

Approved Minutes
Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
December 4 & 5, 2008
Anchorage School District Board Meeting Room
5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK

Thursday, December 4, 2008

Chair Cox called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 4, 2008, at the Anchorage School District Board Meeting Room. All members were present except Lt. Col Luu, and Pat Shier who were excused and Jazmin Ziden. Board member Shirley Holloway was on line for portions of the meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Chair asked if anyone had conflicts of interest to disclose. Carol Schaeffer said that she was an employee of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, and had a daughter at Mt. Edgecumbe High School. There were no amendments to the agenda and it was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Miss Ziden joined the meeting at 8:15 a.m.

Public Comment

Dean Hamberg from Soldotna and President of the Alaska School Nutrition Association, said he attended the Education Summit. He said there had been millions of school meals provided this past year with \$32 million from the federal government and additional funding provided by state governments. He said Alaska was not included and he hoped they would become involved, noting that 2 million lunches would be provided across America this date. Sylvia Reynolds inquired what the effort looked like in other states. Mr. Hamberg said it is .10 -.20 cents per school lunch. Alaska & Hawaii are eligible for more. He noted that Kenai's subsidy is about \$300,000 a year.

Ms. Dixon in Ketchikan LIO stated support for the library grant regulations.

Work Session

Seismic Hazards. Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission Chair, Dr. John Aho, was present to brief the board. The commission was established under HB 52 in 2002 and has 11 members who are tasked with policy recommendations and operate as an advisory committee with a \$10,000 yearly budget. They have emphasized school safety and showed a power point on current activities with emphasis on schools and with the Kodiak experience in particular. Dr. Aho said that consultants are hired to study schools, and he asked if the board could appoint a representative to the commission.

Members spoke about the need for earthquake drills in addition to fire drills.

Galena Interior Learning Academy Boarding Program. Superintendent Jim Smith and Principal Harry White were present to brief the board and were accompanied by students: Trent Walker-graduate, Kimberly Greenway-student, Ida Chonci Ridenour-graduate, Adrienne Beans-student. Each student spoke about the benefits of the boarding program and how their life had been impacted with the education they were obtaining or had obtained while a student.

Board members asked how the students found out about the school. Most found out through a relative who had gone there, a recommendation or parents and word of mouth. When asked how they keep from getting homesick, students said they use email, telephone calls; some are near home and can go back and forth, and others said they just learn to cope to all the new rules. The students said they are successful in part to understanding teachers who know what they are going through, who take time for after school help, and resident advisors who are engaged.

Mr. Smith said enrollment was down by 65 students this year. They began with 125 students and are down to 104. Mr. White said teachers have to be willing to learn to teach the way used in industry and be willing to teach life skills.

Geri Benshoof said the program has taken a vision, implemented it and doing things a different way is producing results and said it was exemplary. Mr. Smith thanked the board for the opportunity to present their program. He invited the board to Galena for a meeting in the future.

Excel Summer Camp. Carol Wilson and Billijo Mills, Directors, were present to brief the board. The Voyager to Excellence Program (VEP), operates the Excellence, Courage, Enthusiasm and Leadership (EXCEL) Summer Camp. The VTE Program is a School-to-Life program, begun in 1996 and is operated by the Chugach School District. It currently serves students from Chugach, Lake & Peninsula, Kuspuk, Bering Strait and NACTEC. Students come into the program throughout the school year and summer for as little as 3 days all the way up to 30 days for personal/social, character education, basic skills and career development.

EXCEL Camp began in July, 2004. Students come in for 30 days and stay on campus at Alaska Pacific University. It was initially designed to help students who were struggling with the HSGQE, giving intense hands-on training in reading, writing, math and science while working on independent living skills and character education. It has evolved over the years to include construction education, culinary arts, student leadership, WorkKeys, job internships and dual college credit. The WorkKeys, construction and culinary piece earn the students national certificates.

In 2004, enrollment was 18 and has swelled to 38 this past summer. The program is funded through grants from the Denali Commission and Alaska Native Education (ANE) funds. Currently, the grant includes students from the school districts mentioned above. Each individual school district is responsible for recruiting its students. The number one priority goes to those who are struggling to pass the HSGQE.

The presenters showed a short PowerPoint about the program and answered general questions. The board thanked the program for helping students be heroes.

Special Education Service Agency (SESA). Nancy Nagarkar, Executive Director, and Betsy Kruth were present to brief the board. SESA is an instrument of the State of Alaska, created by the legislature in 1986. A public organization, SESA is funded by legislative entitlement passed through the Department of Education & Early Development.

The purpose of SESA's core program, Low Incidence Disabilities (LID), is to provide consultation, technical assistance, and support to rural and remote school district personnel who work with students experiencing low incidence (severe and occurring infrequently) disabilities. Referrals are made through the local school district special education director or coordinator. Dollars flow through EED.

They do a lot of pod casting and provide technical assistance and videos. Grants fund a large portion of their budget. They accompany parents to appointments to help them understand doctor orders with all services being free to districts. A big part of their service now centers on autism where they share a variety of information across the state. Services are provided to children and adults. They continue to have requests for related services, but cannot provide them without the appropriate staff.

Outdoor Skills. Jerry Soukup, Program Coordinator and Lee Roger, Program Assistant with the Department of Fish & Game were present to brief the board regarding the outdoor skills program available to school districts for students in middle school. The course is taught in Juneau, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Kenai. Topics include Alaska history, subsistence issues, firearms safety, wildlife conservation, responsible and ethical treatment of state resources and survival skills. Program emphasis is to get students outdoors and learn what Alaska has to offer and how to use it promoting outdoor skills.

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. Millie Ryan, Executive Director, was present to brief the board. The board was briefed on an overview of the 28 member council emphasizing the work they do with autism. In a community survey of needs, the autism spectrum rose to the top of concerns. Autism affects social skills, communication, play and behavior. Ms. Ryan said 1 in 80 at the Anchorage School District is affected with autism and its growth has been significant since 1964. She said she would like EED to work with them to implement best practices for education. Board member Benshoof serves as the board's representative to the council.

Esther Cox asked how word about their services gets out to the public. Ms. Ryan said through doctors, schools, SESA awareness initiatives, and Stone Soup.

Regulations for Adoption. There was one regulation related to public school library collection development grants to be adopted in the business meeting. Linda Thibodeau, Director of Libraries, Archives & Museums was present to brief the board. MS.

Thibodeau thanked Sue Sherif, Neil Slotnick and Steve Weaver for their help in the rewrite of the regulation. The goal is to give up to \$3,000 to school libraries augmenting budgets. 350 schools could qualify for the money and the potential cost is about \$1.11million. No negative comments were received during the public comment period. It was made clear that schools districts must apply on behalf of schools, not schools alone. If there are more applications than money available, grants would be awarded on a pro-rata basis first and rank second based on need, plan for the money, and other available funds to that school. A reporting date was added to the regulation.

Regulations proposed for Public Comment. Les Morse, Deputy Commissioner, Cyndy Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, and Eddy Jeans, Director of School Finance, were present to brief the board. There were two regulations being considered. Work Ready/College Ready and Quality Schools Grants. Ms. Curran said the Work Ready regulation was proposing a mandated date change from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011 to allow more time for the components of the program to be in place. The quality schools grants was proposing that when small amounts, less than \$10,000 are granted, the reporting be done through student performance results through the school improvement plan rather than a separate reporting. Mr. Jeans said the assessment system is accountable with desk audit process and can be tracked so there would be no worry about accountability in reporting.

Watershed Charter School. John Carlson, head teacher, and Wayne Gerke, Assistant superintendent, were present to brief the board. This charter school is housed in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, and was approved by the school district as their fourth charter school. The school will have K- 8th grade with a teacher-to-student-ratio of 1:22 with full time aides. Emphasis will be on place based education with local culture emphasized with hands-on study of natural sciences, local government, and economy. Enrollment is open, taking students year around as vacancies become available. Sylvia Reynolds said she'd like to hear back in a year about how the school is doing with ADA and ADHA and disabled students. Mr. Carlson described how the student grades would loop enabling the teacher to follow the student to the next grade level. They were asking for a 10 year approval period.

Kaleidoscope School of Arts & Sciences. Mick Wykis - Administrator, Laurie Cowgirl – teacher and Misty Hamilton- APC Chair were present to brief the board. This charter school is housed in the Kenai Borough School District and was approved by the school district. The school began as a magnet school and focuses on arts and sciences. It has grades K-6 with 233 students. Mr. Wykis said turn over was very low. He said the biggest job will be to continue to attract quality teachers who are a good fit and maintaining their alignment with state standards and GLEs. They were asking for a 10 year approval period.

Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA). Gary Matthews, Executive Director, was present to brief the board. Mr. Matthews said regulations require an annual report to the state board every year. He gave a briefing on background information about the ASAA and reviewed a new program called Play for Keeps about tobacco, alcohol and controlled

substances. The board had many questions about the consequences for a student caught abusing the program and how the schools handled those consequences either through policy or by ASAA standards and how they might conflict. There was a discussion regarding Title IX- equity in programming for genders.

Executive Session. The board was to interview candidates for the position of student advisor elect: Tim Rockey of Palmer, Donald Handeland of Mt. Edgecumbe High School, and Holly Reeder of Sitka High School. Sylvia Reynolds moved and Phil Schneider seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development convene in executive session to interview candidates for student advisor-elect for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school-year. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

When the board came out of executive session Bunny Schaeffer moved and Sylvia Reynolds seconded a motion to name Tim Rockey as the new Student Advisor-Elect. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

The meeting was recessed for the day.

Friday, December 5, 2008

The Chair called the meeting back to order at 8:00 a.m. followed by roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance. All members were present except Col. Luu and Pat Shier. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent as presented. Dr. Holloway was on line. For those who were not present when the board concluded its executive session last evening, the Chair announced that Tim Rockey of Palmer High School had been chosen as the student advisor-elect.

Work Session continued...

Teacher Certification Reorganization. The Commissioner, Cyndy Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support and Sondra Meredith, Teacher Education Administrator, were present to brief the board. Ms. Meredith said the section was answering emails on a daily basis and clearing all phone messages by the end of the day. They are increasing the communication concerning incomplete packets/applications prior to returning the applications and allowing Praxis I scores to come directly to EED. Staff has been expanded and new training is taking place. And most importantly, the technology is being retooled and upgraded to make the process faster. There will be a stakeholders meeting convened in the new year with a report to come back to the board at the March meeting.

Geri Benshoof said she wanted to encourage the department to make the process electronic. Dr. Holloway asked if it wasn't time to review the teacher certification regulations and remove barriers to the process. She also noted that teachers are professionals and they have a responsibility to keep their license current. She said other professionals aren't babysat with renewing their credentials. She also noted that the

department does a great job with the numbers that come in at the last minute every year and that are processed.

The Commissioner said that the department was looking at ways to work with human resource departments to get a stronger message out to teachers to not wait until the last minute or until the license is expired to contact the department. A possible solution, would be making birthdays the expiration date instead of the end of the school year. He also said the Anchorage School District was getting a finger print machine. Sylvia Reynolds stated that teachers are professionals and have six months to renew their certificates, and wondered if teachers would be that lenient with overdue homework. Esther Cox said she was glad it was being looked at and was looking forward to the March report. She wondered if teacher certification could get a corner in the NEA newsletter for giving information.

Board retreat results. The Commissioner said the board identified five challenges at their recent retreat: 1) the graduation rate; 2) early childhood education; 3) incentivizing quality teaching; 4) outreach to tribal entities; and 5) student health and safety. For each of these groups, the commissioner noted what was being done at the department level. For the graduation rate, EED is partnering with the Departments of Health & Social Services, Labor and Work Force Development, the University and outreach with agencies that deal with services to children. For early childhood, EED is partnering with Best Beginnings. The governor has proposed a pilot (grant) pre-school program. For the quality teaching, EED is partnering through the university system teacher education programs. For the outreach to tribal entities, the Commissioner is meeting with rural school boards and is continuing to advocate for a director position in the department for rural education matters. For student health & safety, EED has no funds to review health & safety plans required of districts. The governor has proposed in her upcoming budget, \$1.5 million for obesity prevention, new autism dollars and anti tobacco, alcohol and drug use through the Department of Health & Social Services.

Education Summit wrap up. The Commissioner said the summit was successful with over 400 participants and an outflow of very positive comments. He thanked Esther Cox for her closing remarks and Bunny Schaeffer for her speech. Other board member who participated were Sylvia Reynolds who was a facilitator and Jazmin Ziden who participated on one of the student panels. Sylvia Reynolds noted that students who participated made a significant difference and she hoped to continue to have students involved. The board was given notebooks with draft summit findings and conclusions and was asked to comment. Since they had not had time to review the notebooks, they asked to see something more refined at the January meeting. Dr. Holloway suggested being realistic where the responsibility begins, birth or age 3, early learning or early childhood. She asked, when does Early development begin? She said that through partnerships, an impact can be made birth through 3 years. It was also noted that special needs responsibility could go to age 21. Esther Cox said we had the responsibility to follow up and keep the summit outcomes alive. The Commissioner said he'd like to get the outcomes posted on the web as soon as possible for public comment. Phil Schneider said he felt the summit was a good way for a new commissioner to come on board, and

making the connection with K-12 and the university. Commissioner LeDoux said he intended to send the summit results to the University Board of Regents, Departments of Labor and Work Force Development and Health & Social Services for their comments also.

Business Meeting

Regulations to go out for public comment.

Work Ready/College Ready. This regulation change would delay the effective date for one year so that the program can be fully implemented. Ms. Cox said she was still concerned with band width issues associated with the program and felt that the pilots should have more time. The commissioner said he believed that the technical problems could be solved.

Shirley Holloway moved and Phil Schneider seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on proposed amendments to regulations related to 4 AAC 06.715 and 4 AAC 06.717, Work ready/college ready transitional skills curriculum and benchmark assessments. The motion passed by a 5 – 1 vote, with Chair Cox voting against the motion.

Quality School Grants. This regulations change sets a threshold for application and reporting requirements for small grants. Ms. Cox said she would not support because she thinks the application can be further streamlined. Mr. Jeans said the department does support the amendment. There are 15 districts with \$10,000 or less.

Shirley Holloway moved and Sylvia Reynolds seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on proposed regulations 4 AAC 33, Quality School Funding Grants. The motion passed by a vote of 4-2, with Ms. Cox and Ms. Schaeffer voting against the motion.

Regulations to adopt

Public School Library Collection Development Grants. This is a new regulation providing a vehicle for a public school with a library to apply for not more than \$3,000 for a fiscal year to expand and improve the library collection. Grant funds still have to be established by the legislature. There was no discussion.

Sylvia Reynolds moved and Shirley Holloway seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt proposed regulations 4 AAC 57.400 – .480 related to Public School Library Collection Development Grants. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mt. Edgecumbe High School Report. Bill Hutton, Superintendent of Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) in Sitka, was present to brief the board. He said lots of exciting

things were going on at MEHS. For the first time the school has become a 4A school due to increased enrollment. He said the Oceanography course was particularly popular this year and they were doing exciting things in that class. The co-op program with the Scripps Institute is also going well. A new genetics class is very popular with its Ph.D. volunteer teacher. The technology program remains strong. They are working with Sheldon Jackson College to obtain some of its library collection. There are three AmeriCorps volunteers working with the recreation program and the students, which is going very well. He noted that demerits were down significantly this year so far.

Under the category of capital improvement, Mr. Hutton said the crawl space under the dorms had been a major project and had been cleaned up and they were anticipating a badly needed \$1.5 million dollar girl's dorm renovation this year.

Donald Handeland, a MEHS student who was present at the meeting to be interviewed for the position of student advisor, said that he comes from Nome and chose MEHS because of the variety of classes and electives. He will be pursuing a degree in Engineering after school and is already taking college classes. He said he liked residential life. His favorite subjects are math and he is the only sophomore in some of the higher math classes.

Mr. Hutton said that historically, MEHS loses enrollment after the Christmas holidays. They are developing new brochures and advertising. He said they have 392 beds and all students have a bed. Some students are local. He said they will never be more than 430 beds unless new dorms are built. When asked if there was a possibility to use some of the Sheldon Jackson College campus, Dr. Holloway said they were selling off land and buildings to pay off debt.

Mr. Schneider thanked Mr. Hutton for having the board meeting at MEHS in September.

Libraries, Archives and Museums Report. Linda Thibodeau, Director of Libraries, Archives and Museums (LAM) was present to brief the board. Ms. Thibodeau introduced Sue Sherif and Jacque Peterson from the Anchorage Talking Book Library who were in the audience. Ms. Thibodeau gave an update on the new LAM building in Juneau. The state already owns the property and they are entering the design phase and establishing an advisory committee. Ms. Cox has agreed to serve on the committee. Ms. Thibodeau also reported on the Archives Rescue Corps (ARC) a grant-funded division-wide project that aims to identify all paper-based archival collections in Alaska. Other activities she mentioned were attending the Education Summit, the broadband survey, coordinating with the Gates Foundation to conduct a statewide library survey of broadband accessibility and costs, and electronic initiatives. She also reviewed upcoming state museum programs and earthquake proofing archives shelving.

Minimum Expenditures. Ms. Cox said it was important that the legislature understands that accountability is different now than when this law went into affect. The law is AS 14.17.520, which requires public school districts to spend at least 70% of their school operating budget on instructional activities. The board presented a resolution 01-2009 to

be taken to the legislature. The resolution as presented was amended to add language in the therefore clause. Bunny Schaeffer moved and Sylvia Reynolds seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed resolution encouraging the Alaska Legislature to reconsider or amend AS 14.17.520, Minimum Expenditure for Instruction. The motion was passed by a 4-1 vote (Shirley Holloway was off line). Phil Schneider voted against the motion, saying he just wanted the entire statute repealed.

Budget and Legislative Report. Eddy Jeans, Director of School Finance, was present to brief the board. He said he could not discuss the ongoing budget negotiations until the governor made her announcement. He said there would be \$800,000 for Head Start and \$2Million for a pilot Pre K program to be developed by the department. He said the Professional Teachers Practices Commissioner (PTPC) would no longer be funded through teacher certification receipts but by general fund which frees up to about \$200,000 in teacher certification.

Regarding legislation, Mr. Jeans said there were two items to be aware of. The military compact and the Pre-20 Commission. He said there would be two new committees this year, a House Education Committee and a Senate Education Committee. He said there was \$56 million in adjustment increases over last year in the foundation formula.

Assessment, Accountability and Information Management Report. Erick McCormick, newly appointed Director of Assessment, was present to brief the board. He began by reviewing district Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) numbers. He said 26 districts met the bar and 28 did not. He briefed the board on new USDOE regulations regarding Title 1 of NCLB saying USDOE proposed a new cohort for the high school graduation rate effective 2010-2011 and it will be used an indicator in 2011-2012, proposing a uniform calculated graduation rate in all states. He said there were also changes in the accountability work book and supplemental services and some other reporting. Mr. McCormick also briefed the board on the state high school exit exam report published by the Center on Education Policy and the preliminary average daily membership (ADM) numbers from the October count period. Mr. McCormick also reviewed upcoming activities and meetings. He said a new assessment contract had been released and he hopes to have it issued by February 17, 2009, so work can begin on March 1st. The new contract will go through 2016.

Attorney General's Report. Neil Slotnick, Assistant Attorney General, was present to brief the board. He indicated that the staff at the department had been particularly helpful in assistance with a number of issues. Regarding the Moore case, there are issues remaining of oversight of districts with low academic achievement. Expert witnesses and past and present department staff have been deposed and heard. He said there would be post oral arguments on December 10. Then the judge should make a decision. He said other cases have meeting set to see if a solution can be worked out. He also announced that Kathleen Strasbaugh, who had been another attorney assigned to the department, had left state service and the Department of Law would be assigning another attorney to take her place.

School Improvement. Les Morse, Deputy Commissioner, was present to brief the board. Mr. Morse indicated that his chief area of responsibility was to focus on school improvement and streamline the process. He said 20 schools had had desk audits done, and school audits had been conducted in 56 schools in 19 districts. He said that when the picture is not clear, an on-site audit is conducted. Currently, an evaluation study of the tool used is being done. He described the validation study and discussed curriculum alignment institutes to take place in January and March, district improvement plan coaches training and collaboration meeting, webinar courses planned prior to the winter conference.

Mr. Morse confirmed that North Slope, Bering Strait and Lower Kuskokwim were the districts that were undergoing instructional audits. In response to questions from board members, he indicated that the Alaska Comprehensive Center would be doing the audit study. He said in order for a district to get off audit status, the district is required to make three consecutive years of improvement in all three subject areas, then the department can no longer do interventions. He indicated that the mentor program was part of the process.

Commissioner's Report. Commissioner LeDoux was present to brief the board. He said the bureaucracy was complicated, but he's working through it. He said there were great staff in the department working for students. Traveling around the state was enabling him to speak with school boards, university folks, legislators, education support groups, and he felt he was building coalitions. He was pleased with the governor's announcement that she would request funding for Head Start and the pilot program. He said there were many holes in the department where help was needed, specifically in technical assistance, social services and student health and safety.

Consent Agenda. Sylvia Reynolds moved and Phil Schneider seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of: 1) the Watershed Charter School Application; 2) the Kaleidoscope Charter School Application; 3) the minutes of the September 10-12, 2008, meeting; and 4) the minutes of the October 27, 2008, meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Board Comments.

Jazmin Ziden thanked the board, the commissioner and the staff and the Anchorage School District for the meeting space. She congratulated Tim Rockey as the new student advisor elect.

Sylvia Reynolds thanked the department for its hard work in preparing for the meeting. She said the next TAC meeting would be the end of April. She enjoyed the education summit. She said she was interested in knowing ASAA numbers and seeing a Title IX monitoring report. She also wanted to see some data regarding how school board expenditures related to academic success. She said she was looking forward to visiting

the LAM at the March meeting. She congratulated MEHS and the GILA program for what they were doing for students.

Commissioner Ledoux introduced Marcy Herman, the department's new legislative liaison.

Geri Benshoof said she was interested in early childhood education being a whole community effort.

Bunny Schaeffer enjoyed this meeting because there was lots of discussion about students and successful programs.

Phil Schneider thanked the department staff for the education summit and congratulated Tim Rockey saying that all the candidates were well qualified which made the decision hard. He said he enjoyed the Watershed Charter School presentation and the fact that they include financial literacy in their curriculum. He feels languages should be more a part of curriculum. He congratulated Rhonda Gardner, Anchorage School District Assistant Superintendent, on her upcoming retirement and wished everyone a happy holiday.

Esther Cox shared some of the recent PTPC decisions with the board and requested a report from PTPC at the March meeting. She reported on recent travel arrangement to Kansas City to attend the National Governor's Association (NGA) conference on teacher quality and reminded board members of upcoming meeting dates. She thanked all the students who interview and congratulated Tim Rockey. She said she was looking forward to meeting with the education committee in March. She thanked the department for their continued good work and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:00 p.m.