

State Board of Education & Early Development
Unapproved Minutes
July 13, 2022
Virtual Platform Meeting
Department of Education & Early Development
333 Willoughby Avenue
Juneau, AK 99801

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

Chair Fields called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. After the pledge of allegiance, the board adopted the agenda for July 13, 2022. Member Van Diest moved to adopt the agenda and the motion was seconded by Member Griffin. There were no objections to the adoption of the agenda. There were no conflicts of interest on the agenda. Member Hamilton was excused from attendance at this meeting.

Public Comment

Public comment was opened at 3:13 pm.

Jennifer Hayes-Tyson, a Special Education Teacher in the Juneau School District, read an email that she sent to the board members regarding Alaska students being able to read by the third grade. In her experience she sees the need for a structured literacy program specifically geared toward dyslexia. Her wish is for the State to appropriate a portion of the \$20.7 million Federal Grant for Literacy Development, for training Special Education Teachers who are interested in becoming Dyslexia Specialists, like a workshop she attended this summer. She thanked the board for taking the time to hear her read the email. Chair Fields thanked Ms. Hayes-Tyson.

Tim Doran, long-time educator in Alaska, asked the board to postpone the release of the recommended test cut scores. He sees a need to analyze the results of the assessment and the purported status of student proficiency. Setting the cut scores early may give a misleading result. In 2005-2014 the test scores averaged 70%-80% as of 2015 it is the opposite. He is concerned that it undermines the accountability and credibility of the States assessments and how it can impact students, teachers, and parents. Tim thanked the board and that he appreciates the effort and time they put into the education of students. Chair Fields thanked Mr. Doran.

Judy Eledge, a retired educator in Alaska, thanked the board for doing something about reading for the State of Alaska. Training for educators gets overlooked when expecting teachers to implement programs like the reading plan without proper training. She believes intensive training specifically geared toward reading would cover all aspects such as dyslexia that was talked about earlier. Secondly the reading bill has a lot of expectations for K-4 teachers that without the support of the whole district will be difficult, especially in rural districts where there are limited teachers with seemingly limited support. Chair Fields thanked Ms. Eledge.

Pam Skogstad, a Physical Education Specialist with 25 years of experience in rural and non-rural Alaska, drafted and developed a regional training model that would have regional training centers that would support 4-5 districts for trainings and workshops for staff. It would allow the districts to combine resources and be economically better for the districts without coming all the way to Anchorage. This could help with the State supporting a paraprofessional certification which could be done regionally. She will be doing regional trainings this fall and will give feedback to the board. She thanked the board for their time. Chair Fields thanked Ms. Skogstad.

Public comment closed at 3:24 pm.

Work Session

Agenda Item 1. Reading Plan Update

Deputy Commissioner Heidi Teshner introduced Director Susan McKenzie. Director McKenzie introduced the Strategic Reading Plan. She walked the board through the PowerPoint presentation in the back, which started with showing the journey. She introduced the six strategies in the plan to provide support to schools, so all students read at grade level by the end of third grade: 1. Professional Development; 2. Evidence-Based Materials; 3. Early Literacy; 4. Frameworks for Success; 5. SOR Resources, Date, and Communication; and, 6. Teacher Preparation. Director McKenzie went into detail explaining each strategy and then took questions from the board. First Vice Chair Kowalaski asked how large the demand for the Leaders Academy is and what the waitlist were for. Director McKenzie answered that it capped out at 50 and there was a large demand and a waitlist. First Vice Chair Kowalaski asked about the process to create the rubric. Director McKenzie answered that they are just getting started. Second Vice Chair Stockhausen asked about dyslexia training being added to the plan. Director McKenzie answered that to pass the core class assessment you to have to show proficiency in dyslexia but would add it. Member Griffin expressed his excitement for planning in regard to the Alaska Reads Act whether it passed or not. Member Van Diest expressed her excitement and thanked Director McKenzie and her team. Military Advisor LTC Fowley asked about reciprocity about credentials in other states. Sondra Meredith answered that the regulations package is being formulated. Chair Fields thanked Director McKenzie and the team for putting it all together. There was no further discussion.

Agenda Item 2. Regulations for Public Comment, Assessment Cut Scores

The board was asked to open a period of public comment on assessment cut scores. Kelly Manning, Deputy Director for the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, gave background on the process to get to the proposed cut scores. Deputy Director Manning then introduced Elizabeth Greninger, Assessment Administrator with the Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, who walked the board through a presentation of the standard setting process for the AK STAR and Alaska Science Assessments recommended cut scores. Factors such as COVID impact, new assessments, and inexperienced test takers were contributing factors to the preliminary results. Changing the name of the titles for achievement categories shows the support into meeting grade level academic expectations. The proposed cut scores went through different educator committees and groups. Cut score ranges are purposefully different from the Peaks scale, scope, and sequencing. Ms. Greninger explained the impact data was recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee and educator committees. First Vice Chair Kowalski asked for more clarity on curriculum alignment throughout the districts, especially in middle school level. Ms. Greninger answered that the department wants to provide support and blueprints of the test design are shared and that can impact decisions on curriculum and course sequencing with grades 8 and 9 having a bigger variance across the districts. Member Griffin asked if the cut scores are benchmarking against national standard NAEP results. Ms. Greninger answered that the data was referenced as well as Peaks scores, but was not shown to panelists as criteria, however it is possible to bring it into the 2023 data. There was no further discussion.

Business Meeting

Agenda Item 3. Regulations for Public Comment, Assessment Cut Scores

Second Vice Chair Stockhausen moved and Member Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment on amendments to 4 AAC 06.739 (b) and (c), achievement level titles and cut scores for English Language Arts, Math, and

Science; 4 AAC 06.822 (b) and (c), accountability sub scores; and 4 AAC 06.899 (24), “alternative school” definition. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

Agenda Item 4. Acting Commissioner Appointment

Member Griffin moved and Member Van Diest seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development appoint Heidi Teshner as Acting Commissioner effective immediately. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

Agenda Item 5. Consent Agenda

Member Van Diest motioned, and Member Griffin seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education and Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of approval of the minutes of the June 8 and 9, 2022 board meeting. The motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote. There was no discussion.

Board Comments

Member Griffin is happy with the process regarding the cut scores and expressed his excitement how the Strategic Reading Plan had many elements of the Alaska Reads Act already integrated into it.

Member Stockhausen thanked Heidi and the department; she expressed her excitement regarding the Strategic Reading Plan.

Member Van Diest is hopeful to get the cut scores up with the implementation of the Strategic Reading Plan.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.