

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION

Education Committee
Meeting Minutes

LOCATION

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

Teleconference
January 21, 2016
1:30 p.m.

Attendees:

David Kohler, Chair
Jill Burkert
Anthony Cravalho
Sandra DeHart
Don Enoch
Angie Fraize
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Heidi Haas
Clayton Holland
Cassidy Jones
Margaret Kossler
Patrick Pillai

Community Members and Guests:

Barb Chambers
Kristi Fuller
Cindy Higgins
Sam Jordan
Ernie Manzie
Maria Pepperworth
Fred Villa
Amy Westfall

Staff:

Christie Reinhardt
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

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus announced that her daughter Ivory had scored higher than the national average on her MAP test.

Christie Reinhardt announced that her 15-year-old son received a good report card, including one A and several Bs. Also, they recently had their annual IEP meeting, and he is on track to graduate.

Guests introduced themselves: Kristi Fuller, a neuropsychologist from Anchorage; Sam Jordan, an administrator with the Department of Education Special Ed unit; and Cindy Higgins, a special education director with the Anchorage School District.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mallory Hamilton **MOVED** to approve the agenda, **SECONDED** by Don Enoch. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A couple of corrections were noted: On page 2, Kristi Fuller corrected the tentative high school graduation rates that she reported. The correct figure is 57.2 percent. Also, Angie Fraize noted that she was at the meeting but was not listed among attendees.

Mallory Hamilton **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the December 17th meeting as corrected, **SECONDED** by Patrick Pillai. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

CORRESPONDENCE

Christie Reinhardt explained that correspondence had been included on the agenda as new business.

REPORTS

Chair's Report

David Kohler said that he had nothing specific to report.

SESA

Patrick Pillai reported that SESA agency staff generated 738 mission-specific activities between July and December of 2015, many of which were done by distance delivery. They are currently evaluating their phone and internet contracts, which expire in May, to better support these telepractice activities. SESA is still recruiting for a vision specialist, but is providing services through a contractor in the meantime.

Patrick said that SESA staff are busy preparing for the early intervention conference next week, and the Alaska Autism Resource Center is finalizing plans for its road show and the autism walk. Also, SESA has completed the rebuilding of their FileMaker Pro database, and it is fully in use now.

DEED

Don Enoch reported that the Department of Education and Early Development have been working on a lot of things pertaining to ESSA, the Every Student Succeeds Act. They have also been working on the state systemic improvement plan (SSIP). Don said that some presentations at ASSEC have been cancelled because of the travel restrictions. DEED will be sending one person who is required to go by a grant, and one DEED representative will try to provide a virtual presentation at the conference.

Don reported that DEED recently participated in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee meeting. DEED is almost done with their compliance monitoring, and they are working on updating the handbook to include Employment First language, elements of ESSA, and so on. They have finished the intensive funding claims, and are preparing to submit their annual performance report in February.

Don Enoch reported that the Department will be meeting with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transitions (NTACT) the first two days of

February. Also, they are working on the fiscal programs audit letter they received from OSEP, and working with the Governor's Council to address how discipline problems are handled in schools and districts. Finally, Don said that DEED is still reviewing ESSA, and he is interested in the Council's upcoming discussion about high school diplomas for the one percent.

CASE

Clayton Holland reported that Deb Evenson had attended the meeting of CASE administrators and principals and talked for a couple of hours about FASD and how to effectively interact with students who have brain-based differences.

Clayton said that the CASE scholarship will be awarded during the ASSEC conference to someone who lives in Alaska and is working toward becoming a special ed teacher or related service provider. ASSEC is February 8, 9, and 10, with pre- and post-conferences, and the CASE meeting will be held on February 9 as well. Clayton said that he anticipates spending a lot of time this year dealing with ESSA and its implications.

FASD Workgroup

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus said that the FASD Workgroup is interested to see how things go now that FASD is included in the "other" category for services, whether there is more acceptance of diagnostic work-ups from the FASD diagnostic team. The workgroup also worked on their five-year goals, which will be included in the DD Committee's Five-Year Plan.

Jeanne noted that she will be doing a pre-conference at ASSEC on FASD Into Action and a short presentation on discipline at the conference. Jeanne will also be doing an FASD work session at the Pacific Rim Conference in April.

DD Committee

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reported that the DD Committee has formed an ad hoc committee to address the General Relief wait list, and they drafted a letter to SDS which will soon be finalized and sent. They also discussed "other" under the I/DD waiver, with a lot of information from Maureen

Harwood. The committee is following the Medicaid 1915 (i) and (k) reform, and they have been working on their Five-Year Plan.

OLD BUSINESS

The Five-Year Plan

Christie Reinhardt said that she is very pleased with the Education Committee's new Five-Year Plan, and she thanked everyone for their input and work on it. The Council planner will review it, and then it will be presented to the full Council at the Juneau meeting. Some of the issues the plan focuses on are graduation of students with disabilities, post-secondary transitions and Part C transitions out of preschool, suspension and expulsion, and workforce development.

NEW BUSINESS

ESSA and Diplomas in Alaska

Clayton Holland explained that the Every Student Succeeds Act caps the number of students allowed to take alternate assessments at one percent of the total student population. Another change is that students taking the alternate assessment may earn an alternate diploma instead of just a certificate of completion, and Clayton said that there is now an opportunity to work out the requirements for alternate diplomas.

Christie Reinhardt added that the repeal of the HSQGE removes the testing barrier to diplomas, but it is still uncertain whether students who have taken coursework that isn't up to the regular 12th grade standards will receive diplomas. Also, the requirements for certain post-secondary programs like Project SEARCH and TAPESTRY, which are open only to students who have not yet received a diploma, will have to be examined. Often these students have their diplomas deferred in order to qualify for the programs.

Barb Chambers, mother of a 19-year-old high school senior with disabilities who has completed her curriculum and hopes to get a real diploma, spoke to the committee about her daughter's situation. The group agreed that there is a lot of work to be done to clarify the standards for graduation under ESSA and examine how students will be impacted.

The Alaska Performance Scholarship

Mallory Hamilton argued that the Alaska Performance Scholarship is discriminatory against students with disabilities because to qualify, a student has to score well on the ACT or SAT college placement test. Furthermore, the accommodations allowed for those tests are more restrictive than what most schools and colleges allow, and to get accommodations, a diagnosis of a disability within the past 12 months is required. Christie Reinhardt pointed out that the application process for testing accommodations is extensive and must be started months in advance.

Christie Reinhardt added that the schools used to pay for students to take the ACT or SAT because it was a requirement, but now the burden is on families to pay for it and get to a testing center. Mallory Hamilton argued that the test score requirements should be removed from the qualifications for the Alaska Performance Scholarship. The group decided to get more information before deciding on an action statement, including finding out, if possible, how many students with IEPs have received the scholarship.

Inclusive Practice Award

Christie Reinhardt stated that she has received eight nominations so far for the Inclusive Practice Award, and asked for volunteers to rate and score them. The awards luncheon will be on February 9th from 12:15 to 1:30, which is also when CASE gives out their scholarship. Christie asked committee members to let her know if they wanted to attend the luncheon and she would try to arrange it.

Upcoming Meetings and Conferences

- February 2 - 4: **Governor's Council Meeting**, Juneau
- February 6 - 12: **Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference**, Hilton Hotel, Anchorage
- February 9: **Inclusive Practice Award Luncheon**, Hilton Hotel, Anchorage
- February 12 – 13: **Stone Soup Conference**, Anchorage
- February 18 – 19: **Key Campaign**
- February 29: **Autism Conference**, Fairbanks

Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next Education Committee meeting will be on February 18th from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.