

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

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Videoconference Host:

Governor's Council
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1220
Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting Date

Wednesday, July 19, 2023
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Nona Safra-Committee Chair
Jena Crafton
Ken Hamrick
Director Duane Mayes
Anna Attla
Corey Gillmore
Margaret Evans

Guests:

Dave Berube
Jimael Johnson

Staff:

Patrick Reinhart
Jamie Kokoszka
Michael Stevenson
Robert Tasso
Samantha Vetter
Rich Saville

CALL TO ORDER – 11:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Nona Safra welcomed attendees to the meeting. Nona briefly discussed Microenterprise Grants and suggested the committee think about an activity to recognize October's Employment Awareness Month.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and MINUTES

Director Duane Mayes **MOVED** to approve the meeting agenda as presented, **SECONDED** by Anna Attla. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Director Duane Mayes **MOVED** to approve the April 19, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Ken Hamrick. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

REPORTS

Chair Report

The chair report was included in the welcome from the chair.

GCDSE Staff Report

Council staff shared the following updates:

- The United States Department of Education (USDOE) Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Grant was submitted on time by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). The application was for \$10M.
 - Approximately 10% would be for Council-supported activities over a five-year period.
 - Approximately \$2.5M to the Centers for Independent Living in Southeast and Kenai Peninsula for recreational/work programs.
 - Approximately \$2.1M to the Statewide Independent Living Council statewide Youth Leadership Forums.
 - Approximately \$1M to CHD for doing their portion of the grant work.
 - DEED will be in charge of the administration of the grant.
 - Note: A determination will likely be made by the end of August, with a grant start of October 1st.

- All three Project SEARCH sites, Fairbanks, Mat-Su, and Anchorage, were represented at the National Project SEARCH Conference in July. The Anchorage site was highlighted for having a 100% employment rate.
 - Note: A portion of the USDOE RSA grant will expand Project SEARCH in Anchorage and/or add two new sites during years three and four.

- Three pilot sites have been identified for the Alaska Traditional Transition Skills Curriculum. Parent/guardian training will be offered when school begins in the fall.
 - Note: If the USDOE RSA grant is awarded, the Council expects the curriculum will be expanded to more sites.
- The BEST Job Fair Employment First Symposium at the Fairview Recreation Center in Anchorage is scheduled for October 13, 2023.
- The Disability in Retail Fair, a virtual job fair, is scheduled for August 21, 2023.
- The Disability Pride event in Anchorage is scheduled for July 22, 2023 from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Delaney Park Strip.
- October is Employment Awareness Month.
- The Council is looking for stories on how the Council's work with employment has positively impacted them or people they know.

BUSINESS

Vote on Activities for Years 3 and 4 for the Council's Five-Year Work Plan

Nona Safra asked staff to facilitate the discussion related to the activities for years three and four. Samantha Vetter and Jamie Kokoszka outlined the proposed changes to the activities as follows:

Objective 1:

- 3.1.1: Work with partners to participate in at least one employment activity annually, such as job fairs, transition fairs, conferences, and/or statewide stakeholder meetings or trainings. GCDSE and partner agencies will host at least one activity. Review sign-in sheets/participant lists for attendance count; surveys will measure self-reported increase in knowledge and location in Alaska to gauge reach.
 - Recommendation: Keep the activity. The Council anticipates continuing to work on these activities as stated in the Alaska Work Matters Task Force (AWMTF) final report.

Corey Gilmore **MOVED** to accept the proposed activities for 3.1.1, **SECONDED** by Ken Hamrick. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.1.2: Collaborate with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) to support the Council's Five-Year Plan through the management and implementation of the Beneficiary Employment Engagement (BEE) plan activities to ensure beneficiaries have greater access to employment, related support services, and accurate resources and information on how paid employment

impacts Social Security and other benefits. Complete plan activities and submit an MHTAAR report to AMHTA twice yearly. GCDSE will provide a report to AMHTA two times per year with activity progress.

- Recommendation: Amend the plan and replace it with USDOE grant addressing youth in transition, such as Project SEARCH, traditional transitions skills, and other applicable projects. Consider having Project SEARCH as a separate activity – it would need to be an amendment to the plan.
 - Discussion: Remove any language related to the Trust TA Grant

Corey Gilmore **MOVED** to designate Jimael Johnson to wordsmith the activity as per discussion and bring it back to the next meeting for approval, **SECONDED** by Jimael Johnson. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.1.3: Microenterprise Grant Review. Support employment for Alaska's DD population by serving on the Microenterprise Grant Committee. Participating in the Microenterprise Grant reviews and discussions with Alaska WIPA Project Director through the UAA Center for Human Development. Review Microenterprise grant applications, and provide input and recommendations on applications no less than three times per year. Number of meetings and applications reviewed by GCDSE staff and approved by the committee.
 - Recommendation: Change the review of grant applications to two times per year, and keep 3.1.3 in the plan as this is an ongoing reoccurring GCDSE staff activity as a member of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Advisory Board.
 - Discussion: Suggested removing times per year for reviews keeping the language broad while the Trust works with CHD on assessing the program.

Ken Hamrick **MOVED** to keep activity 3.1.3 and remove the verbiage with the quantifier, **SECONDED** by Jena Crafton. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.1.3 continued:
 - Recommendation: Include activities from the Five-Year Plan for Year 3:
 - Participate in at least one state agency transportation committee to improve transportation policies and increase transportation reliability and accessibility.
 - Note: GCDSE Executive Director Patrick Reinhart is already participating in transportation meetings.

Corey Gilmore **MOVED** to add the recommended activity to 3.1.3 with details to be worked out with CISS Committee, **SECONDED** by Director Duane Mayes. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.1.3 continued:
 - Recommendation: Update the Transition Handbook, website, and promote employment resources on social media.

Ken Hamrick **MOVED** to add the activity related to the Transition Handbook as presented to 3.1.3, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.1.3 continued:
 - Recommendation: Consider amending the plan to include USDOE RSA Grant activities.
 - Discussion: Not necessary to amend the plan to include anticipated activities.
 - Action: Tabled.

Objective 2:

- 3.2.1: Support and contribute to the development of a modified curriculum that is regionally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for rural transitions in three regions of the state. Support further development of modified curriculum that is regionally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for rural transitions.
 - Recommendation: Keep the activity in the plan with revised wording, as this activity is partially completed. Remove the first sentence. Suggested language: Support further development of modified curriculum that is regionally, culturally, and linguistically relevant for rural transitions.

Director Duane Mayes **MOVED** to accept the presented recommendation, **SECONDED** by Anna Atlla. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.2.2: Collaborate with partners on a plan for collecting baseline data on rural transitions, developing a pilot using the curriculum, and measuring progress.
 - Recommendation: Continue the activity. Activity is in progress and not complete.

Corey Gilmore **MOVED** to accept the recommendation as presented, **SECONDED** by Director Duane Mayes. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.2.3: Provide at least one training to parents and guardians on the availability of curriculum collaboration with partners. The Council will co-host one training for parents/guardians on the availability of curriculum.
 - Recommendation: Keep the activity. It is currently experiencing a delay in implementation due to securing funding to further the project.

Corey Gilmore **MOVED** to accept the recommendation as presented, **SECONDED** by Director Duane Mayes. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

- 3.2.3 continued:
 - Recommendations: Promote the pilot in at least two meetings with policymakers (state and national).

- Discussion: Remove policymaker language, and insert promote pilot with at least two meetings with appropriate entities at the state or national levels.

Corey Gilmore **MOVED** to accept the recommendation as discussed, **SECONDED** by Director Duane Mayes. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

Other

Director Duane Mayes reported that he plans to attend the National Employment Team Conference September 19 – 20, 2023, and he intends to invite the Alaska delegation to join him at a celebration to commemorate the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Director Duane Mayes shared that DVR's national trade association chose him to represent the directors of Region X. Region X developed a plan that has three priorities:

- Retention and recruitment
- Streamline internal processes
- Public awareness

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Governor vetoed the Centralized Accommodations Fund (CAF). Patrick approached the Trust to see if they would be interested in including a CAF in their budget recommendations for next year. The draft of the Trust's budget recommendations presentation includes a CAF request. Patrick noted that they will continue the effort to bring it to the legislature at the next session.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Dates for the Employment Committee meetings are as follows:

- Thursday, August 17, 2023, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- Thursday, September 21, 2023, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- No meeting in October
- Thursday, November 16, 2023, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- No meeting in December

Patrick Reinhart suggested choosing a time to meet with the CISS Committee to discuss transportation issues.

GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT

Anna Attla **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.