

Approved Minutes  
Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development  
October 28, 2013  
Originating in the State Board of Education Auxiliary room  
801 West 10th Street, Suite 200  
Juneau, AK

The tele/videoconference meeting was called to order by Chair Jim Merriner at 12:30 p.m. All members were present except Sue Hull and Col. Hays, who was excused. Commissioner Hanley announced that Pat Shier had resigned from the board because he was no longer living in the First Judicial District, which he had been appointed to represent. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Chair asked if there were any disclosures. Ms. Schaeffer said she was an employee of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District and the district had a waiver request on the agenda. Mr. Fields said that he was the Board President in Copper River School District and his district had a waiver request on the agenda. They both said they could be impartial. The Chair ruled that they could participate. There were no objections.

The agenda was approved with a motion made by Esther Cox and seconded by Carol Schaeffer and approved unanimously by roll call vote. Ms. Hull arrived via videoconference in Fairbanks.

**Public Comment**

Christie Reinhardt, Executive Director for the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, spoke regarding physical restraint and seclusion. She said there would be a federal bill to reduce this action, and also one in the Alaska House. Ultimately the goal is for students to be safe and successful. She said the bill would require school districts to develop a restraint and seclusion policy that is reviewed annually and requires written reports to go into the student's file. The intent is to restrain students only if students pose an imminent danger to themselves or others. The intervening personnel must have training in crisis intervention. The bill's sponsor will be Rep. Charisse Millett of Anchorage.

**Mt. Edgumbe High School (MEHS) Language Arts Curriculum.** Randy Hawk, Director, was present to introduce the subject, saying that the attempt to do this in Nome had failed because of connectivity problems. The board at that time had posed several questions to MEHS about the curriculum, and MEHS was prepared to answer the questions. Mr. Hawk introduced Bernie Gurule, Academic Principal, who was on teleconference in Sitka. Mr. Gurule introduced Michael Hay, from the English Department. Mr. Hay said that dual credit was available to the students through UAS Sitka Campus, in English 111 & 112, Writing and Literature. He said they used tutors at MEHS to help the students if they needed it. He noted that MEHS was in the first year of a five-year cycle, with current goals of aligning the curriculum to the new standards. They were focusing on freshman and sophomore English. He said the SBAs from last year showed a drop in the sophomore year, so they were looking at making it a year-long program. Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors take ACT/SAT tests each year to become familiar with them. The emphasis is on vocabulary skills this year. In answer to other board posed questions, Mr.

Hay said the class period was 80 minutes, five times a week for a year for freshmen and a semester for sophomores. All are peppered with work-related skills. There was a discussion related to time spent in class at each grade level.

Esther Cox inquired about student performance on the Alaska Performance Scholarship. Mr. Hawk said he would get that information, but knew generally it was increasing.

There was a general discussion around subject credits per year, which subjects (names) and the number of credits given. Deputy Commissioner Morse cited regulation 4 AAC 06.075, which sets out the graduation requirements. Mr. Hay said that AP course testing is outside of the school schedule because of scheduling, and he clarified that English IV projects can be research papers, analysis, or class presentations.

Ms. Christie Anderson, MEHS teacher, said that the literacy outreach makes MEHS unique using techniques that work well and can be shared. She said they had adopted the Professional Learning Community model. It is teacher-driven, researched-based with a lot of sharing. There is a manual for inservices, which they use. Regarding challenges and priorities, Mr. Gurule said working with and interpreting the new standards, vocabulary (students are from all over the state and come with many different cultures), and continuing the outreach goals with the new standards. According to Mr. Hay, realigning curriculum to the new standards, analyzing data and creating strategies to use it all more effectively is the greatest challenge. Mr. Gurule thanked Mr. Hay and Ms. Anderson, and Esther Cox thanked them all for assembling again to present this work. Ms. Hull asked for a list of graduation requirements for MEHS. She asked Mr. Hay what the greatest challenge was in implementing the new standards. He said besides vocabulary, using close reading and textual evidence. But he said it was all helping students with higher-level thinking. Mr. Merriner asked if they used Explore and Plan or AKCIS. Ms. Anderson said they use AKCIS extensively. Mr. Merriner thanked them for the presentation.

**School District Waivers.** Heidi Teshner, School Finance Manager, was present to brief the board. She said there were 24 waiver requests this year and the requirement for the process could be found in AS 14.17.520, which requires school districts to spend 70% of their operating budget on instruction. If they can't do that, they have to request a waiver for stated reasons. This was the 16<sup>th</sup> year of implementation. Commissioner Hanley said a lot of work is done by the school finance staff before they come to the board with these recommendations. They try very hard to work with districts to get them to the 70% requirement. Ms. Cox asked how long the hold-harmless was in effect for Pelican. Ms. Teshner replied three years, and she said their count was due in three weeks, as all districts are. Ms. Cox asked about administration positions at small schools. The commissioner said they were all different as determined by individual local boards. Some schools had a superintendent/principal combination, some small schools actually share a superintendent part time, and others have a principal/teacher combination. Ms. Williams asked what happened if the waivers were not granted. The commissioner said they would have to make up the difference to equal 70% somehow and submit an amended budget at 70%. Ms. Schaeffer inquired about the accounting change in Kashunamiut School District. It was explained that they transferred some activities funds from a special revenue fund to the operating fund. It was also explained that in Lake and Peninsula School District, the water, sewer and garbage costs had tripled in the last year. The board commended Nome School District and

Pribilof School District for the zero cost for board travel, and commended St. Marys' for joining a consortium to reduce fuel costs. Ms. Hull asked if there was an enrollment threshold for districts. Ms. Teshner said it was 10 students for schools, and there were no external incentives. If ADM drops by 5%, the hold-harmless provision is triggered for three years. She asked if there was a recommendation from the department to improve the process. The commissioner said when the districts get below a certain size and lack economy of scale, the challenge increases. It is difficult for the department to know the deeper issues in the districts. Chris Simon, Rural coordinator, said he was a rural (REAA) superintendent once and the local people do not want to give up their autonomy to join forces. Mr. Fields said it's obviously been going on for years and inquired if the department had looked at the percentage. Mr. Merriner said the board had talked about it exhaustively in prior meetings, passed resolutions and rescinded resolutions. He asked why the administrative services had increased in Yupiit School District. The commissioner said the change out of superintendents, and paying out the old contract was a contributor and they were also using outside technical services and outside accountant on contract now. He noted that tremendous efforts were being made in Yupiit with the outside accountant.

Sue Hull moved and Esther Cox 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 2014 for the following school districts: Alaska Gateway, Aleutian Region, Aleutians East Borough, Bristol Bay Borough, Chatham, Copper River, Hoonah City, Hydaburg City, Iditarod Area, Kake City, Kashunamiut, Kuspuk, Lake and Peninsula, Nome, North Slope Borough, Northwest Arctic Borough, Pelican City, Pribilof, Saint Mary's, Skagway, Southeast Island, Tanana City, Yukon Flats, and Yupiit. There was no further discussion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**Regulations to go out for Public Comment.** School Recognition. Dr. Susan McCauley, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board. Dr. McCauley noted that the board had seen this regulation before. After the board had adopted it, the department realized that a provision in the waiver had been left out of the original proposal. Therefore, it was before them again. A definition from the waiver for calculating small schools' graduation rate for the Reward School designation was not included in the previous version. The amendments now are consistent with the federal waiver. Previously, the regulation's language was holding small schools to a higher standard and there was a need to define the two-year graduation cohort. The new version fixes that.

Esther Cox moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 06.885 School Recognition. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

### **Board Comments**

Esther Cox gave kudos to Tanana School District and Ketchikan School District on their budget work. She also asked Mr. Hawk to provide a class schedule. She thanked the English Department at MEHS for its work on the curriculum. She also requested a mailing address for Pat Shier.

Carly Williams said the fall Alaska Association of School Government meeting was recently held in Juneau with 350 students attending; they selected three candidates to come to the board for Student Advisor Elect; and their Executive Director, Carol Waters, was retiring in December.

James Fields reminded board members that the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) meeting was coming up and thanked the commissioner for his work.

Sue Hull said the AASB conference was beginning on the upcoming Thursday and that the commissioner would be presenting the Alaska Teacher of the Year Award. She said she would miss Pat Shier on the board and thanked the department for the answers to the assessment questions.

Carol Schaeffer said she was looking forward to the December board meeting in Anchorage.

Jim Merriner thanked Bruce Johnson and the commissioner for their discussion on APS course designation, thanked Pat Shier for his service, thanked the board members and staff for their work with the waiver districts, and said he was looking forward to the December meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.