

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Education Committee Meeting

LOCATION

Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference

Meeting Date

August 23, 2012
1:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Anna Attla
Taylor Gregg
Terese Kashi
Don Enoch
Heidi Haas
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus

Community Members and Guests:

Christine Inglet
Patrick Pillai
Sam Jordan
Fred Villa
Maureen Pintner
Tonja Updike

Staff:

Teresa Holt
Patrick Reinhart

Prepared by:

Patrick Reinhart

Call to Order – 1:30 p.m.

Roll Call

READING OF THE COUNCIL MISSION

Don Enoch recited the Council's mission statement
"Creating change that improves the lives of people with disabilities"

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Announcements or Good News

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reminded folks that the FASD awareness day is coming up September 9th.

Taylor said her cousin is doing better

Terese Kashi said she was happy to be off crutches finally following her knee surgery.

After initially not being reappointed, the Governor's office has reappointed Taylor Gregg to the Council

Fred Villa reminded people to be extra cautious when driving now that school is back in session.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

Heidi Haas **MOVED** to approve the agenda. Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus seconded the motion. The motion **PASSED**.

Don Enoch **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the July 2012 meeting but with a correction that he was present via teleconference. Heidi Haas seconded the motion. The motion **PASSED** with the notation that Don was present.

CORRESPONDENCE

Teresa shared the information about the lawsuit that was recently decided by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (Case # 112 LRP 37428). The case cited the Anchorage School District for failure to develop an updated IEP simply because a parent had IDEA administrative complaints

pending with the district. The lower courts sided with the District's argument, but the 9th Circuit reversed the lower court rulings, siding with the parent and the student with a disability. The Court of Appeals is the last stop before a case goes to the Supreme Court, and this decision will have regional if not national implications. The parent of the child, Maureen Pintner, was a guest at the meeting and she explained the case in more detail to the committee members. Committee members are welcome to contact Maureen directly if they have questions. Patrick and Teresa have her contact information.

Teresa let the committee know that the State Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is filing a waiver from some of the rules required by the National "No Child Left Behind" law. They call it an ESEA Flexibility Waiver. DEED put their proposal out for comment and held informational webinars. Comments were due last Tuesday, and the Council provided input in two primary areas, which is listed below:

Principle 2 State-Developed Differentiated System of Recognition, Accountability and Support

The Council commends EED for proposing a star rating system under the draft waiver which focuses on school improvement instead of corrective action and that the proposed system is tailored to the educational realities faced in Alaska instead of requiring the implementation of corrective action options that are not possible in rural communities.

Under the current system, students with disabilities count 100% towards AYP resulting in significant efforts to increase the proficiency rate of students with disabilities. Under the proposed Alaska School Performance Index, students with disabilities only count 3.5% of the total score. The Council is concerned that this will reduce the amount of effort put towards improving the academic achievement of students with disabilities. The Council supports the requirement for schools to include subgroups in which there are at least 5 students. This will greatly increase the number of rural schools reporting on subgroups.

Principle 3: Effective Instruction and Leadership (Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems)

The Council is very concerned about the evaluation requirement proposed in the waiver to base 20% of teacher and administrator performance on student data. While it is not clear whether special education teachers and related services providers will be included in this waiver provision, the Council is concerned that this provision might have the unintended consequence of teachers choosing to leave special education teaching positions in favor of positions educating the students who achieve the highest academic scores. Alaska already faces a statewide shortage of special education teachers and related service professionals throughout the state and this provision could increase the shortage.

At the last meeting Teresa shared a letter from the office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) regarding their request for feedback on how they do business. OSEP will be asking for the public's input until the end of August. Teresa read the second question to the committee and let them know that they can provide input via the link she sent out earlier in the day.

Review of Graduation and Dropout Rates

Teresa talked about the EED stakeholders meeting on graduation and dropouts next week in Anchorage, which will be attended by Julie Broyles, Eric Gebhart and herself. In preparing for that meeting, she asked the Committee to discuss ideas and make recommendations for the delegation to present at the stakeholders meeting. The Committee reviewed the data on drop out and graduation rates. Sam Jordon from EED talked about how that data is collected and warned that you cannot always compare equally from year to year because the federal government changes the way the data is collected. However, overall it provides a good longitudinal view on how the state is doing on graduation and dropout rates. The committee members then discussed some recommendations. Teresa then asked that if members have additional ideas to **email her feedback by August 28th** or call her on the phone to if they want to provide feedback that way. Below are the recommendations discussed at the meeting:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increased training for all teachers (regular and special education) on evidence based interventions, best practices and practical ways for teachers to increase graduation rates/decrease dropout rates.
2. EED should ensure IEP teams are providing real data at quarterly progress reporting periods (i.e. is the student closing the gap?, real data not just nice words).
3. EED should create a regulation that says if a student fails an SBA that schools/districts are required to show (using actual data) that they are implementing meaningful interventions that close the achievement gap for that student based on data driven instruction.
4. EED should do a data analysis on suspensions/expulsions and graduation/dropout correlation. Also look for a correlation between schools implementing positive behavior supports and graduation/dropout rates.
5. EED should add additional questions to the Post School Outcomes survey for students identified as dropouts and for those who did not receive a diploma.
6. EED should raise the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18 (with exceptions for students who get their GED or diploma before age 18).
7. Interventions should target students in middle school and 9th grade as that is when most students dropout.
8. EED should look for a correlation in the reduction of related services/supports on the IEP in middle/high school and graduation/dropout rates.
9. EED should mandate that schools identify and change policies/practices that decrease graduation rates or increase dropout rates (i.e. truancy policy leads to expulsion, how missed school work is allowed to be made up, compulsory attendance age,).
10. Schools should have to develop and implement programs to increase attendance rates (i.e. home visits,).
11. EED should create a mandatory policy that districts increase number of students reading at grade level by 3rd grade (like an annual measurable objective) using research-based, data-driven instruction.
12. EED should leverage the research done by ICER
13. EED should look at post secondary school graduation data

14. EED should create alternate pathways for students with disabilities to obtain diplomas
15. EED should require districts to implement early warning systems to identify students at risk for dropping out/not graduating and provide research-based interventions for these students.
16. EED should create a clearing house/provide technical assistance to districts on best practices, research based interventions, and practical ways to increase graduation rates/decrease dropout rates.

REPORT FROM STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

There was no time left for a report so Teresa said she would ask Geri Benshoof to provide a report in writing.

REPORT FROM SESA

There was no time left for a report so Teresa said she would ask Patrick Pillai to provide a report in writing.

REPORT FROM EED

There was no time left for a report so Teresa said she would ask Don Enoch to provide a report in writing.

REPORT ON OSEP MEGA CONFERENCE

Taylor Gregg, Amy Simpson and Teresa Holt attended for the Council and will provide a separate report to the committee members in writing.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- EED stakeholder meeting in Anchorage: 8/30-8/31-Julie Broyles, Eric Gebhart and Teresa Holt will be attending for the Council.
- State Board of EED in Kodiak: 9/13-9/14-Patrick Reinhart will attend.
- State SPED Directors Meeting in Anchorage, 9/27-9/28
- Council Meeting in Anchorage, 10/3-10/5—all council members attend, Statewide Public Testimony and Community Gathering is 8 pm on 10/3.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next regularly scheduled meeting is supposed to be Thursday, Sept. 27 but that is the same time as the SPED Directors meeting in Anchorage. Staff will send out a Doodle poll for an alternate meeting time.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.