

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 13, 2023

8:01 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Jamie Allard, Co-Chair
Representative Justin Ruffridge, Co-Chair
Representative Mike Prax
Representative CJ McCormick
Representative Tom McKay
Representative Rebecca Himschoot
Representative Andi Story

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: DIVISION OF LIBRARY, ARCHIVES, AND MUSEUMS
- HEARD

OVERVIEW(S): MT. EDGE CUMBE HIGH SCHOOL
- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

SABRINA JAVIER, Director
Administrative Services
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the presentation on the Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums.

AMY PHILLIPS-CHAN, PhD, Director
Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint, titled "Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums."

LACEY SANDERS, Deputy Commissioner
Office of the Commissioner
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the presentation on the Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums.

SUZZUK HUNTINGTON, Superintendent
Mt. Edgecumbe High School
Sitka, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint, titled "Mt. Edgecumbe High School."

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:01:00 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR JAMIE ALLARD called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Representatives Prax, McKay, Himschoot, Ruffridge, and Allard were present at the call to order. Representatives McCormick and Story arrived as the meeting was in progress.

[8:01:31 AM](#)

OVERVIEW(S): Division of Library, Archives, and Museums

CHAIR ALLARD announced that the first order of business would be a presentation by the Division of Library, Archives, and Museums.

[8:02:33 AM](#)

AMY PHILLIPS-CHAN, PhD, Director, Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums (LAM), Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), co-presented a PowerPoint, titled "Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums" [hard copy included in the committee packet]. She introduced herself and proceeded to explain LAM's mission, vision, and purpose, as seen on slide 2. She explained that for fiscal year 2023 (FY 23), LAM is working in partnership with DEED to advance the strategic priorities, as seen on slide 3, to heed Alaska's education challenge. She stated that for this a new position has been created, titled "Early Literacy Children's Coordinator." She explained that the function of this position is to coordinate with Alaska's youth service librarians.

8:04:32 AM

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN moved to slide 4 which showed a chart of DEED's budget, and she pointed out LAM's budget, which is divided into seven main components: library operations, archives, museums operations, online with libraries, live homework help, Andrew P. Kashevaroff (APK) facilities maintenance, and broadband assistance grants. On slide 5, she provided information on the APK facilities. She addressed the resources the state library provides, including the availability of materials in various formats. She detailed the grants which support various programs. She also noted the library provides a statewide summer reading program which helps promote literacy and mitigate summer learning loss.

8:07:15 AM

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN moved on to slide 6 and discussed the archives component of LAM, which is located in the APJ building. She explained that one of the priorities of the state archives is to preserve and provide access to government records that document Alaska's history. She noted the number of researchers who use this resource, and the materials and digital records accessed. She addressed the new acquisition the state archives received over the last year. She proceeded to slide 7, addressing the LAM's museum operations. She pointed out that the state operates two museums: The Alaska State Museum in Juneau and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka. She described the museums' strong cultural ties, their collaborative partnerships, the development of exhibits and educational programs, and research projects.

8:12:56 AM

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT questioned the Sheldon Jackson Museum's stance on holding collections which are important to the local Indigenous people.

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN replied that the team at the Sheldon Jackson Museum has fostered a great working relationship with Indigenous community members in Sitka and across Southeast Alaska. She described how the Native communities have access to the collections on display and those stored. In response to a follow-up question, she stated that, regarding space and collection storage areas, the museum is currently at capacity.

[8:15:24 AM](#)

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN, in response to Co-Chair Ruffridge, answered that there is only one state library, and this is in Juneau.

[8:16:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK asked about LAM's repatriation efforts for artifacts currently housed out of state or even internationally.

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN replied LAM does not have control over these items. She stated that LAM only functions as an educational resource for community members.

[8:17:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked how many Alaska museums and cultural centers LAM helps support.

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN answered there are around 100 museums and cultural centers in Alaska that are all eligible to participate in LAM's main grant program, Grant-In-Aid (GIA). She stated that last year GIA allocated \$100,000 in grants.

[8:19:06 AM](#)

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN continued the presentation on slide 8, addressing the Online with Libraries (OWL) program. She explained the OWL project offers grants to Alaska public libraries to help with Internet costs, a Zoom account for training, and story times for children. She proceeded to slide 9, addressing the Live Homework Help, which is an online tutorial program for students in grades K-12 and intro level college students. In addition to tutoring, she explained users can receive help preparing materials for finding employment.

[8:21:04 AM](#)

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN, in response to Representative Story, stated that there were 12,883 students served by live homework help during the 2021 to 2022 school year.

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN continued to slide 10, addressing the maintenance of the APK facilities. She stated that the budget of this component supports construction, maintenance, contracts, and opportunities to promote LAM to diverse audiences. She

proceeded to slide 11, addressing the Alaska School Broadband Assistance Grants (BAG), which was developed to assist schools increase Internet download speeds.

[8:24:37 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX, concerning BAG, questioned whether LAM is working with any other government departments, specifically the Alaska Broadband Office.

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN responded that BAG does not directly interface with the Alaska Broadband Office.

[8:27:32 AM](#)

LACEY SANDERS, Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development, addressing the question, explained that DEED is working on a broader level [than LAM], as it has a seat at the statewide broadband council and participates in the conversation on the education piece concerning the need of broadband across the state.

[8:28:40 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked what other entity held the OWL program previously.

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN explained that the program originally was funded federally through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. She stated that in 2013, the state took over funding for the program, which is now managed by the Alaska State Library, under LAM.

[8:30:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT requested information concerning services for the needs of the visually impaired.

DR. PHILLIPS-CHAN responded there is the Alaska Talking Book Center in Juneau. She expressed uncertainty concerning the number of users of this resource. She offered to provide data on the number of users at a later date. In response to a follow-up question regarding additional services for the visually impaired, she recommended that DEED be contacted with the exact needs.

[8:32:37 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX noted a requirement in the Executive Budget Act to ask about specific missions and goals. He questioned where to find the information on LAM.

SABRINA JAVIER, Director, Administrative Services, Department of Education and Early Development, stated the information can be obtained on the Office of Management and Budget's website by searching DEED's link to FY 24.

[8:33:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY questioned whether 25 megabits per second should be the minimum Internet speed for rural school districts, and she questioned whether better broadband access statewide has been discussed.

MS. PHILLIPS-CHAN responded that LAM would follow whatever is signed into law by the governor.

[8:35:36 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:35 a.m. to 8:36 a.m.

OVERVIEW(S): MT. EDGE CUMBE HIGH SCHOOL

OVERVIEW(S): Mt. Edgecumbe High School

[8:36:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the next order of business would be a presentation on Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

[8:37:04 AM](#)

SUZZUK HUNTINGTON, Superintendent, Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS), provided a brief personal background. She began the PowerPoint presentation, titled "Mt. Edgecumbe High School," [hard copy included in the committee packet] on slide 2, titled "Mission, Vision, and Purpose." She stressed that MEHS takes Alaska's education challenge to heart. She moved to slide 3, titled "Strategic Priorities: Alaska's Education Challenge." She noted that MEHS fully supports students reading at grade level. She proceeded to slide 4, titled "Budget Organizational Chart" and noted that MEHS is a division within DEED but stands-alone in most areas. She pointed out where MEHS sits in the organizational chart shown on the slide, and its role with other divisions.

8:40:04 AM

MS. HUNTINGTON moved to slide 5 which addressed school enrollment, annual scholarships awarded, courses and class size, and costs of attendance. She continued to slide 6, which showed the breakdown of the number of students, communities, and types of districts involved with MEHS. She noted MEHS's students come from 38 school districts across Alaska.

MS. HUNTINGTON moved to slide 7 and discussed MEHS's admission process. She pointed out the application timelines and noted that MEHS accepts about 50 percent of the roughly 350 applications received each year; criteria and process are also highlighted on the slide. She continued to slide 8 and discussed MEHS's aquatic center. She stated that many classes are offered, including lifeguard training, with student workers often lifeguarding open swims. She also emphasized that community partnerships contribute to the center's self-sufficiency, as fees for the pool cover its expenses.

8:47:47 AM

MS. HUNTINGTON moved to slide 9 and gave a quick highlight of sports and activities offered at MEHS. The slide showed the current school year's participation rates in various sports. She pointed out the many non-sports activities listed on slide 10. She noted that the honor society is not shown on the slide. She continued to slide 11, pointing out academic highlights at MEHS. She explained MEHS does not hold to the minimum state requirements, as it has requirements beyond the minimums in many areas. She gave a brief synopsis of this. She moved to slide 12 and discussed industry certificates available for students. She pointed out that these come through partnerships with the University of Alaska Southeast. She stated that the certificates offered range from the medical field to those in construction, such as welding.

8:54:28 AM

MS. HUNTINGTON discussed the numerous activities dedicated to recreation at MEHS, as seen listed on slide 13. Continuing to slide 14, she reiterated the emphasis on developing leadership at MEHS, and she pointed out the opportunities for students to serve as leaders, as listed on the slide. She proceeded to slide 15, titled "Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) Wellness Highlights." This includes counseling departments, partnerships

with mental health resources, and the proactive responsiveness to various student needs.

MS. HUNTINGTON concluded with slide 16, titled "Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) Cultural Highlights." She stated that Native Alaska languages are highlighted at MEHS as dual credit courses. She pointed out that this year there is a new cultural integration specialist, with a language leadership club designed to revitalize languages.

[9:01:07 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD stated that a question-and-answer meeting on this subject would be scheduled at a future date.

[9:01:35 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.