

State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
July 1, 2024
Virtual Meeting

Monday July 1, 2024

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

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

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

Second Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and First Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move to adopt the agenda for July 1, 2024 for the State Board of Education meeting with the removal of item number 1, The Executive Session. Without further discussion the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members.

Work Session

Public Comment

There were no public comments provided.

Agenda Item 2 – Regulations for Public Comment

2.A Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) Program

Ryan Bravo, Assistant Attorney General with the Department of Law. The purpose of this update is to bring the regulations in line with the new statute that passed increasing the maximum speed from 25 to 100MBP.

Agenda Item 3 – FY2025 Budget Update

Tama Carson, DEED Administrative Services Director provided budget update. The Governor signed the FY25 budget on June 28, 2024. Items that were vetoed were: 1) Additional non-foundation funding of \$180 to each school district for K-3 students. 2) Additional \$100 for K-3 students in Title 1 schools. 3) Funding to school districts to satisfy the maintenance of equity. 4) Under the Early Learning Coordination, 2.6 million match the legislature put forward. 5) Mt. Edgecumbe High School additional funding for one additional round trip for students to go home. 6) The Alaska Commission on Post Secondary Education, the Higher Education Investment Fund deposit from repayments. 7) The Mt. Edgecumbe deferred maintenance, the girl's dorm roof and window replacement. HB 193 Broadband, although it was passed, the Governor did veto a portion. The total base budget for broadband is about 21 million which is what we will need to cover for the school districts.

Student Advisor Pak inquired about the potential repercussions of the veto on the maintenance of equity funds. Commissioner Bishop responded that there are no anticipated consequences. The state shared a compromise with the USDOE, and no issues were raised. The key tasks involve reporting the local school districts' (LEAs) spending of remaining ART funds, which have been approved. The state's equitable funding formula for districts was a concern, but it was upheld as fair. The grant expires on September 30, 2024, giving LEAs time to spend down their funds, and no issues have arisen for the districts.

Chair Fields asked about the department's actions regarding issues at Stebbins Elementary and another

school facing an emergency. Deputy Commissioner Karen Morrison reported that a team visited Napakiak two weeks ago to assess the situation, noting no further river erosion but expressing concerns about potential storm damage. The report is with OMB to identify funding for demolition and temporary school structures. Regarding Stebbins School, a fire on June 26 destroyed the school and nine other structures, including teacher housing. The fire originated in the boiler room, and the Governor declared a State Disaster Emergency, which will make emergency funds available for response efforts.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 4 – Regulations for Public Comment

2.A Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) Program

First Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned, and Second Vice Chair Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment on changes regulations 4AAC-33.600 – 4AAC 33.690 to increase internet speed for districts through the Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) program under AS 14.03.127(a). Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 5 – Approve Deputy Commissioner

Second Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Second Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Karen Morrison, effective immediately. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Board Comments

First Vice Chair Stockhausen shared that the meeting in Kotzebue was a valuable and enriching experience, bringing a deeper understanding of that part of the state. Stockhausen expressed a desire to intentionally choose similar remote sites for future meetings, preferably during the school year, to interact with teachers and students directly. She also thanked everyone involved for the extra effort in organizing the meeting in such a remote location.

Military Advisory Lt. Col. Fowley asked about the Green to Teach Program. The Commission confirmed that we are moving to implement a Green to Teach Program in Alaska, utilizing some of the flexibility that the board has shared in their goals regarding certification. We hope to have a cohort starting July 1, 2025, and will provide a more detailed report to the board.

Chair Fields inquired if Commissioner Bishop could clarify the definition of a correspondence program and whether there are plans to rename and redefine it. Commissioner Bishop explained that while reviewing regulations, they found some outdated aspects of the definition. Traditionally, correspondence was seen as a rigid, time-bound interaction with certified teachers. However, modern correspondence programs are much more flexible, often blending in-person and online learning, especially in rural areas where students access courses not available locally. Despite a recent Supreme Court decision favoring current statutes, the goal is to update regulations to better reflect 21st-century educational practices, offering flexibility in how students engage with correspondence programs. Public input will be sought later this year as part of this update process.

Second Vice Chair Van Diest expressed appreciation to Commissioner Bishop for reviewing and updating the regulations. She agreed that getting public input is a good idea, based on her discussions with principals, superintendents, and program directors statewide. Van Diest also shared her excitement about the Green to Teach Program, emphasizing the importance of training teachers who are from our state and are committed to staying here.

The board adjourned at 3:38 p.m.