



**Alaska Workforce Investment Board**  
**Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development**  
**Employment & Placement Committee Minutes**  
**July 21, 2005**

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**Attendees**

*Committee members:* Rose Ellis, Kitty Farnham, Tom Nelson (*ex officio*), Gale Sinnott (*ex officio*), Molly Merritt-Duren (*ex officio*)

*Staff:* John Pratt

*Guests:* David Alexander, Mary Rogers, Chris Hayes

**Call To Order**

The special meeting of the Employment & Placement Committee of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board was called to order at 3:35 p.m. on Wednesday, July 21, 2005, via teleconference by Chair Rose Ellis. The rest of the committee members were present in-person at the Frontier Building in DPA's conference room.

*Agenda*

An ad hoc agenda was outlined to guide the meeting:

- Call To Order
- ABE Presentation
- Native MOU Debrief
- Plan For August AWIB Meeting
- Discuss Action Tracker Items

The agenda was approved unanimously.

**Presentation**

*Adult Basic Education – David Alexander, Nine Star Enterprises*

Dr. Alexander, representing the ABE/GED program on behalf of Amy Utse, provided a handout to accompany his presentation (staff will distribute the handout to those not present). The Anchorage regional ABE program is a consortium effort consisting of Nine Star, the Anchorage Literacy Project, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and Covenant House Alaska. The consortium has about 400 GED graduates each year between the four organizations. Overall ABE participation is about 3,000 people in Anchorage. Last year there were about 1,700 GED graduates statewide (2,000 annual average). GED is a high school diploma and accounts for 20-25% of all high school graduates. There are 18 providers throughout the state – 8 are funded by grants, 5 by RSAs; all have supplement income as well.

ABE has three purposes for participants: 1) to get GED or alternative high school diploma, 2) to go on to university, and 3) to get a job. Of the students last year that indicated they wanted to move on to further education, 76% did so; 43% going to the University of Alaska. Students are encouraged to attend their local University branch and pursue a career involving occupational licensing or some other portable work credential. The program also coordinates with the Alaska Works Partnership to get students into apprenticeships. 62% of the students that wanted to get a job or improve their job did so.

The program is organized around four quarters of about 12 to 15 weeks each, coordinated so that all the partners have concurrent start dates (however, the program is actually open-entry, open-

exit). Students can take the test any time they want. All students have to take a pre-test and post-test to measure their gains. Their numbers have been growing steadily over the past four year, since Amy Utse became the state director. Students last about 80 hours in a program, on average, over about a year (most don't attend class every day). Most clients begin with about an eighth grade equivalency. ABE serves and graduates about equal numbers of the major language groups in Alaska. ESL classes are available at all locations.

ABE operates on an annual budget of about \$2.7 million (approximately \$1.5 million of which is state general fund and \$1 million is federal) and have not had an increase since 1986. Dr. Alexander lobbied the legislature this year to add \$100,000 but it was cut out of the budget.

Chair Ellis suspended the presentation briefly to address other business items prior to some committee members leaving the meeting.

### **Discussion Items**

#### *Native MOU Debrief*

Gale Sinnott explained that the second day of the MOU meeting went much better than the first and that everything came together by the end. A four-person group of volunteers (Mona McAleese, Ken Mill, Donna Scott, and Ken Selby) will be tweaking the draft document and changes and wordsmithing the final revision. Mona will distribute to the Native grantees and AWIB members as soon as possible, hopefully in time for inclusion in the AWIB meeting packets. The timeline calls for the E&P Committee to approve it on August 11, the AWIB to vote on it August 12, and the completed MOU to be signed by all parties by September 30. E&P will monitor an action plan for implementation and semi-annual meetings of the parties will be held to keep on track.

Dick LaFever's assistant captured the salient points of the meeting, Mona and Donna meticulously documented the changes to the draft, Mary Rogers took notes, and John Pratt recorded both days' sessions. Tom Nelson indicated that Mr. LaFever's contract includes a write-up for the meeting. Kitty Farnham asked that the meeting report be delivered to this committee prior to its August 11 meeting. Mr. Pratt was tasked with following up with Dick LaFever.

#### *August Meeting*

All committees are scheduled to meet from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. on August 11 following the AWIB work session at the Marriott Residence Inn in Anchorage. The E&P members agreed to meet via teleconference from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on August 10 to continue the strategic planning begun at the Juneau meeting in February.

#### *Action Tracker*

Tom felt that strategic planning should be the priority for the August meeting. Consequently, the committee agreed to defer DVR's presentation to the September meeting. Kitty wanted to have a thorough discussion about the Operator MOU, but didn't feel it could be adequately addressed concurrently with the planning session. Tom, Gale, and Kitty will make every effort to join the next Ops Workgroup meeting to resolve the Common Intake pending action. The broader discussion of the Operator MOU could then be postponed until September. Mary Rogers will notify the directors of the next Ops Workgroup meeting. The residency report is an annual hardcopy report from R&A that Mr. Nelson can summarize and deliver at any time. Mr. Pratt pointed out that the committee could still meet at its regularly scheduled time at the end of August, which met with the chair's approval. The Operator MOU item will be the highlight of the August 31 meeting. The Gale will make her DVR presentation at that time as well.

### **Presentation (continued)**

University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton is an advocate for ABE and has been vigorously lobbying the legislature on the need for the program and increased funding. GED prep program is available via Internet distance delivery and Dr. Alexander related a number of rural Alaska success stories. The number of ABE students is on the upswing partly because employers are increasingly

requiring high school diplomas and partly because individuals eligible for ABE services need further technical training to advance in their careers. Almost all participants take computer classes concurrently with reading, writing, and math.

Ms. Farnham harkened back to a standard assessment question former AWIB chair Alice Galvin frequently asked, “Is there a policy implication here for the AWIB?” She asked what are the primary strategies that AWIB could support to ensure better than 1986 funding levels in light of high school exam failures/dropouts and the rural/urban education divide? Dr. Alexander responded that school districts could give a portion of their formula funding to ABE in anticipation of those dropouts. Thus far he has been unsuccessful in pursuing this course of action. Mr. Nelson stated that the AWIB does approve the annual ABE/GED plan and that that would be the appropriate opportunity for the board to impact the program with a resolution or policy. Ms. Farnham also noted the recommendations the AWIB makes to the governor in the annual report to the legislature. Rose wondered if this would fall under E&P or P&P purview and invited Dr. Alexander to contribute his recommendations on the matter for further consideration.

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m. by Chair Ellis. The next general meeting will be at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 11, at the Anchorage Marriott Residence Inn.

**Action Tracker**

WHO	WHAT	DUE BY	STATUS
J. Pratt	Coordinate distribution of Native MOU summit report with Dick La Fever		Pending face-to-face meeting
J. Pratt	Fax handout from ABE/GED presentation to committee members absent from July meeting		Hand out at 8/11/05 E&P
M. Rogers	Notify directors of next Operations Workgroup meeting		
D. Alexander	Communicate ABE/GED policy recommendations to E&P committee		
T. Nelson, G. Sinnott, K. Farnham	Join next Ops Workgroup meeting to resolve Common Intake pending action		
M. McAleese	Distribute final draft of Native MOU to AWIB and Native grantees	8/5/05	Done
E&P	Approve final draft of Native MOU at committee meeting	8/11/05	
AWIB	Vote on final draft of Native MOU at business meeting	8/12/05	
G. Sinnott	Presentation to E&P on DVR/TVR overview	8/31/05	
E&P	Examine Operator MOU at committee meeting	8/31/05	
AWIB & Native grantees	Sign final Native MOU	9/30/05	
E&P	Submit recommendations re: ABE/GED to ExCo for inclusion in annual report to the legislature	January, 2006	
E&P	Monitor Native MOU implementation plan	Ongoing	

*Minutes submitted by: John Pratt*