

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development  
Approved Minutes  
Teleconference originating in the Commissioner's office  
801 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
Juneau, AK  
January 24, 2011

The teleconference meeting was called to order by Chair Cox at noon. All members were on line with the exception of Pat Shier. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Chair asked if anyone had any disclosures; there were none. The agenda was amended by unanimous roll call vote to include a report from Acting Commissioner Les Morse.

Other in attendance were: Carl Rose from the Association of Alaska School Boards; Bruce Johnson from the Alaska Council of School Administrators; Mike Lesmann from the Governor's Office; Cyndy Curran, Elizabeth Nudelman, Marcy Herman, Eddy Jeans, and Patty Owen from the department; Neil Slotnick and Rebecca Hattan, Assistant Attorneys General; Dottie Knuth, board secretary; and online were Mary Synder and Satasha Green from UAA, Laurel Vorachek from the Anchorage School District. Shirley Pittz from Health & Social Services, and Alyse Galvin, Partnership Liaison at EED.

5. Fund Balance. The commissioner introduced Elizabeth Nudelman, Director of School Finance, who was there to speak to this regulation. The regulation was before the board again because of drafting errors in the version the board saw in December. It also had been edited to be rewritten as repealed and readopted. This proposed regulation change would align the language in 4 AAC 09.160 to the GASB Statement No. 54 language while maintaining the current 10% fund balance calculation in accordance with AS 14.17.505 Fund balance in school operating fund. This alignment does not change the calculation or process currently in place for districts.

Jim Marriner moved and Phil 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 09.160, Fund balance. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

6. Alaska Performance Scholarship. The commissioner introduced Eddy Jeans. Mr. Jeans noted that the regulation had been adopted by the board at the December meeting; however, since that time in talking with the Department of Law, it was felt that some minor edits needed to be added to clarify meaning. The edits were not substantive. The order of the regulation was re-ordered to flow better and it added a curriculum requirement to make it consistent with law. Mr. Jeans emphasized that the requirements in this regulation applied only to 2012, and 2013, at which time the regulation would sunset after the transition period. Mr. Jeans verified that after 2013, the regulation would be modified. Ms. Schaeffer said that she voted no last time and was going to vote no again. She said there are 88 small schools with less than 30 students, and she feels that it will be difficult for those students to participate for many reasons, but mainly because of distance delivery quality. She felt those students were being left out. Mr. Morse said those were legitimate concerns and all instruction would have to be worked on in all schools. Mr. Jeans clarified that the passing grade language on page 4 was addressing the grace period for requirements and that ACT and SAT scores would dictate eligibility. There was a discussion regarding grading and

pass/fail. Mr. Morse said students have to achieve a GPA that meets the requirements and that ACT, SAT and WorkKeys scores will be the line in the sand. Chair Cox asked if specific courses being named would be the next step. Mr. Morse said it would and that regulation was being worked on and would come before the board in March. He noted that it was going to be difficult to name courses, though, because districts had different names for the same courses, so content will become the determining factor. Jim Merriner wondered if by naming the course local control was being taken away. Mr. Morse said that was not the intent to go through the local curriculums; courses will be set out in regulation for the districts to follow.

Janel Keplinger moved and Phil Schneider seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development re-adopt the proposed changes to 4 AAC 43, regarding the Alaska Performance Scholarship. The motion passed by a 6-1 roll call vote.

7. Legislative Report. Commissioner Morse introduced Marcy Herman, Legislation Liaison. Ms. Herman discussed the pre-filed bills and which ones had been scheduled for a hearing. Of particular interest, she noted SB 6 the Pre-K school program, SB 8 Student Surveys, SB 10 the Repeal of the Exit Exam, SB 43 the Alaska Performance Scholarship and SB 54 the P-16 Education Council on the Senate side, and HB 5, constitutional history curriculum, HB 93 School gardens, greenhouses, HB49 Early childhood education parents as teachers, HB 104 Alaska Performance Scholarships, and HB 112 Secondary Student Civics Exams on the House side. Other bills that she is tracking are the traumatic brain injury concerning state athletes, and the capital, operating and mental health budgets. Ms. Herman said any comment the board was willing to make regarding the exit exam would be helpful. Chair Cox reminded the board that they had a resolution on file and that last year's discussion centered on not doing away with the exit exam until there was something to take its place. She said she remembered at the end of last year's joint meeting with the board that someone had said the board had 18 months to do something about the exam. She inquired if anyone else heard or remembered that comment. She said she didn't remember which legislator made it. She asked board members for their comments. Mr. Morse said it doesn't make sense to remove it, because it (the exam) makes sure students have basic essential skills. Ms. Benshoof expressed concern for special education students who can't pass and never will be able to pass the exam. Mr. Morse said when the exam began. the department didn't have the comprehensive accountability program that it now has. All the new pieces hold the system accountable. Mr. Schneider said he would like some data regarding urban/rural, ethnic statistics, socioeconomic numbers and questioned what information like that the department had. Erik McCormick, Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management, said they can run cumulative graduation rates analysis. The state is now graduating 1,100 more kids than before the test, over a time of stagnant enrollment. Ms. Keplinger noted that accountability was very important. She said a high stakes test for a diploma could have different levels. She didn't know if WorkKeys could replace the exit exam. Ms. Schaeffer said she liked the tiered diploma idea and that she would also like to see the data Mr. McCormick was talking about noting that student had many road blocks. Mr. Schneider agreed that a tiered diploma was an interesting thought.

Ms. Benshoof asked how we know that the Exit Exam is making the graduation rate go up. Mr. McCormick said they can't say specifically. Col. Sullivan said that benchmarks and accountability are extremely important for military students and he supported the tiered system. Ms. Schaeffer asked what other states used a tiered system. Chair Cox said from this discussion,

she felt a lengthy discussion needed to happen before they meet with the joint legislative committee and wondered if the state wanted a high stakes exam and if they could provide a diploma for all students. Mr. Morse said the intent of the legislature was to provide an essential skills exam. Mr. Merriner inquired how much in depth Mr. Morse's conversations had been with Mr. Hanley. Mr. Morse said he has been kept up to date frequently, and knows that the board is preparing for a discussion and a position. Mr. Morse said he believed the department had enough information to prepare for the March board meeting.

8. Budget Report. Commissioner Morse introduced Eddy Jeans, Policy Advisor. Mr. Jeans said the budget was basically the same as last year with two exceptions: \$2M for the Pre-K pilot, which is now moved to base as it is reoccurring, and the funding for the scholarship for 2011 and 2012. Ms. Benshoof said she would like more information regarding the Pre-K Pilot. Mr. Morse said there would be a report during the March board meeting. He said the \$10M includes grants, Head Start and Best Beginnings. Chair Cox said she would like the report to include the number of children being served, how districts/schools apply for the programs, do they want the programs, and are they rising to the occasion. She asked what *special schools* were. Mr. Jeans said they include SESA, AK School for the Deaf and Health & Social Services' contract with Providence.

9. Consent Agenda. Chair Cox asked if anyone wanted to pull anything off of the consent agenda. Nothing was pulled. Carol Schaeffer moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of: 1) endorsement of the Family Engagement Plan; 2) endorsement of the Early Literacy Plan; and 3) approval of the appointment of Patricia Owen as Health and Safety Coordinator. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

10. Commissioner Comments. Commissioner Morse was present to brief the board. He noted that the board would hear a report regarding the Yupiit School District in March. He said the statewide birth-grade 12 literacy plan will go out for public comment and come before the board in March also. He said the Task Force on Higher Education will soon have recommendations. He noted that the Alaska Learning Network will have a briefing in March. Commissioner Morse said that he had attended the State of the State Address on behalf of Mr. Hanley, he was working closely with Mr. Hanley in preparing for the transition by having many briefings and that February 3 would be the new commissioner's first day in the office. Lastly, he said he and many department staff were providing almost daily testimony with the legislature regarding budget and bills.

Board Comments.

Col Sullivan – none

Tiarna Fischler – none

Jim Merriner – thanked the department and Chair Cox for a good meeting.

Janel Keplinger- none

Ger Benshoof – thanked Les Morse for assuming the role of commissioner

Phil Schneider – echoed Ms. Benshoof's words

Carol Schaeffer – mentioned that the Galena school had lost its motor shop in a fire. Mr. Morse said that the department facilities section and Sam Kito were in contact with Galena and helping.

Esther Cox – said she wanted to encourage MEHS to pursue accreditation. She also questioned why the state board had to fill out APOC forms since they did not deal with money. She encouraged board members to talk with their legislators about APOC requirements. Chair Cox asked the department to make an appointment with the joint legislative committee during its March board meeting. She also noted a piece in the ADN this date about “Waiting for Superman” and recommended reading the article. Chair Cox also asked if video-conferencing was available for all board members instead of teleconference meetings. The department will look into that.

The meeting was adjourned by mutual consent at 2:00 p.m.