

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
October 27, 2008
Originating in the Commissioner's Conference Room
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200
Juneau, AK

The teleconference meeting was called to order by Chair Cox at 1:00 p.m. All members were present on line. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Chair asked if anyone had any disclosures. Carol Schaeffer said that she was an employee of the Northwest Arctic School District and had a child at Mt. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka. Pat Shier said that his wife was employed by the Yukon Koyukuk School District as a teacher.

The agenda was approved by unanimous roll call vote, as amended, with a motion made by Pat Shier and seconded by Sylvia Reynolds. The amendments to the agenda were approval of two appointments made by the commissioner and consideration of a resolution addressing the 70% minimum expenditure for instruction requirement.

Public Comment.

Mary Francis, Executive Director of Alaska Association of School Administrators (AASA), read a new resolution from the school administrators requesting a decrease in the minimum expenditure percentage to 60%. She said it had been passed at the fall meeting and would be forwarded to the legislature. Answering a question, she said "rural" was defined as having a budget of \$3M or less.

Waiver Requests.

Commissioner LeDoux introduced the waiver requests saying that 28 districts had applied for waivers, which was four more than last year. Mr. Jeans said that each school district had submitted its budget and they had all been reviewed by the department. Those who failed to meet the 70% for instruction were required to submit a letter explaining why. The department then reviewed the financial information and helped the districts to adjust their numbers and those who failed to still meet the 70% were being brought before the board for waiver approval. Phil Schneider asked what happened if they were not approved. Mr. Jeans said the district would be notified and they would respond with a new budget or a new waiver with additional information. EED is required to withhold state aid if the waiver is not approved. Shirley Holloway noted that there was no correlation between how well the students were doing compared to the amount of dollars spent. Sylvia Reynolds inquired if legislative budget & audit (LB&A) had reviewed the waiver requests. Mr. Jeans said they are all forwarded to LB&A as required by law. Pat Shier inquired if an alternative could be considered like asking for a modification to the law. Esther Cox asked what would happen if they weren't approved, would the legislature get the message. Mr. Jeans said the districts would close down. He said the author of SB 36 was no longer in the legislature and maybe the current legislature

might look at a modification more favorably this year. Mary Francis interjected that the power base was in the urban districts and that the rural districts didn't have as powerful a voice. Phil Schneider asked if an incentive of some kind might help. After discussion, Mr. Jeans said that he would appreciate the opportunity to take it back to the legislature and try again with a new resolution from the board.

Sylvia Reynolds asked to pull the following school district waiver requests for discussion: Klawock, St. Mary's, Tanana, Hydaburg, North Slope. Pat Shier moved and Shirley Holloway seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the district waiver requests for 70% minimum expenditure for instruction requirement for Fiscal Year 2009 for the following school districts: Alaska Gateway, Aleutian Region, Aleutians East Borough, Bering Strait, Bristol Bay Borough, Chatham, Copper River, Cordova, Hoonah City, Iditarod Area, Kake City, Kuspuk, Lake and Peninsula, Lower Yukon, Nome City, Northwest Arctic Borough, Pelican City, Pribilof, Southeast Island, Southwest Region, Wrangell Public, Yukon Flats, and Yukon Koyukuk. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Sylvia Reynolds spoke about her concerns with the North Slopes waiver request. She noted the \$185,000 for the football team saying instructional dollars were down and activities were up. She said she'd like to see more information to justify this and also facts about their school board travel. She also wondered what was being done for the girls of the districts. The board said they wanted to hear a report at their December meeting regarding the drop out rate and growth and expenses. Ms. Reynolds questioned the instructional drop in Hydaburg and what was causing it. She noted that administrative expenses were very high in Klawock. The board briefly discussed small district consolidation. Administrative expenses were also discussed with regard to St. Mary's. Discussion regarding Tanana had to do with the fact that they have a big facility they are heating and maintaining for 53 students.

Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board.

Commissioner LeDoux introduced Bill Hutton, Superintendent of Mt. Edgecumbe High School, who was on line in Sitka regarding the appointments to the Mt. Edgecumbe Advisory Board. Mr. Hutton explained the process for selection of the candidates describing the advertising and length of the search for the candidates. Carol Schaeffer inquired if she had a conflict since her daughter was a student and she was the board's representative to the advisory board. Neil Slotnick, Assistant Attorney General, said that she did not because she was acting in her capacity as state board member. Shirley Holloway moved and Pat Shier seconded the following motion. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development appoint Sherry Lestenkof to fill a three-year term as the School Board Representative, Dave Herbert to fill a three-year term as the Superintendent Representative and Jeff Klanott to fill a three-year term as the Alumni Representative to the Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board, beginning October 27, 2008, through July 1, 2011. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Appointments.

Commissioner LeDoux said he had appointed Erik McCormick to replace Les Morse as the Director of Assessment, Accountability and Information management. Pat Shier moved and Phil Schneider seconded the following motion. I move that the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Erik McCormick as Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner LeDoux said he had appointed Marcy Herman to replace Dick Luther as Special Assistant. Shirley Holloway moved and Carol Schaeffer seconded the following motion. I move that the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Marcy Herman as Special Assistant. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Commissioner LeDoux said he had appointed Linda Thibodeau as the Director of Libraries, Archives and Museums (LAM). I move that the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Linda Thibodeau as Director of Libraries, Archives & Museums, effective November 1, 2008. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Kay Shelton, retiring LAM Director was present and thanked the board and the commissioner for their support.

Resolution.

Chair Cox asked the board what they wanted to do about updating the 2007 resolution regarding the minimum expenditure. Pat Shier proposed making an alternative to an outright repeal. Shirley Holloway said she was leaning toward giving Eddy Jeans another opportunity to take it to the legislature. Esther Cox wondered if more breathing room was needed for the districts. Par Shier moved and Shirley Holloway seconded a motion directing the department to redraft the resolution and to present it at the December meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Board Comments.

Sylvia Reynolds congratulated Kay Shelton on her retirement, said she was excited **about** the Education Summit, thanked Mr. Jeans and Mary Francis for their work and congratulated Geri Benschhoff for getting an award from Delta Kappa Gamma.

Shirley Holloway thanked Kay Shelton and also thanked Commissioner LeDoux and Esther Cox for attending the Avant Garde press conference. She reminded the board that she would be connecting by audio for the December meeting.

Carol Schaeffer said it was a good meeting.

Phil Schneider said it was nice to work with everyone.

Geri Benshoof said it was -25 in Fairbanks and she had just returned home after being gone for a month.

Pat Shier said he had attended the National Council on Teacher Retirement meeting and said there were lots of retention issues. He said it was important to prepare students for a world with uncertainty at the root.

Jazmin Ziden thanked Mr. Jeans for his work and explanations and thanked Commissioner LeDoux for his work and said she was looking forward to the Education summit.

Lt. Col Luu said he regretted not being in Sitka for the September meeting and was looking forward to the next meeting.

Esther Cox said it was a pleasure to be part of the interview committee for the new LAM director. She described her tour of the department while she was in Juneau. She inquired if anyone was going to the school board's conference and congratulated Dr. Holloway and Avant Garde for its innovative plan to train Native teachers.

Commissioner LeDoux indicated that the FY2010 budget for the department was progressing. He said that Les Morse was working full time on school improvement and that new staff and positions were coming together. He also said he had been traveling a lot and speaking at many forums around the state, and he was working with staff on problems with teacher certification. He said the Moore trial had taken an incredible amount of time in the department and thanked Neil Slotnick for his expertise and guidance. He had been to Copper River to announce Michael Johnson as this year's Milken winner. He ended by giving his expectations for the Education Summit.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 1:50 PM.