

State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Meeting Minutes
February 25, 2025
Virtual Meeting

Tuesday February 25, 2025

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Roll was called, and the following members were present to provide a quorum: First Vice Chair Sally Stockhausen, Second Vice Chair Lorri Van Diest, Military Advisor Lt. Colonel James Fowley, Student Advisor Joshua Pak, Member Barbara Tyndall, and Chair James Fields.

Chair Fields called a quorum. Member Dupras had scheduling conflicts. Member Van Diest gave the invocation, and the board pledged allegiance to the flag.

Second Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Member Bergey seconded a motion to adopt the agenda of the February 25, 2025, meeting. Without further discussion the motion passed in a roll call vote. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 1 – Motion to Executive Session

Chair Fields motioned, and Second Vice Chair Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development convene in executive session to question, consider and discuss the characteristics and qualifications of candidates for the student advisory member elect position, a topic that may tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, under AS 44.62.310(c). Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Those present in the executive session are the State Board Advisory members, Deputy Commissioner Karen Morrison, and the candidates for Student Advisor-Elect.

Agenda Item 2 – Executive Session: Interviews for Student Advisor-Elect

- 2A. Stephen Gibson Resume
- 2B. Amber Sherman Resume

At 5:05pm First Vice Chair Stockhausen acting on behalf of Chair Fields motioned to come out of executive session, and Second Vice Chair Van Diest seconded the motion without further discussion or objection the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Chair Stockhausen expressed gratitude on behalf of the Board to the candidates for applying, emphasizing how much they enjoy interviewing candidates. She highlighted how inspiring it is to see the accomplishments of students across Alaska and reflected on how impressive their resumes are, wishing they had similar achievements in high school. She thanked the candidates for their time and for all their contributions to their schools.

Agenda Item 3 – Vote for Student Advisor-Elect

Second Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Member Bergey seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development to select Amber Sherman as the student advisor elect for

the remainder of the school year, 2024-2025. On July 1, 2025, Amber Sherman's 1-year term will begin as the student advisor to the board and continue through June 30, 2026. The motion passed in a roll call vote, 5 yes, and 1 recused.

Board Comments

Commissioner Dr. Deena Bishop thanked both candidates, Stephen and Amber, for their applications and acknowledged their impressive resumes and experience. She noted collaboration with OSAG and OSAW to ensure top-quality candidates and recognized the difficulty of choosing just one for the position. As a former principal, she empathized with the challenge of competitive selections but assured them that their excellence is evident. Bishop encouraged them to keep striving forward, regardless of the outcome, and expressed appreciation for their dedication to serving their fellow students.

Member Lorri Van Diest thanked the Board for their kind words over the past meetings and shared that this was her last meeting, joking that her family doesn't believe she's actually done. She expressed appreciation for everyone and hopes to see them again in the future. She also wished Joshua the best, acknowledging his bright future and saying it was a pleasure to get to know him.

Member Bergey thanked both applicants for putting their names forward, recognizing their initiative and personal growth. She commended them for their willingness to apply and encouraged them to remember that opportunities come at the right time when needed. She expressed appreciation for their efforts and enjoyment in speaking with them. She also thanked Member Van Diest, stating that she will be missed.

Student Advisor Pak echoed previous remarks, expressing confidence in the state's future after hearing from the candidates. He encouraged them to keep striving in their pursuits. He also gave a heartfelt farewell to Member Van Diest, thanking her for her service and the wisdom she brought to the group.

Member Lt. Col. Fowley thanked the two applicants for reminding him and the Board why they do their work. He praised their impressive resumes and interviews, appreciating the opportunity to get to know them better. He acknowledged that it's easy to focus on negative issues but emphasized that the candidates represent what's going right in Alaska. He agreed with Josh that the state is producing outstanding candidates, showing that something is working well.

Member Tyndall acknowledged that much had already been said but reiterated admiration for the impressive students coming out of Alaska's school system. She commended both applicants for their bravery in stepping up and praised their outstanding resumes. She also saluted Lorri Van Diest, thanking her for her service and expressing hope to see her again in the future. Lastly, she thanked Joshua for his great work.

Chair Stockhausen thanked everyone for their time, acknowledged the students who applied, and expressed appreciation for Member Van Diest. She then moved to adjourn the meeting.

The board adjourned at 5:14 p.m.