

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

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Videoconference Host:

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

Meeting Date

Wednesday, September 20, 2023
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Caitlin Poindexter, Chair
Director Duane Mayes
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich
Corey Gilmore
Chelsea Burke

Staff:

Patrick Reinhart
Jamie Kokoszka
Rich Saville
Michael Stevenson
Ian Miner
Samantha Vetter
Lanny Mommsen

Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 1:36 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Caitlin Poindexter welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Introductions, Announcements, or Good News

Caitlin Poindexter opened the floor for introductions. Chelsea Burke shared that she works in the Childcare Program Office as a program coordinator for quality and capacity-building for childcare statewide. She is actively involved in Special Olympics of Alaska. Her youngest son is an athlete and a child with an IEP. She is looking forward to taking on an advocacy role at the Council.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and MINUTES

Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich **MOVED** to approve the September 20, 2023 meeting agenda as amended, **SECONDED** by Director Duane Mayes. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Director Duane Mayes **MOVED** to approve the April 26, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

REPORTS

Chair Report

Caitlin Poindexter shared the Council's condolences to Representative Peltola on the loss of her husband, Eugene Petola, Jr.

Caitlin Poindexter remarked that she stepped up as chair of the Legislative Committee because she believes the work is vital. Caitlin stated that people must protect, advocate for, and support people with disabilities. The work is personally and professionally important to her.

Caitlin Poindexter reported that she is learning how to navigate the Alaska State Legislature website in preparation for the fall session.

GCDSE Staff Report

Council staff reported the following information:

- September 8th, 2023 was the showing of *8 Magic Keys*, a film about developing successful interventions for students with FASD. The Governor’s Council presented the Governor’s proclamation declaring September 9th as FASD Awareness Day.
- The Council supported and participated in the Anchorage Disability Pride event on July 22, 2023.
- DEED was awarded the U.S. Department of Education grant. The grant will support projects, including launching the traditional transition skills curriculum pilot, supporting Project SEARCH sites, and boosting Peer Power’s outreach.
- The Governor’s Council participated in the Embracing Alaska Disabilities Fair event, which occurred at the same time as the Shining Abilities Craft Fair.
- The fall Council meeting is scheduled for October 9 – 10, 2023.
- The Aging and Disability Summit is scheduled for October 11 – 12, 2023
- The Employment Symposium/Job Fair is scheduled for October 13, 2023.
- The Reducing Recidivism Conference is scheduled for November 30 – December 1, 2023.

Patrick Reinhart added that the U.S. Department of Education Disability Innovation Fund grant awarded to DEED includes a \$10M award over the next five years to push the envelope on the leadership training and tracking of youth with disabilities towards an employment or career future. Patrick noted that as a grant partner, the grant activities dovetail nicely with the Council’s employment goals, the partnerships with DVR, the State Independent Living Council, Independent Living Centers, the Center for Human Development at UAA, and others. As a grant partner, the Council will receive funding from DEED to support Project SEARCH’s existing sites in Anchorage, Mat-Su, and Fairbanks with technical assistance and support for travel to attend national conferences and expand Project SEARCH to two more communities in the state. There is also funding to support Peer Power to train self-advocates on outreach to students with disabilities related to employment and careers.

Patrick Reinhart reported that he will be speaking at a national Tribal and Indian transportation conference next week to talk about statewide issues related to transit.

BUSINESS

2023 State Legislative Updates and Discussion

Jamie Kokoszka shared the Council’s position papers related to outstanding legislation from the last session as follows:

- HB 111 (Deaf and Hard of Hearing)
 - Sits in House Finance awaiting hearing
 - Companion Bill SB 143 was introduced
 - The Deaf Education Board identified edits to the language of the proposed legislation as follows:
 - Add ASL as a method of communication as an option.

- Remove “cued speech” and “total communication” as options as they do not apply to Alaska and are outdated methods of communication.
 - Change the definitions of “deaf” and “hard of hearing” in the bill as they are deficit-focused.
- SB 57/ HB 58 (Adult Home Care)
 - Combined with SB 106 and HB 127 (HCBS waiver services)
 - Signed into law summer 2023.
- Centralized Accommodation Fund (CAF)
 - A budgetary item that got vetoed in the Governor’s final budget
 - Trust included it in its recommendations to the administration
 - One of the top recommendations in the AWMTF report
 - The CAF will be brought forward again next session
 - The Council will consider whether or not to present it as a capital project.
- SB 104/HB 161 (Civil Legal Services Fund)
 - A Council bill in 2018
 - Alaska Legal Services (ALS) is in dire need of appropriate funding
 - The bill promotes moving back to 25% of legal fees collected by the state going to ALS.
- Discussion of potential Council-supported/initiated bills
 - Move ACL funding for assistive technology (AT) loan program from DVR to another entity (Assistive Technology of Alaska, CHD, Centers for Independent Living, other entity with direct connection to consumers in need of AT).

Update on Federal Issues

FASD Respect Act

Caitlin Poindexter reported that a thank-you letter was sent to Senator Murkowski for bringing forward the Respect Act. The Respect Act includes:

- Promote and fund education awareness and services across community agencies and systems of care for infants to adults.
- Provide funding to state and tribal systems for FASD services throughout the lifespan.
- Create Centers for Excellence to guide states and other systems of care in expanding diagnostic capacity, public awareness, and outreach about FASD.
- Provide training and technical assistance on prevention, supports, and interventions for people diagnosed with FASD.

Caitlin Poindexter reported that a Governor’s proclamation was introduced at Bear’s Tooth on September 8th at the *8 Keys to Success* film premiere.

ABLE Act Update

Patrick Reinhart reported that there is a bill in Congress that would significantly expand the number of people with disabilities who could utilize the ABLE Act.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

Caitlin Poindexter reported that the Administration on Community Living (ACL) is seeking public input on Adult Protective Services' establishment of the first-ever federal regulations for APS programs. The proposed rule aims to improve the inconsistency and quality of APS services across states and support the national network that delivers APS services with the ultimate goal of better meeting the needs of adults who experience or are at risk of maltreatment. The deadline for comment is November 12, 2023. There is a webinar available for review online at [ACL.gov](https://acl.gov). Patrick Reinhart noted that the CISS Committee would be a good fit to offer public testimony on regulations.

Caitlin Poindexter shared that AKLeg.org is a wealth of information regarding the legislative sessions. She encouraged committee members to familiarize themselves with the website as it provides up-to-date information throughout the legislative session.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

There will not be a Legislative Committee meeting in October. The next Legislative Committee meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday, November 8, 2023, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT

Caitlin Poindexter accepted Chelsea Burke as a new Legislative Committee member.

Chelsea Burke **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**. The meeting ended at 2:57 p.m.