

State Board of Education & Early Development
Draft Minutes
February 28, 2024
Andrew P. Kashevaroff (APK) Building
395 Whittier Street, Juneau, AK 99801

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Roll was called, and the following members were present to provide a quorum: Member Pamela Dupras, Military Advisor James Fowley, Member Jeff Erickson, Member Bob Griffin, Second Vice Chair Sally Stockhausen, Member Barbara Tyndall, First Vice Chair Lorri Van Deist, Student Advisor Felix Myers, Student Advisor Elect Joshua Pak, and Chair James Fields.

Chair Fields called a quorum. Member Tyndall gave the invocation, and the board pledged allegiance to the flag.

First Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Member Erickson seconded, a motion to adopt the February 28, 2024 agenda with the following amendments: 1) the addition of a tour of the legislative library at 10:30 am; 2) the addition of an executive session at 3:15 pm to obtain legal advice related to Nikolaevsk Charter School's appeal of the denial of its Charter School application to the State Board of Education and Early Development. Legislative Liaison Laurel Shoop provided an explanation of the changes. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members.

At 10:25 a.m. Chair Fields called a recess for board members to take a tour of the State Museum and library until public comment.

Public Comment

Chair Fields called the meeting back to order at 11:02 a.m. and opened it for public comment. No public comments were provided in person or virtually.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1 – School Construction and Major Maintenance List

Karen Morrison, Director of Finance and Support Services, and Lori Weed, School Finance Manager and Acting Facility Manager presented information and updated the board prior to the approval of the final annual priority list of capital projects eligible for funding under the school construction and major maintenance grants. This is an annual process set up in Alaska Statute 14.11. It is a ranking of the grant projects that are submitted to the department from school districts that select projects in their district to rank them on a six-year plan and then provide applications for those year-one school projects to the department for consideration in this ranking process. Department staff spends about 6-9 weeks reviewing applications specifically, data input, calculations, cleanup and proofing with a rating team. The lists are provided to the Governor for consideration in his upcoming budget, then to the legislature.

Agenda Item 2 – Legislative and Budget Update

The legislative update was presented by Laurel Shoop, DEED Legislative Liaison. Currently, 72 bills are being heard by various House and Senate Committees. These bills impact teacher retention and recruitment, school construction and major maintenance, school funding, and various other topics. A list of all the bills that are being monitored by the department as of February 27th has been provided to the State Board of Education and Committee members. In the last session, Governor Dunleavy introduced a bill for teacher retention and recruitment, which continues to be one of the Governor's top priorities. House Bill 106 and Senate Bill 97 are companion bills in both the House and Senate. These bills would provide lump sum payments for classroom teachers in Alaska for a period of three years. These bills would authorize the department to make lump sum payments to teachers directly in amounts of \$5000, \$10,000, or \$15,000, depending on the teacher's service location in their school district. Parents' rights and education transparency are also Governor Dunleavy's priorities. House Bill 105 and Senate Bill 96 are bills that would increase opportunities for parent involvement in their children's education by creating meaningful notice and consent requirements. When originally introduced, they required school districts to allow parental access to school records and to develop policies requiring written consent before providing instruction related to human reproduction. House Bill 274 and Senate Bill 192 are companion bills that would improve the Reads Act statutes by updating the Alaska statewide literacy screener requirements. These updates would allow for progress monitoring that will inform additional instruction to increase reading skills and adjust the end-of-year meeting date between parents and teachers from 45 days to no later than 15 days before the end of the school year. This will allow access to end-of-year literacy screener data on student learning and progress as needed to discuss grade three promotion.

House Bill 140 passed both the House and Senate extremely quickly for its size and impact on education. This started as a bill to increase the allowable download speed cap for the School Broadband Assistance Grants Program but has turned into a larger education funding bill that included programmatic changes to the department. On February 26th, the State concurred with the House version of Senate Bill 140, which was transmitted to the Governor that same day. This bill now includes the following updates to the maximum download speed allowable under the State-funded School Broadband Assistance Grants Program from 25 megabits to 100 megabits per second. It will increase the BSA from 5,960 to 6,640. The legislative intent language was included to direct a portion of the additional funding the bill provided to classrooms in the form of educator salaries and retention bonuses. It also requires school districts to report an update on how they are meeting the intent language of this section on February 1, 2025, and 2026 directly to the Senate Secretary and the Chief Clerk of the House. This bill adds a section of the law that would allow charter schools that have their contracts terminated by a school district the ability to appeal the termination decision to the Commissioner of the department. This bill adds a section of law that would create a charter school coordinator position supporting charter schools in Alaska. It modifies the pupil transportation section of the law to update student transportation multipliers found in the foundation formula. This also modified the correspondence study multiplier for the foundation formula and added a section of the law that would pay \$500 per student in grades K-3 for students who have been determined to have a reading deficiency. This bill totals nearly a quarter billion dollars in increased funding for education in Alaska.

Provided an update on House Bill 69, which passed last legislative session; it provides a mechanism for the Tanana City School District to be absorbed into the Yukon-Koyukuk School

District. According to the local Boundary Commission Legislative Report dated January 18, 2024, the Superintendent of the Yukon-Koyukuk, Tanana City School District contacted the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development local Boundary Commission staff to inquire about the city of Tanana's potential reclassification to a 2nd class city in June of 2023 after Governor Dunleavy signed HB 69 into law. The Department of Law determined that a new law would require new regulations to establish a local Boundary Commission process for reclassification. The local Boundary Commission approved a regulations project at its August 10, 2023 meeting and worked with an Assistant Attorney General in drafting new regulations, which were posted for public comment and adopted the new regulations on November 20, 2023, they became law and were effective on January 4, 2024. If the city of Tanana submits a petition under the new regulations, and the local Boundary Commission approves the petition, reclassification would become effective on July 1, 2024, and the Tanana City School District would officially become part of the Yukon-Koyukuk Regional Education area.

Tama Carson, Administrative Services Director, provided the board with an update on the Governor's amended budget for FY25. The Governor introduced the FY24 supplemental budget items for DEED. There were three operating items included for Mt. Edgecumbe High School which include rising utility costs due to inflation, replace unavailable interagency authority for teachers contracts to support operations, and increased contractual costs for dorm management and food services. On February 14, 2024, the Governor issued his FY25 amended budget for DEED. There were two operating items, which included the Alaska Reads Act Advisory Panel and the Career and Technical Education component related to the general fund match of the Carl D. Perkins Federal Award, which is currently working through the House Finance Subcommittee process.

Break for Lunch at 12:05 p.m.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 3– Approve School Construction and Major Maintenance List

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned, and Member Erickson seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development to approve the Department's fiscal year 2025 final School Construction Grant fund and Major Maintenance grant fund priority lists.

Member Griffin stated that he would be voting no for this year and understands the ramifications of not putting forward to punctuate his concerns with this agenda item. Without further discussion, the motion passed in a roll call vote 8 yes, 2 no.

Agenda Item 4 – Questions Regarding Standing Reports

4A. Innovation and Education Excellence (IEE) – Kathy Moffitt, Director
First Vice Chair Van Diest asked for clarification on the differences between the two grants associated with early learning for the three-year district wide Early Learning Education and Pre-Elementary grant; and if the districts can apply for more than one grant. Deb Riddle, IEE Operations Manager responded that there are several grant programs in early education. The pre-kindergarten grants are three-year grants that districts can apply for and receive funding, The early education program grants that are district-wide to address the Reads Act, these are for 4–5-year-olds for districts who want to either improve or build an early education program, and that is funded by the Reads Act funding so they can apply for both.

4B. Alyeska Reading Institute (ARI) – Carol Boatman, Director
 First Chair Van Deist inquired about the ARI’s tutoring program for 80 students. ARI is working to provide high-impact tutoring for students across the state who are struggling. Targeted instruction will be provided in a virtual small group setting and progress monitoring will occur to measure growth and adjustment interventions.

4C. Libraries, Archives & Museums (LAM) – Dr. Amy Phillips-Chan, Director
 First Chair Van Deist asked about where we are in the process of selling the Stratton Library. Dr. Amy Phillips-Chan, Director of the Alaska State Libraries, Archives & Museums Director provided some historical background of the building and that they had an appraisal done in November and discovered that the current cost to rehab the facility is over 14 million which reaffirmed the decision to move forward with a sale. A team has worked to craft a best interest finding policies and procedures that is now under review of the Commissioner’s Office, following approval, it will then go into a 30-day public notice period for comment, and following that the Board will have an opportunity to review public comments and then decide whether to move forward with sale.

4D. Finance and Support Services – Karen Morrison, Director

4E. Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) – Suzuk Huntington, Superintendent
 Second Vice Chair Stockhausen inquired about the status of land sale for Mt. Edgecumbe for Coast Guard use. Lori Weed, Acting Facilities Manager responded that it’s currently with the Coast Guard for Environmental Review and Assessment processes and anticipate some action hopefully by the beginning of new fiscal year so that Mt. Edgecumbe has full fiscal year to use the proceeds.

4F. Attorney General – Susan Sonneborn, Assistant Attorney General

Agenda Item 5 – Commissioner’s Report

Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner, shared a presentation on benchmark scores and data for student learning in Alaska. This data review aims to determine which districts need additional support by analyzing the beginning-of-year (BOY) and middle-of-year (MOY) data to understand trends and needs for the remainder of the school year. This data also helps to consider adjustments to systems that need to be addressed.

Agenda Item 6 – Consent Agenda

6A. and 6B. Approve the minutes of the December 6, 2023, meeting
 First Chair Van Deist motioned, and Second Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of the approval of the minutes for the December 6, 2023, and January 17, 2024, board meetings. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Board Comments

All board members thanked member Jeff Erickson for his contributions and tenure with the State Board of Education and Early Development. Thanks also to the Commissioner and all DEED staff involved for their time and efforts in putting the SBOE meetings together and answering board questions.

Agenda Item 7 - Executive Session

Chair Fields motioned, and First Chair Van Deist seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development to convene an executive session to obtain legal advice regarding Nikolaevsk Charter School's appeal of the denial of its charter school application to the State Board of Education and Early Development under AS 14.03.253, a matter which is by law required to be confidential under the open meetings act AS 44.62.310c.3.

The board adjourned at 2:44 p.m.