

State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
April 21, 2021
Virtual Platform Meeting
Department of Education & Early Development
801 West 10th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm. After the pledge of allegiance, the board adopted the agenda for April 21, 2021. Member Van Diest moved to adopt the agenda and was seconded by Member Kowalski. There were no objections to the adoption of the agenda. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members at this meeting. Lt. Col. Hammill and Student Advisor Scott were both excused from attendance.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened at 3:06 pm

Elena Markova from the Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education thanked the teacher recruitment and retention working group for their work and informed the board that the council has also partnered with an infant learning program association to conduct a less comprehensive similar study regarding the early childhood workforce. She welcomes any opportunity to collaborate on reducing the challenges in the teacher workforce, particularly in the special education area.

Public comment closed at 3:10 pm. Chair Fields reminded the board that the board does not engage with the public during public comment. They take notes but do not ask questions of the public during this time.

Agenda Item 1. Regulations to go out for public comment: English Language Proficiency Standards Regulations and English Language Exit Criteria Regulations

Commissioner Johnson asked the board to open a period of public comment on regulation changes regarding the assessment of English learners, including revised exit criteria for English learners and updated English language proficiency standards. Deborah Riddle, division operations manager, briefed the board on the WIDA standards as well as the changes made to the regulations. According to Deb, exit criteria for English learners were last updated in 2017. These regulations would update the standards to the revised 2020 edition. She then took questions from the board. One notable comment from the board was the recommendation to include language that acknowledges Alaska native students in these regulations.

Agenda Item 2. Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Johnson welcomed Dr. Anne Zink and asked her to give the board an update on the status of COVID-19 in Alaska and how students can return to in person learning next year. Dr. Zink gave the board some statistics on the percentages of persons in the state who are vaccinated and how that would affect the ability of those persons to interact with other vaccinated persons. She also discussed the difference between a case fatality rate or overall mortality rate in response to questions posed from board members. She thanked the board for their work to support students and stands ready to support

the board in any way to making sure that teachers in the state are vaccinated, and anyone in Alaska's community 16 above and hopefully soon 12 and above. She then took questions from board members. Commissioner Johnson then updated the board on the third Cares Act funding package, and state testing. He will update the board further at their next meeting regarding the numbers of students in the state are going through assessment testing.

Agenda Item 3. Approve Regulations to go out for public comment: English Language Proficiency Standards Regulations and English Language Exit Criteria Regulations

Member Van Diest motioned and Member Kowalski seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment on the proposed amendment of 4 AAC 04.155 English language proficiency standards, 4 AAC 06.820 Participation, and 4 AAC 34.055 Plan of service. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 3:49 pm