

State Board of Education & Early Development
Unapproved Minutes
January 26, 2022
Virtual Platform Meeting
Department of Education & Early Development
801 West 10th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm. After the pledge of allegiance, the board adopted the agenda for January 26, 2022. Second Vice Chair Kowalski moved to adopt the agenda and was seconded by Member Erickson. There were no objections to the adoption of the agenda; motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members at this meeting. Member Van Diest and Member Griffin were both excused from attendance.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened at 12:07 pm.

Emily Ferry resides in Juneau and works with the Alaska Association of School Boards. She called in as a member of the AlaskaCAN! Conference Planning Committee. AlaskaCAN! works with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education to help ensure that we have more Alaskans prepared for the jobs that are available in the state, they are all about increasing the number of Alaskans who have post-secondary credentials, degree certificates, etc. Their conference this year is March 1 through 3 and they took note that overlaps with the State Board of Education's next upcoming meeting so they wanted to extend an invitation to join them for the keynote speaker which will be presenting on March 1 at 8:30 in the morning for about an hour if that works in the board's agenda. That speaker will be Mandy Savage Romer, who is a professor with the Harvard Grad School of Education, and will be looking at how we can work in the K-12 system to increase post-secondary readiness and the number of students, and number of Alaskans, that are ready for jobs in the state. She just wanted to take the opportunity to extend that invitation and she would follow-up by sending some information via email.

Public comment closed at 12:10 pm.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1. Department FY2023 Operating and Capital Budgets

Lacey Sanders, Administrative Services Director, provided an overview of the Governor's FY2023 Operating and Capital budgets for the Department. 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. The most notable items include the K-12 Foundation and Pupil Transportation programs being fully funded based on the statutory formula, as well as full funding for both the School Debt Reimbursement Program and the Regional Educational Attendance Area and Small Municipal School District School Fund (REAA Fund). One significant change in the budget this year is due to the lack of a reverse sweep with the Higher Education Investment Fund (HEIF), so all programs that were previously funded with HEIF have now been funded with unrestricted general funds to ensure the continuity of services within those programs. These include the Alaska Performance Scholarship,

Alaska Education Grants, WWAMI Medical Education Program, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education's administration and operations, and Live Homework Help. Another item to note is that the Governor's budget does increase the WWAMI Medical Education Program; there is an increase in the number of seats that are available, increasing it from 20 to 30 seats. The last operating budget change highlighted is an increase in the Lower Yukon School District's residential school as a result of an increase in their bed count. There was one item in the Capital budget, which is \$54.9 million for the William N Miller K-12 Memorial School Replacement in Napakiak, which is the number one project on the FY2023 School Construction Grant Fund list.

Chair Fields asked about the \$550 thousand for Mt. Edgecumbe High School. Ms. Sanders responded that there was a budget structure change which moved the funding and positions associated with managing the Aquatic Center into its own component for budget clarity. There were no further questions from board members.

Agenda Item 2. Legislative Update

Lacey Sanders, Administrative Services Director, provided an update on when the second regular legislative session of the 32nd Legislature started, January 18, 2022, and shared that there were 15 education related bills in the list of pre-filed bills. Ms. Sanders further mentioned that there are now 65 education related bills that the department is monitoring. She let the board know that both the House and Senate Education Committee members have remained the same and that the department has done two budget presentations so far this session. Chair Fields asked for an update on the reading bills. Commissioner Johnson responded that there was a Senate Finance Committee hearing yesterday on Senate Bill 111 and they would be continuing that discussing this afternoon. The House Education Committee would be hearing their version of the bill, House Bill 164, on Friday, January 28. There were no further questions from board members.

Agenda Item 3. COVID Relief Funding Update

Commissioner Johnson provided opening comments on the department's new federal COVID relief funding dashboard, which is a website where people can go and look at the COVID funding for individual districts. The website was established to facilitate conversations and help answer questions about how districts are spending their COVID funding. Lacey Sanders, Administrative Services Director, further explained that the department also revised the COVID relief website to provide more clarity to districts, legislatures, and others in finding information. Nicole Endsley, Program Coordinator for the COVID relief funding, then walked the board through the website, both the COVID relief resources available on the website (<https://education.alaska.gov/covid-19-information>) and the funding dashboard (<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/publish?EQBCT=0cfd777df5b94c0bbec27cc0631318a4>).

Chair Fields commented on the good job the department did in laying it out and making it easy to navigate and asked if providing this information was a requirement of the funding. Commissioner Johnson shared that there is no specific requirement for the information to be posted in a specific way, but there are requirements that the department and districts post their budget plans on their website. Further, there is an obligation for transparency and ensuring that the department is providing the board, legislature, and the public with information on how the funds are being spent. This is a one stop shop for anyone to be able to go and see how the various pots of money are being spent. There were no further questions from board members.

Agenda Item 4. Mt. Edgecumbe High School Superintendent Recruitment

Commissioner Johnson shared that Superintendent Janelle Vanasse would be retiring and the department will need to go through the recruitment process. He wanted to provide an opportunity for the board to give any feedback on the process the department planned to go through for the hiring of the Superintendent, and it was even more important because the department would also need to go through a hiring process for the principal position.

Chair Fields asked what the timeline for the hire is. Commissioner Johnson responded that the candidate would need to start July 1 but wanted to get the announcement out as soon as possible.

Member Stockhausen applauded the idea of getting as much input from the school, community, and staff as possible, as they are the ones who have to work with this position. She further asked who does the evaluation for the Superintendent. Commissioner Johnson responded that it is either himself or the Deputy Commissioner.

Chair Fields commented that he would lean towards bringing a couple of candidates forward to the State Board if we had them so that they could interview them and at least weigh in on the selection.

Member Stockhausen asked who sets up the committee and what is the advisory boards roll in the process. Commissioner Johnson responded that the Advisory Board would have at least one person on the selection committee, as well as a member of the State Board. Commissioner Johnson then restated that the process would be documented. There were no further questions from the board.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 5. Approve the board's annual report to the legislature

Second Vice Chair Kowalski motioned and First Vice Chair Hamilton seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the report to the legislature. Chair Fields asked if we know when the report would be presented to the legislature and if that would be in person or virtual. Heidi Teshner, Acting Deputy Commissioner, responded that the department was working to schedule a time with the House and Senate Education Committees, and we would keep the board apprised of when it gets scheduled. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no further discussion.

Agenda Item 6. Approve Executive Secretary

Member Stockhausen motioned and Member Erickson seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Janell Andrews as Executive Secretary to the Commissioner and the board, effective immediately. Commissioner Johnson shared a few comments and recommended the board approve her appointment. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no further discussion.

Agenda Item 7. Approve Special Assistant to the Commissioner

Member Stockhausen motioned and Member Erickson seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Commissioner's appointment of Kollette Schroeder as Special Assistant to the Commissioner, effective immediately. Commissioner Johnson shared a few comments and recommended the board approve her appointment. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no further discussion.

Board Comments

Member Erickson shared that he was anxious to look over the new website as it looks very comprehensive, and he appreciates all the work that was done with that and looks forward to getting together in March.

Military Advisor LTC Fowley thanked Commissioner Johnson for explaining to the new guy why we were talking about the Mt. Edgecumbe Superintendent and wondered if that would apply to the Anchorage School District Superintendent, but now he understands why. And he did a google search of the new funding dashboard and it was the first link to pop up so that's great as far as getting the information out to the public. He also is looking forward to seeing everyone in March.

Student Advisor Brokaw stated she was happy to be able to attend this first meeting.

Member Stockhausen applauded the department on the COVID funding transparency on the website, it seems very accessible and well organized, and thanked the department for their work on that. And welcomed First Vice Chair Hamilton back.

Second Vice Chair Kowalski thanked the department for their work on the website. Welcomed First Vice Chair Hamilton back as well. Thanked the department for explaining the budget so thoroughly and clearly. Welcomed Janell and Kollette.

First Vice Chair Hamilton stated it was great to be back. Thanked Janelle Vanasse for all her hard work as the Superintendent of Mt. Edgecumbe and hopes the board can do something to recognize her. He too is looking forward to seeing everyone in March.

Chair Fields welcomed First Vice Chair Hamilton back and welcomed Janell and Kollette. Thanked the Commissioner and department staff for the meeting and looks forward to seeing everyone in March.

The meeting adjourned at 1:07 pm.