

Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development

Approved Minutes

December 10 & 11, 2009

December 10, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cox at 8:00 a.m. All members were present, except Phil Schneider and Shirley Holloway, who were excused, and Pat Shier. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were no conflicts of interest. The Chair said that there were several changes to the agenda. At 11:30 a.m., the Goldenview Singers would be coming into the meeting to sing. The interview for one of the student advisors would be moved to this day at 3:30 p.m. from tomorrow to accommodate her school schedule. The chair also noted that agenda items 7, 12 and 13 would most likely be moved to the next day because of the amount of public comment. Geri Benshoof moved to accept the amended agenda, Janel Keplinger seconded the motion, and it was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Public Comment

Varvara Martishev and her husband, parent of students attending Voznesenka School in Homer, were in opposition to the HSGQE testing dates in April 2010, due to an important religious holiday (Old Believers), saying their student could not take the test or SBA.

LaDawn Druce from KPBSD said she was in support of SB 109, the repeal of the exit exam, saying her son had problems with the exam but finally passed. She said she felt the exam unfairly labeled students.

Leesa Arnes said she had a deaf son and spoke about her good experience with the School for the Deaf.

Robert Thomason in the Petersburg LIO said he was in favor of repealing the HSGQE because graduation rates had not improved.

Bridgit Woodstock in the Petersburg LIO, said she had been a special education teacher for 17 years in Alaska and felt that HSGQE was not a fair standard for her students with IEPs and supported its repeal.

Jean Ellis in the Petersburg LIO, president of the Petersburg school board, said not all students tested well but were good students and made good employees and should not be denied a diploma. She supported the repeal of the HSGQE.

Teresa Verstig said she had a dyslectic son, and the thought of him not passing the HSGQE terrifies their whole family and said it was a crime to have kids go through that agony.

Dalton Arnes signed his comments saying it was great to be able to speak using sign and knew it was his responsibility to set up signers if he wanted to communicate. After school he planned to go to Gaulladet for engineering. Board members were pleased he was able to participate this way.

Dana Decter said he was born deaf and started learning American Sign Language (ASL) at age three. He attends school in Soldotna and loves school; some students there know ASL. He said he wanted to go to college after high school.

(Pat Shier arrived at 8:35 a.m.)

Lucy Hope from Mat-Su talked about the deaf program in Mat-Su, saying there were 13 deaf students (3 in preschool, 7 in elementary school, 2 in middle school and 1 in high school) in the district, all with assistive devices and they have three deaf teachers working to build the skills of the staff. Board members congratulated her on their program. Commissioner LeDoux noted that Anchorage School District also had a good program. Shirley Holloway said that the conversation was important because deaf students can feel very isolated.

Elizabeth Andrews said she was one of the first students the Alaska School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. It was a positive influence in her life, and she'd like to see it continue feeling it provides a big difference and an important service to the deaf community.

Karl Schlaih in the Mat-Su LIO said he was the principal at Shaw Elementary School, serving 10 deaf students in on Pre K- 4th grade and said the benefits of the program were huge.

Mary Dunney, a parent of a deaf child with a cochlear implant, said she looked for the right program for her child and was very pleased with the Mat-Su program.

Senator Bunde said he was pleased that the board was looking at the HSGQE and reminded the board that at the time of the adoption the common complaint was that students didn't have basic skills. He asked what a high school diploma or certificate of attendance meant, asking if it was feel-good. He said it took six years and asked the board to not eliminate it before they had something better. He noted that 80% of the public majority thought it was a good thing. He asked the board to help define what a diploma was, saying it was important to students. He said he was concerned that the wrong message was being sent, that it isn't necessary to work hard. He said he didn't want to take backwards steps, he wanted to find a new tool – “don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.” Board members thanked him for coming. When WorkKeys was mentioned as a possible substitute for the HSGQE, he said he thought the WorkKeys was an aptitude test. When asked how he felt about national standards, he said one size does not fit all. Shirley Holloway said there needs to be thoughtful conversations in years to come to have a tool that helps students understand what it is they need to know and be able to do. Esther Cox thanked Senator Bunde and said this is something the board needs to look at and will do so thoughtfully. Kirsten Johnson Strempler, from the Anchorage School District, said mandated assessments were getting to be too much. She felt the HSGQE was a flawed system of assessment and was a simple basic skills test. She said an exam that connects high school and life skills should be considered. She felt WorkKeys uses a common language for employers and families. She

supported the repeal of the HSGQE. Janel Keplinger said students find the WorkKeys more relevant and the results easier to understand than SBAs. Shirley Holloway said the argument was a good one, but we had to ensure that students are able to read, write and compute. She asked where WorkKeys fits in with the data-driven model. Esther Cox said WorkKeys was not a high-stakes exam and allows students to graduate at different levels. She wondered why such a high percentage of college students were remedial.

Miranda Cleveland said she had a daughter attending the State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, said many parents didn't know about the program and many students need the early intervention and the options they offer. She emphasized that more people need to know about the school and what it offers.

Michelle Spillane in the Fairbanks LIO, from the Young Learners Preschool, spoke in opposition to the pre-elementary regulations, saying they resulted from DEC dropping inspections, and felt it would require a new facility with more square footage. Jenae Campanelli spoke up and said it impacted their co-op and they would have to reconsider timing and said they would like to hire private sanitation engineers. She thought the old system was better.

Brad Schultz in the Fairbanks LIO and from the ABC Preschool said the school had been certified for 15 years and was not a day care and shouldn't be regulated like one. He felt day care and preschool were being grouped together, and time should be allowed for preschools to come into compliance.

Tori Tragis in the Fairbanks LIO and from ABC Preschool said the regulation impacts rural areas and families work together to teach and care for the children. She said the regulation would require a bigger building, and more staff.

Laurie Schoening said she was concerned with the changes to the square-foot requirements.

MaryAnn Batchhelder said that parents at the School for the Deaf need to know what options they have. Commissioner LeDoux asked her to write to him and send her concerns.

Duane Mayes with the Governor's Council and Special Education and Disabilities read his position paper on the SB 109, the repeal of the HSGQE. Shirley Holloway said she was seeing an increase in trend for passing the HSGQE for students with disabilities.

Chris Tyree said students were dropping out of school because vocabulary wasn't being taught, students had to learn too much on their own and there was a lot of Marxism in schools. She also objected to students sharing supplies.

Kathy Parrish, a mother of a high school student with hydrocephalus and autism, said he would graduate this year and go to UAA and has a job, passed the HSGQE and said her son felt short-changed by the exam being too easy.

Colin Opland-Webb, a student from Service High School, said the HSGQE was an unfair challenge to students who have passed courses and gotten credits. He plans to attend UAA in the fall and feels high school did not prepare him well for college.

David Kohler, a Service High School department chair, said HSGQE doesn't fit the traditional education system, noting that the accountability system is critical, but current exam doesn't fit. He asked the board to explore other means of assessment.

Shelly Osborne from Bristol Bay High School said she had taken the HSGQE twice, and was getting a high school diploma now and was concerned with getting a good job without the HSGQE. Pat Shier encouraged her to not give up.

John Harris from Skagway has a child in special education and has taken benchmarks and is below proficient. His scores on the HSGQE are not passing and won't get a diploma. He feels it's not fair for students with developmental problems.

Anita Holmes from North Pole said that the HSGQE restricted students and inquired about a special diploma for special education students indicating that course work was modified. John Abrams, Special Education Director in Nenana, said he supported WorkKeys as an alternative because students can't pass the math portion of the HSGQE and won't get a diploma without it.

Ashley Lahaoe, a senior at West High School, said she had taken the math portion four times and hasn't passed it and said it's always a stressful time. She wants to go to UA for business but can't if she doesn't have a diploma although she's meeting the district's credit requirement.

Sylvia Holloway, a teacher at Firelake Preschool in Eagle River, said she supported some working groups to work on the proposed pre-elementary regulations and was fearful that the regulation would close down her school. She invited the board to visit some of the pre schools before they make a decision.

Fred Reutov said the week of Easter was important and his child would not be able to take the HSGQE and was fearful she would be penalized.

Tim Rockey, student advisor to the board, presented a resolution from the AASA annual meeting in support of the Governor's Performance Scholarship (GPS). He said they were still working on the resolutions done at the Sitka meeting.

Work Session

The first work session topic was a report from the advisory board for the deaf and hard of hearing, the Alaska Deaf Council and the Alaska State School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Present were: Patrick Pillai with SESA, Madelene Decter, Duane Mayes with the Governor's Council and Liz Andrews with the deaf council. They came to share thoughts and points of view about the deaf community. They discussed the history of language, communication and early intervention and the auditory movement and the development of American Sign Language. They

address some broad band issues and assistive technologies like Skype. The cost of some Internet assistive measures is very costly.

The report was interrupted so the Goldenview Singers from Goldenview Middle School could perform for the board as scheduled. With their director, Sam Strumpler, they sang four selections. Their appearance was much appreciated by the board.

The discussion with folks from the deaf community continued with suggestions that could make a difference, like: exploring curriculum specifically designed for deaf and hard of hearing students, technology advances and video conferencing, development of a five-year state plan for the school for the deaf in collaboration with all areas of deaf and hard of hearing, statewide effective outreach to educate families, statewide teacher education and training/work shop, bringing experienced teachers up from down south to facilitate training, the importance of early identification, saying three years old was too late.

Jerry Sjolander from the Anchorage School District was present to talk about the Alaska State School for the Deaf. He said Alaska is ahead of the times in information services; however, the need to build capacity for communication still exists. He said they are committed to working with EED to make sure the IEP teams have the services they need and to create more opportunities for the different communities to come together. He said more access for developing communication, especially in the early years, is needed.

The commissioner said the state contributes one-half million dollars to the program each year. Shirley Holloway asked about rural outreach. Mr. Pillai said there was rural outreach through a grant and SESA has two early intervention specialists just for the deaf. He said it was hard for the students once they return to the villages because often times there is no one to communicate with. There is a great need for family classes/training in their homes or through technology. Mr. Sjolander said the students with multiple disabilities generally are referred to the state school or go out of state for services. Lee Waters said they are assessing more frequently and getting more data in a timely manner in reading, writing and math. They are also doing research about what other deaf schools are doing across the county. The commissioner said EED was committed to working and collaborating with the deaf community and was glad the board had this discussion. He felt we learned a lot. Esther Cox said it was a plus for these students that they can be identified early and have an opportunity to become successful.

Alaska Textbook Depository. Present were Jim Camp, Lenny Cullip and Rex Weltz. The commissioner said that the board does not support private enterprises and the folks were here to make a presentation. Mr. Cullip said teachers are required to purchase materials to support curriculum that usually come from the Lower 48. These deliveries come with a very high price for shipping and a depository, in a central location, could simplify costs and distribution in Alaska. It would provide a faster and cheaper service and hire Alaskans. Mr. Camp said he believed there was a big advantage in having the materials in state. He said the cost is carried by the publishers. He described the cost like a consignment where the publisher pays all the freight costs.

Early Learning. The board was briefed on work being done by Best Beginnings. Abbe Hensley, Executive Director, was present. She said every child should come to school ready to learn and ready to read. She said Best Beginnings has public and private partnerships, saying that parents are first teachers. Best Beginnings is advancing statewide awareness. She demonstrated the web site and said they have an extensive monthly e-mail newsletter and do radio and TV spots throughout the state. In collaboration with EED, and the help of grant, they are distributing the Early Learning Guidelines now in a friendlier format, and have developed activity guides in Spanish and Yupiit. Ms. Hensley said the global competition was more today than in the past with the amount of brain research being done and research into early learning development. She said all facets of community were being involved: government, business, faith leaders and whole communities.

Ms. Hensley discussed trends in home and out-of-home experiences, community early childhood partnerships, data collection, kindergarten developmental profiles in speaking, listening emerging reading and emergent writing. She also discussed the Imagination Library that distributes free books to one- to five-year-olds in participating communities. She also said that, through a Memorandum of Agreement with the EED, there was going to be an Early Learning Advisory Council formed that will bring people to the table to make a plan. Its purpose is to promote positive development, improved health outcomes and school readiness for Alaska's children, prenatal through eighth grade.

Alaska Statewide Mentor Project and Alaska Administrator Coaching Project. Les Morse, Deputy Commissioner, was present and introduced Ron Keffer and Carol Kane, both coaches from AACCP; Mike Dunleavy, ASMP administrator, Cathe Rhodes, mentor from the ASMP and Barbara Adams, ASMP research analyst, who were present to brief the board. They gave background on program funding, selection process, training and communities served. Mr. Dunleavy said he works closely with UAF to give assistance to new teachers with the goal of increasing student achievement and teacher retention. He described a two-year training period that touches about 8,000 students with about half of the cadre rotating out each year. Cathe Rhodes described the characteristics that are looked for to become a mentor and described the program basis and training. She said it included monthly visits and weekly contact and constant communication using email, Skype and other technologies. Barbara Adams discussed teacher retention and research methods and data collection regarding student achievement. Carol Kane discussed the role of the principal/superintendent and the administrator coaching project. She said they hold leadership institutes and workshops. The project is funded largely by the state. There are 91 principals and 12 superintendents participating this year with 12 mentor coaches. Ron Keffer discussed how adults learn and how they talk with adults and how the coaching project helps in this area of communication through professional development institutes. Ms. Kane read several positive testimonials about the program.

Title IX. Gary Mathews, Executive Director of the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA), was present to brief the board. He distributed the new handbooks and activity passes for the board members. He discussed new compliance with Title IX. Compliance issues are: 1) whether the selection of sports and levels of competition effectively accommodate the interests and abilities of members of both sexes; 2) the provision of equipment and supplies; 3) scheduling of games and practice time; 4) travel and per diem allowance; 5) opportunity to receive coaching

and academic tutoring on mathematics only; 6) assignment and compensation of coaches and tutors; 7) provision of locker rooms, practice and competitive facilities; 8) provision of medical and training facilities and services; 9) provision of housing and dining facilities and services; 10) publicity. The commissioner congratulated Mr. Mathews on his 16 years of service to ASAA.

Anchorage School District's Career and College Ready Institute. Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director of Middle School, was present to brief the board. Ms. Vandergaw said the initiative was being done with stimulus money and was in its fourth month. She described three key initiatives including staffing of a career guide in each middle school, the assessment of each eighth-grader utilizing ACT's Explore test and the completion of an individual learning and career plan (ILCP) based on the results of the Explore. Three career guides were present. They said the program was to make career guidance for middle schoolers more relevant. The program is predicated on three basic questions, who am I, where am I going and how am I going to get there? From these answers they develop a working plan that will follow the student into high school. The plan will evolve as the student progresses through school.

Regulations to go out for public comment. Sam Kito and Eddy Jeans were present to brief the board about amendments to the facilities regulations. The changes are as follows: The proposal would limit school districts to no more than 10 applications for capital projects per application cycle. During the FY2010 rating cycle, EED read seven times as many applications as were funded. In order to justify state financial assistance in constructing a school, a district would have to demonstrate that it projects to have at least 25 students five years after constructing the school. However, the Commissioner of Education could determine that new construction is warranted for a school that is projected to have fewer students in that time frame. The proposal would allow EED, rather than the Department of Natural Resources, to determine whether a state-owned educational facility has any use by another state agency. Under requirements for property insurance, the proposal would define "replacement cost" to include all costs associated with replacement of a facility as are needed to insure that the facility is fully operational at no additional cost to the district.

The board moved into Executive Session with motion made by Shirley Holloway and seconded by Janel Keplinger and approved by unanimous consent. The board moved out of Executive session by motion made by Pat Shier and seconded by Janel Keplinger and approved by unanimous consent.

December 11, 2009

Work Session continued

High School Exit Exam (HSGQE). Erik McCormick was present to brief the board. He said in 2009, over 8,000 students received a high school diploma, which was an increase of over 1,100 students when compared to 2005. There is a new coding for race/ethnicity to match the 2000 census which allows to identifying one's self as a mix of two races. He noted that 26 states have an exit exam in place, and three more states have plans to implement one. By 2012, 74% of the nation's high school students will be taking the exam. He said some states are moving to end-of-course exams, which raise the amount of rigor. Only three of 26 states measure college

readiness; Alaska is not one of them. Some states, including Alaska, have accommodations for special education students. Some of our special education student still cannot pass the exam. He asked how we can address that student and said we need to find out what other states are doing. Board members explored questions such as the purpose of a high stakes exam and meeting the needs of a small group of individuals. Mr. McCormick said originally Senator Bunde wanted a minimum skills test for employers to know what an Alaskan diploma meant. Shirley Holloway said originally it was a measure about what we wanted kids to know and be able to do after high school -- maybe it's time for some adjustment. The commissioner said if the state pulled this challenge away, kids would sink and it's been good for the special education students. He said the system needs a higher expectation for special ed students and currently there is no flexibility for them. Janel Keplinger said there has to be away for special ed students to show the skills they have in a different format from a written test. Mr. McCormick suggested differentiated diploma. The commissioner said he has discussed an honors diploma, a basic diploma and a certified diploma. Mr. McCormick said he could do some research. He noted that no one wants to step away from the accountability or flexibility. He was asked to bring some research to the board in March about different diplomas. He said that two-thirds of those in 2008 didn't graduate because they hadn't completed course requirements. Pat Shier reiterated the need for accountability for special education students, and said until we have an alternative, we cannot do away with the HSGQE. He noted that WorkKeys was coming along and would be in place soon. Esther Cox said Senator Bunde thinks WorkKeys is an aptitude test of skills. The commissioner said the WorkKeys correlated to ACT and is a solid test. The board discussed high stakes tests with rigor, minimum competency tests, the need for a skill level diploma and the proper use of the SBAs in grades 3-10 in school districts. The commissioner said the board needed to be ready in March to act. It was suggested that the January meeting be a face-to-face meeting and address these concerns.

Alaska Education Plan. Cyndy Curran, Alyse Galvin and Erik McCormick were present to brief the board and reported on the Graduation Working Group. The next meeting will be January 12 & 13, 2010, at the Talking Book Library. At the last meeting they extensively reviewed push outs – those things that prompt students to leave school. A web site is being planned for sometime in the spring for students, parents and teachers. It was noted that the Winter Conference is January 14 & 15 in Anchorage, and the legislature begins on January 19.

Esther Cox said she felt the board needed to give the House Education Committee a recommendation on where the board stood on compulsory age. Shirley Holloway said she didn't support it. She said we can't keep kids in school at 16, how will we do it at 18? It has no punch or consequences or enforcement and there are no resources. Bunny Schaeffer said she was not in favor of it. Geri Benshoof said there was no advantage to raising the age to 18 and it can't be enforced. Janel Keplinger asked what the message was saying she was still on the fence. Mr. McCormick said we needed a student perspective. Tim Rockey said he tried to bring it up at AASG and there was little interest, it had no legs and was unenforceable. He said he felt it would not increase the graduation rate overall. Pat Shier said it was the government saying that parents weren't accountable and if it was tied to a driver's license it would be different, but there is no enforcement. Shirley Holloway said she'd be all over it if it were tied to a driver's license. Bunny Schaeffer brought up the 12 exemptions to the current law, putting students in home school being the one more often used. Some of the other exemptions are for physical or mental

conditions, being in custody, being suspended or ill, and more than two miles of transportation. The commissioner said EED would prepare a position paper.

Esther Cox inquired why there was an age 16 law if it could not be enforced. She said maybe we should do away with an age requirement. Pat Shier agreed, saying a student should stay in school until they are proficient and then be able to “go forth and do good” – like a mastery demonstration. The commissioner said in some districts the parents are from other countries and they expect their children to stay home or work to help support the family. The age law will help this population to understand the value of education. He asked if there was evidence that minority groups drop out more. Shirley Holloway suggested the board address the loopholes instead of a new law. Eddy Jeans interjected that the Department of Public Safety says they can’t enforce the truancy law and that it’s low on their list of things to do. The board agreed to meet face-to-face on the issues of compulsory age, HSGQE and the Governor’s Performance Scholarship on January 13 at the Talking Book Library.

Virtual School. The commissioner reported that 30 Alaskans were brought together at EED to discuss a virtual school. He said there were a number of distance efforts going on in the state and this effort was to examine the ability of the state to deliver quality education in the state especially in the rural areas and small school sites. The committee is looking at virtual school models that are already operating. The group will meet again in January. He said the curriculum delivery would be from highly qualified teachers and would include university courses and staff development. He said it provides school choice and would be available to all students, including home schooled students. Shirley Holloway said students can move as fast as they want in a virtual school and graduate early and move on. The board was generally in favor of the concept and wants to hear more as the committee moves along. Pat Shier said he appreciated the statewide focus and inquired if a board member was on the committee.

Board Priorities. Cyndy Curran was present to brief the board. Ms. Curran said the teacher quality meeting would be held in January. They are doing research on teacher quality and teaching quality. The group is looking at evaluations, recruitment, certificate renewal, mentoring and induction and courses. She said the next step was to define “teacher quality.” They will be addressing the rural problem of university courses being offered sporadically and transfer practices. They will also be looking at student achievement being tied to teacher evaluation and performance.

Ms. Curran noted that the health and safety group continues to meet to develop a statewide comprehensive health and safety plan. They will be prepared to present to the board later in the year. They expect to be done with their work at the end of June. An update will be given in March.

Governor’s Performance Scholarship (GPS). The commissioner said the GPS requirements would be GPA, assessment score and participation in a rigorous curriculum which included four years of math, language and science and three years of social studies. He said many people were working on the initiative in the department. Marcy Herman was doing research, Eddy Jeans was carrying it to the legislature. He noted that regulations addressing cut scores, alternate pathways, appeals and other topics would be coming out of the law after the bill passes. He also said that

averages from A to C+ will qualify for assistance. Pat Shier said that Alaska needs to have Alaskan students stay in Alaska. Geri Benshoof said she likes the idea that an average student can get financial help. Tim Rockey said there had been positive feedback from students. The board agreed to take up a resolution in the business meeting.

Regulations. There were two regulations the board was being asked to consider adopting, the Para-Professional and the Pre-Elementary. Cyndy Curran was present to brief the board on both regulations. The Para-Professional regulation established a new assessment and score – having a high school diploma or equivalent, and completed two years of postsecondary study or hold an associate’s degree or pass a state or local assessment. This will replace the HELP assessment that will phase out by the end of December 2009. The second regulation was the Pre-Elementary, which would amend the health and safety standards for public and private pre-elementary schools and amend the program requirements for public pre-elementary schools. Neil Slotnick reviewed the statute history of this regulation. He noted that the Department of Health and Social Services has jurisdiction over child care, but the legislature has given the board the authority to adopt the regulations for health and safety for pre-elementary (not day care). He also noted that the department has no educational jurisdiction in private schools. The department negotiates with Health & Social Services to inspect pre-elementary schools for health and safety. Mr. Slotnick said the regulation should be effective on February 1, 2010. The commissioner said these regulations are reasonable and protects the safety of our smallest students who have no voice and need protection. The biggest objection in public comment was fingerprinting of volunteers and the effective date. There were also concerns with space requirements and bathroom requirements that are not a part of this regulation. Those are in the day care regulations. He said people were mixing the two up. Ms. Curran said a letter of explanation was ready to be sent to all stakeholders in this issue.

Regulations to go for public comment. Erik McCormick was present to brief the board. One other regulation to go out for public comment was the Non-standardized Assessment Manual. It proposes to match language to the HSGQE proficiency descriptors in mathematics and adopt by reference the March 2010 edition.

Business Meeting

Para-professional standards. Shirley Holloway moved and Janel Keplinger seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt changes to 4 AAC 04.220, regarding Paraprofessional standards. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Pre-elementary. Janel Keplinger moved and Bunny Schaeffer seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt changes to 4 AAC60.010, 4 AAC.60.020, 4 AAC 60.035, 4AAC 60.040, 4 AAC 60.050, 4 AAC 60. 060, 4AAC 60.070, 4AAC 60.080, 4AAC 60.090, 4AAC 60.120, 4AAC 60.130, 4AAC 60.140, 4AAC 60.150, 4AAC 60.160, 4AAC 60.170, 4AAC 60.175, 4AAC 60.180(4), regarding Preschool certification . Geri Benshoof said that her church had a pre-school and she wondered if that was an ethical question. The chair ruled that Ms. Benshoof could participate. Ms. Cox said she was glad the letter of explanation was ready to go out. Mr. Slotnick verified that the board would authorize the commissioner to change the effective date to coincide

with the Department of Law review and the Lt. Governor's signature. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed by a 4-2 vote. Mr. Shier and Ms. Benshoof voted against the motion.

Facilities. Shirley Holloway moved and Pat Shier seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on amendments to 4 AAC 31, regarding Facilities regulations. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Non-standardized assessment. Geri Benshoof moved and Pat Shier seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on the revised *Nonstandardized Assessment Administrative Manual* and 4 AAC 06.775(i), Statewide assessment program for students with disabilities. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Mt. Edgecumbe High School (MEHS) Report. Superintendent Bill Hutton was present to report to the board with student, Donald Handeland. Mr. Hutton said he appreciated the work on emergency school closures. He said the MEHS wrestlers won their region and were in Anchorage competing. He also noted that US News had designated MEHS as a bronze top high school, one of six in Alaska so designated. He said that 44 of MEHS's 72 graduates last year are in a postsecondary program. Mr. Handeland reported that the student council put in a lock down to prevent students from leaving school for the second semester. He said MEHS had sent 13 delegates to AASG, and the dorms has recently gotten Internet with new filters. Mr. Hutton said MEHS would be admitting 10 new students in January.

Library, Archives & Museums (LAM). Linda Thibodeau was present to brief the board. She said the LAM was applying for four new grants, and she handed out a list of new initiatives. She said the broadband grant was submitted by Vallerie Oliver, the E-Rate coordinator. She said the grant brings in \$32 million of E-Rate money to the school districts and public libraries. She said the grant puts infrastructure in place. Discounts are decided on community economy. Rich Greenfield will submit a \$10 million Gates Foundation grant for telecommunications that, if approved, will offer lower costs for Internet services. He said it would support bandwidth statewide and that most of the rural libraries fall below the normal T-1 level.

Ms. Thibodeau said Glenn Cook was now the new Deputy Director of the LAM and Bob Banghart was the new museum curator. Both leave positions within the LAM that will have to be filled. The commissioner thanked Ms. Thibodeau for her leadership and said he appreciated the work being done on the grants.

Teaching & Learning Support (TLS) Report. Cyndy Curran was present to brief the board. She said that TLS was the largest division in the department with many components of the education plan and is behind many department functions already talked about - health & safety, technology, teacher quality, pre-school. She discussed other activities: the Winter Conference would be held January 14 & 15 at the Anchorage Hilton, they were completing round II of the SFSF application, and monitoring the Race to the Top. She said the special education monitoring went well in October and they were waiting for the final report, and the child nutrition section was carrying on monitoring in districts now. She said the CTE section was working with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Esther Cox asked if the Fairbanks program

in career planning for students was beginning in middle school. Wayne Gerke from Fairbanks said they were revamping secondary schools as part of the new Axis program. He said EED did two days of training and they were excited about the program.

Assessment, Accountability & Information Management. Erik McCormick was present to brief the board. Mr. McCormick said the preliminary ADM numbers were prepared in November and should be finalized soon. He noted that the AMOs go up next year (until 2014) and it will become difficult for schools to make AYP. He said all states will be using the same graduation rate – a four year measure - but it still will not include the GED or special certificate. There will be test coordinator training in February and a peer review process with US DOE.

School Improvement. Deputy Commissioner Les Morse was present to brief the board. He described the State System of Support (SSOS) as a team of six people working in districts coordinating efforts with mentor teachers and principal coaches. They are working with administrators, school boards, and content support specialists in several areas. He also briefed the board on the recent capacity study that took place over several months at the department saying it would help to develop a clear, public process, and would help to increase the supply of teachers in rural areas. Chair Cox thanked him for the mentor presentation.

Rural Education. Phyllis Carlson, Director of Rural Education, said she began her position on November 23rd. She said she appreciated the opportunity and that connecting with school boards in rural areas was very important. She said she sees her role as engaging with SSOS and visiting all schools that are in intervention, working with AASB and Norm Wooten, working with John Muller in the Governor's Office, working with the department leadership, and creating a rural advisory committee. She said she had been asked to serve on the Suicide Prevention Council. She was welcomed by the board members.

Attorney General's Report. Neil Slotnick was present to brief the board. The commissioner introduced Rebecca Hatten, the new Assistant Attorney General, who has been assigned to the department. Mr. Slotnick said there were no new developments in the Moore case, but to expect an update at the March meeting. He said the judge had six months to rule and time was closing in. He reviewed some of the cases he is handling, noting the Ketchikan pool project appeal. He said Ms. Hattan attended that hearing.

Budget/Legislative Report. Eddy Jeans was present to brief the board. He said the governor's budget was released on December 14. The next legislative session begin January 19, 2010. He anticipates the hot topics for this year to be: the Governor's Performance Scholarship (GPS), the High School Graduating Qualifying Exam (HSGQE), the compulsory school age bill, and the repeal of the 70/30 requirement.

Commissioner's Report. Larry LeDoux was present to brief the board. He said he very much appreciated Eric Fry who was coordinating public information on the GPS bill. He welcomed Anna Kim, the new Director of Administrative Services and said Marcy Herman was doing

several special projects for him. He congratulated Tim Rockey on doing an excellent job in AASG leadership. He said the department now had office space in the Atwood Building on the 15th floor and that he had spent time with 101 year old Dr. Soboloff at the rural subcabinet meeting and had a very meaningful conversation with him. He noted also that he had spoken with several school board members at the recent AASB meeting. He also noted that the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey results should be out soon. He thanked Dottie Knuth for her work with the board and in the commissioner's office.

The following motion was made by Shirley Holloway and seconded by Janel Keplinger. I move for the State Board of Education & Early Development to move its January 25, 2010 meeting to January 13, 2010 and for it to be face-to-face in Anchorage. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The following motion was made by Pat Shier and seconded by Shirley Holloway. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the consent agenda consisting of: 1) minutes of the September 8-10, 2009, meeting; 2) minutes of the October 26, 2009, meeting; 3) the appointment of Anna Kim to an exempt permanent position as the department's Director of Administrative services; and 4) appointment of Addison Field and Marnie Leist to fill three-year terms on the Alaska State Museum Collections Advisory Committee, beginning January 1, 2010, and ending on December 31, 2012. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The following motion was made by Pat Shier and seconded by Tim Rockey. I move the State Board of Education & Early Development convene in executive session to interview candidates for student advisor-elect for the remainder of the 2009-2010 school-year. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

The board came out of executive session and resumed its meeting by motion made by Pat Shier and seconded by Geri Benshoof and passed by unanimous consent.

The following motion was made. The State Board of Education & Early Development's student advisor-elect for the remainder of the 2009-2010 school year is Donald Handeland of Sitka. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote. The board and those present congratulated Donald Handeland.

Board Comments.

Pat Shier thanked the commissioner for all the travel he was doing and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He read a thanksgiving message entitled, *Why Am I Here*, written October 3, 1789, by George Washington. It was the same day he penned the first amendment. Mr. Shier wondered if they intended to sanitize our values.

Bunny Schaeffer asked that EED contact the Old Believers who testified and explain why the testing date cannot be changed. She wished everyone happy holidays. The commissioner interjected that he had talked with them after they left the room yesterday.

Tim Rockey congratulated Donald Handeland on his selection and said he was eager to work with him. He said he was looking forward to the compulsory age and HSGQE issues being debated. He thanked the Anchorage School District for allowing the board to use their space, he thanked the staff and board and said he was grateful to be representing students .

Shirley Holloway thanked the staff for the enormous amount of work they do, and thanked the commissioner for focusing on the significant issues. She said she enjoyed the Goldenview Singers, and thanked the staff for the discussion from the deaf community and noted that she had the privilege of knowing Dr. Soboloff. She welcomed Donald Handeland and wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

Janel Keplinger thanked the department for their work, and thanked the commissioner for doing a good job. Welcomed Donald Handeland and wished everyone a happy holiday.

Geri Benshoof congratulated Donald Handeland and said she too appreciated Dr. Soboloff. She said she was impressed with the department staff and the work of the commissioner. She noted that she went to the ASSB meeting in Anchorage, saying the board always tries to do the best for all students and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Esther Cox said she attended the career and technology group meeting and the graduation working group saying she was glad that Representative Seaton attends the meetings. She said she had met with the Governor and talked about the education plan and teacher quality and she was hoping the board could meet with him in March. She handed out the annual report for the Construction Academy. She said she had recently met with faculty members from Goldenview Middle School. She congratulated Janel Keplinger on her school being named a Blue Ribbon School in Kodiak. There was a general discussion regarding how the board handles public testimony. It was decided that the board should not engage in conversations with the commentators, but just listen and that the department should seek the commentators out for further discussion. Shirley Holloway noted that board training would say that board members should not respond. Pat Shier said he wanted access to the speakers. The board inquired about board training at their March meeting and agreed to add a day to the meeting if necessary. Ms. Cox thanked the staff and Mrs. Knuth and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

By unanimous consent the meeting was adjourned.

