

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
February 28, 2018
Juneau, AK

Chair Fields called the audio conference work session to order at 2:03 p.m. The board and staff recited the Pledge of Allegiance. No members reported conflicts of interest. Absent was Member Hamilton. Member Himshoot moved to approve the agenda and Member Thompson seconded the motion. The board approved the agenda unanimously.

Because the meeting was exclusively a work session, the board did not take public comment.

Agenda Item 1. Commissioner report and board questions.

Commissioner Johnson thanked the board for their time and introduced Grace Jang, Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Walker. He also said that we would move future work sessions to 3:00 pm. He spoke briefly about the legislative session and how school safety has been brought to the forefront with the issues going on in the country. He referenced the Alaska Education Challenge and that one of the primary issues was safety and well-being. The Commissioner then talked about the primary point of the meeting being to update the board on ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act). We had received feedback in December from the U.S. Department of Education and we just submitted the ESSA plan back to them today.

Brian Laurent, Data Management Supervisor, shared an accountability update to the board. He shared slides and presented information on the long-term goals and measures of interim progress. He spoke about a system of school differentiation, indicators and designations. He also spoke about academic achievement, graduation rates, and English learner progress toward English language proficiency.

Chair Fields had a question regarding chronic absenteeism and how that was defined. Mr. Laurent explained there is not a universal statewide definition of chronic absenteeism and that it is up to the district whether the absence is considered excused or unexcused. Member Himshoot also commented on how this might affect the Migrant Education program. There were also a few questions from Chair Fields and Member Thompson regarding these new indicators. Mr. Laurent explained that chronic absenteeism is defined as a student who misses at least 10 percent of the days in which they were enrolled in school. This is applicable to grades K-12. It also includes all students enrolled at least half of the year. Chair Fields raised questions on adjusting the school calendar and if the student could utilize technology during his/her absence and if that would count as an absence.

Margaret MacKinnon, Federal Programs Coordinator, shared information with the board on the peer review process and the other eleven sections of the ESSA plan. Chair Fields asked about the ESSA plan and if we thought there would be any concerns from U.S. Department of Education. Commissioner Johnson felt there were no concerns.

The work session adjourned at 2:55 p.m.