

State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
April 22, 2020
Audio Conference Meeting
Department of Education & Early Development
801 West 10th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. After the pledge of allegiance, the board adopted the agenda for April 2, 2020. Member Van Diest moved to adopt the agenda. Member Kowalski seconded the motion. Student Advisory Member Mainard was not present. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified.

Work Session

Commissioner Johnson thanked chair fields and the board for being here. Commissioner Johnson has been meeting with various stakeholder groups to communicate regularly to them on DEED's work. He updated the board on CARES act funding and gave the meeting to Administrative Services Director, Lacey Sanders so that she could walk the board through the particulars of the funding on how the money is coming to the state and how it is being distributed.

Lacey explained that the CARES act is made up of three pots of money and then explained the purposes of each fund and how much the department will be receiving from each fund. She focused on the third pot of funds, the elementary and secondary relief fund(ESERF) which are funds that are being distributed to school districts to support elementary and secondary education. Alaska's allocation will be approximately 38.4 million dollars. The funding will be distributed by the USDOE to DEED and then DEED will distribute them via grants. The allocation is based on the Title 1A funds on last year's enrollment numbers. Lacey requested that the board reference the email that was sent to them and walked the board through the attachments that detailed the allocation totals that would be distributed to school districts. At this time, DEED believes that the USDOE application and guidance will be distributed either April 23rd or April 24th and as soon as the application and guidance are received, DEED will begin to operate under those guidelines to pass that funding along to school districts. She then detailed some ways that school districts could use these funds to support their students.

Chair Fields asked how many districts do not fall under the Title 1A funds. Of the 54 school districts, there are 3 that would not receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Relief Fund but those districts will be covered under the Governor's relief fund. All 54 school districts will receive some sort of funding under the CARES Act relief funds.

Member Scott asked if the correspondence was sent to her correct email because she did not receive the correspondence from Lacey. Lacey will be sure to send the information to Member Scott's email address.

Member Hamilton asked about the status of the 30 million that was vetoed in Governor Dunleavy's budget. Lacey responded that the 30 million that would have been allocated outside the funding formula was vetoed by the governor due to the fact that it will be covered by the approximately 30.4 million that would be coming in from the CARES Act.

Commissioner Johnson informed the board that they will be voting on the DEED budget at the June meeting now that it has been signed by Governor Dunleavy. DEED will also have another COVID-19 update and DEED's response to date during the June meeting for their reference. He let the board know that they are planning for a virtual meeting in June.

Chair Fields asked what measurement districts have been using to engage their students during electronic learning. Commissioner Johnson mentioned that it varies from district to district and that most superintendents are working hard to gather that data and some districts are farther along than others on gathering the data. DEED looks forward to sharing reports from school districts on this issue with the board when they become available.

Chair Fields asked how the department plans to address the start of next school year. The commissioner responded that they are working with the administration to work through those questions and get information out to districts and to the board.

Member Hamilton asked about the higher ed side with regards to the PCPE. Commissioner Johnson does not have any statutory authority over PCPE but the department can work with PCPE to get those numbers to the board.

Member Stockhausen asked what the timeline is in regards to making decisions with regards to school next fall. Commissioner Johnson responded that it all depends on the healthcare mandates and the healthcare mandates. DEED working on finishing this year and then will work on making decisions for reopening in the fall. DEED is looking at and preparing for all scenarios with regards to all the possibilities. Until there is a vaccine, we won't get back to normal and they want to be prepared for any and all situations.

Member Van Diest commended the commissioner on his presentation to the joint House/ Senate committees and that he answered many of her questions about the Florida Virtual School.

Chair Fields thanked the department for their work and adjourned the meeting at 3:32pm