

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
July 9, 2026
12:35 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Caitlin Poindexter – Co-Chair, Marlene Wenger, Sabrina Richmond, Corey Gilmore

Council Members and Guests: Scott Lindbloom, Kaleigh Holm, Demii Van Dusen, Karen Heath, Teri Tibbett

GCDSE Staff: Jamie Klimczak, Chelsea Burke, Samantha Vetter, Rich Saville, Lanny Mommsen

Minutes Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 12:35 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum not established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR
Caitlin Poindexter welcomed attendees to the meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION
No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVE AGENDA
Tabled due to lack of quorum

APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES
Tabled due to lack of quorum

REPORTS
Co-Chair Report
No news to report.

Staff Report
Chelsea Burke shared the following update:

- Council staff has been working toward finalizing the five-year plan for submission.

- The Council's fall meeting has been scheduled for October 5 – 6, 2026.
- The Council member trainings will resume in August.
- All of the requests the Council made through Trust funding were included in the budget, including additional funding for Project SEARCH and the Changing Table Grant Fund. Chelsea is currently working with Grants & Contracts on the Changing Table Grant Fund Request for Information (RFI).
- A grant from the Office of Violence Against Women that the Council applied for has been awarded. The grant will support a collaboration with CHD Friendship & Dating Training. The aim is to implement one-on-one training and extend these services to rural areas. The staff is currently integrating this initiative into the Council's plans.

Karen Heath shared the following update for CHD activities:

- CHD received its core UCEDD grant.
- CHD submitted its five-year LEND proposal.

BUSINESS

Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

Jamie Klimczak reported that she and Samantha Vetter have encountered situations where individuals with ADHD are being denied necessary services and support. Many are ineligible for grants or Medicaid waivers because their primary diagnosis lacks co-occurring disabilities. Some individuals experience severe symptoms while others manage them better with treatment, including medication. However, some do not respond well to medication, have health limitations, or prefer not to use it. As a result, these individuals are not receiving the services they need.

Jamie Klimczak reported that the Council has been focused on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) for several years, led by a dedicated workgroup. Recent discussions have highlighted the importance of addressing ADHD alongside FASD and other neurodevelopmental disabilities, which tend to be categorized under behavioral or mental health rather than recognized as developmental brain disorders. Jamie noted that the task involves determining the best approach to providing services and focusing on whether changes in legislation, policy, or public education are necessary. There's a need to inform both the public and service providers about the appropriate terminology and classifications, especially regarding conditions like ADHD, which many may not recognize as a developmental disability. Additionally, consideration should be given to educating those responsible for approving or denying applications. The question remains about where to find relevant resources, such as state legislation.

Caitlin Poindexter shared her efforts to find support for her daughter, mentioning her experience with neurofeedback and discovering Dr. Grove at Head-to-Toe Holistic Healthcare, who offers a program called LETS. She suggested that both Dr. Grove and the Alaska Neurofeedback Center could serve as valuable resources for exploring neurodiversity and identifying gaps in care.

Corey Gilmore highlighted the challenge that many neurodiverse services are not covered under waiver services, despite the rehabilitative potential they offer. He urged the Council to advocate for legislative changes to expand waiver services to those who

need temporary support for greater future productivity. He noted that part of the problem is that the only condition actually covered in state waiver services is FASD, not FAS.

Samantha Vetter pointed out that while there is a general understanding of the impact of neurodiverse diagnoses, the support often fails to meet the actual needs of individuals. She emphasized the importance of clarifying eligibility for services, noting the limited number of people qualifying for existing waiver services due to stringent criteria. Corey reiterated that only full-blown FASD is covered under state waiver services, leaving those with FAS without support.

Demi Van Dusen shared a personal experience highlighting the complexity of addressing different needs in the context of regulatory and statutory issues. Caitlin Poindexter emphasized the importance of focusing on specific aspects to navigate the various legal and policy frameworks effectively.

Teri Tibbett, the advocacy coordinator for several Alaska Mental Health Trust boards and programs, discussed her role in coordinating efforts on prenatal alcohol exposure and advocating for relevant policies and funding. She also leads initiatives for organizations supporting families affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Teri shared what she has learned about neurobehavioral disorders:

- The overarching challenge is that it is an invisible disability that often manifests itself in behavior.
- Many disabilities fall under the neurobehavioral disorders umbrella that is often overlooked, misdiagnosed, and dismissed.
- There has been a huge movement over time to improve awareness of neurobehavioral disorders and to educate medical professionals, correctional officials, and legislators to improve medical diagnosis and individualized services.
- Complex trauma disorders are a neurobehavioral disorder. TBI, TABI, FAS, ADHD, and autism are all brain-based disabilities that are different from person to person and need thorough examination.

Teri Tibbett reported that there has been a concerted effort to raise awareness and educate medical professionals, legislators, and others to improve diagnosis and provide tailored services. Advocates like Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus and various organizations are working towards these goals, but progress remains slow, with historical efforts often losing momentum despite their initial promise.

Jamie Klimczak recommended scheduling a meeting to discuss the work that's been done historically, what could be learned from it, and which direction to take now. Teri Tibbett agreed to send the committee historical strategic plans from the many siloed efforts under the umbrella of neurobehavioral disorders. She directed the members' attention to links she provided in the chat: HR 2438, the FASD Respect Act, and the GCDSE FASD Strategic Plan.

[Representative Andi Story Update](#)

Kaliegh Holm directed the members' attention to the final budget for FY '27. She noted that it was unfortunate to see that the Governor vetoed items related to education and early education.

Council Priorities

Following are the outcomes of the Council's legislative priorities and other bills that were tracked:

- ***SB 178/HB 376 – Expand Early Intervention Services (ILP Program)***
 - 6/18/26, enacted into law without signature (unfunded mandate).
- ***HB 246 – SESA Funding***
 - 7/2/26, enacted into law without signature.
- ***SB 141 – Public Buildings: Changing Facilities***
 - Did not pass legislation but resulted in the first universal changing space in downtown Juneau in the state Capitol building.
- ***HB 26 – Public and Community Transit***
 - Passed House and Senate, vetoed by the Governor.
- ***SB 8/HB 39 – Education for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing***
 - 6/22/26, enacted into law without signature.
- ***HB 272 – Insurance for Prosthetics & Orthotics***
 - Rolled into SB 185, Insurance; Rebates; Advertising
 - SB 185 was scheduled to be heard before House Finance but was delayed and never resumed.
- ***HJR 45 – Support Special Education Funding***
 - Passed and transmitted to the Governor
 - Enacted.
- ***HB 48 - Civil Legal Services Fund***
 - 5/20/26, enacted into law without signature
 - Effective date of law, 8/23/26.
- ***HB 73 – Complex Care Residential Home***
 - 6/24/26, signed into law
 - Effective date of law, 7/1/27.
- ***SB 190 – Uniform Act: Guardianship/Conservatorship***
 - Last committee – Senate Judiciary.
 - Seven amendments were submitted
 - Was not expected to pass due to its complexity, but work is hoped to continue into next legislature if a bill sponsor is acquired.
- ***HB 96 – Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board***
 - 6/24/26, vetoed by the Governor.
- ***HB 36 – Foster Children Psychiatric Treatment***
 - 6/22/26, enacted into law without signature.
- ***HB 52 – Minors and Psychiatric Hospitals***
 - 6/18/26, vetoed by Governor; veto sustained.
- ***HB 292 – Insurance: Pediatric Neuropsych Disorders***
 - Referred to House Finance; bill has died.
- ***Medicaid Waitlist/interRAI***
 - Work towards the interRAI is moving forward.

Federal Updates:

- Letter of support for “FUND the FASD Respect Act” submitted
- Section 504 lawsuit - ongoing.

TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Upcoming Legislative Committee meetings:

- August 2026, no meeting
- September 10th, 2026, 12:30 p.m.
- October 2026, no meeting

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 2:00 p.m.

DRAFT