

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development

Approved Minutes

September 18-19, 2014

Anchorage, AK

Thursday, September 18

Chair Esther Cox called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. Kathleen Yarr was excused. Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance. The board unanimously approved the agenda. Jim Merriner declared a potential conflict of interest for agenda items regarding correspondence programs; Mr. Merriner is an administrator in the IDEA correspondence program. Ms. Cox ruled that Mr. Merriner could participate in the agenda items.

Public Comment

Sen. Mike Dunleavy said parents in correspondence programs want more flexibility, especially for students who are proficient or advanced. He asked if the proposed requirement of monthly contact between students and teachers was necessary if teachers agree to less frequent contact.

John Brown of Mat-Su Central School opposed the proposed requirement of monthly teacher contact with students. He said the proposed language regarding tutoring was ambiguous.

Peter Hoepfner of the Cordova School Board asked for alternate pathways to superintendency to create a larger pool of applicants.

Todd Poage, superintendent of the Alaska Gateway School District and president of the Alaska Superintendents Association, supported the rehire of retired superintendents.

Dr. Steve Atwater, superintendent of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, supported an alternate pathway to superintendency.

Pat Shier of the Alaska Home Educators Alliance said that correspondence program students who are proficient should be released from some regulatory requirements.

Lisa Parady, executive director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators and the Alaska Superintendents Association, said the hiring of superintendents is becoming more difficult and the candidates' pool is thin.

Christie Reinhardt of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education was pleased with the repeal of the high school exit exam. She approved of the proposed guidelines for student participation in assessments.

Rep. Lora Reinbold submitted a letter from several legislators expressing concerns about the date to first administer the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP), as well as the public notice for the regulation that included the assessment date. Rep. Reinbold said the term "testing material" was

not defined. She expressed concerns about the cost of the AMP and about the cyber security of the state's AMP contractor.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1. Mt. Edgecumbe High School science curriculum. MEHS educators presented on the school's science curriculum, noting that the curriculum uses close reading and math skills, in keeping with Alaska's standards. Staff said they are looking at how the Next Generation Science Standards relate to MEHS's curriculum. Staff answered board member's questions about the number of required science credits, the number of students who take science electives, dual-credit courses, and state board's authority to adopt the school's curriculum.

Agenda Item 2. Career & Technical Education (CTE). Dr. Susan McCauley, director of Teaching & Learning Support, reviewed the department's steps to fill CTE openings and provide the federal government with data on the postsecondary credentials of Alaska's students. Board members said it is important to offer students more CTE options and that it is laborious to grant academic credit for CTE.

Agenda Item 3. Pre-Kindergarten. The department's lead staff member for early education, Paul Sugar, reviewed his memo on pre-elementary, pre-kindergarten (pre-K), Head Start, and Parents as Teachers programs. He presented a written report on the third year of the department's pre-kindergarten grant program, showing improvements in students' measures of growth. Sue Hull asked how the state can prepare more children in pre-K programs, study long-term gains for pre-K students, and best spend the department's pre-K funds.

Agenda Item 4. Funding. Administrative Director Heidi Teshner reviewed a memo about the department's budget. Sue Hull asked how the board engages in the budget in a substantive way related to policy. Commissioner Hanley said the department's budget is a function of the Governor's budget and the legislature.

Agenda Item 5. Teacher Certification and Praxis Update. Dr. McCauley reviewed the staff memo, saying the department's proposal for changes to certification requirements would be in firmer form in December, following input from the Education Certification Advisory Group.

Agenda Item 6. Chief School Administrator and Superintendent. Commissioner Hanley reviewed a memo related to the board's repeal in 1992 of a waiver option for an administrator certificate. He reviewed what is required by statute and what is left to regulation. Board members discussed waivers, including when they should be granted in the hiring process, criteria, local flexibility, training of non-certificated administrators to evaluate educators, and alternate pathways in other certificates. The board directed staff to consider regulations for an initial administrator certificate that would allow an alternate pathway for superintendency.

In a non-agenda item, Ed Graff, superintendent of the Anchorage School District, presented to the board about a picture book and ebook the district has published.

Agenda Item 7. Alaska Arts Education. Shannon Daut, director of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, and Dr. Annie Calkins, special projects coordinator for the council, presented an August

2014 report, “Venture for Alaska’s Youth/Arts Education in Alaska.” The report presents results from a survey of district administrators and case studies from the New Visions project in four districts.

Agenda Item 8. Assessment Development and Technology Practice Test. Education Administrator Elizabeth Davis reported on scheduling flexibility, increased accessibility, and technology-enhanced questions in the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP). The board viewed a computer demonstration of the AMP Technology Practice Tests by Marianne Petrie, director of the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation, which is affiliated with Alaska’s AMP contractor, the Achievement & Assessment Institute. Petrie also reviewed the role of Alaska educators in developing and vetting AMP, the stages of adaptive tests, and the timeline for making available Technology Practice Tests, classroom “testlets,” and benchmark tests. The board discussed informing the public about the AMP tests.

Agenda Item 9A. Charter Schools. Dr. McCauley reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 278 regarding charter schools.

Agenda Item 9B. Correspondence Study Programs. Dr. McCauley reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 278 regarding correspondence study programs. Board members discussed what constitutes sufficient teacher monitoring of students and asked about the criteria for tutors. The board wanted the proposed regulations to specify that in 4 AAC 33.426(c) the subject areas are English language arts and mathematics.

Agenda Item 9C. Accountability Updates. Erik McCormick, director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management, reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 278 regarding assessment, accountability, jury service, and data about military families. Mr. McCormick noted that alternative high schools scored better under the Alaska School Performance Index after the board approved changes in calculating their index scores.

Agenda Item 9D. Residential Schools. Elizabeth Nudelman, director of School Finance, reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 278 regarding residential schools.

Agenda Item 9E. Assessment Updates. Mr. McCormick reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 278 regarding waivers from requirements that 11th-graders take a career-ready or college-ready assessment as a condition of receiving a high school diploma.

Agenda Item 9F. Natural and Cultural History Repositories. Linda Thibodeau, director of Libraries, Archives & Museums, reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 144 regarding the state’s designation of natural and cultural history repositories.

Agenda Item 9G. Math Credits. Dr. McCauley reviewed the proposed regulation to require students to have three credits of math as a condition of receiving a high school diploma. Dr. McCauley noted that 47 Alaska districts already require at least three credits, as do 42 states. Kobe Rizk asked why the department is not proposing a requirement of three science credits, as well. Dr. McCauley said many districts require only two science credits now, and districts have a lot of work to do on other issues.

Agenda Item 9H. Restraint and Seclusion. Dr. McCauley reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 210 regarding the restraint and seclusion of students.

Agenda Item 9I. Common Core Standards. Commissioner Hanley reviewed the proposed regulations to implement HB 278 regarding the Common Core Standards. The Commissioner said the legislature did not intend to prohibit spending to implement Alaska's standards or prohibit the department from working with districts that adopted the Common Core as their district standards.

The board recessed at 5 p.m.

Friday, September 19

Work Session, Continued

Agenda Item 10A. HSGQE Elimination. Mr. McCormick reviewed regulations to adopt that would implement HB 278 regarding the exit exam and career-ready and college-ready assessments, as well as state accommodations for WorkKeys assessments. The regulations also set the 2014-2015 school year as the first year of the Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) assessments. Jim Merriner asked about the issues Rep. Reinbold raised in public comment and a letter. Commissioner Hanley said the public notice for this regulation specified that it related to regulations from 4 AAC 06.701-.790, which include the AMP date. The change cleaned up regulatory language to match the date that Alaska agreed to in its waiver from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which was approved in May 2013. Districts have been preparing for the 2015 test date for a year and a half. Results from the 2015 AMP will not have consequences for schools in the Alaska School Performance Index and will not be used in teacher evaluations. The waiver allows Alaska to be exempt from the Adequate Yearly Progress system of NCLB and to institute its own accountability system, one that includes a measure of student growth.

Agenda Item 10B. Challenging Courses. Legislative Liaison Marcy Herman reviewed regulations to adopt that would implement HB 278 regarding challenging courses. Board members discussed whether districts would set a high bar for testing out of a course; whether districts had enough time to prepare for the effective date of July 1, 2015; subjects that can be challenged; districts' costs to assess students' mastery of course material; and a provision that would not let students test out of courses if they have completed or challenged a more advanced course.

The board added a provision that districts can charge a fee to cover their costs to develop and give assessments to test out of courses. The board removed the provision that would not let students test out of courses if they have completed or challenged a more advanced course.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 11A. Charter Schools. Barbara Thompson moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 27.057 Charter school transportation policy; 4 AAC 33.110 Charter school application and review procedure;

and 4 AAC 33.113 through 4 AAC 33.119 Regarding charter schools. Jim Merriner seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

Agenda Item 11B. Correspondence Programs. Barbara Thompson moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 09.160 Fund balance; and 4 AAC 33.421 through 4 AAC 33.426 Regarding correspondence study programs. Kenneth Gallahorn seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously. The version sent out for public comment clarifies that in 4 AAC 33.426(c) the subject areas are English language arts and mathematics.

Agenda Item 11C. Accountability. Barbara Thompson moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 06.812, Alaska school performance index; 4 AAC 06.883, Jury service exemption; 4 AAC 06.895, Report card to the public; 4 AAC 06.899, Definitions. Jim Merriner seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

Agenda Item 11D. Residential Schools. Sue Hull moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 33.090(c); and 4 AAC 33.090 (h) Regarding district-operated statewide residential educational programs. James Fields seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

Agenda Item 11E. Assessments. Sue Hull moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 06.775, Statewide assessment program for students with disabilities; 4 AAC 06.721, College and career readiness assessment waivers; 4 AAC 06.722, Waiver for entering the public school system late; 4 AAC 06.723, Rare or unusual circumstances; 4 AAC 06.724 Procedures for appeal from a denial of a waiver from college and career readiness assessments. Jim Merriner seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

In the version that went out for public comment, the board deleted from 4 AAC 06.722 (a): “A student who resides in the state but attends a private school or is home schooled as provided in AS 14.30.010 and transfers to a public school after the completion of all scheduled administrations in the student’s year of intended graduation is not eligible for a waiver.”

Agenda Item 11F. Natural and Cultural History Repositories. Barbara Thompson moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 58.300 through 4 AAC 58.320 Designation of Natural and Cultural History Repositories. James Fields seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

Agenda Item 11G. Math Credit. Jim Merriner moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 06.075(b) Increasing the units of credit required for high school graduation. Kenneth Gallahorn seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

Agenda Item 11H. Restraint and Seclusion. Barbara Thompson moved; I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 06.175

Reporting restraint and seclusion incidents and expulsions; and 4 AAC 06.177 Crisis intervention training programs. Jim Merriner seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

The board changed the proposed regulations to correct unclear wording in 4 AAC 06.177(b)(6). The passage now reads: “forbids the use of seclusion in a manner that restricts a student’s breathing or otherwise harms the student.”

Agenda Item 11I. Standards. James Fields moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 04.145 Common Core Standards Initiative restrictions. Jim Merriner seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously.

Agenda Item 12A. HSGQE Elimination. Barbara Thompson moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the amended proposed amendments to 4 AAC 06.710 Statewide student assessment system, 4 AAC 06.715 Work ready/college ready transitional skills curriculum and benchmark assessments, 4 AAC 06.717 College and career readiness assessments, 4 AAC 06.720 Program evaluation, 4 AAC 06.737 Standards-based test, 4 AAC 06.755 High school graduation qualifying examination, 4 AAC 06.758 High school graduation qualifying examination results, 4 AAC 06.759 High school graduation qualifying examination: remediation, 4 AAC 06.771 High school graduation qualifying examination reexamination, 4 AAC 06.772 High school graduation qualifying examination waivers, 4 AAC 06.773 Waiver for entering the public school system late, 4 AAC 06.774 Rare or unusual circumstances, 4 AAC 06.775 Statewide assessment program for students with disabilities, 4AAC 06.777 Students that have passed another state's competency examination, 4 AAC 06.780 Procedures for appeal from a denial of a waiver from the high school graduation qualifying exam, 4 AAC 06.789 Requests by parents for high school graduation qualifying examination waivers, exemptions, and appeals, 4 AAC 06.790 Definitions. Jim Merriner seconded the motion. The board members present approved the motion unanimously. The amendment changed “testing materials” to “test materials.”

Agenda Item 12B. Challenging Courses. James Fields moved: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt amended proposed regulation 4 AAC 06.065 Challenging Courses. Jim Merriner seconded. Board members present approved the motion by a 4-2. The amendment inserted as the last sentence in 4 AAC 06.065(a): “Districts may charge a fee to cover the costs of development and administration of the assessment.” The amendment deleted from 4 AAC 06.065(b) the sentence: “Students may not challenge courses when they have either completed or challenged a more advanced course of study.”

Agenda Item 13. June Board Meeting Dates. The board set June 3, 4, and 5 as the dates for its June meeting in Fairbanks, to include a board retreat and meeting with the University of Alaska’s Board of Regents.

Agenda Item 14. Teaching and Learning Support Report. Dr. McCauley reviewed her written report. Sue Hull said that 2,600 educators have been served by Teaching & Learning Support events. Barbara Thompson asked how the mentoring program was affected by reduced

funds. Dr. McCauley said the program no longer serves superintendents. Dr. Parady said the Alaska Council of School Administrators and the Southeast Regional Resource Center are offering monthly webinars to superintendents.

Agenda Item 15. Assessment and Accountability Report. Mr. McCormick reviewed this year's designations under the Alaska School Performance Index. The department will publicize the Technology Practice Tests for the Alaska Measures of Progress.

Agenda Item 16. Rural Education Report. Rural Education Coordinator Chris Simon reviewed his written report.

Agenda Item 17. Mt. Edgecumbe High School Report. Superintendent Troy "J" Thayne reviewed his written report. He said the school's system for evaluating educators will be presented to the board in June.

Agenda Item 18. Libraries, Archives and Museums Report. Division Director Linda Thibodeau reviewed her written report.

Agenda Item 19. Department of Law Report. Assistant Attorney General Luann Weyhrauch, speaking by telephone, reviewed her written report and updated the board on work at a contaminated site in Aniak.

Agenda Item 20. Commissioner's Report. The Commissioner said the department is working on implementing the new standards, assessments, and teacher evaluation requirements. He reviewed events he has attended and new middle school STEM grants and Digital Teaching Initiative grants.

Agenda Item 21. Consent Agenda. The board unanimously approved corrected minutes of the June 5-6, 2014, meeting and minutes of the July 30, 2014, meeting.

Board Comments

Barbara Thompson thanked Lisa Miller, the Anchorage School District, department staff, board members, and the people who made public comments.

Jim Merriner agreed and welcomed Mr. Thayne. Mr. Merriner said he was impressed with Mr. Rizk's insightful comments. He thanked the board.

Sue Hull agreed with the above comments and said she appreciated the quality of the department's work. She said she wants a discussion of the future of education in Alaska. She praised Ms. Cox's work as chair.

Kobe Rizk agreed with the above comments and noted that the Alaska Association of Student Government will meet on October 29 through November 1 in Wasilla.

Kenneth Gallahorn said that simple is better and helps districts statewide.

James Fields said he was impressed by the use of Alaska teachers in developing and vetting the new assessments. He said the state is opening ways of getting an education.

Esther Cox reported on the Military Youth Academy's graduation. She thanked the department for referring to state statutes in the board packet's cover memos. She was pleased with the discussion of superintendent regulations. She thanked Sondra Meredith for her research on the topic. Ms. Cox asked when the board will discuss term limits for the capital improvement grant review committee.

The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.