

Nonpublic School Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

May 9, 2023

Members Present: Patty Lansink, Josh Bowar, Brian L'Heureux, Donna Bishop, Natasha Havercamp

Others in Attendance: Rachel Bosovich, Mark Ford, Eric St Clair

Agenda Item	Person	Notes
1. Welcome and Review Agenda	Patty Lansink Rachel Bosovich	Patty Lansink welcomed Natasha ("Tasha") Havercamp to the committee, who works at a church in Davenport with a nonpublic school attached to it. The committee members introduced themselves. Rachel Bosovich noted she is sitting in for Dr. Kim Buryanek as the Iowa Department of Education's (Department) representative. The committee reviewed the agenda. No additions were made at this time.

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2. ESA Update	Mark Ford	<p>Department Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer Mark Ford introduced himself. He came to the Department in late January. In addition to working on the executive branch realignment initiative (reducing the Governor’s cabinet-level departments from 37 to 16), Mr. Ford is also leading the Department’s side of the Students First Educational Savings Account (ESA) initiative. The Department is working with the state’s selected vendor, Odyssey, as well as the Iowa Treasurer’s Office, Department of Revenue (Revenue), and the Office of the Chief Information Officer on implementing the ESA online application, ESA account and payment system, and information security.</p> <p>The deadline for the parent/guardian application to go "live" on the ESA system is May 31. The Department is also one day ahead of the May 10 deadline to have the parent/guardian application, online FAQ for parents, vendor application, approved/unapproved expenses and the school registration form completed, and the ESA administrative rules published. The Department is now working with Odyssey and Revenue on the manual verification system for residency and income eligibility. After two years, the ESA program will be open to all Iowa families, and only residency will need to be confirmed.</p> <p>Last week was the deadline for all accredited nonpublic schools to make sure their contact and administrator information was submitted to ensure Odyssey could pre-load their information into the system. This Thursday, Odyssey will give the Department a live demo of the parent/guardian application process. Odyssey will provide parent/guardian trainings beginning the week of May 22, and trainings for schools and Department employees will begin the week of May 15.</p> <p>Mr. Ford said the Department will send welcome letters to qualifying accredited nonpublic schools, which will include training dates. The committee asked how they could assist with the process. Mr. Ford suggested visiting the ESA webpage on the Department’s website, signing up for email alerts, and reviewing the FAQ page to see if anything else needed to be addressed. The committee asked for per pupil funding information for public and nonpublic schools, and Mr. Ford said he would look into it.</p>

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3. Legislative Update	Eric St Clair	<p>Eric St Clair noted the legislative session adjourned last Thursday afternoon, and discussed relevant highlights. The ESA bill was introduced the first week of session, and was passed and signed by the Governor soon thereafter. While the Department was initially monitoring hundreds of bills—some covering overlapping topics—the Governor introduced two omnibus bills that reconciled a number of proposals. Lawmakers ultimately passed both of those bills. Senate File 391 made changes to Chapter 12 (offer and teach requirements). Senate File 496 covered a wide variety of other topics, including age-appropriate instruction, curriculum transparency and appropriate library materials, review processes for parents and citizens to request reconsideration of instructional or library materials. The bill also included intra-district enrollment provisions in instances of bullying and harassment. The education appropriations bill also included some policy provisions. The Department is reviewing legislation, and will issue guidance soon.</p> <p>Another important bill this session was House File 256, which removed the minimum age to receive a teaching license, so that high school students concurrently enrolled in college-level education programs can apply for a license upon graduation. House File 614, which has not yet been signed, relates to out-of-state and international teacher licensure. House File 604 allows an ombudsman to investigate complaints regarding incidents or threats of violence filed by licensed practitioners. It also includes provisions for parental notification. The committee asked if the bill was focused on student-to- student, adult-to-student or student-to-adult threats and/or incidents. Mr. St Clair said he would review the legislation to confirm, and noted that the Department would be issuing guidance on this legislation as well.</p> <p>Rachel Bosovich noted that the Department received 102 fiscal note requests from lawmakers this session, compared to 30 or 40 fiscal notes last session.</p>

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4. EANS Disposition	Thomas Mayes	<p>Thomas Mayes was unable to attend today’s meeting. Ms. Bosovich said the Department is continuing with the Emergency Assistance to Nonpublic Schools funding (EANS) disposition process and will keep the committee updated. In the meantime, Federal Programs Consultant Susan Selby and Federal Programs Bureau Chief Jillian Dotson are good contacts for urgent questions. That will ensure Mr. Mayes receives their questions in a timely manner. The committee asked for a timeline on EANS disbursement and approved expenditures.</p> <p>The committee asked when EANS I reverts to the Governor’s Office, and Ms. Bosovich said Mr. Mayes is working on that, and the team is putting together some guidance.</p> <p>The committee requested a written update from the Department about EANS, including allowable spending for staff.</p>
5. Meeting Dates for 2023-24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 10, 2023 • Dec. 12, 2023 • Feb. 13, 2024 • May 14, 2024 	Patty Lansink	The committee approved the meeting dates for the 2023-24 academic year