

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL  
EDUCATION**

**Education Committee**

**LOCATION**

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

**Meeting Date**

**February 19, 2015  
1:35 p.m.**

**Attendees:**

Terese Kashi – Acting Chair  
Anthony Cravalho  
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus  
Jill Burkert  
Heidi Haas  
Patrick Pillai  
Breanna Brian  
Amy Westfall  
Clayton Holland  
Jim Kreatschman  
Derrick Pennington

**Guest Speaker:**

Evelyn Alsup

**Staff:**

Christie Reinhardt

**Prepared by:** Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

**CALL TO ORDER – 1:35 p.m.**  
**ROLL CALL**

### **Welcome from the Chair**

Terese Kashi, acting chair, welcomed committee members to the meeting.

### **Announcements and Good News**

Christie Reinhardt reported that her son made the honor roll in middle school. Christie expressed her appreciation to the staff at Hanshew Middle School for their support, and noted that the structured learning environment has created a positive climate for her son to be successful.

Jill Burkert reported that they had one graduate from their program with a BA in special education last semester, and they expect three more graduates this semester.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Heidi Haas **MOVED** to approve the agenda. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**.

### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the January meeting. During discussion, Christie Reinhardt asked for an amendment to reflect that SESA is renegotiating their contract with their accounting firm, not the Department of Education as reported.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the January meeting as amended. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

### **Reports**

#### **SESA**

Patrick Pillai reported that the SESA database cited 206 travel itineraries and 720 technical assistance contacts related to activities provided by specialists in school districts between July 1, 2014 and February 19, 2015.

Patrick Pillai reported that after the GCI evaluation of SESA internet equipment, the bandwidth was upgraded from five megabytes per second to seven megabytes per second.

Patrick Pillai reported that training was provided to 19 school staff and one parent from each district by SESA disability specialists. Eagle Eye training was also included at district testing sites.

Patrick Pillai reported that the second quarter grants are significantly ahead of deadlines, and they are set up to develop videos on specific intervention strategies to post on the SESA website. Patrick noted that they intend to hire two new alternate specialists for FY2016.

## **EED**

There was no report available from EED for this meeting.

## **CASE**

Clayton Holland reported that special education administrators met at the ASSEC Conference. Christie Reinhardt was a guest speaker, and she spoke to the members about the activities at the Governor's Council, along with impact of House Bill 210, which CASE was a contributor to. Christie Reinhardt updated the members with regards to the definition of physician as it relates to other health impairments and IDEA for the purpose of education and other legislation that may impact special education.

Clayton Holland reported that CASE awarded their scholarship at the ASSEC Conference to a student attending the UAA program working towards a degree in special education.

## **State Board of Education**

Christie Reinhardt reported that Kathleen Yarr has been unable to attend Education Committee meetings due to a family situation, and she extends her apologies.

Christie Reinhardt noted that the State Board of Education has not met since the last report.

## **FASD**

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reported that the FASD Subcommittee has not met since their last report. Jeanne noted that she was able to present at ASSEC, and there was a great turnout.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reported that with regards to SESA's FASD work group activities, they have gotten quite a few responses to the survey, and the results have been interesting. Patrick Pillai reported that there were 4,593 surveys sent out, and they received 1,129 returns so far, which translates to a 24.5 percent return rate thus far.

## **Old Business**

### **Inclusive Practice Award/ASSEC**

Christie Reinhardt reported that the Inclusive Practice Award event was very good this year. They had nine nominees spanning a variety of disciplines including schools, intensive needs classrooms, teaching teams, individual teachers, and for the first time a short-term residential program. The winner was Keet Gooshi Elementary School in Sitka. Christie Reinhardt commented that three years ago this was a school that was being monitored, and that within the past few years, adopting an almost complete inclusionary school policy, they were able to show 100 percent growth across the school in all categories, including special education, and last year received a five-star school designation.

Christie Reinhardt noted that SESA's Patrick Pillai was nominated for the Inclusive Practice Award this year, and when his name was announced, applause filled the room, because people from all over the state recognize the outstanding work he has done all of these years.

Jill Burkert volunteered to look into developing a way to share the stories of success that the Inclusive Practice Award brings to light, as she believes that sharing different types of success with districts and programs that are struggling with inclusion would be encouraging.

## **New Business**

### **Guest Speaker – Evelyn Alsup**

Evelyn Alsup, the director of North Star Behavioral Health, spoke to the Education Committee regarding the education of students in psychiatric treatment facilities. She reported that currently, if a child goes into a psychiatric treatment facility, the district in which that facility is set provides the education for that student, which is five hours a week per child. She noted that most districts do more, but in her hospital setting, the students are receiving two hours a day of instruction online. There is no direct instruction.

Evelyn Alsup reported that she has done due diligence on developing a piece of legislation, HB 102, to advocate for the students to receive better educational support in treatment facilities. She explained that the legislation would allow the treatment facility to provide education for the students in residence. This would allow facilities to hire certified educators and specialists, and a liaison to work in conjunction with the school district to provide individualized instruction for the student that would be in collaboration with the district to allow for a successful transition for the student. The plan would also include 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow up to have the ability to report an outcome to the state.

Evelyn Alsup opened the floor for questions, and clarified some of the specifics in the bill. She noted that the bill is not intended to be an instrument for school waivers, but for the small population of students that are admitted to a licensed facility by a physician. She explained that the bill is being sponsored by the legislature's Education Committee and has been read across the floor. She is currently in the process of finalizing amendments to the bill and gaining support. Evelyn encouraged the committee members to review the bill in its entirety and submit feedback to her.

## **Other Legislation Discussion**

Christie Reinhardt led the committee members through a review of the legislation being heard this session in Juneau. The active House bills are as follows:

- HB 36, an act relating to pre-kindergarten programs within a school district.
- HB 76, an act relating to the GCDSE; remove the term "gifted" from their enabling statute.
- HB 80, an act repealing secondary students taking college and career readiness assessments.

- HB 85, an act relating to college and career readiness assessments for secondary students; and relating to restrictions on the collection, storage, and handling of student data.
- HB 89, an act relating to civics exams and secondary school graduation requirements.

Christie Reinhardt reported that HB 89 is legislation that the committee will need to offer comment on, mainly because it could potentially create a barrier to graduation for some students.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Conferences**

#### **February 18 – 20, 2015**

Key Campaign, Juneau

#### **February 27, 2015**

Stakeholder Work Group for Autism  
Alaska Mental Health Trust, Anchorage

#### **March 6 – 7, 2015**

Stone Soup Group Parent Conference  
BP Energy Center, Anchorage

[www.stonesoupgroup.org](http://www.stonesoupgroup.org)

### **Time and Date of Next Meeting**

The next Education Committee meeting is scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m.

Jill Burkert **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.