

Alaska State Professional Teaching Practices Commission
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1236
Anchorage AK 99501
ADOPTED MINUTES
April 15-16, 2021 (Via Zoom)

Call to Order: Lem Wheelles called the meeting to order at 8:38a.m. There were 7 members present on the conference call so there was a quorum.

Members Present: Janine Todd, Tammy Van Wyhe, Secretary Jamie Burgess, Chair Lem Wheelles, Adam Reid, Jennifer Stafford, Danette Peterson. All members attended via Zoom. Melody Mann, PTPC Executive Director was also present.

Members Absent: Tony Graham, Diane Kardash

Agenda Approval: Tammy Van Whye moved and Janine Todd seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Melody noted that there would be no administrative review. The agenda was unanimously approved with the removal of the administrative review.

Introductions/Updates from Communities: New member Danette Peterson introduced herself. All other members reintroduced themselves and shared an education issue that they are passionate about.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved by Tamara Van Whye and seconded by Adam Reid to approve the January 28, 2021 minutes. The motion passed with the correction to the year listed in the minutes header.

Department of Education Teacher Certification Report:

Sondra Meredith joined at 9:00am and reported that she attended the Alaska Teacher Placement's first ever Virtual Job Fair. There will be a second virtual fair on April 22nd. The Alaska Teacher Certification Office will have a booth at this fair. Sondra also participated in an event for Human Resource Managers at the ALASBO conference, which was held virtually over 3 days. She provided information regarding the certification process in Alaska. ALASBO plans to continue this virtual model and invite additional Human Resource professionals for education to participate, since these individuals have significant impact on recruitment and retention for school districts. Sondra also participated in the University of Alaska Anchorage's recent accreditation visit; UAA had submitted information to the state accreditation council, which was followed by a virtual visit with professors, students enrolled in the program, alumni, and employers of graduates. The purpose of the visit was to ensure that UAA will be working with stakeholders to continually improve teacher licensure programs. In the fall a determination of accreditation status for UAA should be made.

There are potential changes to licensure due to legislation; the certification office tracks legislation moving through the legislature in this area. There has been activity around a few house bills; limited certificates for immersion teachers and recognition of NTBC teachers. SB20 – the out of state reciprocity bill - has had some committee hearings. Sondra invited PTPC members to review the bills and provide testimony when available to the appropriate legislative body.

The Teacher Certification Office has filled their two vacancies and trained new staff in anticipation for the hiring season reaching peak. The Office is very close to having a new fully online certification application process ready to launch.

Sondra responded to a question from the Commission how new teachers from the lower 48 have handled the requirement for the Alaska History and Multicultural Education courses during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was also discussion around disseminating information around hiring J-1 Visa applicants to districts around Alaska.

Executive Director's Reports: Melody Mann delivered her reports in the following areas.

Activity Report: Melody is seeing relatively few actual complaints being filed, but quite a few contacts to her office. There have been quite a few questions regarding the pandemic and the decision-making going on by districts about how instruction is delivered, whether teachers can teach remotely from out of state, etc. There have been several issues with complainants wanting to remain anonymous but still initiate a complaint; state statute says complaints must be signed. Breach of contract issues have been discussed with contacts, but most have not risen to the level of an actual complaint. Melody updated her CJIS training addressing security of personal information while reviewing criminal history records, and she also commented that she has not had any additional requests for presentations regarding Professional Boundaries Trainings. Melody will be holding a meeting with APEI and AASB regarding district adoption of the new Professional Boundaries policy and self-paced training modules for teachers to use and also hopes to do some training with principals in the near future on the policy. Melody commented on the confirmation hearings for several commission members, and noted that the legislature seemed to be a little better informed on the mission and activities of the PTPC than in the past. The records retention schedule has now been completed and Melody plans to evaluate all of the files in the PTPC office for potential disposal or retention accordingly to the schedule.

Financial Report: Melody reviewed the expenditures to date. Next year's budget request includes asking for restoration of funds to cover in-person meetings three times a year, although Melody is unsure whether this request will be granted in full.

Case Report: The commission was provided a summary of the cases the PTPC office has investigated since the last meeting.

EXECUTIVE/DELIBERATIVE SESSION: Tammy Van Whye moved and Danette Peterson seconded to go into executive session as permitted by AS 44.62.310(d). The motion passed unanimously. The commission moved into deliberative session at 9:56 am.

Chair Lem Wheelles called the meeting back into order in Executive Session at 10:06am after a short break.

The meeting was recessed at 12:13pm for lunch. The meeting came back to order at 1:16pm.

It was moved by Jamie Burgess and seconded by Adam Reid to move out of deliberative session at 1:25pm. The motion passed.

Action Items

Professional Teaching Practices Commission Cases

PTPC Case 21-09: *The Commission accepted the stipulated agreement reprimanding the Initial Teaching Certificate of Trevor McGrady.*

Moved: Jamie Burgess Second: Janine Todd

AYE
Lem Wheelles
Tammy Van Wyhe
Adam Reid
Jamie Burgess
Danette Peterson
Jennifer Stafford
Janine Todd

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 21-13: *The Commission accepted the stipulated agreement issuing a warning against the Professional Teaching Certificate of an educator.*

Moved: Tammy Van Whye Second: Danette Peterson

AYE
Janine Todd
Tammy Van Wyhe
Adam Reid
Jamie Burgess
Danette Peterson
Jennifer Stafford
Lem Wheelles

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

PTPC Case 21-14: *The Commission accepted the stipulated agreement issuing a warning against the Administrative and Special Services Teaching Certificate of an educator.*

Moved: Adam Reid Second: Danette Peterson

AYE

Janine Todd
Tammy Van Wyhe
Adam Reid
Jamie Burgess
Danette Peterson
Jennifer Stafford
Lem Wheelles

NAY

Motion passed unanimously.

Election of FY21 Officers

Lem Wheelles was nominated to serve as Chair of the Commission for the coming year. With no other nominees, the motion was passed unanimously.

Adam Reid was nominated to serve as Vice Chair of the Commission for the coming year. With no other nominees, the motion was passed unanimously.

Jamie Burgess was nominated to serve as Secretary for the Commission for the coming year. With no other nominees, the motion was passed unanimously.

Schedule for 2021-2022 Meetings

Fall Meeting – October 7-8, 2021; Winter Meeting January 27-28, 2022; Spring Meeting April 14-15, 2022. In Person meetings will be held at the PTPC Offices in Anchorage.

Discussion Items

Administrative Reviews:

Lem asked about how administrative reviews are to be conducted, and Melody read the bylaws for the commission stating that a panel of no less than three is needed. The full Board is not necessary to conduct reviews, and Lem shared concerns about handling reviews in a timely fashion, as opposed to waiting until the entire Board could be convened. Melody discussed that her predecessor has addressed this issue and felt that first, it was a lot of burden on a panel of three, second, that it was a learning experience that it was important for the commissioners to participate in, and lastly that it would require appropriate notification under the open meetings act, and an opportunity for public comment.

Melody said there were some different options that could be considered if needed. Tammy stated that it was important to have all the different viewpoints from the different seats, and Jamie suggested perhaps leveraging video platform use if there was a particular situation where a review should be conducted in a timeframe which fell outside the normal meeting schedule to allow for more commission members to participate in an abbreviated meeting.

In Person Meetings:

Discussion was held around the request for a budget for holding all three meetings in person next year. Melody also discussed a current in person hearing request, and the challenge of scheduling since no travel would be permitted for commission members until after the school year ended, and the availability of the legal counsel involved. Discussion was held around the pros and cons of in person versus online meetings.

Outreach Efforts:

Lem discussed a need to heighten the visibility and understanding of the PTPC's function and the Educator Code of Ethics amongst the educational community in Alaska, and volunteered himself to speak to groups as well as encouraging other commissioners who might be interested in doing the same. He also mentioned the possible idea of putting together a short information video about the PTPC, possibly in partnership with NEA Alaska. Discussion was also held around presentations that Melody does for districts and what those look like. Melody stated she has three slightly different versions – one for educators, one for administrators and one for pre-service educators.

There has been discussion around the cost of producing an eLearning module or video around the Code of Ethics and the PTPC. Melody discussed an agreement with NASDTEC allowing commission members to complete their Prevention and Correction course at no charge. She thought it would be a good potential model if we wanted to do something ourselves.

Information Items

Farewells to Outgoing Members:

A thank you to Tony Graham and Diane Kardash for their service as their terms come to an end, and to Tamara Van Whye and Janine Todd, who will be retiring from their respective positions. Tamara's replacement will likely be nominated to fill her seat, and Janine hopes to be able to continue if retired educators are allowed to continue in their seats. Both Tammy and Janine shared their enjoyment of their time serving on the commission.

Adjournment: Tammy Van Whye moved and Danette Peterson seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved. Lem Wheelles adjourned the meeting at 2:39 pm.

Submitted by,
Jamie Burgess
April 21, 2021