this work and will continue to work forward with the department. Deputy Commissioner Sana Efird has met with teams of internal staff to get input from all levels to meet the recommendations. The call to action is around the three commitments.

Member Thompson talked about the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the staff in the department. There was some discussion about statutory and regulatory changes. The department's role is to champion our commitment and to focus all of our work to get the ground level buy-in. After we finish the process, our implementation plan can be put into practice. We are looking at a five year plan. Chair Fields thanked Deputy Commissioner Efird for being proactive and thanked the board for the guidance with the five areas.

Agenda Item 10. MEHS Curriculum. Janelle Vanasse, Mount Edgecumbe High School Director is working on the curriculum development. She talked about pulling together an advisory board of teachers and administration. She also spoke about their current practices and curriculum development. She wants to prioritize the required courses and then go to electives. There was some discussion on curriculum changes. Janelle talked about the presentation and said that she will have a letter from the MEHS Advisory Board with action items so that we can vote on the curriculum at the next meeting on May 31, 2018.

Agenda Item 11. Project SEARCH Presentation. Anne Applegate, Program Coordinator, Governor's Council on Disabilities, presented in person, while Patrick Reinhart, Executive Director, and Kristin Vandagriff, Planner were available via phone for the presentation and questions from the board.

Patrick thanked the Board and the Commissioner for allowing them to present to the board. He talked about the transition program for students with disabilities from ages 18-22 in hospitals doing internships. He talked about them working in business settings where the student can learn job skills. He indicated that this training is in real work settings. They work to provide business education and vocational rehabilitation. It is low risk and low cost for businesses. The goal is employment for their students. They are looking to start their next program in Juneau and are meeting with the hospital next week.

Agenda Item 12. AdvanceED Presentation. Brad Billings, Education Administrator, and Tim Cline, AdvancED Director provided information about AdvancEd. Tim Cline talked about accrediting schools since 1927. They currently have 188 organizations in network and 4

accredited systems. The Alaska AdvancED Council include Dan Walker, Tim Scott, Dr. Ginger Blackmon, Brad Billings and Debbie Brewer.

Tim Cline talked about accreditation being a journey, rather than an event. They empower the schools and help them through the process. Instead of compliance, it is about improvement. He talked about the AdvancED Systems Accreditation Model and providing a system-wide framework for sustainable improvement, collective ownership, structures for collaboration, shared high expectations, and a culture of learning and continuous improvement.

Agenda Item 13A. World Languages. Member Thompson moved and Member Van Diest seconded the following motion: After considering all public comment, I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt 4AAC 12.388 World Language Expert Limited Teacher Certificate. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 13B. Chart of Accounts. Member Thompson moved and Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4AAC 06.120(a)(2), Chart of Accounts effective dates; and proposed amendments to the Uniform Chart of Accounts and Account Code Description for Public School Districts. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 14. Standing Reports. The board discussed the standing reports and asked questions on some of the written reports. Member Thompson had a question for Educator and School Excellence Director Bob Williams regarding the new E-Learning modules regarding opioids. She had asked if we have had a big increase in people taking it. Todd Brocious, School Safety Administrator, said that we are just now advertising for it and we are hoping that people will start taking advantage of that E-Learning module. Commissioner Johnson talked about some of the E-Learning trainings that he took over the Christmas break and said that the way it was presented was incredible. He encouraged the Board to sign up for at least one of the trainings and suggested that if they contacted Todd Brocious, he could set them up with a username and password. The board also discussed school safety issues due to the recent tragedies. Todd Brocious indicated that over 15 districts took us up on some of the school safety updates. He reminded everyone on the board of the existing resources for walk outs, safety, and civic engagement. Member Thompson thanked Bob Williams and Todd Brocious for their work in their unit.

15. Commissioner's Report. The Commissioner appreciates everyone's time. Our next meeting is via audio.

Margaret Mackinnon, Federal Programs Coordinator, has worked at the Department for over 41 ½ years. Commissioner Johnson thanked her for keeping us on track. He wanted to let the Board have a chance to say goodbye as this will be her last face-to-face meeting with the Board. Member Thompson said that she worked with her on Title I, various federal programs, etc. She said that Margaret has been a huge team player and she will be missed. She deserves a break with that grandbaby.

Member Kowalski mentioned that she has heard Margaret's name over the years in Fairbanks used very positively. Member Hamilton thanked her for her steadfastness and said that she is an informant for those hard decisions. Member Himschoot thanked her for keeping working through uncertain times. She thanked her for her time and her leadership. Member Michael thanked her for her continued dedication. Member Scott can understand the continuity of care and the impact that she has made for students. Member Lorrington thanked her for her 42 years for the teachers and the department and echoed the gratitude. Chair Fields thanked her for her consistency and playing a critical role in education in the State of Alaska.

16. Consent Agenda. Member Hamilton asked that we have a discussion section for the Charter Schools. Chair Fields asked about what our statutory obligation is. We want every student to have an excellent education every day.

After the discussion, Member Himschoot motioned and Member Scott seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of the Anvil City Science Academy application, approval of the Winterberry Charter School application, approval of the School Construction and Major Maintenance Lists, and approval of the minutes of the January 29-30 meeting and the minutes from the February 28, 2018 work session. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Board comments

Member Hamilton suggested that we hold a future board meeting in Sitka at Mt. Edgecumbe and in the future in locations where we have partners. Chair Fields thanked the Governor for his reappointment. He welcomed all of the new board members and encouraged them to find their role. He thanked Margaret for her service with the State of Alaska and also thanked Member Michael for his service.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.