

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development

Approved Minutes March 21 & 22, 2016 Juneau, AK

Monday, March 21

Chair Fields swore in new member Rebecca Himschoot.

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. All members were present. The board, staff, and public recited the Pledge of Allegiance. The board prayed. A presentation by Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott was removed from the agenda. The board approved the day's amended agenda.

Rebecca Himschoot, First Vice-Chair Hull, and Chair Fields declared a potential conflict of interest because they serve school districts with projects on the state's construction and major maintenance lists. Chair Fields declared that Ms. Himschoot and First Vice-Chair Hull did not have a conflict. Interim Commissioner Susan McCauley declared that Chair Fields did not have a conflict.

Public Comment

Christie Reinhardt, of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, addressed HB 102 and SB 103, which relate to private psychiatric institutions' services to school districts. She was concerned about the use of public funds for private residential psychiatric treatment centers that also educate children, the liability of school districts that use such services, and the record of United Health Services, a national provider of such services.

Lorraine DeAsis of Juneau said the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) uses inflated data. It has received state funds while school district programs in Native education are fighting to financially survive. She noted that ANSEP is open to non-Natives.

Rep. Lora Reinbold said legislators have had no input on the department's advisory committee on the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. She said the committee includes educators, not parents. She said holding an advisory committee meeting in April in Anchorage rather than Juneau would leave out legislators. Rep. Reinbold said an advisory committee document referred to student's opting out of assessments as the No. 1 threat. She said the board should pass a regulation reflecting that the state should not spend money on the Common Core. She wants Alaska's standards rewritten. She said the department does not inform parents of their right to opt out of assessments.

Dr. Lisa Parady, executive director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators, said its members considered the characteristics they hoped for in a new commissioner. She thanked Interim Commissioner McCauley for her work. She thanked the department for its process of developing a state plan to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Rep. Tammie Wilson said HB 44 (the Alaska Safe Children's Act, passed last year) requires school districts to do a lot more. Her district said it would cost \$450,000-plus to meet its requirements. She said the intent of HB 278 was that Alaska would not use the Common Core. Alaska's standards are very similar to Common Core. She urged the department to use off-the-shelf assessments.

Harvey Brandt of Sitka praised Mt. Edgecumbe High School, citing its diversity, good faculty, and investment in the future.

Dean Willis of Sitka, parent of Mt. Edgecumbe High School students, spoke of the unique opportunity the school offers to students throughout Alaska to get a good education, whether collegiate or vocational. He said the state should expand Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

Kathleen Brandt praised Mt. Edgecumbe High School, noting its focus on Pacific Rim studies.

John Byoff of Nome, parent of Mt. Edgecumbe High School students, said they receive an excellent education. He opposes a takeover of the school by the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program.

Bill Hill, of the Bristol Bay Borough School District, asked for support for a project on the major maintenance list.

David Nees of Anchorage said he could not find a mention of bylaw adoptions in the 2012 minutes, although the bylaws refer to that. [Editor's note: the bylaw adoptions were in the minutes of the October 29, 2012, meeting.]

Temple Billard of Fairbanks, a Mt. Edgecumbe High School graduate from Twin Hills, supports keeping the school as a four-year program.

Barbara Haney of North Pole noted that an advisory committee document referred to student's opting out of assessments as the No. 1 threat. She said not enough classroom teachers are on the advisory committee. She said the state should review its standards and not spend time on arts standards. She said school districts are not informing parents of their right to opt out of assessments.

Amy Brabeck, a parent and former teacher in Anchorage, said assessment scores should not be tied to teacher evaluations.

Jenny Loudon, a parent in Anchorage, opposed the use of assessment scores in teacher evaluations, saying that the growth of students isn't consistent from year to year.

Nancy Wertzbaugher of Anchorage, a parent and former principal, opposed the use of assessment scores in teacher evaluations.

Charles Degnan of Unalakleet, a graduate of Mt. Edgecumbe High School, said he has served in the Alaska House of Representatives and the Alaska Federation of Natives board and worked as a fisherman. He said he is concerned about the effect of regulations on small communities.

Michelle Martin of Juneau, a parent of Mt. Edgecumbe High School students, supports the school.

Ed Gray of Sitka said standardized testing is a flawed model. He noted an advisory committee document that referred to student's opting out of assessments as the No. 1 threat.

Lisa Hollander of Skagway, a parent of Mt. Edgecumbe High School students, supports the school.

Jack Walsh, superintendent of the Craig City School District, said some of its buildings are 40 to 50 years old. A five-year moratorium on capital projects puts the district in a bind. He said staff reductions of 45 percent at the Department of Education & Early Development are catastrophic. He said it costs districts significantly to train every person for Erin and Bree's Law.

Work Session

Teacher Lorrie Heagy and students from Glacier Valley Elementary in Juneau presented music on string instruments. She spoke about the Juneau Alaska Music Matters program.

Michael Bourdukofsky and Mike Ulroan presented information about the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) and answered board members' questions about admissions and funding. Dr. Herb Schroeder said ANSEP's proposal to use Mt. Edgecumbe High School as an accelerated high school had been distorted. He said ANSEP would like to run an accelerated high school somewhere to demonstrate the model, and then put schools in hub cities. Mr. Bourdukofsky said such a school would benefit any student who wants to go to college.

Agenda Item 1. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). By telephone Julia Martin, of the law firm Brustein & Manasevit, presented a PowerPoint about ESSA. In response to board members' questions, she explained ESSA's conflicting provisions about opting out and participation rates.

Margaret MacKinnon, Director of Assessment & Accountability, said the department expects to submit the state's ESSA plan by late fall 2016 or early 2017. The draft of the state's plan will be open for public comment.

Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education & Certification, reviewed the process of developing the state plan and the involvement of stakeholders and the public. Bernie Sorenson, a contracted facilitator for the process, spoke about the use of synchronous and asynchronous distance techniques such as WebEx and Povernoodle.

Dr. Susan McCauley, Interim Commissioner, said the advisory committee is just the beginning of stakeholder involvement. The options that emerge will be vetted at various conferences and legislative committees.

Agenda Item 2. Travel restrictions. Board members and staff discussed the costs of attending meetings in person, the desire to not reduce the opportunity for public comment, and the lack of security for executive sessions by distance. The board will ask the Governor's Office for a waiver to hold its usual quarterly meetings in person.

Agenda Item 3. Commissioner selection. Chair Fields said applications would be solicited in Alaska. The board developed several questions that candidates will answer in their applications. The department will advertise starting the week of March 28, with a due date in late April.

Agenda Item 4. Capital projects. Finance Director Elizabeth Nudelman explained the process by which construction and major maintenance projects are added to the department's lists of approved projects. The department gives priority to the neediest life and safety projects. In the Governor's budget are the first project on the construction list and the first three projects on the major maintenance list.

Agenda Item 5. Strategic plan. John Harmon, First Vice-Chair Hull, and Barbara Thompson updated the board on subcommittee work on the board's three strategic priorities.

Agenda Item 6. Advertising board meetings. Assistant Attorney General Luann Weyhrauch noted that the board's bylaws require publishing meeting notices in two newspapers. The board could save \$2,500 to \$3,000 a year by publishing meeting notices in only one newspaper. The board asked staff to bring back a revision of the bylaws to allow that. First Vice-Chair Hull said the board should review all of its bylaws. She and John Harmon will serve on a subcommittee.

Agenda Item 7. Substitute teachers. Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education & Certification, reviewed the department's regulations that limit teachers with retired teaching certificates to substitute for teachers who will be absent for 20 days or less. Board members discussed the pros and cons of repealing the regulation, and asked the staff to come back with a recommendation.

Tuesday, March 22

Barbara Thompson removed the appointment of Interim Commissioner Susan McCauley from the consent agenda. The board approved the day's amended agenda unanimously.

Work session continued

Agenda Item 8A. Educator evaluations. Dr. Susan McCauley, Interim Commissioner, reviewed the history of the state requirement that includes the use of student learning data in educator evaluations.

Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education & Certification, reviewed the proposed regulations, which resulted from talking to educators and administrators. Although districts would no longer be required to use student learning data in evaluations, they would be allowed to do so. Board members discussed a provision that would prohibit districts from using state assessment results as student learning data in evaluations.

Agenda Item 8B. SAT scores. Margaret MacKinnon, Director of Assessment & Accountability, reviewed proposed regulations that would account for scores in a new version of the SAT as they relate to eligibility for the Alaska Performance Scholarship.

Agenda Item 9A. Arts standards. Annie Calkins, Special Project Coordinator for the Alaska Arts Education Consortium, reviewed public comments for the proposed arts standards, which are voluntary. Ms. Calkins said the consortium is working on an implementation handbook.

Agenda Item, 9B. Repeal of educator evaluation pilot. Dr. Susan McCauley, Interim Commissioner, addressed the need to repeal the piloting of the use of student learning data in educator evaluations in this school year, given that the board may choose to repeal the requirement in general. Sondra Meredith, Administrator of Teacher Education & Certification, explained the proposed regulations.

Business meeting

Agenda Item 10A. Educator evaluations. Kenny Gallahorn moved and John Harmon seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 04.205. District performance standards, 4 AAC 19.010. Purpose and scope of evaluations, 4 AAC 19.015. Evaluation materials to be available, 4 AAC 19.030. Evaluation procedures. 4 AAC 19.055. Reporting of evaluation results, and 4 AAC 19.099. Definitions. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 10B. SAT scores. First Vice-Chair Hull moved and Dr. Keith Hamilton seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on 4 AAC 43.020 Standardized examination and grade point average requirements. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 11A. Art standards. John Harmon moved and Kenny Gallahorn seconded the following motion: After considering all public comment, I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to regulations 4 AAC 04.140(a) Content standards. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 11B. Repeal of educator evaluations pilot. First Vice-Chair Hull moved and Rebecca Himschoot seconded the following motion: After considering all public comment, I move the State Board of Education & Early Development repeal 4 AAC 19.010(k) Purpose and scope of evaluations. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 12. MEHS director appointment. Dr. Susan McCauley, Interim Commissioner, reviewed the qualifications of the appointee, Janelle Vanasse, and the process of vetting

applications. She noted that the Governor's Office also wanted the department to consult with the Mt. Edgecumbe High School advisory board. First Vice-Chair Hull moved and Kenny Gallahorn seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Interim Commissioner's appointment of Janelle Vanasse as the Superintendent of Mr. Edgecumbe High School in Sitka, to commence on July 1, 2016.

Before passing the motion unanimously, board members said that future selection processes should include the board.

Agenda Item 12A. Appointment of Interim Commissioner. The board went into executive session, citing state law. After coming out of executive session, John Harmon moved and Dr. Keith Hamilton seconded a motion to approve Dr. Susan McCauley as Interim Commissioner. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item 13. Libraries, Archives & Museums report. Linda Thibodeau, retiring Director of Libraries, Archives & Museums, recommended Patience Frederiksen as her successor. She noted that two archivists are retiring, that June 6 would be the grand opening of the division's new facility, and that budget cuts are expected.

Agenda Item 14. Teaching & Learning Support report. Paul Prussing, Acting Director of Teaching & Learning Support, presented a written report and reviewed expected budget cuts.

Agenda Item 15. Assessment & Accountability report. Margaret MacKinnon, Director of Assessment & Accountability, said the department may put out a request for proposals for a statewide assessment in mid-April, after surveying superintendents and the Every Student Succeeds Act advisory committee.

Dr. Susan McCauley, Interim Commissioner, said she and then-Commissioner Hanley spoke to the U.S. Department of Education about flexibility for school districts in their choice of assessments for spring 2016, but we were denied a waiver. To not give the Alaska Measures of Progress in spring 2016 would put the department out of compliance with state and federal law. The department is not telling school districts how to deal with students opting out of assessments; rather, the department is informing districts about state and federal law, she said. The ultimate goal is to have assessments of learning, for learning, and as learning.

Agenda Item 16. Mt. Edgecumbe High School report. Superintendent Bill Hutton said the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program's proposed acceleration academy has merit but would serve a different population than Mt. Edgecumbe High School serves now. He reviewed progress in the swimming pool project, for which ground has not yet been broken. Board members were concerned that the pool would not have funds to operate. Mr. Hutton said the department has expressed this concern many times since the pool was first approved in fall 2010. The pool is a legislative priority, said Marcy Herman, Legislative Liaison.

Mr. Hutton cited statistics to show the quality and cost-effectiveness of Mt. Edgecumbe High School and the satisfaction of graduates. Barbara Thompson said the board should be more

supportive of Mt. Edgecumbe High School and more forthcoming in its support, such as by a resolution. Chair Fields asked Mr. Hutton to provide the board with data about the school.

Agenda Item 17. Legislative and Budget report. Legislative Liaison Marcy Herman reviewed selected bills. Administrative Services Director Heidi Teshner reviewed the Governor's amended budget and legislative budget actions, which will result in a loss of 20 or so positions at the department.

Agenda Item 19. Commissioner's report. The board received this report out of sequence to accommodate Interim Commissioner McCauley and Chair Fields, who had to leave the meeting for a period. Dr. McCauley said she would attend a national policy meeting about the Every Student Succeeds Act in April.

Agenda Item 18. Attorney General's report. Assistant Attorney General Luann Weyhrauch reviewed recent legal cases. In answer to a board member's question, she said there is no need for a legal opinion on the state statute prohibiting the use of state funds for the Common Core. She noted the legislature has the option to hold a hearing to investigate the facts.

Agenda Item 20. Consent Agenda. John Harmon moved and Kenny Gallahorn seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of the following: approve the appointment of Betty Walters as Interim Deputy Commissioner; approve the school construction and major maintenance lists; approve the minutes of the January 25, 2016, meeting; and approve the appointment of Patience Frederiksen as LAM Director. The motion passed 5-0, with Chair Fields and First Vice-Chair Hull absent.

Board comments

LTC Nall said the board is making good strides in the right direction.

Kenny Gallahorn welcomed Rebecca Himschoot to the board.

Dr. Keith Hamilton thanked Bill Hutton, Betty Walters, and Dr. McCauley. He said the board should support Mt. Edgecumbe High School, and he reiterated concern about the swimming pool's operating funds.

John Harmon thanked staff. He noted the need to explain options to parents and to protect student data. He said the board should consider a regulation regarding the Common Core. He thanked Dr. McCauley.

Wilfried Zibell thanked staff and the board.

Alec Burris thanked staff, congratulated Betty Walters and Dr. McCauley, and welcomed Rebecca Himschoot. He said he was happy with the new art standards.

Rebecca Himschoot said she was thrilled to be on the board. She said she has seen the department change from being a regulatory agency to a supporting body.

Barbara Thompson welcomed Rebecca Himschoot and Betty Walters; thanked the board, public commenters, and staff; and reported on the Alaska Safe Children's Task Force.

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.