

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Videoconference Host

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1220
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Meeting Date

Thursday, December 11, 2025
3:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present:

Art Delaune, Carl (CB) Brady, Lisa McDonald, Sabrina Richmond, Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich

GCDSE Staff:

Jamie Kokoszka, Patrick Reinhart, Rich Saville, Lanny Mommsen, Samantha Vetter

Council Members and Guests:

Judy Edwards, Kaleigh Holm, Justine Bright, Alison Kahn, Elizabeth Joseph, Demii Van Dusen

Minutes Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 3:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Quorum not established

WELCOME

Art Delaune welcomed attendees to the meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Tabled.

APPROVE AGENDA

Tabled.

REPORTS

Chair Report

No report was given.

Staff Report

Council staff reported the following information:

- Council meeting scheduled for February 9 – 12, 2026, in Juneau
 - February 9 – travel; February 10 - Council meeting; February 11 & 12 – half-day meeting, half-day legislative visits; February 12 – legislator visits and departure.
 - December 15, 2025, is the deadline for Council members to notify staff whether they plan to attend the Juneau Council meeting in February.
 - Legislative visits are being scheduled. If a Council member would like to visit their legislator, please let staff know.
 - The Council requested a social function at the Governor’s House on February 11, 2026. The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) members were invited to join the Governor's Council at the social function.
- The Council staff is midway through completing the Council’s Program Performance Report (PPR) for the federal government. The report is due December 31, 2025.
 - The Council staff is working on a synopsis of the annual report that will be included in the legislative visit packet.
- The Alaska Deaf Council (ADC) expects to have advocates in Juneau at the same time the Council is there. ADC’s advocacy focuses on the Deaf Education Bill and the expansion of the ILP.
- The Inclusive Practice Awards nomination period closes on Friday, December 19, 2025. The awards will be presented at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference in February.
- The Stone Soup Group continues to host the Transition Series on the last Wednesday of each month.

Patrick Reinhart reported that Key Campaign plans to scale back its Juneau advocacy event scheduled for March 17 – 19, 2026. Last year, Key Campaign met in Juneau at the same time as the Council and joined in advocacy efforts. Due to travel restrictions and the cost of travel, Key will do a small-group effort in March.

Patrick Reinhart reported that Governor Dunleavy released the FY ‘27 budget. He has not had a chance to review it in its entirety; however, the budget items directly affecting the Council were funded. It included the three items added by the Mental Health Trust last month: \$250,000 in capital funding for the Adult Changing Spaces Grant Program, \$75,000 for the adult Project SEARCH sites, and \$175,000 to support Council staffing.

Patrick Reinhart reminded the committee that he announced his retirement at the end of May. The Executive Committee will meet on December 12, 2025 to begin the transition process.

BUSINESS

2025 Federal Issues and Discussion

Patrick Reinhart shared the following information on federal issues the Council is following:

- The FASD Respect Act was passed by Congress and signed into law in late 2025, establishing a comprehensive federal response to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders by authorizing funding and programs for prevention, research, and support services via the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This bipartisan effort, led by Senators Murkowski and Klobuchar, aims to boost education, screenings, and state/tribal capacity, creating FASD Centers for Excellence and ensuring better resources for affected individuals and families, marking a significant win for the FASD advocacy community.
- The Administration on Community Living (ACL) released a new mission/vision statement. ACL exists as it was, but it is now part of the Administration for Children and Families. The Council met with ACL administrator Mary Lazar, who shared that funding for the DD Councils will continue to flow. The funding is secure until the end of January, when ACL will need to develop another budget. The link to the mission/vision statement is <https://acl.gov/about-acl>.
- CMS has released an update (<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-issues-guidance-strengthen-oversight-medicaid-financing>) related to home and community-based services and Medicaid state guidance. The guidance did not address the Medicaid expansion population, who may lose benefits if they do not fall into one of the exempted categories. It is also unclear how volunteering will be counted and whether friend/family caregiving will be considered for the work requirement.
- HUD housing cuts were reversed by the courts this week. The Continuum of Care funds that were set aside to help people exit homelessness and need services while they are sheltered were released this week.

2025 State Issues and Discussion

Kaleigh Holm, Representative Story's aide, joined the meeting to share news from the legislature. She reported that the Alaska Department of Revenue has released its Fall 2025 Revenue Forecast. The Governor's budget appears to be a maintenance-level budget without special projects. She noted that it does pull from the reserve, which generally the legislature does not support, so changes are anticipated.

Patrick Reinhart asked whether the legislature has a role in how the state spends Rural Health Transformation Fund (RHTF) funding. Kaleigh Holm agreed to forward the question to Representative Story. Patrick noted he was asking because one of the priorities in the state's submitted plan for the funding is early intervention services, so there may be an opportunity to use some of the RHTF funding for ILP over the next five years.

Patrick Reinhart noted that as previously reported, the Council will drop the SESA funding request from its priorities. Rich Saville attended the latest SESA meeting and reported that SESA had no concerns about it.

So Every BODY Can Move Alaska (SEBCM) Update

Alison Kahn and Justine Bright joined the meeting and shared the following update:

- SEBCM met with Representative Josephson, who will be sponsoring an Alaska bill which is in the drafting process. It has been sent to Legislative Legal, and hopefully a clean draft will be available soon. Other legislators have also expressed interest in co-sponsorship.

- SEBCM met with the Division of Insurance to gain an understanding of their perspective. SEBCM submitted questions to the division seeking an explanation of its perspective and clarification of some language.
- SEBCM is exploring fundraising options and looking for self-advocates who support the bill and are willing to testify in Juneau when the time comes.

Council Priorities

Patrick Reinhart reported the Council priorities as follows:

- SB 178: Expand Early Intervention Services (Infant Learning Program)
- HB 26: Statewide Public and Community Transit
 - Passed the House
- HB 141: Public Buildings; Changing Facilities
- HB 39 and SB 8: Education for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - The Council has turned the lead advocacy over to the Alaska Deaf Council. The Council will continue to support the bill.
 - Passed the House
- HB 73/SB 76: Complex Care Residential Homes
- Other areas of importance:
 - SEBCM Alaska legislation
 - Civil Legal Services funding
 - Rewrite of the State of Alaska guardianship laws.

TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Legislative Committee meeting has been scheduled for January 8, 2026, 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Other events:

- Meet Your Legislator Training is scheduled for January 29, 2026.
 - Focused on Council members' legislative visits in Juneau
- Council meeting scheduled for February 9 – 12, 2026 in Juneau
 - February 9 – travel; February 10 – Council meeting; February 11 & 12 - half meeting, half legislative visits; February 12 – legislator visits and departure.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at approximately 3:55 p.m.