



“Update on the New Statewide Plan for Early Childhood Care and Education” Snapshot Sessions Notes

Association of Alaska School Board Annual Conference

Friday, Nov. 8, 2019 • 1:30-3:15 pm

Four 17-minute snapshot sessions were presented to school board members and superintendents by Christina Hulquist, Program Coordinator II at the Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Child Care Program Office, department lead for the Impact Project and lead member of the Early Childhood Joint Task Force (JTF) and Betsy Brenneman, Preschool Development Grant Coordinator at the Association of Alaska School Boards and member of the Early Childhood Joint Task Force. Also attending and helping with the presentations was Chelsea Burke, Project Assistant at DHSS Child Care Program Office.

Presentations during each of the four sessions evolved differently, however, in general, Christina presented the rainbow graphic of the state’s ECE system and the JTF stakeholder graphic and explained the status of the statewide early childhood needs assessment and strategic plan. She offered an overview of the collaborative work of the JTF and its leadership team this year in meeting the requirements of three separate early childhood grants. Betsy showed them the chart of all PDG activity areas and explained more about the status and goals of the needs assessment and how it ties into the strategic plan. She also spoke about the current stage and design of the strategic plan and about upcoming community engagement meetings, alerting attendees meetings may be taking place where they live, work or represent.

Attendees were invited to ask questions, offer ideas of how they saw themselves involved in early childhood work and to express their thoughts about the state’s early childhood landscape given their experiences

As the sessions progressed, Christina told attendees it was encouraging to hear some of the same concerns we have heard from many other places and to know we are not off track.

Attendee responses:

- We need to get Head Start back in our community.
- Accessibility and affordability are real issues, especially for 0-3 Early Head Start. We really need it and want it back.
- More increase of opportunity for early childhood. Newhalen School
- Stronger AEYC statewide. It used to be stronger. It needs to do better outreach and parent trainings.
- EC teachers should organize into an association.
- We got an early literacy grant which is great.
- More money for pre-K grants
- Head Start vs. pre-school – there are barriers to how they function together, we need more alignment.
- A basic definition of kindergarten readiness is needed. It could be made flexible for communities.

- Some teachers are certified and some are not. This is a problem.
- Some districts provide certified teachers for private preschools and for a district preschool (Nome).
- Partnerships with tribal organizations are important.
- The strategic plan could be helping small rural communities with resources. We have significant demands for care. Help us to develop – how to get more homes licensed?
- Is there data on the effect of Imagination Library. It is very important to see that data. It is working.
- EC takes planning and teacher support.
- We need consistency across the state – a kindergarten readiness defined curriculum so that all kids are getting the same thing at the same time to have a level playing field. And then professional development.
- Parent skills are needed.
- Educational services for new parents giving them parenting skills and telling them where resources are.
- Tribes need more information, they would be able to work with others.
- Young parents are a concern. They need parenting skills.
- Ability to share information is stifled because of the strict regulations around protected info (HIPAA, FERPA, etc.)

Attendees

Session 1

Name & Title	Organization	Contact #	Email
Tracy Wirak , school board member	Haines Borough School District	406-459-3531	twirak@hbsd.net
Katie Holmlund , school board member	Petersburg School District	907-209-5792	KatieHolmlund@hotmail.com
Jeff Short , school board member	Juneau School District	907-209-3321	jwsosc@gmail.com
Kathy Ahgeak , superintendent	North Slope Borough School District	907-304-3315	kathy.ahgeak@nsbsd.org
Wassillie (Wally) Gust , school board member	Southwest Region School District	907-693-6522	wgust2015@yahoo.com
Kathy Sherman , school board member	Northwest Arctic School District	907-412-3345	ksherman@nwarctic.org
Edgar Hoelscher , school board member	Lower Yukon School District	907-758-2297	ed_hoelscher@yahoo.com
Shannon J. Nanalook , school board member	Lake & Peninsula School District	907-571-3130	sejohnson24@yahoo.com
Deedie Sorensen , school board member	Juneau School District	907-723-4473	ssoren@gci.net

Session 2

Name & Title	Organization	Contact #	Email
Ferdinand Sharp , school board member	Southwest Region School District	907-843-0721	ferdinandsc@hotmail.com
Patrick Mayer , superintendent	Aleutians East Borough School District	907-383-5222	pmayer@aebbsd.org

Brandy Arrington, school board member	Nome Public Schools	907-304-2713	bmarrington95@gmail.com
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Session 3

Name & Title	Organization	Contact #	Email
Barb Jewell, school board member	Cordova City School District	----	bjewell@cordovasd.org
Julia Phelan, school board member	Delta/Greely School District	-----	juliahphelan@gmail.com
Paul Kelly, school board member	Juneau School District	907-240-3447	paul.kelly@juneauschools.org

Session 4

Name & Title	Organization	Contact #	Email
Debbie V. Cary, school board member	Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	907-398-8308	dcary@kpbsd.k12.ak
Debbe Lancaster, superintendent	Wrangell Public School District	907-874-2347	dlancaster@wpsd.us
Millie Hawley, school board member	Northwest Arctic Borough School District	907-645-2153	mhawley@nwaarctic.org

Submitted by Betsy Brenneman, PDG Coordinator, AASB, bbrenneman@asb.org