

Approved Minutes
Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
October 29, 2012
Originating in the State Board of Education Auxiliary room
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, AK

The tele/videoconference meeting was called to order by Chair Jim Merriner at noon. All members were present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Chair asked if there were any disclosures. Carol Schaeffer said she was an employee of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District (NWABSD) and the district had a waiver request on the agenda. The Chair ruled that Ms. Schaeffer should recuse herself when it came to the NWABSD waiver discussion. He clarified that she could participate in all the other waiver discussions and voting. There were no objections from board members. Esther Cox asked if something had changed as she didn't remember this being an issue before. Mr. Merriner said he had discussed it with the department's legal advisor and he was erring on the side of caution. Rebecca Hattan, Assistant Attorney General, said according to the board's bylaws Ms. Schaeffer could ask for a vote on the issue. Ms. Schaeffer declined. Madison Manning, student advisor, advised the board that both of her parents were employed by Lake & Peninsula School District and she was a student at a Lake and Peninsula school, and the district also had a waiver requests on the agenda. The Chair ruled that because she was an advisor, she could participate. There were no objections.

The agenda was approved by roll call vote with a motion made by Ms. Cox and seconded by Pat Shier.

Public Comment.

Hedy Eicheid, UniServ Director at NEA-Alaska, read a short written comment by Ron Fuhrer, NEA-Alaska President, encouraging the board to re-notice and extend the time for public comment of the proposed evaluation regulations. He indicated that there was much interest in the project on behalf of the NEA-Alaska members, the revisions were significant, and they wanted time to formulate comments about the revisions.

Waiver Requests. Commissioner Hanley introduced Elizabeth Nudelman, Director of School Finance, who briefed the board on the procedures related to the minimum expenditures process. She reviewed the statute and the documents related to the department's gathering of information. She indicated that her division had worked extensively with the districts and had specifically talked with districts about capital budgets. Mr. Merriner thanked Ms. Nudelman for the information and asked for a motion. Ms. Cox moved to pull the waiver request for the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, and Phil Schneider seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. Ms. Cox moved and Mr. Shier seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the district waiver requests for 70% minimum expenditure for instruction requirement for Fiscal Year 2013 for the following school districts: Aleutian Region, Aleutians East Borough, Bristol Bay Borough, Chatham, Copper

River, Hoonah City, Hydaburg City, Iditarod Area, Kake City, Kashunamiut, Kuspuuk, Lake and Peninsula, Nome, North Slope Borough, Pelican City, Pribilof, Saint Mary's, Skagway, Southeast Island, Southwest Region, Tanana City, and Yukon Flats.

Mr. Merriner asked for discussion. Ms. Cox said she was glad to see that Lower Yukon School District and Yupiit School District were not asking for a waiver. She felt that was very good. She noted that the data showed that Yukon Flats was doing much better in its effort to achieve the 70% for instruction. She noted that Iditarod and Nome had 25% in operations maintenance. She inquired if there was anything unusual going on in those districts. Ms. Nudelman said she didn't have any specifics. Iditarod had significant energy costs and several buildings in remote areas. She didn't have any specific information regarding Nome; however, she said that neither of the districts had raised any red flags in the review process. She felt that economy of scale and high energy costs were certainly factors. Mr. Schneider inquired if energy costs could be line-itemed out and included in operation costs. Ms. Nudelman said the law comes from statute and it would likely promote a statute change. Ms. Hattan said the law is clear and the board's authority is limited to the statute language. Geri Benshoof said that some districts, Iditarod in particular, were experiencing declining enrollment, so they were getting less money from the state, but the energy costs remained the same. Mr. Shier said he appreciated the work done by the department to drill down on the concerns the board had previously expressed. The question was called and the motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Ms. Cox moved and Mr. Shier seconded a motion to approve the Northwest Arctic Borough School District's waiver request. The commissioner commented that the district was closer than ever, at 66%, to making the 70% requirement and that they had worked hard to get to this point. He also noted that several districts had improved their efforts with the highest gains to date: Nome, North Slope, Northwest Arctic, Southwest Region, Tanana, Yukon Flats, Bristol Bay, Hoonah and Hydaburg. Ms. Cox thanked the commissioner for naming those districts. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote, with Ms. Schaeffer recusing herself.

Regulations to go out for public comment.

Deputy Commissioner Les Morse briefed the board about a new regulation project that would revise the Alaska Performance Scholarship. He described three components: the proposal would 1) allow high school-level courses taken prior to high school to count toward the scholarship eligibility if the courses are on the student's transcript; 2) allow International Baccalaureate courses as approved courses for scholarship eligibility; and 3) clarify that ACT and SAT tests used for scholarship eligibility are the reading, writing and math tests. Ms. Cox said the board had discussions in the past regarding allowing the middle school courses to count for scholarship eligibility. Mr. Shier moved and Mr. Schneider seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on amendments to 4 AAC 43, Alaska Performance Scholarship Program. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Sondra Meredith, Teacher Education Administrator, was present to brief the board regarding re-noticing the teacher and administrator revised regulation. The original proposal was revised to eliminate some duplication; clarify the application of cultural standards; differentiate among

teachers, administrators and special service providers; and make the evaluation requirements less prescriptive for districts. The project would have an additional 30 days public notice. Ms. Benshoof raised questions about the special service providers. It was noted that special education teachers are covered in the proposal. The board was reminded that they were not adopting this regulation but putting it out for public comment. It was decided to see what the public comment had to say about special service providers. Ms. Meredith clarified that the Plan of Improvement was included in the statutory reference and referred to in the document. The concern of NEA-Alaska that was expressed in public comment was clarified as being in favor of putting the new proposal out for comment. The terms “shall” and “must” were discussed in relation to the cultural standards. Ms. Meredith said the language was changed to “shall” to provide flexibility in determining the performance standards. It was clarified that the proposal would have a 30-day period of public comment. Mr. Shier moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion: I move that the State Board of Education & Early Development re-notice for public comment the new proposed regulations governing cultural standards and teacher and administrator evaluations. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Bylaws. Mr. Merriner asked about the meaning of public comment section in relation to works sessions. Ms. Hattan clarified that there would always be public comment at a board meeting, whether there was a work session or not. Ms. Keplinger moved and Mr. Shier seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the amendments to its Bylaws, dated October 29, 2012. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Education Plan. Commissioner Hanley indicated that the edits to the plan as requested by the board had been made, and the plan would be posted on the web site. Ms. Cox moved and Mr. Shier seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the amendments to the Alaska Education Plan. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. Mr. Merriner thanked board members Schneider and Keplinger for their help in the editing process.

Resolution. Mr. Merriner noted the long service Cyndy Curran had with the education community of Alaska and her years with the state department of education. Ms. Cox moved and Ms. Keplinger seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve Resolution 01-2012 honoring Cynthia Curran and direct the Chair to apply his signature on behalf of the entire board. Mr. Schneider said he liked the part about her humor. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Board Comments.

Ms. Cox thanked Ms. Nudelman and the staff for the work on the packet saying that the information about the school boards was good. She was participating in the meeting via teleconference from Virginia and noted that Hurricane Sandy was bearing down.

Ms. Benshoof had no comments.

Ms. Keplinger thanked the staff.

Ms. Schaeffer thanked the board for the updated Education Plan.

Mr. Shier said he echoed everyone's comments.

Mr. Schneider thanked Ms. Meredith for her work on the regulation proposal, and noted that the technology needed improvement.

Ms. Manning had no comment.

Mr. Merriner thanked the department staff and said he appreciated the time given to him and the board. He thanked GCI and Roxy Mourant for the connections, and thanked the board members for their participation. He inquired about the new military advisor and said he was looking forward to his arrival. He also invited board members to share any readings they had that were thought to be worthwhile with board members.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent.