

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
December 18, 2018
Work Session meeting originating in Juneau, Alaska

Tuesday, December 18, 2018

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. Members Kowalski and Van Diest called in late and were present. After the pledge of allegiance, the board adopted the agenda for December 18, 2018. Member Thompson moved for the adoption of the agenda with the removal of agenda item 6 - executive session. Commissioner Johnson mentioned that the removal of the item stems from the scheduling availability of the students. They are working to find time that will work for the students. Motion passed. There were no conflict of interest notifications given to the chair.

Public Comment

Mat-Su School District: Jeff Blackburn, Stephen Anderson, Victoria Flint- addressed the board on the topic of student growth in computer science and the importance of having a standard set of objectives. They asked that the board consider the computer science standards as written.

Tim Parker, President of NEA Alaska: shared his focus on student learning from the perspective of NEA Alaska with regards to the disruption of schools due to the earthquakes. He shared the difficulty of communicating effectively with both staff and students as people are trying to put their classrooms back together. Informed the board that NEA Alaska has put together an earthquake relief support fund. He shared his thoughts on the Alaska Education Challenge and his hope that the program continues and is successful.

Keith Brady, Municipal Administrator City and Borough of Sitka- City is interested in purchasing approximately three acres of land that the Department of Education owns so that they might construct a seaplane base. This project is about 16 million dollars and is almost all funded by federal grants. He has spoken with Commissioner Johnson and Mt. Edgecumbe High School regarding the proposed sale. He requested that this topic is brought up as a discussion and action item at the next board meeting.

Mike Robinson, past president of the Alaska Library Association- spoke on the National School Library Standards agenda item. Getting these standards is a priority of the Alaska Library Association. The standards were developed in 1999 and it is time to adopt a new standards as almost 20 years have passed. These standards will prepare a student for university work much better than the current standards.

Greg Binoche, Senior Program Officer with Microsoft- spoke to the new computer science standards. Stressed the importance of having an aligned set of practices for teachers and students alike.

Dr. Lisa Skiles-Parady, Executive Director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators- spoke to the board regarding their desire to work with the new administration on the goals that they have set. The superintendents are also pleased to welcome Tammy Van Wyhe to the department. They hope that the board considers the computer science standards in the near term. She also acknowledged how incredible the leadership that was exhibited in the face of the earthquake.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1. Update on State Board of Education Priorities. Commissioner Johnson provided an update to the board regarding his ongoing communication with the new governor and administration regarding education priorities. The governor is very excited to implement his commitment to every student becoming a reader, every ninth grader being proficient in algebra, and also increasing opportunities for career and technical education. Commissioner Johnson is excited to continue his work with the board and with the new administration to improve the public education system.

Agenda Item 2. Board Report to the Legislature. Erin Hardin, Information Officer, updated the board regarding their responsibility to submit a yearly report on their activities to the Legislature. Member Kowalski requested two edits be made to the draft report. Commissioner Johnson requested that the board send any further edits to Erin Hardin so that they can be reflected in the final report.

Agenda Item 3. Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Update. Commissioner Johnson informed the board that this serves to make the board aware that the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation has reviewed both UAF and UAA's teacher preparation programs. We have received UAF's report and we congratulate them on their successful completion. We have not received UAA's report and once we receive it we will schedule a work session with the board. We are aware that there are some significant issues and President Johnson is fully aware of the issues and they are making substantial changes to the program. This decision is very important to you because the board approves the report. Member Thompson asked if the commissioner could enlighten the board about if changes could be made without a big disruption to the students or the program. The commissioner does not have the answer but is looking forward to working with the board and the school on this decision.

Agenda Item 4. Discovery Peak Charter School Renewal. The board was asked to approve the application of Discovery Peak Charter School for a period of ten years terminating on July 1, 2029. Paul Prussing walked the board through the application and clarified that this is not a renewal but a new application for the charter school. He included the FNSB board meeting minutes so that the board could see the local minutes as well as the one page summary of the school and its role. Ms. Allison Bartlett from the Discovery Peak Charter School answered questions from Member Van Deist, Member Thompson, Member Loring, Member Hamilton, Member Scott, and Member Kowalski.

Agenda Item 5. The New National School Library Standards (NSLS) Guest Presentation. The board was given a presentation on the national library standards with the goal of adopting the new standards. Department of Education and Early Development staff did receive one letter of support that was submitted after the board packet had been sent. Staff will make sure that the board will see it in their next packet. Dr. Deborah Rinio of the Alaska Association of School Librarians presented to the board regarding the new national school library standards. She concluded by asking the board to consider reviewing and revising the Alaska Library Science Standards and to consider adopting the new national school library standards. She then took questions from board members.

Business Meeting. Chair Fields moved to amend the business meeting to add an agenda item. Agenda item request is to change the meeting dates of the January meeting from January 23-24, 2019 to February 4-5, 2019 under agenda item 9E. Member Thompson seconded the motion. Motion passed. After discussion, Chair Fields moved to amend his motion to make this agenda item number 10 and move it out of the consent agenda discussion portion. Member Thompson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Agenda Item 7. Standing Reports. Written reports were provided from Student Learning, Educator and School Excellence, Legislative and Budget, Mt. Edgecumbe High School, Libraries, Archives and Museums, and the Attorney General's Report.

Agenda Item 8. Commissioner's Report. Commissioner Johnson gave his report. He welcomed the board's new Assistant Attorney General, Susan Sonneborn. He thanked Luann for her service to the staff. He thanked the board with their patience during the transition time. He noted that Ms. Tammy Van Wyhe will be joining DEED in January and he is looking forward to introducing her. He provided an update on the earthquake response efforts that are taking place. Although the earthquake exposed some weaknesses in the building structure, it clearly demonstrated the strength of character in the people of Alaska. Encouraged the board to go to the website of both Anchorage and the Mat-Su school districts so that they could get information from individual schools. Reminded the board that it's time that the SBOE review all DEED regulations. Requested that the board create a regulations subcommittee to identify regulations that should stay or be removed. DEED will also be reviewing ESSA revisions so be on the lookout for those to come through. He also honored Member Thompson for her work on the board as this will be her last meeting.

Agenda Item 9. Consent Agenda. Member Thompson moved and Member Hamilton seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the consent agenda consisting of approval of the Discovery Peak Charter School Application, the minutes of the September 14-15 meeting, the minutes of the October 24 work session, and the draft report to the legislature.

Member Van Deist expressed confusion regarding the Discovery Peak Charter School Application approval in the consent agenda. Commissioner Johnson mentioned that the department should consider the process by which charter school applications should come to the board. He asked that the board consider a work session to discuss the how charter school processes come before the board. Member Thompson amended her motion to replace the word "adopt" with the word "approve." Member Hamilton seconded. The motion to amend passed unanimously in a roll call vote. The motion to approve the consent agenda passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 10. Move the January 2019 meeting date. Member Thompson moved and Member Himschoot seconded the following motion: I move that we change the January 23rd and 24th meeting date to February 4th and 5th in Juneau. Member Van Diest will be unable to attend if they change the date. Commissioner Johnson informed Member Van Diest that they will do whatever they can to accommodate her. The motion passed six to one in a roll call vote.

Board Comments

Member Hamilton agreed that it was exciting to read that the people pulled together and that no lives were lost. This is not the last earthquake that we'll have in Alaska and this is a great opportunity to look for ways to go through ways that we can better be prepared.

Member Himschoot echoed the comments made by other members for the way that educators came together after the earthquake. She mentioned again the need for a standing rules committee. She would also like to hear more about the charter schools to see if there are some policies that can be updated. She expressed her unhappiness that NAEP and the State of Alaska will not be testing science this year. She also indicated that she would like more opportunities to hold face to face meetings.

Member Kowalski echoed everyone's appreciation to school districts regarding their response to the quake. She is happy to hear that there is an alignment in priorities with the new governor regarding the Alaska Education Challenge. Is also interested in having a work session to discuss charter regulations as well as teacher prep programs so that the board has a clearer understanding on their role. She thanked member Thompson for her dedication and leadership and wished her best wishes.

Member Scott thanked the members of the public for their comments in the public comment section of the meeting. Welcomed Susan Sonneborn and said that she is looking forward to meeting her. She also challenged the board to continue to support the schools as they continue their recovery efforts from the earthquake. She also thanked Member Thompson for her service.

Member Thompson welcomed Susan Sonneborn and said that Rebecca Hattan would be missed. She thanked the board members, department staff, and Commissioner Johnson for their dedication over the last five years on their work to improve education in the State of Alaska. We have a lot to work on and she thinks that working together they can do that work.

Member Van Diest expressed her confusion on the way that the board adopts standards. She will reach out to the Commissioner to get clarification on how it works. She also would like a rules subcommittee. She welcomed Susan Sonneborn and is looking forward to meeting her. She wished Member Thompson the best in her future endeavors. Thanked Governor Dunleavy for allowing Commissioner Johnson to continue to be the commissioner of DEED.

Chair Fields welcomed Susan Sonneborn and Tammy Van Wyhe. He wished Merry Christmas to everyone and wished Member Thompson the best of luck.

The meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.