

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
September 25, 2014
1:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Taylor Gregg – Chair
Don Enoch
Angie Fraize
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Mallory Hamilton
Terese Kashi
Patrick Pillai

Community Members and Guests:

Anne Applegate
Adele Daniels
Clayton Holland
Cassidy Jones
Jim Kreatschman
Amy Westfall
Blayne White

Staff:

Teresa Holt
Christie Reinhardt
Patrick Reinhart

Minutes prepared by: Jeannette Rice, Peninsula Reporting

Call to Order –1:32 p.m.
Roll Call

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR
INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND GOOD NEWS

Teresa Holt announced that she would be leaving the Governor's Council on October 22nd to become the new long-term care ombudsman.

Taylor Gregg announced that she had just returned from a fun and interesting trip to the east coast to visit family, during which she went to Salem, Massachusetts.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Christie Reinhardt noted that new business would come before old business to accommodate the schedule of Sam Jordan from the Department of Education.

Mallory Hamilton **MOVED** to approve the agenda as amended. The motion **PASSED**.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Terese Kashi **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the August 21, 2014 meeting. The motion **PASSED**.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report on for this meeting.

REPORTS

Chair's Report

Taylor Gregg stated that the Executive Committee had discussed and prepared comments on the regulations regarding students being allowed to take tests to challenge courses.

SESA

Patrick Pillai noted that Eric Gebhardt had concluded his term with the Governor's Council, and Patrick thanked Eric for his leadership as president of the SESA board. Patrick commented that Eric Gebhardt had elevated them to a new standard with his outstanding contributions.

Patrick announced that the new SESA board chair will be Jack Walsh, superintendent of the Craig City Schools on Prince of Wales Island.

Patrick Pillai also said goodbye to Teresa Holt, adding that her knowledge, advocacy, and competency will be sorely missed on the SESA board.

Patrick Pillai stated that the FASD SESA committee has contracted with David Tarcy to design a survey for teachers and paraprofessionals in all 54 Alaskan school districts. A draft of the questionnaire is now in circulation.

Patrick Pillai concluded by reporting that SESA has hired a new deaf education specialist, Olivia Yancey.

EED

Don Enoch explained that the monitoring schedule is going as planned, and the Department has been doing some technical assistance trips in which they work with school districts to provide training or guidance in problem areas.

Don Enoch kept his comments brief and noted that Sam Jordan would also be speaking for the Department of Education.

State Board of Education

Christie Reinhardt reported that she had attended the State Board of Education meeting at which they passed the legislation removing the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam. Christie noted that the new chair is Esther Cox, who recognized the Governor's Council in her remarks to the board about the HSGQE.

Christie Reinhardt noted that the regulations allowing students to challenge courses, which the Governor's Council had given comment on, also passed.

Christie Reinhardt stated that there is now one comprehensive document that covers accessibility accommodations for all of the eight different assessments that are done in Alaska, so the Governor's Council is going to give comments on that document. Also, regulations regarding restraint and seclusion are being put out for comment. Christie told the committee that she would send the links to these documents as they become available.

FASD Work Group

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus stated that the FASD sub-committee had a contest and an awareness walk in Kiana, and later this afternoon she is going to do a meeting at the school. Jeanne mentioned the survey that David Tarcy is preparing, and said that they will be trying to assemble the work group to discuss the draft soon.

Christie Reinhardt added that the Anchorage School District held an FASD Day event. Senator Meyer attended and read the Governor's Proclamation, and they had booths, activities, and presentations. Christie estimated that over 200 people came through, and many of them were educators.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus added that the group planned to submit a proposal for a presentation at the ASSEC conference in February.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of OSEP letter

Sam Jordan from the Department of Education addressed the committee about a recent letter that was received from the federal government that summarizes a determination of Alaska's ability to implement results-driven accountability (RDA) in the state. Sam explained that this letter recognizes that Alaska has been in compliance with OSEP requirements, but has not seen any improvement in performance as a result. Now a new system, RDA, is being used to assess performance, coinciding with a new set of

state standards and training on the new assessments. Sam Jordan described this time as an opportunity to improve proficiency rates for all students in Alaska.

Sam explained that all states and territories are being required to create a state systemic improvement plan to address one specific educational prerogative. Christie Reinhardt stated that the Governor's Council would help in that work.

OLD BUSINESS

Assessments

Christie Reinhardt noted that she had participated in some talks about the new assessments and had attended the Teaching and Learning Support Institute on September 24th. Christie described the new assessments and the many accessibility features of the new computer-based tests, like being able to have the text enlarged or read aloud. There are also accommodation features that can be turned on by an individual teacher, such as Braille or American Sign Language versions. Christie Reinhardt said that the tests will ultimately be designed to gauge a students' ability and will adjust the difficulty of questions accordingly.

Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

- October 1 - 2: Governor's Council Meeting, Special Olympics Building, Anchorage
- October 15 - 16: Special Education Directors Training, Downtown Hilton, Anchorage.
- October 18 - 20: Alaska Elementary and Secondary Principals' Association, Anchorage

Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next Education Committee meeting will be on October 23rd from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.