

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES  
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Executive Committee  
MINUTES**

**Videoconference Host:**  
Governor's Council  
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1230  
Anchorage, Alaska

**Meeting Date**  
Wednesday, December 8, 2021  
2:00 p.m.

**Attendees:**

Jena Crafton, Vice-Chair  
Art Delaune  
Corey Gilmore  
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus  
Ric Nelson  
Travis Noah

**Guest:**

Charlene Taufest

**Staff:**

Jess Doherty  
Jamie Kokoszka  
Michele Binkley  
Jacqueline Kim  
Myranda Walso

**Prepared by:** Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

**CALL TO ORDER – 2:00 p.m.**  
**ROLL CALL – Quorum established**

### **WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR**

Jena Crafton welcomed committee members and Council staff to the meeting.

### **Introductions, Announcements, or Good News**

Jena Crafton opened the floor for introductions, announcements, or good news.

Jena encouraged committee members to keep Heidi Lieb-Williams, the Council Chair, in their thoughts as she goes through her medical procedures.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES**

#### **Approval of the Agenda**

**Corey Gilmore MOVED** to approve the agenda as written, **SECONDED** by Ric Nelson. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Executive Session**

Jena Crafton **MOVED** for all present Executive Committee members to move into a closed executive session, joined by the Acting Executive Director Myranda Walso and Jacqueline Kim, for the purposes of discussing deliberative and confidential records not subject to public disclosure, including those protected by attorney-client privilege, relating to the organizational structure of the Alaska Executive Branch, **SECONDED** by Travis Noah. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the committee entered executive session.

After the conclusion of executive session, Ric Nelson **MOVED** to request that the Council be moved to the Office of the Governor and that they serve as the new DSA; that the Council directs Acting Executive Director Myranda Walso to formally bring the request to the Governor during the December meeting and then formally agree to provide prioritized work on these issues during the winter Council meeting, **SECONDED** by Art Delaune. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED**. (5/0/1)

Ric Nelson **MOVED** to return to executive session, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**. No action was taken following this executive session.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Art Delaune **MOVED** to approve the meeting minutes from the November 2021 meeting as written, **SECONDED** by Ric Nelson. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

## **REPORTS**

### **Vice-Chair Report**

Jena Crafton reported that there has been a lot of discussion on Council member travel for legislative visits.

### **Executive Director Report and Correspondence**

Myranda Walso reported that Council Chair Heidi Lieb-Williams' return date is unknown.

## **NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED**

### **Determination of Travel/Remote Options for Legislative Visits**

Myranda Walso reported that the Executive Committee asked that the Legislative Committee take up the question regarding the timing structure of the upcoming legislative visits. The Legislative Committee put forward dates. The Executive Committee adopted a hybrid structure of both in-person and virtual visits. The time frame proposed by the Legislative Committee was as follows:

- In-person travel, January 24<sup>th</sup> through 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- In-person travel, February 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Virtual visits, February 28<sup>th</sup> through March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Ric Nelson **MOVED** to accept the travel and virtual legislative outreach dates, **SECONDED** by Art Delaune. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Myranda Walso directed the members' attention to the document titled *Juneau Estimated Travel Expenses* for review. She noted that there were difficulties procuring lodging due to renovations at major hotels in Juneau and finding ADA-compliant lodging. However, after excellent work by Ian Miner, they were able to secure travel and accommodations in Juneau for the dates specified.

Myranda Walso noted that there will be a limit of five Council members for each trip. Accommodations have been considered for Council members traveling with caretakers

and accommodations for Council staff. The current plan includes ten hotel rooms reserved per trip. Miranda noted that she must travel to Juneau to attend the AMHTA meeting during the January trip. The estimated cost for the outreach visit is as follows:

- January \$11,151.86
- February \$16,151.86
- Total \$27,303.72

Ric Nelson **MOVED** to accept the proposed budget for travel to Juneau and approve discretion to make adjustments as needed by Acting Executive Director Miranda Walso, **SECONDED** by Art Delaune. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**.

Miranda Walso opened the floor for recommendations for Council member selection for in-person legislative visits. The committee discussed sending the same Council members to both visits to take advantage of a streamlined travel process and experienced Council members conducting the advocacy.

Ric Nelson **MOVED** to have the same five Council members attend both legislative visit trips, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Miranda Walso reported that Heidi Lieb-Williams, Corey Gilmore, Jena Crafton, Ric Nelson, and Travis Noah had expressed interest and willingness to travel to Juneau.

Art Delaune **MOVED** that the five members who expressed interest in going are approved to travel, **SECONDED** by Ric Nelson. During the discussion, Ric Nelson noted that his caregiver, Dean Paul, travels with him, and Dean is a Council member and would be available if needed. Miranda Walso indicated that the distinction would be slightly different from being selected as a Council member representative on the trip. Art Delaune noted that Dean would be a good advocate but understands there may be a conflict. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Miranda Walso reported that the Council members selected to travel, assuming COVID-19 restrictions and personal health allows, are Ric Nelson, Corey Gilmore, Heidi Lieb-Williams, Travis Noah, and Jena Crafton.

## **ICC Governance Policy**

Miranda Walso directed the members' attention to the document titled *Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities of Alaska Governance Policy* included in the meeting packet. She reported that one of the Council's roles is to act as the Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities in Alaska (ICC). However, the Council members' and the ICC's responsibilities differ from those of the Council as a whole. As a result, one of the unique things about the ICC is that non-Council members make up the majority of the ICC membership. Miranda reported that currently there is no formal structure on how members are selected and

overseen. Because the ICC in the new committee structure is a standing committee, the staff asks that the Executive Committee provide a policy that will outline how the ICC will function in its role on behalf of the Council.

Myranda Walso highlighted the following information regarding the governance policy:

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that each state establish and maintain an interagency council for the purpose of advising and assisting the State lead agency staff regarding early intervention for eligible children with disabilities. Alaska has established that the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) will serve as the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC).

- The GCDSE oversees an ICC committee, which is delegated this responsibility.
- The GCDSE is delegated authority to appoint members to serve on the ICC by the Governor and works to ensure the membership of the ICC reasonably represents the population of Alaska.
- The Governor requires the Council to designate a member of the Council to serve as the chair. Any member of the Council who is a representative of DHSS EI/ILP or staff to the GCDSE may not serve as the chairperson of the ICC.
- The ICC is directed to work with the Part C Program Office and the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program to fulfill IDEA requirements.

#### ICC Committee Roles and Members

- GCDSE Officers
  - Voting officers include a chair and a vice-chair, and a non-voting Lead Agency Officer. There are no term limits for ICC officer positions.
- Chairperson
  - The ICC Chairperson will be appointed by the Chair of the GCDSE and shall be filled only by an individual who is also a member of the GCDSE appointed by the Governor. They will serve at the pleasure of the GCDSE Chair.
  - The Chairperson shall:
    - Preside at ICC meetings
    - Lead the ICC planning activities
    - Recommend removal of members on a case-by-case basis.
    - Appoint the ICC vice-chair
    - Confirm the appointment of new ICC members nominated by the Executive Director following the guidance of the ICC Committee staff.
- Vice-Chairperson
  - Any ICC Committee member in good standing may be selected to serve as the Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair will serve a term of one year, aligning with the state fiscal year, beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of each year. If the Vice-Chair resigns from their position or is no longer a

member of the ICC in good standing, a successor will be nominated by the ICC Chair to fill out the remainder of the term.

- The Vice-Chairperson shall:
  - Assist the Chairperson with performing such duties as prescribed in the governance policy, with other duties as assigned; and
  - Assume responsibilities of the Chairperson, as needed.
- Lead Agency Officer
  - There will also be an officer appointed by the Lead Agency who fills a non-voting, honorary position and is not formally a member of the ICC, but who will provide support for the Chair and Vice-Chair and can assist in leading and preparing committee meetings and events as needed and at the request and direction of the Chair and/or GCDSE staff.
- Part C Lead Agency Staff
  - Members from the Part C State office may assist in facilitating or leading meetings, ad hoc committees, or workgroups if GCDSE staff or ICC officers request support. They may not substitute for either the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson.
- Members-at-Large
  - Any person who desires to be a Member-At-Large must apply for the position by completing an application and submitting it to the GCDSE for review by the ICC Committee lead and back-up staff. GCDSE staff will be responsible for reviewing applications, conducting interviews with candidates, and ensuring that ICC membership reasonably represents the diverse population of Alaska.
  - GCDSE staff will bring the finalists for new ICC member appointments (after reviewing all applications received) to the GCDSE Executive Director, who will refer them to the ICC Chair for consideration. The ICC Chair may accept or reject the nominee.
- The ICC will maintain at least five Members-At-Large. Members-At-Large must meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - Parents of children with disabilities aged 12 or younger
  - Direct service providers
  - Individuals concerned with the preparation of personnel regarding infants and toddlers with disabilities
  - Other members (see section ICC Composition).
- GCDSE Staff
  - At least two staff from the GCDSE will be assigned to support the ICC. Staff will be designated as "Lead" or "Back-up." Staffs' responsibilities include:
    - Disseminating meeting notices, agendas, minutes, and support materials.
    - Providing guidance and resources to the Part C office and to committee members.
    - Recruiting and recommending new members consistent with the composition criteria.

- Member Responsibilities
  - All ICC members are expected to:
    - Be knowledgeable of state and federal regulations governing the provision of early intervention services
    - Advance the mission of the Interagency Coordinating Council of Alaska
    - Attend and actively participate in all meetings
    - Advise the lead agency based upon one's unique perspective
    - Serve on workgroups or ad-hoc committees, as needed; and
    - Submit a letter of resignation to the Lead GCDSE staff as soon as possible if they wish to resign.
- Sub-Committees and Workgroups
  - Ad Hoc Committees or workgroups may be created at the request of the ICC with the concurrence of a majority of ICC members as necessary for a specific time-limited project.
- ICC Planning Group
  - The ICC Planning Committee shall meet at least once prior to each ICC meeting. They will establish an agenda for the upcoming meeting and assure that the business of the last meeting has progressed. The Planning Committee shall include:
    - ICC Chair or Vice-Chair
    - ICC Co-Chair
    - Lead and Back-Up GCDSE staff
    - Other individuals, as needed.
- ICC Committee Meetings
  - Meetings for the ICC of Alaska shall be:
    - Held at least quarterly
    - Open and accessible to the general public
    - Publicly announced with sufficient advance notice of the dates and location to ensure that all interested parties have an opportunity to attend
    - As needed, provide for interpreters for persons who are deaf and other necessary services for Council members and participants. The Council may use funds under Part C of IDEA to pay for those services; and documented in meeting minutes, and may be recorded in audio and video format.
- Decision Making
  - A quorum will consist of fifty percent (50%) plus one of the ICC members
  - Members of the GCDSE staff may not vote
  - No member of the ICC shall cast a vote on any matter that would provide direct financial benefit to that member or otherwise give the appearance of a conflict of interest under Alaska state law. Primary responsibility for adherence to this standard falls on the member.

Myranda Walso noted that the appendixes provide more information from IDEA and other resources focused on the agency's legal responsibilities and include the details of membership criteria defined in law. Myranda noted that the ICC membership should be composed as follows:

- Parents
  - At least 20 percent parents of infants, toddlers, or children with disabilities aged twelve or younger who have knowledge of or experience with programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities. These parents will represent the socioeconomic, ethnic, disability, and geographic diversity of the state, if possible.
  - No less than one such member shall be a parent of an infant or toddler with a disability or a child with a disability aged six or younger.
  - Parents will represent the socioeconomic, ethnic, disability, and geographic diversity of Alaska.
- Service providers
  - No less than 20 percent of the members shall be public or private providers of early intervention services.
- Alaska State Legislature
  - No less than one member shall be from the State Legislature.
- Personnel preparation
  - No less than one member shall be involved in personnel preparation.
- State office of the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program
  - No less than one member shall be from each of the State agencies involved in the provision of, or payment for, early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families and shall have sufficient authority to engage in policy planning and implementation on behalf of such agencies.
- DEED: Preschool Services
  - No less than one member shall be from the State educational agency responsible for preschool services to children with disabilities and shall have sufficient authority to engage in policy planning and implementation on behalf of such agency.
- Denali KidCare
  - No less than one member shall be from the agency responsible for the State Medicaid program.
- Head Start Agency
  - No less than one member shall be a representative from a Head Start agency or program in the State.
- Childcare Agency
  - No less than one member shall be from a State agency responsible for childcare.
- Agency for health insurance



- No less than one member shall be from the agency responsible for the State regulation of health insurance.
- DEED: Office of the Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth
  - No less than one member shall be a representative designated by the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths.
- Office of Children’s Services (OCS)
  - No less than one member shall be a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care.
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)
  - No less than one member shall be a representative from the State agency responsible for children's mental health.
- Other members (highly recommended) may include, but are not limited to:
  - A representative from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), or where there is no BIA-operated or BIA-funded school, from the Indian Health Service or the tribe or tribal council
  - Parents of children with disabilities older than age 12
  - Individuals with disabilities.

IDEA Part C requires some members to be appointed based upon organizational affiliation. These members are not required to apply for a committee position; rather, they shall be recruited by GCDSE staff to fulfill federal requirements. However, they must be recommended for consideration and appointed to serve by the Committee Chairperson. Members who are not elected by the GCDSE officers will be referred to as "representatives." They are not eligible to hold a Member-At-Large position. Representatives shall include individuals from the following agencies:

- Alaska State Legislature
- DEED: Office of the Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth
- Office of Children’s Services (OCS)
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)
- State office of the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program
- DEED: Preschool Services
- Denali KidCare
- Head Start Agency
- Childcare Agency

Myranda Walso urged the committee to adopt the policy as presented. She noted that the Council’s ability to meet its obligation as the ICC is undermined without the structure and guidance.

Ric Nelson **MOVED** to accept the ICC governance policy as presented and delegate authority to make adjustments as needed to the acting executive director subject to the review and approval of the Executive Committee, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Myranda Walso expressed the Council's appreciation to Michele Binkley, the lead staff for the ICC, who spent several weeks developing the policy for the committee's approval.

### **TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Myranda Walso recommended scheduling an additional Executive Committee meeting next week to address issues related to legal discussions and provide an opportunity to meet with an attorney ahead of the meeting with the Governor's office.

Ric Nelson **MOVED** to schedule an Executive Committee meeting for Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., pending the attorney's availability, with a sole agenda item of a legal discussion, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Myranda Walso recommended scheduling a short Executive Committee meeting targeted at the needs of the Transition Committee. Myranda Walso suggested a meeting Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Jena Crafton **MOVED** to schedule an Executive Committee meeting Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., **SECONDED** by Ric Nelson. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT**

Ric Nelson **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Jena Crafton. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.