

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
September 12-14, 2011
Anchorage, AK

September 12, 2011

The board participated in an all-day retreat at the Embassy Suites in Anchorage.

September 13, 2011

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cox at 8:30 a.m. at the King Career Center in Anchorage. All members were present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Chair asked if there were any disclosures. Jim Merriner asked to be recused from voting on the Galena issue later in the meeting because he is employed by the district. The Chair ruled that he could be recused. There were no changes to the agenda, and the agenda for the day was unanimously approved as presented.

Public Comment

Lou Pondoferino, Superintendent of the King Career Center, welcomed the board. He was concerned that the path for CTE students to receive Alaska Performance Scholarships needs work.

Dave Rees, workforce and development specialist for the oil and gas industry, commended EED on its cooperation with the CTE plan. He said they strongly support Strategy No. 4, the Type M teaching certificate for CTE instruction, saying there needs to be a long-term look at giving all educators CTE background in K-12.

Patrick Reinhart with the Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education presented on Project Search, which places young adults with disabilities in intense internships in hospitals during the last year of school. He said the program was active in 43 states and five countries. Mat-Su Regional Health Center and Providence employed six students last year, and Providence will be using eight students this year. Chair Cox asked that the board be keep informed.

Work Session

Assessment --High Stakes Testing. Erik McCormick, Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management, was present to brief the board. He reviewed the uncodified law as it pertains to the high school competency test. The law has been in effect since 2004. References to the specific High School Graduation Qualifying Examination are only in regulation. He indicated that the HSGQE was intended to be a minimum-skills competency test. However, it has been made into something else by virtue of its name -- the high school graduation qualifying exam. He briefed the board on current options for earning a high school diploma in Alaska and cited several trends in state exit exams. The board also reviewed a document entitled "Discussion by

Twelve Alaska Educators on the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination.” The study explored and collected qualitative information about the HSGQE’s impact directly from a group of Alaska high school educators. The department contracted with Data Recognition Corporation to complete the study. Survey topics included credibility of the Alaska diploma, student motivation, and benefits to Alaska. The entire report is available through the department. The board discussed at length changing the name of the test; misconceptions centered around the idea that if a student passed the test, they were ready to graduate or leave high school; and cost savings by eliminating the test. There was a lively discussion regarding end-of-course exams and how they may or may not differ from a graduation exam, and the cost to implement. Mr. McCormick said 80% of the 10th-grade students who take the exam pass it and many consider passing as the end of their K-12 schooling. But even when a student passes the exam in 10th grade, the student still has to complete the graduation credit requirements to graduate. That’s where much of the controversy lies. Most students who do not graduate fail to do so because they do not have enough credits, not because they do not pass the exam.

Differentiated Diplomas. Mr. McCormick was present to brief the board. He reviewed the Education Commission of the States’ report on honors/college prep diplomas and endorsements, which was a compilation of all states and the types of diplomas they offer. Some Alaska districts have an honors diploma, but it is not required by the state.

University of Alaska Anchorage Graduate Certificate in CTE. Cynthia Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, and Sally Spieker, Assistant Professor of Career & Technical Education, were present to brief the board. UAA has a CTE endorsement program, and they were applying to have a Graduate Certificate in CTE program. The endorsement would lead to an endorsement on an existing teacher certificate. Ms. Spieker presented an executive summary of the program, a matrix showing alignment of the courses with the Alaska Teacher Standards and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Career and Technical Education Standards, and course descriptions and program information. Chair Cox verified that there would be student teaching experience or internship. Ms. Spieker said that was necessary to keep their NCATE certification.

Legislative Report. Marcy Herman, Legislative Liaison, was present to brief the board. The board was briefed on the 2011 legislative actions relating to education. Ms. Herman reviewed several education bills and their current status (awaiting signature or signed). Elizabeth Nudelman, Director of School Finance, gave the board a briefing on the process used for the 70/30 district waivers, saying that the department reviews each waiver request thoroughly before it comes to the board. In some cases, they are able to show the district where they can make adjustments to its budget and enables it to not have to request a waiver.

University of Alaska Southeast Math Endorsement. Cynthia Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board. Virgil Fredenberg, Associate Professor of Mathematics Education from UAS, was on the phone to help explain the request. The University of Alaska Southeast has an approved endorsement program in mathematics K-8, and is authorized to sign institutional recommendations for that program. They were seeking approval to sign endorsements in mathematics K-5. The endorsement would not include middle school. They want to focus on the elementary level but increase the pedagogy and content. The K-8

endorsement has a calculus and trig component that teachers do not need for K-5. Jim Merriner inquired about the Praxis requirement. Ms. Curran said the Praxis requirement includes all subjects and there is no specific math test. Ms. Curran said the state certifies the program.

American Charter Academy. Cynthia Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board, and Becky Huggins, Principal, was present. The board approved this charter school in 2010 for a period of three years. They were back before the board seeking approval to expand its program to include grades 2-5, in addition to the current grades 6-12. The request had been approved by the local Mat-Su board. Documenting language said, “including the lower elementary grades into the school provides a path for early connections as well as early interventions ... and strengthens academic focus.”

Special Education. Cynthia Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board. The board was briefed on the composition of the special education team and the following: 1) Eligibility Criteria for Disability Categories; 2) Special Education Child Count by District; 3) Statewide Child Count by Disability and Age for the 2010-11 School Year; 4) Historic Data on Enrollment and Child Count for Ages 6-21; 5) 2010-11 Student Enrollment by School District for Ages 6-21; 6) 2010-11 Special Education Child Count by School District for Ages 6-21; 7) 2010-11 Race/Ethnicity Risk for Special Education by School District for Ages 6-21; 8) Alaska Public School Dropouts 2008-2009 School Year - Students with Disabilities Grades 7-12; 9) Duplicate Count of Special Education Endorsements Current as of August 19, 2011; 10) Employed Sped Teachers w/ Ratio; and 11) Percent of Youth with IEPs Graduating from High School with Regular Diplomas. Ms. Curran said the handbook had been revised and was smaller than in years past, and there is an annual report that is submitted to U.S. Department of Education every year. Discussion centered on eligibility categories and special ed count by district. She said the largest group is specific learning disabilities followed by the speech/language impaired group. The statewide average dropout rate for disabilities is 5.8%, which is $\frac{1}{2}\%$ higher than for the average student. The highest dropout rates seem to be in smaller communities, but Ms. Curran said the reasons vary and it is not necessarily due to lack of services. Pat Shier noted that the work of special education teachers is emotionally draining, and he said he admired the work being done. Geri Benshoof said that the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education was a big advocate.

Regulations – Going out for public comment. Limited Type M for Career and Technical Education (CTE). Cynthia Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board. She said this proposed regulation stemmed from the teacher quality working group believing that CTE should have its own certificate requirements separate from the requirements for the Type M for Alaska Native Language and Culture. It allows the person one year to pass the Praxis I, or other basic competency test, in reading writing and math, and to demonstrate they have the skills in curriculum, classroom instruction and assessment.

Alaska Supplement for WorkKeys Assessment, 2011 Edition. Erik McCormick, Director of Assessment, Accountability and Information Management, was present to brief the board. This supplement further clarifies the accommodation situations related to the WorkKeys assessment. The supplement also provides greater guidance related to the use of the accommodations for the WorkKeys assessment, as negotiated by ACT.

Galena request to increase number of students eligible for statewide residential funding. Elizabeth Nudelman, Director of School Finance, was present to brief the board and Chris Reitan, Superintendent, was on audio. Ms. Nudelman said Galena was asking to increase its student reimbursement numbers from 175 to 210 for the Galena Interior Learning Academy. The budgetary impact for 2013 would be \$397,500. Mr. Reitan said they were looking to use all the facilities on campus. He said they would be adding new curriculum such as CTE and health offerings and possibly heavy-equipment-operator courses, if grant money comes through. Currently they offer cosmetology, culinary, auto mechanics, electricity and carpentry, welding and aviation, and a regular academic program. Chair Cox said she would be interested to see their graduation rate and where students go after graduation.

Commissioner's Report. Commissioner Hanley was present to brief the board. He said he was coming up on nine months on the job. His vision is helping kids to be successful. He said it's helpful to put a face on what we are doing. He had spent time in Kenai and Homer recently and in the Kachemak area with the Old Believers, where scores are high. The commissioner said he had worked with the Evans family and the school in McGrath after the plane crash. As the bar rises in NCLB toward 100% in 2014, the percentage of schools meeting AYP will come down, and he anticipates that Alaska will request a waiver. He said a better model is needed but the department needs to do it right, not fast. He said the department was looking at a \$50M grant with the Early Learning Challenge, Race-to-the-Top. The department wants all students to be reading by grade three, and they are looking at the set of skills children need to have when entering kindergarten. He said the department was acquiring information on the Kognito program of suicide prevention. The program focuses on teacher training. The revision of the standards in language arts and math will be coming to the board in December. It won't be Common Core, but will meet the benchmark. He said the question was how do we set new standards and expect everyone to meet the mark without changing anything in our education system. How will we support this new goal? He supports having good communication that leads to a healthy relationships and team building. He thanked Col. Sullivan for stepping forward to help the family from the plane crash by finding housing for them on the base.

Arts Education Consortium. Annie Calkins, Special Project Coordinator of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, and Charlotte Fox, the Executive Director of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, were present to brief the board. The consortium is partner with the Association of Alaska School Boards, the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education, the University of Alaska Southeast, Carnegie Hall and the Alaska Council of School Administrators to promote arts education in the schools. Ms. Calkins said the consortium was working with the Bering Strait, Copper River, and Kodiak districts to reinvent an arts program. Those districts had little going on in the arts, and now have various programs and momentum. Kodiak has an exemplary music program, and Copper River has adopted one credit in the arts and a curriculum. These three districts will be joined by two more by the end of this year. Ms. Fox said the Arts Council took the lead to get arts back into the schools and provides artists to school districts throughout the state. A new vision program has moved the Arts Council forward in this movement. She said curriculum is being developed and adopted by districts, professional development is beginning to make an impact, and the Kennedy Center grants are being used for leadership meetings in the state, setting an action plan, visiting legislators and administrative retreats. January 12 & 13,

2012, will be the Arts Conference in Anchorage. Ms. Calkins said inroads were being made into secondary grades as well. Bunny Schaeffer noted that the Northwest Arctic Borough School District uses the arts kits and they are great. Ms. Calkins said that all the intervention districts have the arts kits.

The meeting was recessed by unanimous consent.

Wednesday, September 13, 2011

The Chair called the meeting to order; there were no changes to the agenda. The Chair asked if there were any disclosures. Tiarna Fischler said she knew one of the applicants for the MEHS Advisory Board. The Chair ruled that she could participate. Jim Merriner said he was recusing himself from the Galena vote because he was employed by the Galena School District. The Chair ruled that he would be recused.

Regulations:

Jim Merriner moved and Bunny Schaeffer seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on amendments to 4 AAC 12.370-.385, Limited certificate (Type M). The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Janel Keplinger moved and Bunny Schaeffer seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on the Alaska Supplement for WorkKeys Assessment, 2011 edition. The publication is adopted by reference in 4 AAC 06.775, Statewide assessment program for students with disabilities. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Teaching & Learning Support Report. Cynthia Curran, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board. She said the deadline for the 2011 Alaska Performance Scholarships had been extended to December 15, 2011. By June, there were 2,344 eligible students out of the 8,062 graduates -- about 29%. The approximate award value so far is \$4M this year. The department is doing a public WebEx for students and parents to get APS information. There have been approximately 50- 60 at each session so far. She indicated that districts with fewer than three eligible students were not reported to protect the students' identity. She said the CTE team continues to work with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and UA. They have 25 grant requests for the competitive grants. The Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council has met twice and is moving forward with short term goals. The pre-elementary health and safety inspections have begun and staff is working with HSS to streamline services. The NCLB team has been working on reviewing and approving the NCLB applications for the 2011-2012 school year. The team will monitor 10 districts this year. There are nine schools with SIG grants for Tier I. Grants are for schools, not districts. One of the criteria is to do something different in teacher evaluation. There are three intervention districts now: Yukon Flats, Yupiit, and Lower Yukon. The Statewide System of Support (SSOS) team is working closely with all three. Yukon-Koyukuk just recently transitioned out of intervention; however, the SSOS team is still providing technical assistance where needed or requested. The

new AKSCI science curriculum is available for use by districts. Teacher Education and Certification now can do renewals online for the first time.

Assessment, Accountability and Information Management Report. Erik McCormick, Director, was present to brief the board. Mr. McCormick reviewed upcoming testing dates and calendars for district testing, reporting dates, and training schedules. He discussed the AYP release data, saying there will be a 6% increase for language arts and 8% increase for math to meet AYP – a very steep goal. He said they were taking every opportunity to slow down the trajectory. He said the department was watching the waiver process and would apply if and when they could. Deputy Commissioner Morse cautioned that the waivers will waive the substitutes, not the law, and won't freeze the AMO measure. A freeze would only be for one year, and would go up after that. Mr. McCormick said 12 districts made AYP, down from 20 last year – mainly due to targets going up. He noted that the targets are set by USDOE. Geri Benshoof said the problem is the public's perception of failing numbers and lower targets being met. The goal should be obtainable and reasonable.

Legislative Report. Marcy Herman was present to brief the board. She noted legislative bills that were still awaiting action and those that were in legislative committees. Regarding the budget, she said the governor will release the budget on December 15. The department budget meetings are done; the next step is with the Office of Management & Budget.

Rural Education Report. Phyllis Carlson was present to brief the board. She summarized her trips and visits to districts and committee work. She noted that the cultural standards work was progressing and they were getting ready to finalize the rubric to present at the Providers Conference. She said that she had met with the Interior Native Education Group and attended the Tanana Chiefs Conference. She also attended a Lower Yukon school board meeting and was working on a date for the commissioner to visit the community. She said the entire community of Russian Mission was going on a hunting trip with the students of the school this year. She said the community involvement is helping with teacher retention in villages.

Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) Report. Randy Hawk, Superintendent, was present to brief the board. Total enrollment this year stands at 404. He said there were record enrollment applications this year and record numbers of students returning. MEHS has more girls than boys because of dorm space. MEHS did not make AYP this year for the first time. Scores went up but not enough to rise above the rising bar. AYP was made in all areas except LEP in language arts. Two Chinese exchange students have also joined MEHS.

Attorney General's Report. Rebecca Hattan, Assistant Attorney General, was present to brief the board. She reviewed the status of the Kasayulie and Moore cases, saying that the commissioner and the Attorney General were involved at an unprecedented level to conclude both cases.

Library, Archives & Museums Report. Deputy Commissioner Morse was present to brief the board. He said that in December the board will hear an updated report on the SLAM project. He noted that Hawaii has a grant for electronic archiving of state documents and wants to work with Alaska on the project. Pat Shier said his department could also help. The library has acquired a grant to archive the litigation files from the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Mr. Morse announced that

the deputy director of the LAM, Glenn Cook, would be leaving his post in October to move to Arizona. When asked about the money for the SLAM, Mr. Morse said the Juneau delegation was very much in support of the project located in Juneau. Contributions have been made by the legislature for the design work and site preparation. Breaking ground will require new money. The money we have now will last through next summer. Phil Schneider said he would encourage private investors; it's an important project and we need to get creative. Pat Shier said there was not cost recovery currently in the project, but there are some scenarios that could be investigated.

Consent Agenda. Janel Keplinger moved and Phil Schneider seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of: the minutes June 9 & 10, 2011, meeting; approval of the renewal application of American Charter Academy; approval of University of Anchorage Teacher Preparation Programs - CTE; approval of University of Alaska Southeast Teacher Preparation Programs - Mathematics; appointment of a parent representative member to the Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board; and approval of the format for the State Board annual report to the legislature. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Schneider said he removed the Galena request so that Mr. Merriner could recuse himself. Mr. Merriner did recuse himself from the vote. Phil Schneider moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Galena City Schools Residential Boarding School request. The motion was passed by a 6-0 vote.

Board Comments:

Col. Sullivan said, "as usual the department comes prepared." He noted that over 10,000 soldiers have been deployed in Afghanistan, and Ft. Wainwright had lost 11 soldiers recently.

Phil Schneider thanked the department for its hard work, said he fully supported the library and the SLAM Project. He thanked the chair for personally reaching out to the community and the family involved in the plane crash.

Bunny Schaeffer – none.

Jim Merriner said he enjoyed the retreat and that it was good to be reminded what it is about. He thanked the staff.

Tiarna Fischler said this was her first solo meeting and October 12-15 was the AASG meeting where they would be deciding on student advisor-elect nominees for next year.

Geri Benshoof thanked staff for the special education report. She also congratulated Yukon-Koyukuk for its success in getting off the intervention list.

Pat Shier thanked the staff and said he appreciated the creativity.

Janel Keplinger said "ditto!"

Esther Cox said on behalf of the board she had attended ECS in Denver and brought greetings from Barbara Thompson, and said speaker John Medina was amazing. Medina is the author of *Brain Rules*. She sent condolences to the family of Ken Burnley, visited the Evans family (from the plane crash) in the hospital, and attended a teacher quality meeting. She inquired if the graduation working group was going to meet again. She requested strategic planning for December meeting, that the mission statement be placed on all agendas, look into a review of UA teacher preparation programs at some point soon, and look into arranging a joint meeting with the Board of Regents. She said that Jim Merriner and she would attend the Anchorage Mayor's Education Summit in November. She also asked for a three-member ad hoc committee to be formed to review the MEHS manual. She said that the Deputy Commissioner, Rebecca Hattan and Randy Hawk would review the manual and prepare for the ad hoc committee to meet. She asked that the October 28, 2011, agenda contain approval for the ad hoc members. The committee would be one state board member, one MEHS advisory board member, and one member chosen by the commissioner.

She reminded the board about the October 28 audio meeting coming up.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent. Board members took a tour of the King Career Center.