

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
September 9 & 10, 2009
Galena, AK

September 9, 2009 - Work Session

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cox. All members were present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Chair invited disclosures and there were none. The agenda was amended by a motion made by Pat Shier and seconded by Phil Schneider, to include a discussion regarding an emergency regulation pertaining to school closures. The amended agenda was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Public Comment

Steve Musser – Assistant Superintendent of IDEA with the Galena School District. He said there were 3,360 students enrolled and the target for this year was 3,400. He invited the board members to visit while they were in Galena. He clarified for the board that IDEA does take students after the October count period. The chair requested a presentation at the board's December meeting regarding IDEA and its services.

Mary Francis – Executive Director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators. She thanked the commissioner for his leadership in the H1N1 issue. She spoke about restructuring the administrative organization plan and public school control. She also thanked everyone for their support during recent medical issues.

Theresa Holt – Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. She supported removing the term mental retardation and replacing it with cognitive disability and encouraged the board to make policies that eliminate stereotypes. She expressed pleasure that the Alaska School for the Deaf was back in operation, and asked the board to postpone any discussion for the deaf until December so those affected could testify in Anchorage. She said the top priorities for the Governor's Council were supporting SB 109 to remove the SQE, results of the 504 survey and collecting data pertaining to restraint and seclusion in schools.

Chris Rikan – Director of Instruction at GILA. He welcomed the board and described the tours the board would be taking this date. He also described the certificated programs at GILA: welding, cosmetology, Pro start (culinary), food safety, Private Pilot, construction, and building toward automotive certification. The Early Learning Center serves as pre-school program in partnership with the Tanana Chiefs. He said they made AYP last year and were working hard and making progress in eliminating the achievement gap. Mr. Rikan said he thought there would be much opportunity to expand with the coming pipeline, mining and other economic development in the state. He described a partnership with General Motors- Suzuki as making huge donations to the program. Chair Cox applauded the schools voc-tech programs. Commissioner LeDoux announced that the department had a new director of career and technical vocation.

Rebecca Trailer in the Fairbanks LIO office – She said she was affiliated with Access Alaska and supported changing the term mental retardation.

Sidney Huntington – elder from Galena thanked the board for coming to Galena and said the community had come along way since 1973 when they became an independent school . He was very concerned with the unacceptable dropout rate and supported education and the boarding school structure and community commitment. He said that he personally had only a third grade education and didn't want children to endure what he had due to lack of education. He expressed strong support for educational programs at the Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA).

Four students – Haley Brown, Nikki Fennimore, Jenna Buchanan and Raven Mustofonski spoke about their individual learning experiences at GILA saying they had come from small communities and had come to GILA for opportunity, diversity and college preparedness.

Joy Shockley Huntington spoke about small risks producing huge results. She told her inspiring story of being kicked out of GILA as a new student and eventually graduating from Dartmouth College with honors. She said she feels teachers needs to encourage students more and not give up on anyone. She questioned how to put rigor into the curriculum, and spoke about the need for parental support. She said she always does better when she is in a place that celebrates culture.

Work Session

Common Core. The commissioner said the Common Core Standards, sponsored by CCSSO, included reading and mathematics, and was developed through the American Diploma Project and Achieve. He said there were two months between the time the state was asked to participate and sign on. He said Alaska chosen to monitor the progress and to review and compare our standards to the common core. The commissioner said that the federal government setting high expectations is good, but telling us how to do it does not work or apply to education in Alaska. He said managing AARA and SFSF is putting a great burden on the department and very taxing. The Race to the Top (RTTT) will require extensive planning and he is looking at ways to bring in extra staff. In discussion, he said changing curriculum and doing new standards will be very costly. Chair Cox said she was proud of Alaska's standards. The commissioner our position makes us look like we aren't interested in world class schools, and points will be affected on our RTTT application. When our GLSs come out in December, we can do a better comparison and we will be better able to consider the common core and encourage analysis.

Deputy Commissioner Morse gave a brief RTTT briefing. He said the funds were competitive and come with the AARA money. He said the proposed regulations were released in July with a 30 day comment period and EED commented. He indicated that to be eligible, a state cannot have a cap on charter schools, which we do. Our cap is 60 and we only have 25 at present. He said the grant needs to be in collaboration with all education groups, sign off was needed and it will be hard to do, along with common core acceptance. Mr. Morse said the regulations will become official in November and grant writing will begin after that and issued to a small number of states. There is \$350 million nationwide and about \$800,000 for Alaska.

Incentives for higher achievement. The commissioner said the department was looking at the Hathaway Scholarship Program as a model (from Wyoming). Stakeholders will be included to formulate a process. There is a lot of work to do and the board will be kept up to date on the progress.

Emergency Regulation. The commissioner said he felt there was a need for an emergency regulation to address school closures in light of the flu epidemic. The regulation further describes alternative routes for school closures and the types of closures that can occur. It also addresses alternative delivery of schoolwork. He said the districts had been very appreciative of the additional guidance the regulation provides. The regulation will come before the board in December for adoption. The emergency regulation expires December 29, 2009.

Action Plan Review. Cyndy Curran reported to the board. The committee meetings of the action plans, stemming from the new Alaska Education Plan, continue to meet. There are action plans for graduation, health & safety, technology, community and family culture and career tech. Ms. Curran said the teacher preparation group is still meeting also as they discuss recertification, NCATE alternative, and licensure requirements. The board viewed the new brochure that will be distributed.

Commissioner LeDoux introduced Superintendent Kari Boyd of the Yukon Koyukuk School District who was sitting in the audience.

Graduation Committee Working Group Report. The next meeting will be October 8 in Anchorage. It was noted that three legislators are actively participating: Representative Seaton, Representative Gardner and Representative Buch. Board member Schaeffer is also working with the group. The next goal of the committee is to bring together resources that are working and put them into a good format for distribution. Shirley Holloway indicated that bringing the community piece together will be a big job and she hoped the new rural director could help with that. The commissioner thanked Cyndy Curran and Erik McCormick for the work on the committee.

Regulation Review Process. Rhonda Gardner, contractor, was available by video conference to brief the board. She said the process of reviewing the department regulations was going well and its purpose was to reduce needless paperwork and require the minimum amount to carry out state law. She has been meeting with EED staff, superintendents, UA staff, and Department of Law attorney to remove barriers and clarify language. The deadline to be done is December 1, 2009.

Compulsory School Age. Eddy Jeans, Director of School Finance, was present to brief the board. He said the issue was to amend the compulsory school age law from age 16 to age 18. He noted that the State Troopers don't enforce the truancy law now and it won't change if the law is changed. It was noted that the Education Committee would like to hear the board's opinion. There are consequences for parents who don't send their children to school, but there is no consequence for students. The commissioner said he felt it made a powerful public statement

to raise the age to 18. The issue of enforcement kept coming into the conversation. Chair Cox thought changing the HSGQE requirement in the 10th grade might help.

Regulations to Adopt.

There were three regulations for the board to consider adopting: Skills for graduating students, 4 AAC 04.020 – incorporating language from the Alaska Education Plan; Criteria for determination of eligibility and definitions, 4 AAC 52.130(b) and 4 AAC 52.790(3) – changing the term mentally retarded to cognitively impaired; and Alaska School for the Deaf, 4 AAC 33.070 – addressing how transportation is provided. The board reviewed the public comment for each.

Regulations to go out for public comment.

There were two regulations for the board to consider putting out for public comment. Paraprofessional standards, 4 AAC 04.220 – Title 1 program qualifications; and Preschool certification, 4 AAC 60 – integrated early childhood system. The board reviewed the proposed language for the Title 1 program qualifications.

The board adjourned for the day to tour the GILA and school district facilities.

September 10, 2009

The meeting was called back to order by Chair Cox. All members were present. The Chair invited disclosures. Board member Schaeffer indicated that she was an employee of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District. The agenda for the day was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

The board reviewed the Preschool certification proposed regulation. Attorney Neil Slotnick distributed a new version of the regulation different from the packet. Concerning the section for pre-elementary background and health & safety standards checks, the original version had two ways to accomplish this, by Health & Social Services (HSS) or municipality inspections. It was felt that was not enough options, so the new version increased the options to include an EED contract with HSS to do the more limited inspections. Discussion included services provided by HSS, federal vs. state funds, indigenous programs, bachelor degree date phase in, definitions of federal programs and history of preschool inspections.

Business meeting

The following motions were made regarding regulations.

Shirley Holloway moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 04.020, regarding Skills for graduating students. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Geri Benshoof moved and Shirley Holloway seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 52.130(b), regarding Criteria for determination of eligibility, and 4 AAC 52.790(3), regarding Definitions. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

After discussion regarding how transportation issues affect both Anchorage School District and the Mat- Su, and how it enforces the school district to have an obligation to be involved with student education, Phil Schneider moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 33.070 regarding the Alaska School for the Deaf. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Shirley Holloway moved and Tim Rockey seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on amendments to 4 AAC 04.220, regarding Paraprofessional standards. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Phil Schneider moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on changes to 4 AAC60, regarding Preschool certification. After discussion regarding programmatic requirements for pre-elementary schools, section (a) of the regulation, it was decided to remove this section because it was premature with not enough information regarding the impact on existing programs. Mr. Schneider thought it should be left in and the board could evaluate the public comment at the next meeting. The commissioner said he supported removing it, but the department would be pursuing the issue of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field and other requirements. The motion was passed by a 6-1 roll call vote. The commissioner thanked Cyndy Curran for her efforts and advocacy on behalf of these little constituents.

Site visits. The board generally agreed that it would like to visit school sites at the different locations of their meetings. Geri Benshoof said she wanted to be heartily invited. The commissioner said there are fiscal requirements for each such visit and the department would work with the board on those restraints.

Libraries, Archives and Museums report. Dan Cornwell was on video conference for Linda Thibodeau. He reported that they were recruiting for a new museum curator and also for a deputy director. He noted that Rise Alaska, the contractor for the new LAM building was preparing to release an RFP by the end of October. There have been 22 legislators offering messages of support for the new building. \$98 Million is the total cost estimate for 100,00 square feet of space. Board members agreed that they would support a resolution of support. Regarding the flood that occurred on August 17, 2009, the archives reopened on September 8th. 1,000 boxes were impacted and are now dried and examined and it has been determined that there was no lasting damage. Fortunately, there just happened to be a meeting of the Western Association of Conservators going on in Juneau at the time, and they were able to mobilize and help in a very significant way. There is a monitoring plan in effect for the damaged materials.

Dan said the community help was extraordinary. The commissioner thanked everyone for their leadership during this time.

Assessment, Accountability & Information Management Report. Erik McCormick, Director, was present to brief the board. He gave the board a status report on the Unity Project – a competitive grant that is funding the building a data system. It will enable districts to access department data. Districts can also submit data through the web site and get immediate reports regarding missing information or complete data with no waiting for department personnel to do an analysis. He also reported on training for test coordinators, mentor training, OASIS training, the TAC, and the assessment advisory panel. He said the HSGQE test window will be October 6-8 this year. Mr. McCormick said they were doing a standards review and a SBA on line testing pilot in grades 4 & 8. It would test reading, writing, math and science to see what the capacity is in the state. He said he was hoping for 50 schools to participate. He reviewed the current AYP data comparing 2008 with 2009 results. 2009 saw a 3+% rise. He noted that the Alaska School Performance Incentive Program was in its third and final year of the pilot. There will be a final report of the program. He said there could be another performance based measure in the future, at least it hadn't been ruled out yet.

Teaching and Learning Support Report. Cyndy Curran, Director, was present to brief the board. She reported that health & safety section was taking on the Physical Education (PE) standards and that they would be ready in July of next year. She said they were working on a comprehensive plan from the Alaska Education Plan. Ms. Curran said that the special education section of the division had finally hired all staff and everyone was on board. US special education monitoring will be October 5-9. The Early Learning pilot will service 263 students in 19 classrooms at six school districts. The Head Start expansion will serve +60 additional children in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Selawick. The new Coordinator for Career and Technical Education is Helen Mehrkens, a 30 year educator with the state. The new web site for teacher certification is up and running. There have been few problems with certification as compared to last year. Nine Transition to Teaching teachers have been assigned classrooms and a mentor-three in Bering Strait, three in Yukon Koyukuk, one in Yupiit, one in Lower Kuskokwim, and one in Yukon Flats.

District Improvement. Deputy Commissioner Les Morse was present to brief the board. Mr. Morse said the department, one of nine states, is participating in the Academy of Pacesetter States. It is a year-long endeavor to improve the state system of support building rapid improvement and capacity. It is sponsored by the Center of Innovation and Improvement. He said there is a lot of follow up and hopes it will be effective. The US Secretary of Education is supportive of the work of the group. He also reported that the department had hired six technical assistance coaches and nine content support specialists, four in math, three in reading, one in science and one in art. They are being trained and will be in the field soon. Technical assistants work in/with districts where the state has intervened to help them move forward with their plan. Mr. Morse also talked about a capacity student that began in June. It is an inventory of what the department is able to do to meet the needs of districts. It is coordinated by the comprehensive center contractors. A providers conference was held recently that brought together many people in the field working for EED, e.g., teacher mentors, coaches, content support specialists,

technical assistant coaches, and department staff. The purpose was to ensure that each knew what the other was doing, what their programs looked like and what/who/why they were serving.

Budget/Legislative Report. Eddy Jeans, Director of School Finance, was present to brief the board. Mr. Jeans explained the budget process and said the first heads up meeting with OMB will be September 14. This is where the department presents its priorities and budget numbers to OMB. After this meeting, another will be held with OMB where OMB will be the driver, and a final budget is then submitted to the governor, who in turn releases his final budget in mid December. Supplemental requests for 2010 are due in January. The legislature will convene January 19. On April 18, we will know what our budget looks like when the legislature adjourns. There will an additional \$100 added to the foundation formula, and \$13 for special education with a 12.5% geo. Cost differential. Mr. Jeans said he was hopeful that there would be discussion for a multi-year funding plan again.

Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) Report. Superintendent Bill Hutton was present to brief the board. Mr. Hutton said the renovations for the girls dormitory had cost \$1.1.milliion. The boys bathrooms had also been renovated this year. He discussed other projects that were waiting to be completed and described his schedule for facilities repair as aggressive. He had several pictures of projects needing attention. Goals for 2009-2010 include a new freshman orientation schedule, new web site, increased parent communication, increased cultural activities, suicide prevention plans, including staff training and small group meetings, and a full maintenance department staff. He said the flu continued to be present on campus, but it was not disrupting classes. He also noted that music was being added to the recreational program. He discussed admission procedures and the rating sheet used.

The commissioner inquired if the board was willing to support a resolution in support of MEHS capital improvements. Shirley Holloway moved and Geri Benshoof seconded a motion for the board to support MEHS capital improvements by resolution. The motion was enthusiastically passed by unanimous roll call vote. Shirley Holloway also moved and Pat Shire seconded a motion for the board's support of the Libraries, Archives & Museums construction project. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

In response to a question, Mr. Hutton said MEHS normally loses about 10-15% of its students over the course of a year, and around eight students leave before September 30. Family emergencies, crisis at home or in the villages are the usual causes. 20-30 students do not return for second semester in January.

Assistant Attorney General's Report. Neil Slotnick, Assistant Attorney General, was present to brief the board. He said that he had mainly been working on the Moore case. The judge found eight short comings in our intervention plan, the state filed a response and was waiting for a response back. The other case taking his time recently had to do with busing children for the Alaska School for the Deaf. He noted that EED will be getting another attorney assigned to it. Rebecca Hatten will begin soon.

Commissioner's Report. Commissioner LeDoux was present to brief the board. The commissioner said he was on the road frequently. He said he was bringing superintendents

together to discuss state correspondence programs, how they are managed and operate. He said there were three final candidates and final interviews for the Rural Director position were next week. The commissioner noted that he expected to have permanent department space in the Atwood Building by mid-November. He described the new governor as committed to education and said he was looking forward to working with him. The commissioner is also looking for ways to pump up science education which he feels is necessary. He said the US Secretary of Education would be announcing Blue Ribbon Schools for Alaska soon. He said he appreciated the tours given to the board and staff yesterday, and that he wants to look further into the role and capacity of boarding schools in Alaska in relation to the overall plan. The commissioner said the hiring of a Partnership Liaison was a major step forward and introduced Alyse Galvin.

Consent Agenda.

The meeting minutes of the June 2009 meeting were pulled as well as the department appointment of a Partnership Liaison. Shirley Holloway moved and Phil Schneider seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development appoint Ms. Lois Rhodes and Mr. Al Adams to fill three-year terms on the Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board, beginning July 1, 2009, and ending on June 30, 2012. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

The minutes of the June 2009 meeting were amended to clarify that Bunny Schaeffer was in attendance at the graduation meeting as an employee of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District and not representing the board. Bunny Schaeffer moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the minutes of the June 11 & 12, 2009, meeting. The motion was passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

The appointment of Alyse Galvin as Partnership Liaison was discussed. Commissioner Ledoux introduced Ms. Galvin and said this new position was a good one to have in the department. Ms. Galvin said the idea was to meet the goal of helping students grow into world class students with the help of family and community. She said she was still learning the pieces but would make sure that educators were supported. Phil Schneider moved and Shirley Holloway seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the commissioner's appointment of Alyse Galvin in a long-term non-permanent position as the department's Partnership Liaison. The motion was passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Superintendent Jim Smith thanked the board for coming to Galena. He said he shared the value of school choice and said that regional trade centers in the state were becoming regional educational centers. He said their drop out recovery program was rescuing some students from failure. He said he appreciated the work of the department staff and was honored that the board chose to come to Galena for its meeting. He invited everyone to visit the IDEA offices at the district and said he appreciated the leadership of Commissioner LeDoux.

Board Comments

Pat Shier thanked Galena for their hospitality calling them real pioneers. He said he was impressed with the level of commitment of the staff. He said he was looking forward to the science standards and hoped they would be sensitive to why we are here and where we are going.

Bunny Schaeffer thanked Galena saying it was fun to see students from Kotzebue who sought her out. She especially enjoyed Joy Huntington's testimony and said we were lucky to have Sidney Huntington.

Janel Keplinger said the trip was an inspiration for her and commended the Galena efforts. She welcomed Major Sullivan to the board and thanked the staff for their work in making the meeting a success. She said it was a pleasure to work with the board.

Phil Schneider welcomed Major Sullivan and Ms. Galvin to their respective positions. He said he was very impressed with the program at Galena and their leadership. He thanked the staff and said he wanted to continue the conversation about early childhood and making sure there are appropriately trained teachers. He also requested a discussion for the December meeting about a book depository.

Tim Rockey said he was impressed with the Galena program and was happy to have met with the student government while he was there. He congratulated Major Sullivan and Ms. Galvin. He said he was excited about the health package.

Geri Benshoof said she was extremely proud of passing the language change to an acceptable phrase of cognitively impaired. She said she was impressed with the Galena program and glad to see the students and staff were happy. She welcomed Major Sullivan and Ms. Galvin.

Shirley Holloway indicated that she had attended an ACPS meeting and was glad to see the credit score requirement had been raised in student loan applications. She said this was her seventh visit to Galena, beginning in 1971, and she has seen many changes over the years. She thanked the school staff for the warm welcome and especially thanked Joy and Sidney Huntington for their contribution to the meeting. She said she supported coming back to the early learning conversation. She thanked the staff for their work.

Grant Sullivan thanked everyone for his warm welcome to the board and giving the military an opportunity to be at the table. He indicated that working on the board would be a professional highlight for his tour in Alaska. He asked that the department and the board let him know how he could contribute more, and thanked the staff for its work. He invited the board to visit Elmendorf during their December meeting.

Esther Cox said she had attended the Board of Alaska Science Teachers Association meeting recently and the House Education Committee meeting on August 25. She said the department had been well prepared for the meeting. She handed out some articles about Michele Reed, a superintendent in DC who was making a difference in education. She thanked the staff for a good meeting and thanked the staff at Galena for hosting the board calling it a special place. She also welcomed Major Sullivan and Ms. Galvin.

The meeting was adjourned.