

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION

Legislative Committee Meeting

LOCATION

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

Meeting Date

January 6, 2010

Attendees:

Travis Noah, Chair
Eric Gebhart
Kathy Fitzgerald
Banarsi Lal
Lucy Odden
Chris Saddler
Jackie Hill
Fred Villa

Staff:

Duane Mayes
Rich Sanders
Teresa Holt

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo
Peninsula Reporting

Call to Order – 2:00 p.m.
Roll Call

Introductions, Announcements or Good News

Duane Mayes introduced Council member Fred Villa who has now joined the Legislative Committee. Fred Villa provided the committee with his background and experience.

Approval of Agenda

Duane Mayes stated that they need to add a discussion of SB 109 under old business. Kathy Fitzgerald made a **MOTION** to approve the agenda as amended. Chris Saddler **SECONDED**. The agenda was **APPROVED** as amended.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Kathy Fitzgerald made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the last Legislative Committee meeting. Chris Saddler **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED**.

Correspondence

Duane Mayes stated that Patrick Reinhart read through the draft action plan that came from the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force, and he identified some concerns. Duane and Patrick put together a letter to provide comment on the action plan and submitted it at the end of December.

OLD BUSINESS

Senate Bill 109 – Removal of the HSGQE

Duane Mayes stated that he and Teresa Holt developed talking points regarding SB 109 and sent it out to a variety of people who then used the talking points to testify at the State Board of Education meeting on December 10th. Duane noted that about 30 – 40 people testified. Duane stated that Con Bunde was also present and

testified that he is in support of keeping the exit exam, but everyone else who testified is not.

Duane Mayes stated that he is not sure if the State Board of Education has taken an official stance in support of SB 109 or not, but he noted that in some sidebar conversations, the commissioner and Carol Comeau are in support of SB 109. Teresa Holt added that Eric Gebhart's school board and the school board in Petersburg passed resolutions that they support it.

Duane Mayes stated that there were some folks that came in and testified to the value of using WorkKeys as a measure of people's skills as an alternative to the exit exam. Duane suggested that it might be worthwhile to do more research into WorkKeys to see what value it may have for the people that they serve. Fred Villa stated that he can help get them contact information for the WorkKeys program.

Teresa Holt stated that they need to find a supporter of SB 109 on the House side to introduce a similar bill. Teresa stated that members of the House Education Committee are: Seaton, Munoz, Edgmon, Keller, Wilson, Buch, and Gardner. Paul Seaton is from the Homer area and Kathy Fitzgerald suggested contacting Susan Drathman in Homer to see if she or someone else would be willing to approach Representative Seaton about introducing this bill on the House side. Chris Saddler also suggested contacting Representative Olson, from Kenai/Soldotna, to see if he would be a sponsor or a co-sponsor. Duane Mayes also suggested contacting Joyanna Geisler from Homer, and Kathy Fitzgerald suggested contacting former Council member Brian Bennett, also from Homer. Kathy Fitzgerald suggested that either Chris or Dan Saddler contact Representative Olson. She also suggested asking Tonja Updike to talk to Olson as well.

Discussion on Talking Points for SB 32

Duane Mayes referred everyone to the draft talking points on SB 32. He noted that the goal of these talking points is to encourage all the Council members to meet with their representatives prior to the session and use this as a guide to talk about SB 32.

Kathy Fitzgerald had an add-on to the bottom of page one that discusses the consequences on families and individuals. She stated that high turnover rates impact and create inconsistency in program supports and directly impacts the ability to carry out plans of care for individuals. Chris Saddler stated that it creates crisis.

Duane Mayes stated that he will add a bullet that reads: *High turnover rates create crisis for individuals and families and drives up the costs dramatically.*

Kathy Fitzgerald also mentioned that AADD or the Center for Human Development has the documentation that shows the staggering costs of recruiting and training and maybe somehow those figures could be added into the talking points.

Preparation for Midwest Academy Session on Crisis Response

Duane Mayes stated that both Jeff Jessee and Steve Williams will be there representing the Trust, and Lynn Kenney from AADD will be there. Steve Williams will be able to give the group an update on where they are with the WICHE project.

Duane Mayes stated that because the crisis response funding was not included in the Governor's budget, they composed and sent a letter to the Governor's scheduling person requesting a 20 minute meeting with either the Governor or his assistant or both.

Kathy Fitzgerald provided the Legislative Committee with the historical background to providing funding for a crisis response system. She stated that the Council got a \$450,000 commitment from the State when Harborview was closed to create a crisis intervention team to provide expertise in the community to appropriately serve people with challenging behaviors being released from Harborview. She stated that this team was never established and the money was spent in other areas. Kathy noted that as time passes, it has become more and more difficult for some of these individuals to stay in the community because there hasn't been the right training and support.

Duane stated that for the Midwest Academy planning session, they will need to develop specific information about what they're asking for and what the structure of it will look like. Rich Sanders added that last year, legislators were looking for some more specific information about how the money will be spent and how the Council sees this unfolding.

Teresa Holt added that the legislature also has already provided funding through Bring the Kids Home and there are mental health facilities already established, but there is nothing specific for the DD community. Kathy Fitzgerald added that they are totally inappropriate for people with developmental disabilities.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of the Governor's proposed FY'11 Budget

Duane Mayes stated the following Council priorities and recommendations and whether or not they were included into the Governor's budget:

1. \$850,000 Crisis Response/DD Community grants, not in the budget
2. \$100,000 Alaska Autism Resource Center, not in the budget
3. \$100,000 SESA, not in the budget
4. \$150,000 Disability Program Navigators, not in the budget
5. \$100,000 Alaska Transition Training Initiative, not in the budget
6. \$100,000 Transportation Operating Funds, not in the budget
7. \$50,000 Rural Transition Services, not in the budget
8. \$50,000 TBI Care Coordinator, in the budget
9. Capital request for deferred maintenance, in the budget
10. \$200,000 capital request for assistive technology, not in the budget
11. \$800,000 capital request for coordinated transportation, in the budget at a slightly lower amount

12. \$500,000 capital request for essential program equipment, not in the budget

Teresa Holt added that Infant Learning Programs received a \$900,000 cut as well as the loss of one position. She noted that when she gets more information, she would like the Legislative Committee to take a look at it.

Teresa gave the historical perspective on this and noted that last year, ILP was given an additional 1.3 million dollars to get people trained to be highly qualified under IDEA, and to also help offset the additional costs created by the unfunded federal mandate that requires that any child under the age of 3, who has a substantiated report of harm, be evaluated by the Infant Learning Program.

Kathy Fitzgerald asked that during their Midwest Academy planning session for crisis response, they also take some time to look at this issue as well.

On a final note, Duane Mayes stated that he has the spreadsheet for the entire mental health budget and he will send it out to all of the members of the Legislative Committee.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The group discussed a set date and time that would work within everyone's schedules. It was agreed that the first Thursday of each month at 1:30 will work with most people.

There was also a discussion surrounding a Legislative Committee meeting to be held during the January Council meeting. After a group discussion, it was agreed that Duane will send an e-mail out to get people's feedback about the suggested meeting time of 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

During this meeting, the Council will not be holding a self-advocate caucus and Kathy Fitzgerald strongly stated that it is the job of the Council to go over the materials with self-advocates before they

meet. She stated that if they are not going to do a face-to-face caucus, then something else needs to be put in its place.

The next teleconference is scheduled for February 4, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.