

State Board of Education & Early Development
Approved Minutes
January 26, 2021
Virtual Platform Meeting
Department of Education & Early Development
801 West 10th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. After the pledge of allegiance, Chair Fields gave an invocation to start the meeting. Member Griffin motioned to amend the agenda and Member Van Diest seconded the motion. Member Hamilton then made the following motion: I move that the State Board of Education and Early Development amend the agenda to include the swearing in of Jeffrey Erickson and Sally Stockhausen. The motion was seconded by Member Griffin. There was no discussion. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. The board adopted the amended agenda for January 26, 2021 and then proceeded with the oath of office for Member Erickson and Member Stockhausen. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members at this meeting.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened at 9:07 am

Malin Paquette- spoke to the Alaska Student Loan Corporation and to the need of the Alaska Student Loan Corporation to change the way that they operate. She thanked the board for their work and their protocols for swearing in the new members.

Lisa Parady- Executive Director of AK Council of School Administrators welcomed the new members and thanked them for their work on the board. Thanked the board for their support for public education and looks forward to working with the board in the future. She also informed the board that the ACSA has drafted their position statement and will be sending that to the board in the next few weeks and she welcomes any questions if the board should have them.

Public comment closed at 9:25am

Agenda Item 1. Legislative Update

Erin Hardin updated the board on pre-filed bills and the status of the board member's confirmation hearings. Since the Senate had organized, Senators Holland, Stevens, Micciche, Hughes, and Begich will be the members on the Senate Education Committee and the department is looking forward to working with them during the session. She also took questions from the board with regards to the bills and how the legislature is conducting hearings in this virtual landscape.

Agenda Item 2. Department FY2022 Operating Budget

Commissioner Johnson informed the board that the BSA is fully funded this year in Governor Dunleavy's budget.

Lacey Sanders then presented an overview to the board on the Department of Education's FY2022 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 changes in the budget

that would impact the Department of Education with the most notable change for the board which would be the recommendation that the board meet once in person and virtually for all other meetings. Commissioner Johnson extolled the virtue of virtual conferences and mentioned that virtual is not a replacement for in person but it is a way for the department to reach a wider audience than they would be able to do in person.

Member Griffin expressed his disappointment in the bond debt reimbursement allocation portion of the budget. He would like the money to go toward early childhood literacy or other programs that might better suit students in a virtual climate instead of a brick and mortar school building.

Agenda Item 3. COVID-19 Federal Relief Package Update

Commissioner Johnson informed the board that 143 million has been given to the department to flow directly to school districts and President Biden has committed to sending more for schools to go towards vaccine efforts and other methods of student support. With this amount comes a tremendous amount of responsibility to ensure that this money goes directly to support learning for students. He committed to doing everything he could to make sure that every penny goes to supporting kids and making them successful.

Lacey Sanders then provided a presentation to the board which detailed the funds and how they would be distributed to school districts and their allowable uses. She then took questions from the board.

Agenda Item 4. 2020-2021 School Enrollment Update

Commissioner Johnson reminded the board that the numbers reflect students, and the numbers are less about funding and all about those kids.

Heidi Teshner provided an update to the board about student enrollment counts across Alaska. These numbers are current as of December 18 for the public school funding formula. For reference, the preliminary FY2021 numbers are the numbers that districts sent to the Department of Education which are the numbers that are used for the Governor's budget purposes only at the statewide level. The Department of Education reviewed the numbers to remove duplicates and ensure that each student is only being counted once and that the special education intensive students were included as well. On December 21, the FY21 Oasis updated numbers were provided to school districts which started the 30 day review appeal process that ended on January 20. The department did not receive any appeals to the revised average daily membership counts. She then took questions from the board.

Agenda Item 5. Statewide Assessment Update

Tammy Van Wyhe, Karen Melin, and Deb Riddle updated the board on the work that DEED is doing to assess student growth in Alaska. Director Van Wyhe was excited to inform the board that Kelly Manning the new assessments administrator will be starting in February with the department. Karen Melin commended districts on their work to ensure that their students are learning the things that they need with regards to assessments. The NAEP assessment will be postponed until 2022 and in its place is a special study being conducted to review the affects of the pandemic on education with the goals to fill critical gaps in student's knowledge. The study will be available in the fall and Alaska is excited to participate in it to inform what is happening at the classroom level with regard to student achievement. The department is also in the process of securing a new form of assessment tool that employs a through year model in which the RFI closes on January 29th. The department will then begin the review and selection process that will lead toward building a new assessment model. Director Van Wyhe thanked the board for their patience as this issue has been a priority for the board.

The board took at break at 10:46 am and reconvened at 11:00 am.

Agenda Item 6. Early Learning Guidelines Regulations adoption

Commissioner Johnson reminded the board that these proposed amendments to 4 AAC 60.170(a), Programmatic requirements for pre-elementary schools had gone out for public comment and have returned to the board for their adoption. The amendments update the *State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines*, which define the domains of development for pre-elementary children. The *State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines* were last updated in December 2007. Deb Riddle described the guidelines and took questions from the board. The board members encouraged the department to ensure that these guidelines get distributed to a wide audience of parents and other educators. They recommended that the department utilize social media and other communication efforts to communicate these Early Learning Guidelines to stakeholders and parents across the state.

Agenda Item 7. Annual Report

Chair Fields reminded the board that the annual report had been reviewed at the last meeting of the board and that after the revisions suggested by board members, the report was now back in front of them to motion to approve the annual report.

Member Griffin motioned and Member Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the report to the legislature. Member Griffin thanked the DEED staff for their work and mentioned that he thought that it was an excellent report. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

Agenda Item 8. Adoption of Early Learning Guidelines Regulations

Commissioner Johnson asked the board to adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 60.170(a), Programmatic requirements for pre-elementary schools. The amendments update the *State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines*, which define the domains of development for pre-elementary children. Member Van Diest motioned and Member Kowalski seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed regulation changes to 4 AAC 60.170(a), Programmatic Requirements for pre-elementary schools, adopting by reference the *State of Alaska Early Learning Guidelines* dated January 2021. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

Agenda item 9. Commissioner's Report

Commissioner Johnson acknowledged the superintendent who passed away from COVID-19 and extended his condolences to the family as well as other educators of the state of Alaska education system that have been affected by this pandemic.

He welcomed Member Erickson and thanked Member Stockhausen for her willingness to continue to serve on the board. He looks forward to walking through the confirmation process with Member Hamilton and Member Van Diest as this legislative session continues.

Commissioner Johnson and DEED is continuing to attend meetings with the new federal administration and the department will be watching and updating the board on any federal changes that will affect students in Alaska.

The Department continues to have weekly meetings with our stakeholders and Commissioner Johnson continued to underscore the importance of the communication back and forth between DEED and the various stakeholders across the state.

Commissioner Johnson also updated the board on their hopes to have a face-to-face meeting with the board. The Department is still working with all of the variables and as soon as they have firm answers, they will communicate that with the board.

Board Comments

Member Griffin- looking forward to the day that we can all be together. He welcomed Member Erickson. He reiterated the importance of early childhood literacy and challenged the board continue their work to help educators teach students to read.

Member Kowalski- thanked the commissioner for the reminder that there are students behind the numbers. She highlighted the importance of the need for students to be seen even in a virtual setting and noted the increase in student duplicates in the student enrollment updates. She asked that the board resume their committee meetings in the future.

Member Erickson- thanked the board for the welcome and is excited to work with the board. He gave a brief history of his work in the education system and he's looking forward to the board.

Member Stockhausen- expressed her condolences to the family of David and Beth Lougee. She thanked the department their work to support educators and students and encouraged them to keep working for kids even if they were discouraged.

Member Van Diest- echoed Member Stockhausen's comments about the Lougee family. She expressed hope that there might be a light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel. She welcomed Member Erickson and is looking forward t meeting him in the future.

Chair Fields- expressed his thanks to the board and the department for their work during the pandemic. He congratulated Member Erickson on his appointment and is looking forward to the continued work that they will do during the legislative session. Expressed his thoughts to the board about their work during the pandemic and the direction that they should go in the future. He extended his condolences to the Lougee family for their loss.

Adjourned at 11:39am