

Alaska's Education Challenge
Tribal & Community Ownership Committee
Thursday, June 1, 2017

Committee Members Present

Co-Chair Kenny Gallahorn | Co-Chair John Harmon | Co-Chair Jason Toole | Kathy Commack | Jerilyn Kelly | Rachel Roy | Janet Bifelt | Tom Begich | Zach Fansler | Chuck Kopp | Tiffany Jackson | Kerry Boyd | Tim Parker | Steve Ginnis | Melanie Bahnke | Hunter Carter | Chris Hladick | Valerie Davidson | Kathie Wasserman | Deena Mitchell | Liz Medicine Crow

9:00 – Welcome and Overview

Reminder of ground rules, task, and goals for today's meeting.

John Harmon provided historical overview of the State Board of Education's process in developing the Board's current five strategic priorities. Kenny Gallahorn added that it has always been the Board's goal to create and improve our partnerships with all communities.

When asked if there were any clarifying questions, Steve Ginnis asked about how the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) relates to this discussion. He shared that the Fairbanks Native Association has begun discussions with their local school district. Senator Tom Begich pointed to documents on Smartsheet that addressed this question. John Harmon added comments about ESSA and turning control and decision-making back to the states, reaching out to all stakeholders through this process, and how ESSA and the Alaska's Education Challenge complement one another and inform one another.

Steve then asked what REAA school districts are doing in terms of reaching out to their local tribes. John Harmon and Jerry Covey agreed that DEED can provide an answer in advance of the next meeting.

9:30 – Reviewed Goals for Today as listed on the Expanded Agenda

Committee Member Introductions

Valerie Davidson: from Bethel, Commissioner of DHSS, experience in self-governance and federal to tribally operated programs

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 1

Definition of Transformative Change: The schools, including staff at every level, really reflect the communities that we serve, and we're not doing that now...we generally see the community reflected in support staff at this time. I think this can happen through self-governance.

LTC Jason Toole: Military Liaison to the State Board, resides in Anchorage, taught at West Point, Ph.D. in Education, father of 3 children

Definition of Transformative Change: Interested in cultural changes that affect education at-large.

Tim Parker: President of NEA-Alaska, 18 year teacher in Fairbanks

Definition of Transformative Change: It's about culture and community connections to schools, there are currently many places where connections are weak and getting weaker, and where connections are strong it's reflected positively in the school.

Rep. Chuck Kopp: State House Rep for District 24, public safety retiree and commercial fisherman, parents are long-time educators, former private school board member

Experience Level in Smartsheet: average

Definition of Transformative Change: We have to first accurately state the problem, and that we don't look at symptoms, but really recognize when there are deeper underlying problems/pathology, and if we can do that we can do some transformative things/leadership/coaching – something that doesn't look like anything we've done before (ex: separate Yupik education region).

Steve Ginnis: from Fort Yukon, resides in Anchorage, former Chief of his village and of Tanana Chiefs, current leader of the Fairbanks Native Association

Experience Level in Smartsheet: requested assistance via email

Definition of Transformative Change: Means listening to the voice of the people and the students as it relates to what they see to better the educational system.

Jerilyn Kelly: parent, mother of 4

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 1

Definition of Transformative Change: Nothing matures overnight. In order to grow and mature we go through a development process and I'm very humbled and honored to be participating in what we're trying to develop. I really hope that my input and feedback will help to mature the committee's task that we've been given.

Tiffany Jackson: from Sand Point, Executive Director for local tribe, AASB

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 2 (mentioned slow internet access)

Definition of Transformative Change: Bigger ideas – what can we do that is going to positively impact student achievement, encourage our tribes and communities that they are an integral part of that.

John Harmon: from Palmer, SBOE member, high school principal and teacher

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 3

Definition of Transformative Change: Radical, redefining boundaries, outside the box, thinking without limits, and in the end come up with something that looks very different from what we do today and is making a positive difference.

Kenny Gallahorn: from Kotzebue, SBOE member

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 2-3

Definition of Transformative Change: We have to change the way we do things to improve, history has shown we need to do a lot better, all schools in our state should be a reflection of the community they reside in.

Kathy Commack: parent rep, local school advisory board member

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 3 (mentioned slow internet access)

Definition of Transformative Change: Having all of our 15 sites have a stronger rural voice for our district, want to encourage sites to be able to share their voice.

Tom Begich: District J in Anchorage, background in education

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 3

Definition of Transformative Change: Change for change's sake is simply not sufficient, we need to have an idea of where we're going. So what is it that we really want education to look like? Really looking at

things differently, if we're going to do really good transformational change it must be nimble and involve community at every level.

Melanie Bahnke:

Experience Level in Smartsheet: 1

Definition of Transformative Change: I think of when the missionaries came...look at the existing social issues and I try to go upstream and think about when things started changing. The way that we interact with each other, it was all turned upside on its head in a negative way. What I'm hopeful for in this committee and Administration is that our recommendations will survive different administrations and political whims. We may not get it right on the first try.

Zach Fansler: District 38

Definition of Transformative Change: Integrating cultural ideals and methodologies into our education system, communities do that in different ways, we need to be respectful of that, very diverse state, one size does not fit all, we need an adaptable/flexible system in place, need community involvement, need to protect and enhance and ensure our cultural identities around the state.

Rachel Roy: parent from Sitka

Experience Level in Smartsheet: not yet used

Definition of Transformative Change: The butterfly and caterpillar image, we can never go back to what it used to be, it's going to take some uncomfortable decisions and change to prepare our children for the future. Our role is to ensure community buy-in.

Liz Medicine Crow:

Experience Level in Smartsheet: beginner

Definition of Transformative Change: See that the transformation that we need reflects both our geography and cultures, not perpetuate things of the past, ensure our children to excel. Self-determination and self-governance is important - excited to see how we can make that happen.

BREAK – Select your top 3 themes (out of the 5 total) for the committee to focus on

10:36 – Prioritizing Themes (Goal: Narrow Committee's Focus to 3 Main Topic 'Buckets')

Melanie: keep 1-3 themes

Tom: keep 1-3 themes

Kathy: keep 1-3 themes

Liz: keep 1-3 themes

Kenny: keep 1-3 themes

John: keep 3, 1, 4 (put 2 and 5 underneath 4)

Tiffany: keep 1-3 themes

Jerilyn: keep 1-3 themes

Chuck: keep 2-4 themes

Tim: keep 1-3 themes

Rachel: keep 1-3 themes

Jason: keep 1-3 themes (inputs), then 4-5 become outputs

Valerie: keep 1-3 themes

Group agreed to move forward with themes 1-3. They are: 1. Partnerships, 2. Values, and 3. Self-Governance & Community Choice in no particular order.

11:00 -- Norm Wooten provided an explanation regarding the passing off of 5. Students, and how 4. Rebuilding our Schools is encompassed as a "How" underneath themes 1-3.

BREAK – Reflect on 4/20 meeting comments/ideas and how they might be sorted to populate the three themes selected.

Discussion regarding thoughts under theme 'buckets':

Chuck: Value appears most frequently under individual comments, placed letters next to each comment to represent the theme.

Tim: agreed with Chuck

Valerie: a lot of comments alluding to self-governance/community choice, culture referenced more than values.

John: Values – reflection on cultural comments, local language

Kenny: culture and self-governance sticks out

Liz: agreed with Valerie's comments, some comments reflected "How's", mentioned Melanie and Rachel's opening statements – doesn't want to forget those regarding truth and reconciliation, challenge us to get beyond our own assumptions

Melanie: appreciate the ideas generated at the kick-off meeting, got her thinking about the concepts of Alaska Native charter schools, BIA schools before REAA schools, immersion schools

HOMEWORK – Committee members agreed to send categorizations of comments by theme to DEED so they can be sorted and typed up, and then provided back to members as one-pagers to prompt discussions in the next committee meeting.

Members were also asked to think on what else they might need to inform their work – data, presentations, research, etc. A comment was made about definitions and examples regarding self-governance.

CLOSING COMMENTS – the majority of members felt the meeting was productive and expressed their continued commitment to the work ahead, some comments were made regarding the challenge of a teleconference format.

3 Overarching Themes Moving Forward:

- **Partnerships**
- **Values**
- **Self-Governance & Community Choice**