

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
November 2, 2017
Audio-conference work session originating in Juneau, Alaska

Chair Fields called the audio conference work session to order at 10:02 a.m. The board and staff recited the Pledge of Allegiance. No members reported conflicts of interest. Absent were Members John Harmon, Charles Michael and LTC Spencer Van Meter. Member Rebecca Himshoot moved to adopt the agenda as written. First Vice Chair Sue Hull seconded the motion. The motion passed. The board approved the agenda unanimously at 10:04 a.m.

Because the meeting was exclusively a work session, the board did not take public comment.

Agenda Item 1. Alaska's Education Challenge.

Commissioner Johnson extended his thanks to the board for their work since the meeting on October 5th. He thanked several people who had invested their time and support with Alaska's Education Challenge. He thanked Tim Parker with NEA, Dr. Lisa Skiles Parady, Executive Director of the Alaska State Council of School Administrators, and Norm Wooten and AASB. He thanked the Office of the Governor – particularly John Hozey. He also thanked Deborah Riddle and the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) staff that contributed to the presentation: Erin Hardin, Sam Jordan, Marcy Herman, Todd Brocious, Mindy Lobaugh, Sana Efir, Bob Williams, Sondra Meredith, and Paul Prussing. Everyone has elevated this work and have come around this shared vision. Their character and commitment to Alaska's students have brought them together in unprecedented ways. They have found a way to come together around a shared vision for an excellent education, to stand before Alaskans, and say with confidence, "together we have what it takes to make our public education system work for more of our students." This unity and willingness to stand together is going to speak so loudly during this upcoming legislative session.

Deborah Riddle spoke about the excitement the staff had as they put together the action steps, policies, and how we can organize it. The strategic priorities were listed as Awareness, Transition, Implementation and Milestones. These will morph as the process develops. She spoke about the Education Challenge in a recent CTE Conference and some of the promising practices and examples. She asked what things we can weave in and how we can be realistic at the same time.

Barbara Thompson asked when the board can offer suggestions and give recommendations.

Commissioner Johnson wants to establish guardrails - what can be set in stone versus what input we can receive.

Deborah Riddle said that the Governor wants to know where we are headed with this and that we need to provide his staff some information. The Commissioner will create an Executive Summary. Deborah Riddle also requested letters of support from the other organizations.

Member Rebecca Himshoot had a question regarding how in the past we have had a dismal response to surveys. How do we get better engagement in surveys? Deborah Riddle said they are relying heavily on the stakeholders. Member Rebecca Himshoot also voiced her concern over the Connection section and asked that we reach out to the committee as they drafted their goals.

Commissioner Johnson requested something simple and eye-catching for the Education Challenge. Deborah Riddle said there is still some word-smithing, but the graphic will help capture attention. The biggest lift will be on the Support for Responsible Learners piece.

Commissioner Johnson said that student success and well-being won't happen without the support. He is excited about what will happen in the green category. He wants to emphasize that these aren't three new ideas that came from nowhere. This grew out of the Oct 4 meeting. These are the commitments that we heard expressed. Going forward we want to honor the commitments that we offered on Oct 4.

Erin spoke a bit about media cards.

Chair Fields commented that we should have the board members comment.

Barbara Thompson is happy to see the three ideas, but not sure if the wording underneath is correct. She wants to change the words, but not with something long.

Member Rebecca Himshoot is concerned with the term "responsible learners."

Michael Johnson discussed the term "responsible learners." The student plays a part. Kids choose to learn. It is not a passive activity. You cannot be responsible and not reflective. Ultimately the board will decide what that word will be. The Commissioner would like to hear the perspective of others. We need to get into the action plans and not be held up on the words. We need to focus on 3 commitments.

Member Gallahorn said that he is liking it very much – great work.

Member Hamilton said that he likes the circle – and that it is a great way to see in diagram form. He is ready and excited for the next step. He asked that we be sure that the action steps are tangible and with a budget we can afford. He doesn't feel like all are transformative.

Member Sue Hull thanked for all participating. She liked the term "responsible learning." She had looked through the plans and the report and believes that they are pretty succinct in their recommendations on the modernization committee. She had a list of action steps that she hopes the Commissioner will look at. She is interested in seeing specific transformational actions. What will kids need to be prepared for the future? How have things changed in the past 100 years since we have changed our standards? Member Hull is pleased with the change and hopeful for the future.

Commissioner Johnson will be connecting with people within the department and outside of the department. Deb Riddle showed us the format to lead us to the action steps. Commissioner Johnson wants to be careful not to just stack a bunch of action steps on the table. He has begun having a framework that is methodical and doesn't drift away from the Board's recommendations. He is confident that we will have some good action plans. This is a call to action to everyone in the system – not to just those in the Department. The three commitments page will take off shortly and the final report will be completed within the next few weeks. The action plans will not be complete by the December board meeting as they will be starting to form. Tribal compacting may take some time. The board will have a final report by the December meeting. We need to rally around and start working on

the commitments. We have a lot to talk about with our stakeholders. We need to keep those commitments for Alaska's students.

Member Rebecca Himshoot had a follow-up comment about what is more effective. She believes that having some significant systemic transformation is important. We need a way to describe how it looks different than the last 10 years.

Commissioner Johnson spoke about rallying our state around the three commitments. We have to recognize the system isn't just sitting there. The process is for the committee to come up with transformational recommendations. We need to transform with these 13 goals. We are dissatisfied with the way it is now.

Closing comments – thanks to Deb for presenting and to everyone for the ideas.

Commissioner told the board that he hears their passion and not to feel shy about calling or texting him about this process. Our state leaders have inspired him in coming together to share a vision. He wants the members to be equally excited about the process.

The work session adjourned at 11:15 a.m.