

Alaska State Professional Teaching Practices Commission
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1240
Anchorage AK 99501
ADOPTED MINUTES
February 1, 2024

Call to Order: Lem Wheelles called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. There were 7 members present via Zoom webinar. There was a quorum.

Members Present: Chair Lem Wheelles, Vice-Chair Adam Reid, Kim Bergey, Emma Melkerson, Danette Peterson and Stephanie Green, Michael Robbins. Melody Mann, PTPC Executive Director was also present. Mary Carlson joined at 8:48 am.

Members Absent: Deborah Riddle excused.

Election of Secretary: Nominations were opened by the chair, Emma Melkerson volunteered, no other nominations were made. Emma Melkerson was elected Secretary until elections are held at the April meeting.

Agenda Approval: Danette Peterson moved, and Kim Bergey seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Case tracking log and discussion of emergency certificate fees were added to the agenda. The agenda was unanimously approved. Lem noted some items may be taken out of order.

Introductions: Members of the Commission introduced themselves as well as a recent accomplishment this year.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved by Emma Melkerson and seconded by Kim Bergey to approve the minutes of the October 5-6, 2023, meeting and the December 7, 2023, special meeting. The motion passed to adopt the minutes.

DEED REPORT:

Kelly Manning Deputy Director of Innovation and Education Excellence

-Teacher Recruitment and Retention: New teacher certificate administrator started this week, Colleen Walker.

Activity: Is a top priority of DEED and the Governor's office and is taking a multi-pronged report. workgroup: what are the challenges and work with partners around the state to develop strategies.

-The playbook was developed with that group and other partners around the state.

DEED has hired a special projects manager, leading the work out to districts across the state to spread the word.

-Partnering with ATP during the job fair to work with districts to increase district work in recruitment and retention. Goal is to be working on strategies that districts can employ in their work.

-State Board of Ed has asked DEED to pursue a registered apprenticeship program through the department of labor both state and national level. Working through a Grow your Own approach.

DEED is working closely with the national Grow Your Own program to ensure DEED is meeting all the requirements from the DOL.

Planning to have a draft plan later in the spring for public input.

Initially starting with focusing on future educators to get them certificated, then explore pathways to explore hard to fill positions.

-DEED is working directly with the vendor for teacher certification online application. There are still glitches that need to be reworked. Send any glitches to Ms. Walker.

There was a brief break at 9:30 am for 15 minutes.

Executive Director's Reports: Melody Mann delivered her reports in the following areas:

Activity Report:

Staff have accepted 13 complaints for investigations since October 7, 2023. There are 19 open cases currently. Five cases await criminal court cases. Seven cases have been dismissed and closed since October 7, 2023. Six complaints were declined to investigate due to a lack of a certificated subject or due to other factors such as being handled locally or out of the purview of PTPC. Staff continues to reach out to AAG for consultation on cases when necessary.

The office does not get every teaching certificate application, only those with "hits" in their background reports; the downswing of hits continues, with some weeks having none and others only a handful to process. FY 2023 had 137 "hits" compared to 144 the year prior. There were 43 background checks conducted since July 1, 2023 (or FY 24) and 35 since October 13, 2023, for a total of 78 hits this fiscal year.

Melody also attended the PPI conference, attended a session around matching the teacher certification integration system with the NASDTEC Clearinghouse as well as other valuable sessions to guide her work.

Melody has made four more presentations since the October meeting and continues work to reach out to educators around the state.

Financial Report:

Current balances

Personal Services \$52.65

Travel \$3,180.00

Services \$208.96

Commodities \$832.08

Case Report:

The commission was provided a summary of the cases the PTPC office has investigated since the last meeting. Eight cases have been dismissed since October of 2023, (a correction/update from the activities report).

EXECUTIVE/DELIBERATIVE SESSION: Kim Bergey moved, and Emma Melkerson seconded to go into executive/deliberative session as permitted by AS 44.62.310(d) to address cases before the PTPC. The motion passed unanimously. The commission moved into deliberative session at 11:01 am. Melody Mann left the room.

It was moved by Danette Peterson and seconded by Kim Bergey to move out of executive session at 2:09 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Action Items – PTPC Cases

PTPC Case 24-08: *The Commission accepts the Decision and Order of a one-year suspension effective July 18, 2023, of the Emergency Teaching Certificate of Olivia G MacDonald*

Moved: Kim Bergey Second: Adam Reid

AYE
Lem Wheelles
Adam Reid
Emma Melkerson
Kim Bergey
Mary Carlson
Stephanie Green
Danette Peterson
Michael Robbins

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 24-13: *The Commission accepts the stipulation of a warning of an educator*

Moved: Danette Peterson Second: Stephanie Green

Comment: (KimBergey)

This case speaks to Alaska’s need to fill a high number of certificated vacancies in a time of extreme shortages of qualified applicants. When there are extensive needs, people often get creative without always remembering to check the legalities as related to hiring. I see this as an issue that will become more prevalent as the labor pool continues to tighten for the education pool. For this reason, I think it is important to elevate this concern to the Department of Education & Early Develop and the Alaska Superintendent Association. It would be a great topic of discussion for the upcoming Teacher Recruitment and Retention Convening that is happening in February.

AYE
Lem Wheelles
Adam Reid
Emma Melkerson
Kim Bergey
Mary Carlson
Stephanie Green
Danette Peterson
Michael Robbins

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 24-17: *The Commission accepted the one-year suspension effective October 6, 2023, of the Initial Certificate of Rachel Rosenberger*

Moved: Adam Reid

Second: Emma Melkerson

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Mary Carlson

Danette Peterson

Michael Robbins

Stephanie Green

Kim Bergey

NAY

Motion passes unanimously

PTPC Case 21-22: *The Commission approves the extension of conditions in this case to three months for completion of the condition previously ordered*

Moved: Kim Bergey

Second: Danette Peterson

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Mary Carlson

Stephanie Green

Danette Peterson

Michael Robbins

Kim Bergey

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 24-30: *The Commission overturns the dismissal of this case*

Moved: Emma Melkerson

Second: Adam Reid

AYE

Lem Wheelles

Adam Reid

Emma Melkerson

Mary Carlson

Stephanie Green

Danette Peterson

Michael Robbins

Kim Bergey

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Items

April Meeting

In light of the current budget, there was a need to readjust line items. The Governor has requested that we only hold one in person meeting a year, typically this is done in April. This was due to the time necessary to complete Ms. Mann's evaluation, which the state has now moved to October. The caseload is also such that there are many cases in October as opposed to April. The commission generally feels the value of holding meetings in person. April's meeting will be in person. Director Mann will continue to advocate for commission meetings to be held in person.

Case Tracking Log

Lem proposes having a communication system for up-to-date status of all open cases. This would be sent to officers of the commission monthly as a system of checks and balances. Director Mann wants to check with the AAG before a decision is made to ensure that all commissioners retain their ability to hear and adjudicate the cases without the perception of bias at quarterly meetings. The Executive Director explained that there are currently two databases. One database is purely for background checks. The case file database has every case file and follows the case from initial complaint through dismissal or sanction.

Emergency Certificate fees

Currently emergency certificates are struggling for a number of reasons. First being that the fee requirement has to be paid every year. Instead having a fee to cover a 2-year program to lessen the financial burden as well as feeling supported by DEED. Fees are set by regulation. 4AAC12.401
Danette Peterson Motion: This commission adds to the April 11-22, 2024, as an action item a recommendation that the state school board of education adjust the fees for emergency certificates.
Motion passes

Information Items –

DEED related bills

A list was provided to the commission of the current DEED related bills that are in the legislative process. The list is hyperlinked for members to follow. The Bill Tracking management system is also linked for commission members to be updated frequently.

Adjournment: Kim Bergey moved to adjourn the meeting; Danette Peterson seconded. The motion was approved. Lem Wheelles adjourned the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Submitted by,

Emma Melkerson