

State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
January 16, 2009
Teleconference

Chairman Cox called the meeting to order at noon; roll was taken. All members were present except Pat Shier. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Board members were asked if anyone had any disclosures. There were none.

Approval of the Agenda. Commissioner LeDoux had no additions to the agenda. Shirley Holloway moved and Sylvia Reynolds seconded the motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Public Comment. There was no public comment; however, there were individuals at the LIOs and at the Talking Book Library in Anchorage who were listening to the meeting.

5. Legislation. The commissioner introduced Eddy Jeans, Director of School Finance, and Marcie Herman, the legislative Liaison. Mr. Jeans said that the House Education Committee would be meeting three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. He said the Senate Education Committee would be meeting twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays and there would be department representation at each meeting. Mr. Jeans indicated that the Military Compact legislation was drafted and a sponsor was being sought. He also indicated that a hearing would be scheduled regarding the 70% school district waivers. Mr. Jeans went through the various committee assignments given to legislators and the short list of prefilled bills. He said committee work would begin on January 22.

Board members asked questions regarding the military compact, Pre-K movement, and why HB 1 only asked for \$1 in additional funds for school funding. Mr. Jeans explained that it was a placeholder for future conversation.

6. Budget. The commissioner introduced Eddy Jean, Director of School Finance, and Mark Lewis, Director of Administration, who would be speaking to budget issues. Mr. Jeans said the governor would be supporting a \$2M early childhood pilot that included parent education support and school based ½ day programs. There was also an \$800,000 Hear Start request for those students waiting for admission. He is also expecting increased tech support, \$40M for major maintenance & construction, increase in the base student allocation and the addition of three contract auditors. He said the proposed budget allows the department to move forward, noting that the department is the smallest in the state government funded mostly with pass through money.

Esther Cox inquired about the vocational tech position, and the commissioner said it had already been created and advertised and was hopeful that it would be filled soon. He said the position may be in Anchorage. There was a discussion regarding the price of oil and

its affect on the budget. Mr. Jeans reminded the board that the Constitutional Budget Reserve has money from when oil prices were high and education was funded forward under last year's budget. Mr. Jeans reviewed the various budget documents and answered questions as he went along. He noted that the commissioner has received permission to have a new director of rural education. It still needs to be approved by the legislature. The position will work closely with the rural coordinator in the governor's office.

The board discussed the distribution timing of the permanent fund dividend how it impacts schools and attendance. Members wondered if the distribution date could be moved to better coincide with summer vacation. The discussion led to rural migration and the need for more data on the migration issue.

Commissioner LeDoux thanked Mark Lewis and Rhonda Biles for their work on the budget.

7. Education Summit. In the board's packet was a draft of the Alaska Education Plan arising out of the work done at the Education Summit in November. The commissioner thanked the board for its support and said the department wanted to incorporate board comments into the document and it would be put out for public comment on the department's web site. It will come back to the board at its March meeting for approval. Board member's discussed accountability within the document about where education was going, and the need to further narrow it down. Shirley Holloway said she liked the vision, but thought the mission needed further refinement and she also thought there was more intention needed in the core values section. She also expressed a desire to see more about mental illness/wellness.

Board Comments:

Phil Schneider said that his son Max was doing well and congratulated the commissioner on the summit.

Sylvia Reynolds asked if during the March meeting the board would have an opportunity to meet with the education committee. She also inquired about reappointment to the board and when notification would be made. She also noted that the PFD distribution affected the count and wanted a further discussion.

Geri Benshoof said she will attend the Governor's Council on Disabilities in January in Juneau. She gave special thanks to the commissioner for his good faith follow up with concerns. She noted that that best early learning program was in North Carolina and someone should go to their May conference.

Tim Rockey thanked the board for his opportunity to serve as the student advisor-elect.

Bunny Schaeffer has no comments.

Shirley Holloway said that the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary was faced with scary times in the student loan program. She also voiced support for meeting with the education committee in March. She said she had heard good things about the department's winter conference, and said he wanted to the board to be involved in the teacher certification rewrite and suggested a regulations review.

Esther Cox said she attended the National Governor's Association (NGA) conference in Kansas City in December and visited a school in St. Louis for the Associated General Contractors. She brought greeting from Barbara Thompson and Roger Sampson whom she saw in Denver on the same trip. She welcomed Tim Rockey to the board. And she inquired about stipends for teachers who achieve National Certification.

Commissioner LeDoux said the teacher certification meeting to work on regulations would be February 10 & 11 in Anchorage and the board could expect a report in March. He noted that other groups would also be meeting in February – the drop out group, and the early childhood group. He said one of his major concerns was suicide in Alaska communities. He said the department was intending to use contract folks to review regulations and to develop a superintendent's manual. He said the leadership structure in the department was working well and he was pleased with the quality of employees.

By motion made by Shirley Holloway the meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 2:20 p.m.