

**Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development**  
**Approved Minutes**  
**April 18, 2013, Special Meeting**  
**Via Teleconference**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Merriner at 12:07 p.m. after some technical difficulties. The Oath of Office was administered to new board member James Fields. Mr. Fields joins the board as the REAA representative for a term of five years. All members were present except, Pat Shier, Sue Hull and Bunny Schaeffer. With three members absent, there were four members present and a quorum was established. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The Chair asked if anyone had any disclosures. Janel Keplinger said that she was the test coordinator for her school, which might affect the discussion and voting on the norm-referenced testing agenda item. Mr. Merriner said he was also the test coordinator for his school, which might affect the discussion and voting on the norm-referenced testing agenda item. Rebecca Hattan, Assistant Attorney General, advised that the board could, by a vote, make a determination as to whether they could participate. Mr. Merriner said he had no objection to Ms. Keplinger participating. Ms. Hattan advised that the conflict had been aired publically and he could participate. Esther Cox, First Vice Chair, said she had no objection to Ms. Keplinger participating. There were no objections from board members.

Ms. Cox moved to approve the agenda as presented. It was seconded by Ms. Keplinger. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**Public Comment**

Christie Reinhardt from the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education spoke in favor of the repeal of the required standardized norm-referenced testing tool, the TerraNova, saying a shift to standards-based testing and individual measures of achievement and growth against Common Core standards is a much better indicator of a student with disabilities' progress and of a school's success in meeting the requirements of law.

**WORK SESSION**

Regulations to go out for Public comment. Early Literacy Screening. Dr. Susan McCauley, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board. She reviewed the regulation proposal, saying it addresses an early literacy screening process, not a diagnostic process, for students in K-2, and for students in grade 3 who experience early literacy delays in grade 2. She emphasized that it allows for various tools to be used and the assessment would only take 10 minutes or less. The data would be reported to the department once a year, and the proposal aligns with the English language arts standards that the board has approved.

Pat Shier joined the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Ms. Keplinger said she felt the process needed to address comprehension also, and asked why it only took 10 minutes to administer. Dr. McCauley said its intent was only to be used as a

screening tool, and it was not intended to be diagnostic. It would be a very easy and quick way to know how the student is doing in literacy. Ms. Keplinger said she felt the comprehension piece was very important and should be included. She said she understands not burdening districts with more assessments but felt students need to be reading by third grade and this would be one way to ensure that. Mr. Merriner asked about the research. Ms. Keplinger asked what the goal was. Dr. McCauley said the goal was to ensure good literacy by the third grade; a concept that was picking up nationally. She indicated that waiting until third grade to find out that a student was not proficient was too late; it would provide intervention and provide a more comprehensive system. Ms. Keplinger said she was also looking at the teacher evaluation piece and how they would be evaluated; she wanted to let people know it was coming. Mr. Merriner asked who would administer the assessment. Dr. McCauley said a team would be assembled and teachers would not be assessing their own students. She said there was lots of guidance in the industry. Mr. Merriner asked why the proposal wasn't prescribing the guidance since it's available. Ms. Hattan said she and Dr. McCauley had spent considerable time looking at the tools. The level of variety is various enough and not practicable to describe in the regulation. Ms. Cox inquired as to the term "phoneme segmentation fluency (PSF)." Dr. McCauley said the term is consistently used across all measures of screening and teachers are very familiar with it, and it is also stated in our standards. Ms. Keplinger said PSF is only one part of phonemic awareness. Mr. Merriner asked why the assessment would only be given two times a year. Dr. McCauley said it would be given at the beginning and the end of the school year to measure the success. Ms. Keplinger asked if the department already had a list of the four approved tools. Dr. McCauley said she did and she would make the list available. Mr. Merriner asked what happens if the student had a bad day on assessment day, and if there was another way of doing this without putting it into policy. Commissioner Hanley said the idea is to provide tools for teachers, so early identification can happen. The Governor put funding in his budget for this to make sure each school had the tools to use to identify needs. If the proposal is too big, it won't fit into the legislative intent and might become a financial burden on the districts. Mr. Fields thanked the Commissioner for his comments and said it was good to be clear that it's vague on purpose.

**Regulations to Adopt.** Norm-Referenced Testing. Erik McCormick, Director of Assessment, Accountability & Information Management, was present to brief the board. This proposal repeals the TerraNova assessment in grades 5 and 7, and eliminates the school questionnaire. He indicated that all the public comment was supportive. Ms. Cox said she was in favor of the repeal, but asked if it was too early considering the new assessment consortium's timetable. Mr. McCormick said in 2014 there will not be a norm-referenced result. Les Morse, Deputy Commissioner, interjected that even when we have the new assessments, the TerraNova is separate and districts are already giving other measures. The department anticipates a good measure in 2014. The National Assessment of Educational Progress is given every other year and gives a good statewide picture.

University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) Endorsement. Dr. McCauley, Director of Teaching & Learning Support, was present to brief the board and introduced, Dean Lo, Dean of the School of Education. The university was asking for an endorsement for a newly created program in distance delivery and e-learning for teachers who currently hold certification. The program had been approved by the Chancellor and the UAS Faculty Senate. Dean Lo spoke generally about the need for such a program to keep up with technology and the drift toward e-learning. The

program will be 18 credits. She said the program meets the standards from the International Society of Technology in Education, the Alaska State Literacy Blueprint, and the Alaska Professional Content and Performance Standards. Dean Lo said that currently less than 50% of the education programs require any course work in instruction in distance delivery. In answer to a question by Ms. Cox, the course work will be online. Mr. Shier said he was thrilled to see this and thought UAS responded quickly to the need. He said much of online learning is akin to video production and was very dependent on the energy of the presenter and design. It is like asking teachers to be event producers. Dean Lo said the first two courses are design courses in how to differentiate to individual needs. She said the course work does not lead to a degree, so the curriculum committee didn't have to sign off on the program. In response to a question about the length of time to complete the course, she said it would depend on the student, probably two to four semesters.

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

**Regulation to go out for public comment** – Early Literacy Screening. Ms. Cox moved and Mr. Shier seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development open a period of public comment on a proposed new section of regulations, 4 AAC 06.713, Early Literacy Screening. Under discussion, Ms. Keplinger asked if it wasn't sent out would that affect the appropriation. The legislative intent was explained. When asked, Dottie Knuth said the proposal would be out for comment until May 21. When asked why not September, the Commissioner said typically over the summer it's hard to get any public comment as educators are off for the summer. Ms. Keplinger asked if edits could be made after the public comment period was over. Ms. Hattan explained that as long as the edits were not substantive, they can be made. If the edits were deemed substantive, it would have to go out for a supplemental period of public comment. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

**Regulation to Adopt** – Norm-Referenced Test. Mr. Shier moved and Ms. Keplinger seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development adopt the proposed amendments to 4 AAC 06.710, Statewide student assessment system; 4 AAC 06.730, Standardized norm referenced test administration; 4 AAC 06.735, Standardized norm referenced test results; 4 AAC 06.740, School questionnaire; 4 AAC 06.750, Student questionnaire; 4 AAC 06.765, Test security; consequences of breach. There was no discussion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

University of Alaska Southeast course endorsement. Ms. Keplinger moved and Mr. Shier seconded the following motion: I move the State Board of Education & Early Development approve the Distance Delivery and E-Learning Endorsement Program at the University of Alaska Southeast. There was no discussion. The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

## **Board Comments**

Ms. Cox said she had met with the teacher consortium at University of Alaska Anchorage and she was impressed with Dean Lo, who presented at the meeting. She said her presentation was researched-based and wanted it shared with the board.

Mr. Merriner asked the Commissioner to give a short update on legislative action. Commissioner Hanley indicated that the legislature gave districts \$21 million for school security as a one-time appropriation. It will be distributed according to Average Daily Membership. The boarding school bill passed with the current amount, allowing for variable term programs and no stipend sunset date. The Special Education service Agency had its program extended to 2021 with a small bump in appropriation. He said the board will hear a more comprehensive report at its June meeting. Three out of the four components in digital learning were funded, Online with Libraries, Alaska's Learning Network, and online tutoring. The one-to-one initiative was eliminated. Jobs After Graduation was also eliminated, but the department is working with the United Way to see if some of the concepts can go forward. Mr. Fields asked if all testing by 2015 would be on iPads. The Commissioner said the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium would be technology-based and there would be a transition. The testing window will be extended compared to the way it's structured now.

Carly Williams said that she attended the Alaska Association of Student Governments' meeting and 300 delegates were in attendance and that it was an awesome conference.

Madison Manning said she couldn't attend the March board meeting because she was at the U.S. Senate Youth Program in Washington, D.C. She thanked the department for the opportunity.

Mr. Shier welcomed Mr. Fields to the board and reminded everyone to pray for administrators, students and a safe spring.

Mr. Merriner welcomed Mr. Fields and said he appreciated his comments and thanked the department for its work.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 1:30 p.m.