

**State Board of Education & Early Development**  
**Unapproved Minutes**  
**January 25, 2023**  
**Virtual Platform Meeting**  
**Department of Education & Early Development**  
**333 Willoughby Ave**  
**Juneau, AK 99801**

**Wednesday, January 25, 2023**

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 12:00pm. After the pledge of allegiance, Chair Fields gave an invocation to start the meeting. Member Griffin motioned to adopt the agenda and First Vice Chair Kowalski seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. The board adopted the agenda for January 25, 2023. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members at this meeting.

**Public Comment**

Public comment was opened at 12:03pm.

*Tom Gamble*- Resident of Sitka, Alaska and called as an individual and commented on a non-subject agenda item. He tried to download/locate an agenda as suggested but could not find one. Further, when he looked back in minutes, the latest version shown was 2017 and 2018 which makes it hard for him to provide adequate comment on what the board is discussing today. Through the chair he thanked the board and had a couple of issues he addressed about some local decisions being made and wanted some thoughtful consideration or reconsideration of the board before moving forward. He was born and raised in Sitka and his family owns the lands now known as Sitka. They have been there since time immemorial and as far as he can tell, for the people that they're raising and training and educating, they will be there for 12,000 more years. That stated, they have had some discussions amongst local people in their tribe about what's being considered as the Board of Education's best interest findings for land conveyances. Some of the lands when learning about history with tribes and relocations and removal and strategies, they look at historical accounts that some people might think about were hundreds of years ago. If we are to talk about land being removed or taken without compensation, justly to the tribe, to own them in Alaska (1990) and that's through what's being considered...he, being born and raised in Sitka as a Tlingit youth get used through the 70s they are at the end of the assimilation / at the beginning of an assimilation era and he's at the point now where they fully understand the laws. They know that there should have been just compensation somewhere. The state is starting to recognize through land acknowledgments that people own the land. But you have to go a little bit further, and he thinks rightful consultation with the tribe before there are any land conveyances, acquisitions, trades, partners, negotiations, consultations, or otherwise, they have to go through the local tribe and his people. They didn't go anywhere. They respect the process that the Board of Education

meets regularly and understand that the role of the Coast Guard helps to save the people, so they are not disputing their value. What they are talking about and he's discussing as a former elected member of the Alaska Native Brotherhood Camp Number One, and having served for the Tribal Council, he knows that the role of Tribal consultation, but he also gained valuable insight and experiences as a Federal employee for two years for the National Park Service and understands national environmental protection laws. When he looks at land conveyances, deeds, and acquisitions that are being done for even small parcels of land within his own traditional territory, that his own tribe was not consulted with, and it's called the best interest. He's calling the Board of Education's attention to redirect their consultations to the tribe and to listen. He does not participate in politics too often anymore. He's redirected his energy directly to the students that are served in the community of Sitka; however, when something of interest grabs his attention, and he knows that they need to speak up, he is there for his people. They call upon him occasionally to still serve this role as an advocate for lands and resources within their territories. His family were the people that fought the Russians, so that everybody could still call this place Alaska. When he says they didn't walk over the mountains and go anywhere, his family raised him to say these types of things to (the Board) respectfully, they would request that the Board reconsider what they are doing with the Coast Guard because his tribe could use two and a half acres of waterfront property. They might even be able to work together with the United States Coast Guard and lease them the same property. He thinks it's time that the State and the Federal Government start to acknowledge that they are the people there. That said, he has probably been a little over three minutes and he won't be here very often bugging (the Board) to say you should do this or you should do that. You're elected to do this. But as a representative of his own tribe, when they say that they are trying to work with the City and Borough of Sitka to state their concerns about historic and natural resources that are hundreds/thousands of years old that maintain their identity to the connection to the land, and they're being overlooked by a Board that is supposed to be educating our youth into the future. He must raise an awareness to (the Board) that they are still here, not in theory and textbooks. With that said there are representatives they elected, not himself, that need to carry on the consultations with (the Board). He may or may not be involved from here on out, but he does need to say that again that he respectfully asks the Board to go back to the Sitka Tribe of Alaska before they sell that property to the United States Coast Guard. His family knew when those islands were individual islands. There are about seven Tlingit place names of historical importance connected to the battle of 1804 right in that area. So before (the Board) releases them in their own best interest, he's requesting respectfully that the Board hear out the Sitka Tribe and make plans, who are their citizens. He thanks the Board for listening.

*Amy Vinlove* – Dean of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) School of Education. Prior to taking on the position in 2018 she served as a faculty member in the Elementary Teacher Preparation program for 18 years at UAF. She is also a National Board-Certified Elementary Teacher and taught for eight years in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. Additionally, she serves as the Chair of the Alaska College of Education Consortium, a collaborative organization made up of three UA Schools of Education as well as other education units within the UA system. She is there to extend the support of the

UAF School of Education for the proposed resolution on exploring alternative pathways to teacher certification. Specifically, they are enthusiastic about the potential opportunities for Alaska schools offered by the development of registered apprenticeship programs as a new pathway for addressing Alaska's persistent teacher workforce shortages. Conversations with several partner, school districts, and with sister schools of education in the UA system, have helped expand their understanding of apprenticeship programs and how to develop them collaboratively with districts, the Alaska Office of Apprenticeships, and other necessary statewide partners. They are glad that the Board of Education and the Alaska Department of Education are also putting effort into exploring the opportunities associated with these pathways. As they collaboratively deepen their understanding of the opportunity and potential that registered apprenticeships hold for Alaska, she urged the Board to keep students educational experience at the forefront of decision-making, as she knows (the Board) always does. She attended a national convening on this exact topic that included the Tennessee Commissioner of Education, the Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education, and the President of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. The presentation centered on emerging models for high quality, educator preparation, and the way in which high quality teacher Residency programs have informed the development of high-quality apprenticeship programs in teaching in Tennessee and other states. One presenter reminded her that the greatest predictor of student achievement, particularly for underserved populations, is the quality and qualifications of the teachers in the district. A recent study by the Learning Policy Institute of high and low-performing districts also showed that the greatest predictor of low academic achievement is the presence of under-qualified, underprepared, or emergency certified teachers. They also know that teachers hired on emergency certificates or substantial credentials are assigned disproportionately to the highest need students in the lowest income schools, and they leave the profession at two to three times the rate of a fully prepared teacher. High quality, well prepared teachers are critical to improving Alaska's education outcomes and thoughtfully constructed apprenticeships offer a new opportunity to create well-prepared teachers. They look forward to working with the Board of Education to building these pathways. She thanked the Board for their time.

*Scott Ballard* – The superintendent of Yupiit School District (YSD), with several members of his leadership team, knows that the Board is trying to be responsive to Alaska citizens and school districts. He taught school for 12 years, became an Assistant Principal and Principal in Hooper Bay; was a superintendent in Iditarod, and now superintendent of YSD. Their district staff, curriculum leaders, and administrative leaders have lots of concerns about the Alaska Reads Act. They believe the act is based on a flawed understanding of how we could improve the education of all students in Alaska but particularly in their case, they have an Yupiit immersion program that are trying to reform and change the whole delivery of their educational system. They are attempting to broaden their curriculum and engage students by making sure that when kids get up in the morning, they want to attend school. They are trying to make sure they can engage with their local culture, their local language. They are trying to attempt to change, so they can do more career and technical education, or hands-on related to the environment that they live in their historical setting. When they look at the Alaska Reads Act it seems to be another version of No Child Left Behind where they have observed that the curriculum in Alaska

became constricted and students were in math classes for two hours a day, kids in language arts classes for two hours a day, the theory being if they weren't successful, they were going to give them twice as much of what isn't working. That's obviously not what the thinking was, but in reality that's what the result was. They believe the Alaska Reads Act is going to be a similar situation. Not only that they do not have the funding and it's definitely an unfunded mandate. It's a mandate and they are required to follow the law and it's not funded. They do not have the human resources to even meet the demand. Superintendent Ballard thanked the Board for listening and said they will have a more comprehensive presentation on this for their legislators.

*Meghan Johnson* from THREAD was unable to provide public comment during the meeting due to technical issues. Chair Fields notified Ms. Johnson that she could provide written testimony in light of the technical issues.

Public comment closed at 12:20pm

## **Work Session**

### **Agenda Item 1. Department FY2024 Operating and Capital Budgets**

Acting Commissioner Teshner introduced the Director of Administrative Services, Sabrina Javier. Director Javier then presented an overview on the Department of Education's FY2024 Operating Budget and took questions. She walked the board through the steps that the Office of the Governor and the Office of Management and Budget conduct in their internal formation of the budget and the date that the budget was released to the public. She then detailed the significant changes in the budget that would impact the department. One notable impact is a \$30 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and a decrease of about \$306 million in a technical removal of Federal COVID relief funding.

First Vice Chair Kowalski wanted clarification about the large decrease noted in the document and is it mainly due to the Federal COVID relief funding. Director Javier confirmed that is the case and further explained that COVID relief carry-forward funding will be added to the budget later, and that the removal of the COVID relief funding is a technical adjustment so the department's budget does not appear 'over-inflated'.

Acting Commissioner Teshner commented to the Board that a budget update will be provided in March and will include any supplementals, amendments, and subcommittee work. She reassured the Board that this isn't the only time the FY2024 budget will be presented.

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen asked the question about the appropriation of the Federal COVID relief funding to the department and if the department is appropriated a lump sum and can spend how it wants to, or is it appropriated with designated uses. Director Javier replied that the department received the funds as an appropriation in the language section of the budget bill and allocates it based on Federal guidelines. Deputy Commissioner Lacey Sanders explained that the Federal COVID relief funding was awarded for multiple years and any remaining funding in the current year will be 'carry-forward' funding in the following year.

Since the legislature already appropriated the initial amount, they do not need to re-approve the carry-forward, it is funding they have already approved.

Student Advisor Elect Myers asked the question about the BSA and if the increase was outside of Bill 272 that would increase the BSA to \$6,153. Acting Commissioner Teshner explained that BSA of \$5,960 was an increase that was added to the Alaska Reads Act last session and any new bills introduced would be in addition to that. There was no further discussion.

### **Agenda Item 2. Legislative Update**

Acting Commissioner Teshner introduced Special Assistant to the Commissioner and Legislative Liaison, Laurel Shoop, who then provided the Board with an overview of the legislative session flows and processes, an update on the committee members, and how bills move through the legislative process. The department is monitoring 14 bills, in addition to the budget bill already discussed. She elaborated that more bills will be introduced throughout the session and the list will continue to grow. A big topic of interest this legislative session is the foundation formula and the base student allocation (BSA), and other school funding mechanisms. She then continued to provide information on the dates, times, locations of, and how to watch the committee hearings. She identified committee chairs and other members, and their areas of representation. There were no questions.

### **Agenda Item 3. Alaska Reads Act Goes Out for Public Comment**

Acting Commissioner Teshner notified the Board that they are being asked to open a period of public comment on the proposed regulations related to the Alaska Reads Act (House Bill 114), which became law on July 15, 2022 with an effective date of July 1, 2023. She identified the four new programs created by the Alaska Reads Act: 1) an early education grant program; 2) a department reading program; 3) a district reading and improvement program; and 4) a virtual education consortium. The proposed regulations address three out of the four programs and additional regulations to be considered related to teacher certification. Regulations related to the virtual education consortium would be forthcoming. A four-page summary was provided to the Board to help with the regulations review. The two additional areas in need of amendment that have been identified are 1) the department reading program in proposed regulation 4 AAC 06.320 and concerns the reading specialists. The amendment seeks to clarify that DEED reading specialists help set the reading improvement goals within the schools; and 2) the second amendment relates to the teacher certification regulations, 4 AAC 12.392, and aims to clarify that the six credit hours in early child education need to include three hours of an evidence-based reading training course that is approved by the department and ends in a summative assessment.

Susy McKenzie, Director of Innovation and Education Excellence, who oversees the department reading program and the district reading and improvement piece under the Alaska Reads Act, discussed educator qualifications that are part of the regulations package. She provided a detailed explanation of the department reading program and highlighted that this portion is voluntary and eligible schools may apply through an application. Next, she explained the district reading intervention program, which is the only required element within the Act, and went

through in detail the four major parts. The four major parts are: 1) a Literacy Screener; 2) the K-3 MTSS (multi-tiered systems and support); 3) the individual reading improvement plan; and 4) progression. Then she explained the three different types of educator qualifications required under the Act. These include: 1) a lead teacher for the Pre-K programs with specific education / experience; 2) a teacher that teaches in the K-3 level, an administrator that supervises for K-3 and must have a valid teaching certificate with defined training or experience; and 3) a Reads Act verified reading teacher with a valid teaching certificate with defined training or experience and a district-certified evaluation.

Deborah Riddle, Division Operations Manager for the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, provided a detailed description of the three components to the early education program: 1) a district-wide grant application process to build or improve early learning education programs; 2) adopted standards that provide the guidelines for a quality early education program; and 3) approval for districts to qualify for formula funding for their Pre-K programs. She reiterated that this piece of the Alaska Reads Act is voluntary.

Member Griffin wanted clarification that the average daily membership (ADM) funding would not go to kids enrolled in existing Head Start programs. Ms. Riddle replied that he was correct, that only the students who are enrolled in the school district program would be eligible for the ADM funding.

First Vice Chair Kowalski wanted clarification that if a district already has an operating preschool program, that they don't automatically get counted in the ADM and that they have to go through the district-wide grant approval process for the early reading program in order to be counted in the ADM. Ms. Riddle confirmed that this was correct if the program does not meet the standards to be adopted through the regulations.

First Vice Chair Kowalski then wondered if there was any way to capture the number of students who are in state or district operated (preschool programs) using state funds that aren't participating in the reading program, and that might be an unmet need.

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen expressed her excitement about the opportunities for teacher training in reading and is excited to see the outcomes. She is particularly excited that admin will also be trained because they are leaders and can lead well when they are trained. She asked whose responsibility it will be to monitor that teachers have the specific training/education they need. Will it be the districts responsibility? If a teacher has an elementary education degree, does that mean they can only teach grades 4 through 8? Director McKenzie replied that if a teacher is teaching at a higher grade that they would not need that endorsement and DEED will monitor that through data reporting and teacher certification certificates. That is why the state is adding that endorsement, so it is easy for the district and the state to see and sort.

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen commented that she is really hopeful that universities jump on board and work this into their teacher preparation program.

Student Advisor Elect Myers asked two questions: 1) what qualifies as a reading specialist? 2) what incentives are offered to attract the best possible educators? He recognizes that the one-year time duration in a community might be difficult. Director McKenzie responded that the reading specialists will have a reading endorsement and experience, and have training in the science in reading, as well as be heavily involved in the reading symposium as we move forward. The state is also putting together a reading specialist handbook.

First Vice Chair Kowalski asked if there was a committee to work with schools and districts interested in implementing literacy support for their students in languages other than English, specifically Alaska native languages? Director McKenzie explained that the Alaska Reads Act has a lot of culturally relevant practices and there are planned webinars and surveys to address this and to gather information so support can be provided. This is a journey and we are making plans to support districts.

First Vice Chair Kowalski had a follow-up comment regarding the regulations that speaks to the measurable evidence as it stands now is in English language arts. She has concerns and does not want to inadvertently, however well intentioned, to build a system that does not take into account the need for communities to strengthen our students and make them successful in our community school systems, that we need to bring in Alaska native language cultures back into the programs. She has concerns that the current regulations are very specific to a particular language. She supports good, strong literacy, but has concerns that the current regulations might impact our schools and students in a way that was not intended. She wants to be kept up to date on reports moving forward and where we might be causing systemic harm. Director McKenzie responded by saying that they are having lots of conversations about this very issue and she appreciates First Vice Chair Kowalski's comments.

Member Griffin commented that many of his questions/concerns were already addressed and recognized that the Yupiit School District expressed their concerns earlier and wondered if DEED had been getting any specific feedback along those lines. Director McKenzie responded by saying that the questions and clarifications people have had have been excitement about the opportunities. There have been some concerns about the financial impact, like after school tutoring. Lots of requests for presentations.

Member Griffin commented that he was thankful for Director McKenzie's leadership on this legislation and is happy to see the progress knowing that it's going to help our kids and educators. Director McKenzie responded by thanking her team.

#### **Agenda Item 4. Teacher Apprentice Program Board Resolution**

Chair Fields handed the discussion over to Second Vice Chair Stockhausen, who is the Chair of the Effective Educators committee.

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen provided an overview of the Teacher Apprentice Program and how UAF and the system are working towards building apprentice programs. They continue to

investigate, open doors, and move forward with what can be done to make alternate pathways to support the teaching community.

Chair Fields clarified that the resolution tells the department to look into the program, put out a request for information to try to find the program that would meet the need for teacher apprentices. He then asked for questions and comments from other Board members. There were no questions.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Amend Board Meeting Dates**

Acting Commissioner Teshner provided amended Board meeting dates to accommodate an in-person executive session for the final Commissioner interviews. A February meeting date was added to conduct in-person interviews, date still TBD. Amended the April 19 meeting from a work session to a special meeting for the purpose of reviewing and adopting the final Alaska Reads Act regulations.

Chair Fields indicated that the February date was pretty much set for an in-person meeting on February 23. He then asked if there were any questions or comments. There were no questions or comments.

### **BUSINESS MEETING**

#### **Agenda Item 6. Annual Report**

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned and Member Hamilton seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the report to the legislature. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

#### **Agenda Item 7. Alaska Reads Act To Go Out for Public Comment**

Member Griffin motioned and Member Erickson seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment on regulation changes to implement House Bill 114, including: adding new regulations 4 AAC 06.300 through 4 AAC 06.390 to implement a department reading improvement program; adding new regulations 4 AAC 06.400 through 4 AAC 06.490 to implement a district reading improvement program; amending teacher certification regulations 4 AAC 12.300(g), 4 AAC 12.305, 4 AAC 12.310, 4 AAC 12.345, 4 AAC 12.407 and 4 AAC 12.900(a), adding new sections to teacher certification regulations 4 AAC 12.310, 4 AAC 12.392, 4 AAC 12.393, 4 AAC 12.409 and repealing 4 AAC 12.900(b) to address teacher certification requirements; and, adding new regulations 4 AAC 05.100, 4 AAC 60.190 through 4 AAC 60.990, adopting by reference *State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines*, and repealing 4 AAC 60.037 and 4 AAC 60.180 to implement an early education grant program.

Member Griffin said he was looking forward to public comment. There was no additional discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.



### **Agenda Item 8. Approve Teacher Apprenticeship Program Board Resolution**

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the proposed resolution supporting alternative pathways to certification.

RESOLUTION OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT in support of alternative pathways to certification. Resolution 01-2023.

WHEREAS, Alaska is experiencing a teacher shortage; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's teacher turnover by district has averaged from 10% to over 30% annually across the state; and

WHEREAS, high teacher turnover negatively impacts students, schools, and communities; and

WHEREAS, Alaska can improve our education system to better meet the needs of students, parents, employees, employers, and communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the State Board of Education and Early Development supports efforts by the Department of Education and Development to:

- a. Identify fiscal resources that can be used to support alternative certificate programs in Alaska; as recommended by the Teacher Recruitment and Retention (TRR) subcommittee on Alternative Certification Programs;
- b. Identify regulatory changes that would allow for additional teacher preparation programs to be allowed in Alaska; and
- c. Develop a Request for Information (RFI) for the development of an alternative teacher education program that:
  - i. Addresses identified gaps in teacher preparation programs offerings in Alaska;
  - ii. Incorporates the latest research and best practices in teacher preparation;
  - iii. Complies with the federal requirements for a registered apprenticeship;
  - iv. Utilizes a model standards-based curriculum that aligns all required coursework with practicum experiences; and
  - v. Complies with existing statutes and regulations (i.e. AS 14.20.020 and 4 AAC 12.308).

Student Advisor Elect Myers asked if this resolution was the only priority the Board will have for this year as far as teacher retention goes or will there be other solutions the Board will look at to increase teacher retention. Second Vice Chair Stockhausen replied that the resolution is just one way for the Board to explore recruitment and retention issues, as well as provides the department with the authority to gather information for the Board, and that it is not legislation. There was no other discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

### **Agenda item 9: Approve Board Meeting Dates**

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned and First Vice Chair Kowalski seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development add a February 23, 2023 meeting in order to conduct interviews for the Department of Education and Early

Development's Commissioner, and amend the April 19, 2023 meeting to a special meeting in order to take action on the proposed Alaska Reads Act regulations. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

**Agenda item 10: Approve Deputy Commissioner**

First Vice Chair Kowalski motioned and Second Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve Acting Commissioner's appointment of Lacey Sanders as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development, effective immediately. The Board enthusiastically welcomed Ms. Sanders back. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

**Agenda item 11: Consent Agenda**

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of approval of the minutes of the December 7 and 8, 2022 board meeting. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

**Board Comments**

Member Griffin- happy to see Ms. Sanders back and excited to see what comments come in on the Alaska Reads Act. Acknowledged Director McKenzie as a superstar and that she has a superstar team and that the Alaska Reads Act is a huge piece of legislation with lots of moving parts, and is excited to get the program underway, as well as adopting the comments from Alaskans to meet specific and unique needs.

First Vice Chair Kowalski- happy that they are at a point in the State education system where we are going to get closer to guaranteeing that we have high quality educators for the teaching of reading. It's something that's been optional in the past and something that we've tried to convince people it's an important skill set for our teachers to have. Glad not in that same space of leaving it up to chance, and that there are more pieces for our educators to understand and deliver good instructional teaching strategies to students. She said the feedback from the conference last spring and the professional development shows that teachers are happy to better understand how to do this effectively, and that's one great way to empower and feed our teachers when they most need it, so thank you.

Member Erickson- happy that one of the goals is the mental health of our kids because they are really struggling so would like to keep focused on that. Also wanted to mention that it was nice to have a nice sit down and have a zoom conference after the last couple of weeks, so thank you all.

Chair Fields- acknowledged the comments from Sitka and recognized that this may be a Mt. Edgecumbe advisory board issue. He asked Second Vice Chair Stockhausen to follow up with

them with regards to their tribe and consultation. He thanked Acting Commissioner Teshner for her leadership during this intermediate time and for keeping things on track. He's heard nothing but positive comments on the work Director McKenzie has done on the Alaska Reads Act.

The meeting adjourned at 1:37pm.