

**State Board of Education & Early Development**  
**Approved Minutes**  
**June 10, 2021**  
**Virtual Platform Meeting**  
**Department of Education & Early Development**  
**801 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Juneau, AK 99801**

**Thursday, June 10, 2021**

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. After the pledge of allegiance, the board adopted the agenda for June 10, 2021. Member Van Diest moved to adopt the agenda and was seconded by Member Griffin. There were no objections to the adoption of the agenda. There were no potential conflicts of interest identified by board members at this meeting. Lt. Col. Hammill and Student Advisor Scott were both excused from attendance.

**Public Comment**

Public comment was opened at 9:06 am

Annie Massey (parent) called to express concerns with the public education system in the state of Alaska. She mentioned data that reveals that students in Alaska are not served well by public education. She asked the board to support parents, students, and teachers and to give parents full control of their child's education instead of the teacher's labor union. She asked the board to support a constitutional amendment that protects parents rights to direct the upbringing of their children including education.

Tom Klaameyer- President of NEA Alaska. Thanked the board for their leadership in moving to recovery and rebuilding from the pandemic. He thanked the Department of Education for their work to communicate with teachers and families during the ECHO sessions. He also discussed the Canvas program and encouraged the board to look for innovative ways to assist students in online and hybrid attendance models. He also thanked the board for their continued work to advance the trajectory of Alaska's Education Challenge.

Kenneth Wells- discussed the implementation of critical race theory in the Anchorage School District. He asked the board to do whatever they could to remove the teaching of critical race theory in the Anchorage School District.

Mike Coons- spoke to his opposition of critical race theory being taught in schools.

Dr. Deena Bishop- Superintendent of the Anchorage School District. Thanked the board for their work and for the opportunity to lead the Anchorage School District. She discussed the importance of the need for a major shift in reading instruction. She advocated for a strong tier one curriculum and practice so that there would be a strong structured and systematic approach to reading instruction. She stressed the importance that all students should have access to quality reading instruction. She expressed her support for the University of Alaska's proposed School of Education Early Childhood BA and explained that a program like this could be a game changer for students. She congratulated the department on the formation of the new assessment and is looking forward to it's implementation across the state. She

also was very clear that the ASD does not teach critical race theory. It is not in their current curriculum nor has it ever been requested to be included in their curriculum.

Pamela Samish (parent)- discussed the recommendation of the CDC to get the COVID-19 vaccination for children. She expressed her opinion that the recommendation is foolish, experimental, and dangerous. She also spoke to her opposition of critical race theory being taught in schools.

Lisa Parady- Alaska Council of School Administrators. Thanked the department and staff for their support of students over the last year through the pandemic. She shared with the board an update on the School Leadership Institute and their work to prepare teachers from across the state for the next school year. She congratulated the department on their announcement of the new assessment and is hopeful that this new system will streamline the assessment experience for students and make it more understandable for families and support teachers.

Malan Paquette- spoke about the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education and her hope that the new leadership will address her concerns about what she feels is the mismanagement of their student loans.

Danielle Camp- Alaska Coalition of BIPOC Educators- spoke to their mission to champion equity in education for communities of color in order to achieve equality with their top priorities being in the health and safety of educators students in communities of color, equity in academic opportunities and curriculum and the hiring and retention of educators and color. She asked the board to prioritize the hiring of teachers of color due to the fact that students of color who are taught by teachers of color have better performance, improved graduation rates, and are more likely to attend college. He discussed the recruitment and retention working group results and stressed the importance of recruiting teachers of color and offered the assistance of the Alaska Coalition of BIPOC Educators in moving this directive forward.

Rozlyn Wyche- Alaska Coalition of BIPOC Educators- spoke to her support of critical race theory as an academic movement of civil rights scholars and activists in the United States, who seek to critically examine the law as it intersects with issues of race into challenge mainstream liberal approaches to racial justice. She thanked the Anchorage School District for their anti-racism and instructional equity policy.

Lloyd Thurman- spoke to his opposition of critical race theory being taught in schools.

Public comment closed at 10:04 am

### **Agenda Item 1. UAS Teacher Preparation Program Presentation**

Commissioner Johnson explained to the board that they would be briefed on the current teacher preparation programs offered by the University of Alaska Southeast's Alaska College of Education and the results of its most recent accreditation visit by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Dr. Dean Atwater and Dean Scott Christian provided an overview of the UAS education program and described how they met the CAEP accreditation standards along with the CAEP accreditation process. They informed the board that UAS' Alaska College of Education received full accreditation in both the initial and advanced programs for the five years until the spring of 2025. They also updated the board on changes that the UA Board of Regents implemented at their last board meeting including changing the name of the UA Education Unit to the UA School of Education, moving

the UAF school of education and the UAA school out of their existing colleges to become independent academic units, and to create a college of education consortium that will be comprised of the directors of each of the units, as well as faculty and some members from statewide as well as a liaison so this action moves us away from playing a lead role in the system and can be viewed as a leveling of the playing field. Although the university system is undergoing a big change, Dr. Atwater stressed that on the program level, the student will not feel the changes as they enroll and go through the School of Education. UA Interim President Pat Pitney also assisted with the discussion and took questions from the board.

### **Agenda Item 2. UAA School of Education Early Childhood BA**

Commissioner Johnson informed the board that they would be briefed on a proposed plan to regain initial program accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and state-approval by the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). Provost Denise Runge of UAA presented to the board their proposal for the School of Education Early Childhood Bachelor of Arts (BA). As of now, UAA offers a certificate and an associate's degree in the field of early childhood education. They also offer advanced programs in educational leadership special education and language education which underwent evaluation by CAEP for accreditation and are awaiting a decision in the fall regarding those programs. She briefed the board and gave them some advanced information about steps that UAA is taking so that they could initially license teachers at the preschool through three level through the addition of a new BA in early childhood education. She noted that the degree has been created and approved through the UAS School of Education process, but has not yet been approved by the Board of Regents. Dr. Hilary Seitz joined Provost Runge as they explained to the board what the degree would look like and then took questions. The board asked that the UAA system bring back more detailed information to them which detailed their focus on reading in this program. Commissioner Johnson committed to the board that he would not bring something to the board for their approval without making sure that it has been thoroughly vetted so that it can be successful.

### **Agenda Item 3. Legislative and Budget Update**

Heidi Teshner, Director of Finance and Support Services, and Lacey Sanders, Administrative Services Director, briefed the board on the status of the department's FY2022 budget, including any changes made to the budgets through the House and Senate Finance Subcommittees and Conference Committee. As of June 10, the budget had not passed and the legislature had until June 18 to do so. Director Teshner briefed the board on the three pieces of legislation that passed during session that impacted the Department of Education. House Bill 73 extended the COVID-19 disaster emergency and was signed into law on April 30. House Bill 100 reauthorizes the technical vocational education program, also known as TVEP for an additional three years so through June 30, 2024. Senate Bill 19 reauthorizes the Special Education Services Agency, also known as SESA, for an additional eight years and increase the funding allocation from \$18.65 to \$23.13 times the average daily membership. Although the reading bill did not pass this session, the legislature is working to get a revised draft to work on in the interim or next session.

Director Sanders gave the board an update on the budget. As of this meeting, the legislature was still working to pass a budget during their special session and the 30-day deadline of the special session was June 18. Director Sanders will give the board a more complete picture of the budget once it has been passed by the legislature. She anticipates that this update could occur at the next state board meeting.

### **Agenda Item 4. Adoption of English Language Proficiency Standards Regulations and English Language Exit Criteria Regulations**

Commissioner Johnson asked the board to approve in their business meeting the adoption of proposed amendments to regulations involving the assessment of English learners, including revised exit criteria for English learners and updated English language proficiency standards. Deb Riddle, Division Operations Manager, and Tammy Van Wyhe, Director of the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence provided a brief overview of the regulations to refresh the board's memory and took questions from the board. This regulations packet was put out for public comment and received positive feedback during the public comment period.

#### **Agenda Item 5. MEHS School Advisory Board Appointments**

Commissioner Johnson asked the board to approve in their business meeting the appointment of three members to the Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) Advisory Board. MEHS Superintendent Janelle Vanasse introduced the board to Dorothy Chase, Lydia Agnus, and Marry Suzzuk via their applications and gave a brief history of the advisory board's seats that were being filled. Two seats that were open, one alumni representative and one parent representative as well as a second parent position that was vacated during the year and stayed unfilled until the time came to reappoint the seat. Member Stockhausen spoke to her support of the candidates listed as she is the board's representative to the MEHS Advisory Board. Member Van Diest asked the board to consider what steps needed to be taken to transition the MEHS Advisory Board to a regular school board instead of the state board filling that role as the MEHS Advisory Board is more directly involved in the operations of MEHS. Commissioner Johnson will research the issue and get back to the board but he mentioned that it is most likely a statutory issue as MEHS exists in statute.

#### **Agenda Item 6. MEHS Credit Requirements Updates**

Commissioner Johnson asked the board to approve in their business meeting the recommended adjustments to the MEHS credit requirements. The recommendations do not adjust the total number of credits but do expand the classes that can be taken for specific requirements. Superintendent Vanasse walked the board through the curriculum changes and took questions from the board. She detailed the three credit adjustments that needed adjusting were the existing "technology credit" that was put in place when computers were new to the education environment previously only accepted courses that were computer-based. With an increase of time in this credit requirement, the recommendation is to expand to include career and technology classes to allow students to choose courses most aligned with their post-secondary plans. The PE and Health 2.0 credit requirement required students to spend the equivalent of 80 minutes per day for a full year equivalent. Adjusting the credit requirement to 1.5 will hold the same amount of time for this subject area that is more time-based. The extra 0.5 will be shifted to elective credit. In the previous system, Alaska History was provided as a 1.0 credit class. The recommendation is to meet the requirement with a 0.5 credit class and allow the student to choose an elective social studies class to complete the same 4.0 credits of required social studies. The board stressed the fact that issues like these could be decided by the MEHS Advisory Board if they were able to operate as a school board and encouraged a further discussion on ways that they could give the MEHS Advisory Board more authority in which to make decisions on topics such as credit requirements and curriculum. Superintendent Vanasse and Commissioner Johnson will continue to work on the issue and bring back recommendations to the board as they have them.

#### **Agenda Item 7. Adoption of English Language Proficiency Standards Regulations and English Language Exit Criteria Regulations**

Member Griffin motioned and Member Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 04.155 English language proficiency standards, 4 AAC 06.776 Assessment of a student that is an English learner, 4 AAC

06.820 Participation, 4 AAC 34.055 Plan of service, and 4 AAC 34.090 Definitions. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

#### **Agenda Item 8. MEHS School Advisory Board Appointments**

Member Hamilton motioned and Member Stockhausen seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development appoint Dorothy Chase to the full term Parent Representative seat, Lydia Agnus to the full term Alumni Representative seat, and Mary Suzzuk Huntington to the remaining one year Parent Representative seat on the Mt. Edgecumbe High School Advisory Board. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

#### **Agenda Item 9. MEHS Credit Requirements Updates**

Member Erickson motioned and Member Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed MEHS credit requirement adjustments. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

#### **Agenda Item 10. Questions Regarding Standing Reports**

Commissioner Johnson introduced the standing reports which includes Innovation and Education Excellence; Libraries, Archives, and Museums; Mt. Edgecumbe High School; and the Department of Law. Member Hamilton asked about Mt. Edgecumbe vaccination rates and asked if there was a requirement to be vaccinated for students returning in the fall. Superintendent Vanasse mentioned that they are encouraging their students and staff to be vaccinated but they are not requiring it and they have built quarantine measures for unvaccinated students into their Smart Start plans. Superintendent Vanasse also addressed questions from the board regarding their testing measures in Mt. Edgecumbe. Director Van Whye from the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence took questions from the board regarding the new assessment as well as the plan for Alaska Virtual School in the fall. Commissioner Johnson responded to questions about the emergency C type certificates being awarded and ways that districts could still utilize the certification without a disaster declaration in place. He encouraged board members to reach out to Sondra Meredith with the Teacher Certification Section with any questions that they had.

#### **Agenda Item 11. Commissioner's Report**

Commissioner Johnson thanked the members of the public who attended the meeting. He informed the board regarding his evaluation, that, although they usually do it in June, since they will be meeting in person in August, they would complete it when they were all together. He congratulated staff who had experienced growth in their families in the form of new children and highlighted the fact that in just a few short years, those children will be in the education system. They need an education system that will be effective. Commissioner Johnson reminded the board that the work they and the department do is not just for today's students but for tomorrow's students. He thanked Deputy Commissioner Karen Melin and Director of Innovation and Education Excellence Tammy Van Wyhe for their service to the department as they will be moving on from the department.

#### **Agenda Item 12. Selection of meeting dates, locations, and topics**

Member Van Diest motioned and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move that the State Board of Education and Early Development adopt the following date as set forth on page 129 of the board packet for the June 10, 2021 meeting with the change of the August 23 through the 25th 2021 location in Juneau, Fairbanks, or Sitka for our regular quarterly meeting. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

### **Agenda Item 13. Subcommittee Appointments**

The board engaged in a discussion of the members who should sit on the various subcommittees that had members appointed to them. Member Hamilton will serve on the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) Committee and be an alternate for the Education Commission of the States as well as the joint subcommittee with the UA Board of Regents. Member Van Diest will serve on the College of Rural and Community Development as well as the CTE Committee and be an alternate on the joint subcommittee with the UA Board of Regents.. Chair Fields will serve on the Public School Trust Fund Advisory Committee as well as the Education Commission of the States. Member Griffin will serve on the Public School Trust Fund Advisory Committee as well as the Military Compact. Member Erickson will serve on the Technical Advisory Committee as well as the CTE Committee. Member Kowalski will serve on the Public School Trust Fund Advisory Committee as well as the joint subcommittee with the UA Board of Regents. Member Stockhausen will serve on the Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education as well as the MEHS Advisory Board.

### **Agenda Item 14. Selection of Officers**

Chair Fields turned the gavel over to Commissioner Johnson who opened the nominations for Chair of the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development. Member Griffin made the following motion which was seconded by Member Van Diest: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development elect James Fields as Chair to serve from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. There were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote but James Fields abstained from voting. Member Stockhausen made the following motion which was seconded by Member Griffin: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development elect Keith Hamilton as First Vice-Chair to serve from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. There were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote but Member Hamilton abstained from voting. Member Van Diest made the following motion which was seconded by Member Hamilton: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development elect Sandy Kowalski as Second Vice-Chair to serve from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. There were no other nominations. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

### **Agenda Item 15. Consent Agenda**

Member Stockhausen motioned and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of approval of the minutes of the March 16-17, 2021 board meeting and the April 21, 2021 board meeting. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

### **Board Comments**

Member Stockhausen expressed her excitement about the new NWEA assessment contract and how that will improve education in the state. She also thanked the University of Alaska system and their work to prepare tomorrow's teachers to be outstanding teachers of reading. She thanked the district leadership teams to teachers for all of their outstanding efforts to make sure that students received what they needed during this year and is looking forward to next school year.

Member Griffin stressed the importance of letting the Alaska's Education Challenge remain the north star for navigating through all of the issues that exist in education throughout the state. He remarked about the results of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention study and the importance of retaining strong teachers to help new teachers. He discussed critical race theory and requested that the board have a conversation about the topic at a future board meeting. He echoed earlier thoughts about giving the MEHS Advisory Board more independence to make key decisions for the high school instead of

waiting for the state board. He concluded by thanking Deputy Commissioner Melin and Director Van Wyhe for their work for the department.

Member Hamilton thanked the department for their work during the pandemic and hopes that next year will look like normal. He is looking forward to seeing everyone in August at the board meeting in person.

Member Erickson is encouraged by the work that the University of Alaska system is doing to move forward with certification programs for teachers across the state. He congratulated the department on the new assessment and echoed Member Griffin's comments about having a discussion at the board level regarding critical race theory.

Member Kowalski is excited about the new assessment and is looking forward to the department's updates as we move through this new assessment into spring testing. She is eager to work with the University of Alaska system and their focus on teacher preparation programs and requested that the board spend time with the Board of Regents during their board meeting in August. She also thanked Deputy Commissioner Melin and Director Van Wyhe for their work for the department.

Member Van Diest- mentioned that she was excited about the new assessment and how that will play out for students as well as her eagerness to see the rest of the board in person in August. She is also looking forward to the progress from the University of Alaska system on their new programs that they are proposing while keeping in mind that they must teach reading that matters. She repeated her request that Superintendent Vanasse and Commissioner Johnson work with the MEHS Advisory Board to transition that board from an advisory board to a working board so that they can make decisions for Mt. Edgecumbe without waiting for the state board. She would also like to see an agenda item on a future agenda to discuss critical race theory. She also thanked Deputy Commissioner Melin and Director Van Wyhe for their work for the department and wished them well in their future endeavors.

Chair Fields spoke to the four internal committees that the board members were part of and requested that a discussion about making changes to those committees be placed on the agenda for the next board meeting. He celebrated the work that Deputy Commissioner Melin and Director Van Wyhe had done for the department. He is looking forward to future work with the University of Alaska system and is hopeful that a meeting between the state board and the UA Board of Regents can take place soon. He is hopeful that a reading bill can make it through the legislature next session and is grateful for the new assessment that the department will be implementing. He thanked Commissioner Johnson for his leadership and is looking forward to seeing everyone in person in August.

Linda read the following comment from Student Advisor Myriam Scott as she was unable to attend but requested that her comments be put on the record: I would like to say thank you to all the board members for being so welcoming and this was an amazing and incredibly informative experience. I wish I could've met you all in person but nonetheless this experience was incredibly impactful to me as a student.

Meeting adjourned at 2:44 pm