

State Board of Education & Early Development
Draft Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2025
Virtual Meeting

Wednesday January 22, 2025

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

Roll was called, and the following members were present to provide a quorum: First Vice Chair Sally Stockhausen, Second Vice Chair Lorri Van Deist, Military Advisor Lt. Colonel James Fowley, Student Advisor Joshua Pak, Member Barbara Tyndall, Member Pamela Dupras, and Chair James Fields.

Chair Fields called a quorum and noted that Member Bergey had scheduling conflicts and that she may be joining meeting later. Member Dupras gave the invocation, and the board pledged allegiance to the flag.

Second Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and First Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded a motion to adopt the agenda of the January 22, 2025, meeting. Without further discussion the motion passed in a roll call vote. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members.

Public Comment

Tom Klaameyer, President of NEA Alaska, provided public comment on behalf of approximately 10,000 educators statewide. He thanked the School Board, the Commissioner, and the sponsors of House Bill 230 for addressing regulations related to the National Board certification incentive.

Klaameyer made two key recommendations for improvement:

1. **Pensionable Incentives** – He urged that funds from the incentive be counted toward employee pensions rather than being treated as a simple bonus.
2. **Inclusion of Non-Teacher Educators** – He advocated for the recognition of national board certifications for various school professionals beyond teachers, such as school nurses, psychologists, occupational and physical therapists, speech pathologists, social workers, and counselors. He noted that Anchorage School District has historically recognized these certifications and emphasized that excluding these professionals from the incentive could worsen high vacancy rates, leading to outsourced services rather than in-person support for students.

Klaameyer submitted a written suggestion for regulatory language to ensure these professionals are included and concluded by highlighting the importance of recruitment and retention efforts to support Alaska's students.

Lisa Parady, Executive Director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators, provided public comment focusing on the Alaska Educator Retention and Recruitment Center (AERRC). She expressed gratitude to the Commissioner and key staff members for partnering on initiatives aimed at addressing educator retention and recruitment, specifically in implementing the Governor's working group recommendations from the TR Playbook.

Parady invited board members to the first convening of AERRC at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage, highlighting that the event would feature a keynote speaker, Jeff Utecht, who would discuss generational strategies for recruiting and retaining educators. She also mentioned the event would focus on important

topics like apprenticeship programs and teacher certification. Parady expressed excitement about the collaboration and its potential to make a positive impact on retention and recruitment efforts in Alaska's education system.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1 – Legislative Updates

Jacob Almeida, Legislative Liaison for the Department of Education, provided an update on the legislative session, which began the previous day. He noted that the department is tracking 11 bills in the House and 15 in the Senate. The House and Senate Education Committees will meet on their traditional schedule: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (House: 8-10 AM, Senate: 3:30-5 PM). Senator Tobin chairs the Senate Education Committee, while Representatives Himschoot and Story co-chair the House Education Committee.

Almeida shared resources for tracking legislation, including the Alaska Legislature website (BASIS) and a guide for finding bills by topic. He also highlighted House Bill 59, recently introduced by the Governor, which focuses on State-Tribal Education Compacting. The bill has been assigned to the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs, and both the department and the Governor are prioritizing it.

He concluded by offering his availability to track legislation, assist with presentations, and address any questions or concerns from board members.

Agenda Item 2 – Budget Report – Operating and Capital Budget

Karen Morrison provided a high-level overview of the FY 2026 Governor's Operating Budget for the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), totaling \$1.67 billion. The budget is funded through Unrestricted General Funds (UGF), Designated General Funds (DGF), Federal funds, and other sources.

Key Allocations:

- K-12 Formula Programs: \$1.27 billion (76% of total budget)
- Agency Operations: \$402 million (24% of total budget)

Funding Sources:

- General Funds: 80% (State's primary education investment)
- Federal Funds: 16% (Federal partnerships)
- Other Funds: 4% (Diversified funding sources)

Key Expenditures:

- Grants to schools and educational programs: \$1.56 billion
- Personnel services: \$41.8 million (Workforce support)
- Operational needs: \$71.7 million

Major Budget Highlights:

1. K-12 Funding:
 - Foundation Program: \$1.12 billion (UGF & Public School Trust Funds)
 - Pupil Transportation: \$67.8 million (UGF)
 - School Bond Debt Reimbursement: \$46.5 million (UGF & DGF)
 - Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) Fund: \$22.9 million (UGF)
2. Finance & Support Services:
 - Alaska School Bus Driver Training Manual Update: \$50,000 (UGF)
 - Inflation adjustment for vocational bus driver training: \$37,000 (UGF)
 - Child & Adult Care Food Program Onsite Monitoring Grant: \$120,000 (UGF, FY26-28)

3. Innovation & Education Excellence:
 - Trauma-Engaged Schools & Behavioral Support Coaching: \$130,000 (Mental Health Trust Funds)
 - Vocational Technical Education Program Increase: \$884.6K (DGF)
 - Alaska Resource Education Grant (Workforce Development): \$500,000 (UGF)
 - Career & Technical Education Initiatives: \$1.25 million (UGF)
 - New Electrician & Plumbing Workforce Initiative: \$300,000 (UGF)
 - Teacher Recruitment, Retention & Apprenticeship Development: \$1.5 million (UGF)
4. Libraries, Archives & Museums:
 - Digital Data Preservation Project: \$75,000 (UGF)
5. Alaska State Council on the Arts:
 - Celebrating the Arts License Plate Fees: \$40,000 (DGF)
6. Post-Secondary Education:
 - Increased Program Receipt Authority for Institutional Authorization Fees: \$39.1K (DGF)

Additional Documents & Legislative References:

- School Construction, Debt Retirement & State Aid Projections
- Innovation & Education Excellence Funding Sources
- Public School Funding Projections for FY25-FY26
- Base Student Allocation (BSA) Funding Chart

Morrison concluded by thanking the Budget & Finance Team for their work in preparing the report.

Member Stockhausen asked whether the 99.7% decrease in additional foundation funding indicated that districts would not receive the one-time funding again. Commissioner Bishop confirmed that the funding was one-time and outside the regular formula. However, the Governor intends to make further investments in public education through proposed education bills, which will clarify how additional funding will be allocated. Stockhausen then asked whether the new funding would be restricted to specific uses. Bishop responded that the Governor's plan includes both general and targeted investments to support district needs, academic improvements, and workforce outcomes.

Member Fowley inquired about the 124% increase in child nutrition funding. Deputy Commissioner Morrison explained that this rise is due to a new three-year grant program under the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which reimburses sponsoring organizations for travel costs to conduct on-site monitoring of daycare homes in remote areas. This initiative addresses challenges in ensuring compliance with federal regulations. Fowley also asked about military flow-through funding, to which Lori Weed responded that it supports districts operating military-based programs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Kodiak. The funding includes contractual payments and impact aid funds that DEED applies for on behalf of these districts.

Member Dupras asked how the state is compensating for the loss of Alyeska Reading Institute funding while implementing the Alaska Reads Act, referencing Minnesota's success in reading improvement. Commissioner Bishop acknowledged the significant reduction in financial and personnel support but emphasized that millions of dollars were directed to districts for curriculum and summer school programs. Under the Reads Act, third graders who are not proficient must receive 20 hours of support before advancing, and the Alyeska Reading Academy previously played a key role in addressing these needs. In response to its loss, the state has leveraged the Reads Act's digital platform to support educators, continued professional development through initiatives like the You Fly course, and utilized the virtual consortium. Additionally, direct tutoring funds allowed districts to hire their own staff or work with state-provided tutors. While the loss of Alyeska Reading Institute reduced flexibility, the Department is working with districts through improvement plans and alternative solutions to support reading education.

Chair Fields inquired about the expanding electrician and plumbing workforce initiative. Commissioner Bishop explained that this initiative, led by coordinator Brad Billings, focuses on increasing career opportunities for high school students in technical trades. The program aligns with the government's priority of supporting career, college, and military readiness. A statewide study revealed a lack of high school programs for plumbing and limited pathways for electrical apprenticeships. Given the potential growth of data centers in Alaska, which require electricians and plumbers for maintenance, the initiative aims to prepare students for these in-demand careers. The funding will help districts develop curricula and provide necessary materials, with centralized support to streamline implementation across schools.

Student Advisor Pak asked about the 12.5% decrease in funding for student and school achievement on page 5 of the document, wondering if it was due to the loss of additional foundation funding or if program cuts were planned. Commissioner Bishop responded that the section is primarily grant-funded through ESEA, and fluctuations in grant allocations may account for the change. She assured that the department would follow up with a detailed response regarding the exact dollar amount and any potential impacts.

Agenda Item 3 – Cell Phone Resolution

Deputy Commissioner Morrison introduced a proposed model policy on personal electronic devices in schools, aiming to create focused and safe learning environments while addressing the challenges posed by technology. The policy seeks to minimize distractions by limiting the use of personal devices—such as cell phones, smartwatches, and tablets—during instructional time unless explicitly authorized for educational purposes. It defines key terms, establishes guidelines for storage and use, and allows exceptions for students with IEPs, 504 plans, medical needs, or emergency responder roles. Enforcement will emphasize education and compliance rather than punishment. The policy aims to enhance learning quality, ensure safety, and provide flexibility for districts while keeping classrooms free from social media distractions. If approved, the finalized language will be presented to the board for adoption in March 2025.

Member Stockhausen inquired about district feedback on the proposed personal electronic device policy. Commissioner Bishop confirmed strong support, particularly from districts and schools that have already implemented similar measures. Initial challenges in the first two weeks were noted, but overall, students and teachers have responded positively. Teachers appreciate the increased focus in classrooms, and some schools have observed improved student engagement, even during lunch, as students interact more rather than using their phones. While some questioned whether specific tools like locking pouches were necessary, the policy allows districts to decide on implementation details. The overarching expectation is that devices remain unused, with enforcement left to individual districts.

Member Van Diest expressed strong support for the proposed cell phone policy, highlighting the flexibility it provides for districts in implementation, such as whether to use locking pouches or simply require students to store devices in backpacks. She acknowledged that districts may adjust their policies over time, potentially allowing phone use during lunch while maintaining restrictions during instructional hours. Van Diest emphasized the importance of verbal communication over texting and appreciated the planned feedback loop to assess the policy's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. She voiced her support for moving the policy forward for board approval.

Student Advisor Pak inquired about the potential impact of Senate Bill 18, which also addresses school phone policies, on the proposed model policy. Commissioner Bishop confirmed that the bill, introduced by Senator Wielechowski, is similar in intent, calling for a school-day phone prohibition while requiring the department to collaborate with school districts on policy development.

Member Van Diest sought clarification on the difference between the Senate bill and the proposed policy, noting that the policy allows but does not require districts to implement a cell phone policy, whereas the bill mandates adoption. Commissioner Bishop confirmed that the bill would require districts to establish a policy, while the State Board's approach is more of a recommendation. However, the practical application of

the policy would remain consistent with the Board’s recommendations.

Member Stockhausen values the policy’s accommodations for special education and 504 students, as well as its allowance for educational device use with staff permission. They recognize its balance between fostering focus and teaching responsible technology use for learning and future careers, commending its thoughtful development.

Student Advisor Pak raised concerns about school firewalls blocking educational content, particularly YouTube videos, leading students to use their phones when permitted by teachers. Commissioner Bishop acknowledged that firewall settings are managed at the district and state levels, often due to federal funding requirements for internet safety. While teachers can request URL access, the process can be slow, making it difficult for teachable moments. Bishop emphasized the need to balance technological tools with student safety, noting the addictive nature of social media and the responsibility of adults to regulate access, comparing it to leaving a liquor cabinet open for self-regulation.

Agenda Item 4 – Green to Teach Resolution

Lieutenant Colonel James Fowley, military advisor to the Alaska State Board of Education, introduced a resolution supporting the Alaska Teacher Recruitment and Retention Playbook. He highlighted the need to assist not only military-connected children and families but also military-affiliated adults seeking careers in education. Drawing from the federal *Troops to Teachers* program (1993–2020), which helped over 100,000 service members transition into education, Fowley noted that while the program was reauthorized in 2021, it lacks funding and is minimally operational. Several states have since implemented local versions. His resolution calls on DEED to establish a *Green to Teach* program in Alaska, leveraging the state’s approximately 73,000 veterans to help address teacher shortages. Fowley cited firsthand examples of service members in Alaska who would have benefited from such a program and formally introduced *Resolution 01-2025*.

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska faces a critical shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural and high-need areas, which poses a significant challenge to providing an excellent education for every student every day; and

WHEREAS, military personnel possess valuable leadership, organizational, and instructional skills that can significantly contribute to the quality of education in Alaska’s schools; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development passed a resolution in January 2023 directing the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) to develop alternative pathways to teacher certification in alignment with the recommendation from the Teacher Retention and Recruitment Playbook; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Transition to Teaching (AKT2) program, operated by DEED from 2009 to 2014, successfully allowed individuals with bachelor’s degrees to earn post-baccalaureate teaching certificates through DEED-sponsored pathways; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Defense (USDOD) previously operated the “Troops to Teachers” program, which successfully transitioned military personnel into teaching careers and served as a model for alternative pathways to teacher certification; and

WHEREAS, DEED has the statutory authority under AS 14.20.020 to approve educator preparation programs and certify teachers in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, under AS 14.20.020, individuals seeking certification must, among other requirements, have received at least a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association or approved by the commissioner;

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

- A. Develop and implement the “Green to Teach” pathway to teacher certification, modeled after the former USDOL “Troops to Teachers” program, focusing on transitioning active military personnel, veterans, and their spouses into teaching careers in Alaska; and

B. Identify fiscal resources to support the development and sustainability of alternative certification programs, as recommended by the Teacher Recruitment and Retention (TRR) Working Group on Alternative Certification Programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board recognizes the potential of the “Green to Teach” pathway to address teacher shortages, stabilize the educator workforce, and increase student achievement.

ADOPTED by the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development, at the regular open public meeting thereof, held the 22nd day of January 2025.

Agenda Item 5 – Stratton Library Bid Review

Dr. Amy Phillips Chan, Director of the Alaska State Libraries, Archives, and Museums provided an update on the Stratton Library bid review. The Stratton Library, built in 1974 as part of Sheldon Jackson College and purchased by the State of Alaska in 2010, has faced ongoing facility challenges, making it unsuitable for its intended purpose of collection storage expansion and educational services. In partnership with the Board and the Department, a decision was made to sell the building, with proceeds directed to the Sheldon Jackson Museum for critical facility needs.

The initial *Invitation to Bid (ITB)* was issued on November 19, 2024, with a due date of January 10, 2025. Due to a lack of responses, the deadline has been extended to February 10, 2025, to attract more bidders. If a bid is received, it will be presented for review and potential approval at the March Board meeting.

Chair Fields acknowledged the disrepair of the Stratton Library during a past visit and thanked Dr. Chan for continuing efforts on the sale. Member Fowley asked about the contingency plan if no bids are received by February. Dr. Chan explained that if no eligible bids are submitted, the property will remain under DEED management through the Libraries, Archives, and Museums division. The department would then work with the Board to determine the best future use of the facility.

Agenda Item 6 – Regulations for Public Comment

6A. Retired Teacher: National Board Certification

Kelly Manning, Deputy Director for the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, presented proposed regulatory updates to align with House Bill 230, which passed in the 33rd legislature.

The key updates include:

1. **Retired Teacher Long-Term Substitute Limit** – Increasing the allowable consecutive days a retired teacher may serve as a substitute from 120 to 165.
2. **National Board Certification Incentives** – Establishing regulations under 4 AAC 12.412 to support incentive payments and cost reimbursements for National Board-certified teachers, contingent on legislative funding.

While no funding has been appropriated yet, the proposed regulations would enable DEED to collect data from districts and develop a process for future payments if funding becomes available.

Member Stockhausen expressed support for extending the allowable teaching time for retired teachers and asked several questions about the National Board Certification incentive program.

Key points from the discussion:

- **Certification Expiration & Renewal:** Director Manning confirmed that National Board certifications likely expire every five years, with renewal costs factored into the fiscal note for potential funding.
- **Tracking & Notification:** DEED would implement a reporting system to notify districts of eligible educators and track renewal timelines if appropriations are made.
- **Contract vs. Bonus:** The incentive payments would be included in teachers' retirement benefits as part of their compensation.

- **Eligibility for Other Educators:** Member Stockhausen asked if the incentive could apply to non-teaching staff like speech-language pathologists and nurses. Director Manning noted that public comments on this issue would be reviewed to ensure alignment with statutory definitions before finalizing regulations.

Member Fowley questioned why the limit for retired teachers serving as long-term substitutes was set at 165 days instead of 170, which would cover a full school year. Director Manning responded that the 165-day limit was established in the statute and is intended to help address teacher shortages. While the exact reasoning behind that number is unclear, it likely came from feedback on the teacher recruitment and retention playbook. The change allows retired educators to take on extended substitute roles while aligning with legislative decisions, even though it does not cover a full school year.

6B. Teacher Certification Content Area Exams

Director Manning presented a proposal for the board to open a public comment period on amendments to 4 AAC 12.407 1-3, which updates content area examinations for educators.

The amendments include:

1. **Updating Praxis II Exams** – Replacing discontinued Praxis II titles with their new equivalents and updating required scores.
2. **Introducing Pearson’s Flex Option** – Allowing educators who fall just short of the required passing score (within one standard error of measurement) to complete a portfolio demonstrating their competency instead of retaking the exam.

The Flex Option is intended to support educators who have successfully completed their university programs and clinical teaching but struggle with standardized assessments. If eligible, candidates can submit portfolios through Pearson, which will be evaluated by master teachers.

Additionally, periodic updates are needed to align state regulations with changes in the Educational Testing Services (ETS) exam offerings, as new exams replace older ones every 5 to 7 years.

Member Stockhausen inquired whether teachers moving to Alaska from out of state would still have their older Praxis exam scores accepted, even if the test is no longer offered.

Colleen Walker clarified that:

1. **Older Exams Are Accepted** – If a teacher previously took and passed an exam that has since been discontinued, their score will still count toward certification.
2. **Historical Records Are Maintained** – DEED keeps a historical list of past exams and passing scores to ensure prior certifications remain valid.
3. **Flex Option Eligibility** – If the test was taken within the valid timeframe and the educator scored within one standard error of measurement, they could still qualify for the Flex Option to demonstrate competency.

Agenda Item 7 – Annual Report to the Legislature

Commissioner Dr. Deena Bishop provided an overview of the State Board of Education and Early Development’s annual report to the legislature. The report, structured around the Board’s goals and priorities, outlines the Department of Education’s actions over the past calendar year, as required by statute. Key highlights include:

1. **Regulations & Board Actions** – Updates on regulatory changes, public comments, legislative reports, and resolutions, including the State Tribal Education Compact and HB 59.
2. **Priority 1: Early Literacy & Reads Act** – Significant progress in early literacy, professional development, curriculum support, and the success of the Alyeska Reading Academy and CLSD Grant (\$50M award for five years).

3. **Priority 2: Career, Technical, & Culturally Relevant Education** – Expansion of state tribal public education compacting, credential pathways, career & technical education grants, and student leadership programs.
4. **Priority 3: Student Success & Assessments** – Integration of the Alaska Balanced Assessment with MAP testing, expansion of pre-K grants, and recognition of Alaska’s Charter Schools for academic excellence.
5. **Priority 4: Teacher Retention & Recruitment (TRR)** – The TRR Playbook guided initiatives such as teacher apprenticeships, certification modernization, and educator retention efforts.
6. **Priority 5: Safety & Well-being** – Programs supporting student health, suicide prevention, and positive behavioral interventions.

The report concludes with data analysis, department functions (e.g., post-secondary education, Mt. Edgecumbe, and teaching practices), and legislative presentations.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 8 – Green to Teach Resolution

Second Vice Chair Van Diest motioned, and Member Dupras seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the proposed resolution supporting alternative pathways to certification by establishing the “Green to Teach” pathway. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 9 – Stratton Library Bid Review

Motion was not needed since there was no bid to review. Moved to March meeting.

Agenda Item 10 – Approve Regulations for Public Comment

10A. Retired Teacher: National Board Certification

First Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned, and Member Bergey seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development post for public comment the proposed revisions to 4 AAC 12.380 (e), amending retired certificate holder consecutive teaching days to 165 days and 4 AAC 12.412. National Board Certification, providing reporting dates and requirements for national board certification incentive and reimbursement payments. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

10B. Teacher Certification Content Area Exams

Member Dupras motioned, and Member Tyndall seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development post for public comment the proposed revisions to 4 AAC 12.407 (1-3). Content area examinations. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 11 – Approve Annual Report to the Legislature

First Vice Chair Stockhausen motioned, and Member Dupras seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the report to the legislature. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 12 – Commissioner’s Report

Commissioner Dr. Deena Bishop provided a report to the State Board of Education and Early Development, addressing questions from board members regarding Alaska’s school calendar and instructional time. She clarified that while the state mandates 180 instructional days, 10 of those can be used for non-instructional purposes, resulting in a typical range of 170-172 school days, with built-in allowances for snow days. Instructional hours vary by grade level, with a statutory minimum of 4 hours for grades 1-3 and 5 hours for grades 4-12, though actual school schedules often exceed these requirements.

Dr. Bishop noted that comparing instructional time across states is complex due to variations in how states

count days versus hours, include or exclude activities like recess and lunch, and define instructional minutes. She acknowledged that Alaska's school days might be slightly shorter than some other states but emphasized that the state meets its minimum requirements.

Moving forward, Member Tyndall's committee on Safety, Health, and Well-being will explore school attendance and develop strategic recommendations. A webpage with attendance resources has already been created, and the department plans to continue collaborating with districts to enhance attendance and instructional time.

Additionally, Student Advisor Joshua Pak shared that he has been selected as one of Alaska's two delegates for the 2025 U.S. Senate Youth Program. He described the rigorous selection process and expressed excitement about meeting national leaders in Washington, D.C. and representing Alaska's resilience and service-oriented spirit.

Agenda Item 14 – Executive Session

At 2:42pm Chair Fields motioned, and First Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development convene in executive session to discuss a personnel matter that could tend to prejudice the reputation and character of an individual and financial matters that could have an adverse effect upon the finances of a public entity, under the Open Meetings Act, AS 44.62.310(c)(1) and (2). Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Those present in the executive session are the State Board, Commissioner Bishop, Deputy Commissioner Morrison and legal representative Susan Sonneborn.

At 3:56pm Chair Fields motioned to come out of executive session, and First Vice Chair Stockhausen seconded the motion without further discussion or objection.

Board Comments

First Vice Chair Stockhausen congratulated Student Advisor Joshua Pak on his accomplishments and expressed appreciation for his leadership and perspectives on the board. She also shared her excitement about the new flex plan for assessments, highlighting its potential to address concerns from individuals who have completed their education programs but struggled to pass required tests. She thanked those who worked to implement this change, emphasizing its importance in removing barriers to success.

Second Vice Chair Van Diest acknowledged that this might be her last meeting and expressed gratitude for her time on the Board. She reflected on the challenges, fun, and meaningful experiences she had during her tenure, particularly highlighting the lasting friendships she formed. She thanked both past and current Board members, especially James and Sally, who served alongside her for most of her time. Van Diest emphasized the Board's unique focus on children and expressed confidence that Alaska students remain in good hands. She concluded by wishing everyone the best.

Member Dupras congratulated Joshua on his achievement and thanked Lorri for being a great role model in guiding newer Board members. Dupras expressed excitement about the Green to Teach initiative, recognizing its importance in addressing the teacher shortage. She also highlighted the significance of focusing on attendance issues for both students and staff, emphasizing that this will help raise awareness of the importance of consistent attendance. Additionally, Dupras appreciated the ongoing work regarding cell phone policies, noting their direct impact on education. She concluded by expressing gratitude for the Board's efforts.

Member Bergey congratulated Joshua on his achievement and expressed excitement about his upcoming experience. She apologized for missing part of the meeting and extended gratitude to the DEED staff for their comprehensive reports, noting that reading them thoroughly helped her stay informed without needing to ask additional questions. She appreciated the Board's continued focus on student achievement and

emphasized the importance of maintaining this commitment to drive growth and improvement over time.

Student Advisor Joshua Pak expressed gratitude for the kind words and congratulations. He reported on the recent Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG) winter business meeting in Anchorage, highlighting a structural change where the treasurer position was replaced with a Youth Legislative Council chair to enhance student input in legislative matters. He also announced that the Spring 2025 AASG Conference will be held in Sitka, co-hosted by Mt. Edgecumbe and Sakai School, with the theme "Building Leadership and Bridging Communities." Finally, he thanked Member Van Diest for her service.

Member Lt. Col. Fowley expressed gratitude for the support on the resolution and acknowledged Dr. Goyette's assistance in its development. He highlighted ongoing collaborations with the Department of Defense to streamline the transition of military personnel into teaching roles. He voiced strong support for the cell phone resolution and shared his enthusiasm for *The Anxious Generation* book, which he is reading for a second time. He also congratulated Joshua Pak on achieving his long-term goal and commended Lorri Van Diest for her dedication and her positive impact on Alaska's students.

Member Tyndall expressed appreciation for Lorri Van Diest's leadership on the cell phone resolution and shared how *The Anxious Generation* book has influenced her perspective on screen time for children. She thanked Lorri for her mentorship and support. She voiced strong support for the cell phone resolution, noting that school districts are beginning to adopt it. Additionally, she praised Lt. Col. Fowley for his work on the innovative *Green to Teach* resolution. She also thanked staff for their work on the legislative report, highlighting *The Alaska Challenge* as one of the clearest and most insightful documents she has reviewed. Lastly, she acknowledged the Commissioner's attendance report and emphasized its alignment with the board's health and safety goals.

Chair Fields thanked DEED for providing well-prepared information that helps board meetings run efficiently. He acknowledged the importance of the cell phone resolution, noting that superintendents and board members are looking for guidance on the issue. He expressed appreciation for Lorri Van Diest's leadership in bringing the resolution forward and shared his regret at seeing her leave the board. He wished her and her family the best and looked forward to the next board meeting in March in Juneau.

The board adjourned at 4:05 p.m.