

Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2, December 2011

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ARTICLE: FISCAL YEAR 2013 Funding Priorities

The Governor's Council has six increment priorities for fiscal year 2013. The Council's Executive Committee met July 11 with department representatives to determine fiscal year 2013 priorities. Eric Gebhart, Kathy Fitzgerald, Ric Nelson, Millie Ryan and Teresa Holt presented the Council's legislative recommendations to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (The Trust) September 7–8. All Council recommendations were approved by The Trust and sent to the Governor for

consideration in his budget. Council's recommendations include:

Priority #1: Complex Behavior Collaborative Consultation & Training

The Council worked closely with the Department of Health & Social Services, The Trust and the other beneficiary boards to develop a comprehensive model for delivering in-state services for people with complex behaviors.

The Alaska Complex Behavior Collaborative Consultation & Training includes comprehensive diagnostic and testing capacity, individualized triage services, technical assistance to providers throughout Alaska, as well as case-specific consultation and training

services. It is anticipated that the number of out-of-state placements and the number of placements in correctional institutions and the Alaska Psychiatric Institute will be reduced as a highly qualified workforce is developed.

\$650,000 GF/MH

Priority #2: Council Operations

Unlike many other boards and commissions, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education has never received state general funds to support its fundamental statutory responsibilities. These statutory responsibilities include functioning as 1) the State Council on Developmental Disabilities; 2) the Special Education Advisory Panel; 3) the Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants

and Toddlers with Disabilities; 4) the governing board for the Special Education Service Agency; and 5) a beneficiary board of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority representing Alaskans with developmental disabilities. Without a stable source of base funding, the Council's ability to meet its fundamental statutory responsibilities is seriously compromised. The Council will have reduced ability to address the most pressing needs impacting Alaskans with disabilities and reduced ability to bring together individuals with disabilities and policymakers to develop thoughtful, cost-effective and cost-efficient solutions.

\$150,000 GF/MH funds

Priority #3: Project SEARCH

The Council collaborated with the Department of Education & Early Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, local school districts, hospitals and community rehabilitation providers in Anchorage, Mat-Su and Fairbanks to develop three Project SEARCH sites. Project SEARCH provides education and training to high school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities through an innovative workforce and career development model that benefits the individual, workplace and community. The primary goal of the program is to secure competitive employment outcomes for each graduate in high-demand, high-pay jobs. Business

Advisory Committees are being established in each community to coordinate job placements in related businesses. Several other communities have expressed interest in establishing similar programs.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is the major fund of time-limited job coaching service and needs additional, dedicated resources to meet increased demand.

\$100,000 GF/MH funds

Priority #4: Services for the Deaf

Services designed specifically for the deaf community have gradually disappeared over the past six years due to funding limitations and a lack of understanding regarding service provision. With the elimination of the Anchorage Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center, deaf individuals with multiple disabilities are attempting to access generic disability services with minimal success; communication is a constant struggle and many individuals report that services are fragmented. The goal of these services will be to improve independence, health, wellness and self-advocacy for Alaskans who are deaf or hard of hearing.

\$150,000 GF/MH funds

Priority #5: Employment for People with Developmental Disabilities

These funds will be used to assist community developmental disabilities providers to establish customized training and employment programs in collaboration with local businesses. Council staff will coordinate program development and start-up activities and, as a result, the number of Alaskans with developmental or intellectual disabilities who are working will increase as well as wages paid and hours worked.

\$150,000 GF/MH funds

Priority #6: Expansion of Rural Transition Services

This program is designed to serve youth with disabilities residing in rural and remote areas of Alaska, who are transitioning from high school to adult life (including employment, independent living, participation in post-secondary education, and participation in community life). Hands-on training, technical assistance and ongoing consultation will be provided to assist rural school districts to develop sustainable transition services that will result in improved outcomes for youth with disabilities.

\$100,000 GF/MH funds

ARTICLE:

How a Bill Becomes a Law

The Alaska Legislature is composed of 60 members, all of whom are elected by Alaskans. These legislators work hard to accurately represent their constituents as they discuss, modify and vote on bills. A bill may begin the process in either the House of Representatives or the Senate, but it must pass in both chambers (and avoid the Governor's veto) to become law.

Bills start as ideas that have to be "translated" by legislative staff into bills before they can begin the legislative process. After the bill is written, it is read to the members of the House or Senate by the bill's sponsor. This is called the

First Reading. After its first reading, a bill is referred to the appropriate committees as determined by the House Speaker or Senate President. The committees and their sub-committees review, discuss and amend the bill. The committee process is collaborative in nature, and therefore it can be very time consuming.

When the committees are done considering a bill, it advances to the full House or Senate. Then the bill is re-read (called the Second Reading) and discussed by legislators. During this time, arguments are made for and against the bill. Amendments are presented and voted on. Approved amendments are then incorporated in the bill. When the discussion about the bill is finished, the bill moves on to its Third Reading.

On the Third Reading, the bill is read and voted on a final time. There is no more debate or discussion of the bill during this reading, but a motion can be made to return the bill to Second Reading if a legislator feels that more discussion is necessary. If the bill is defeated by the vote following the Third Reading, then that's the end of it. It cannot become a law unless it starts the process over from the beginning. If the bill passes on Third Reading, there is still more work to be done.

Once the bill is passed in either the House or Senate, it is sent over to the other chamber, and the legislative process is repeated. The same bill must pass in both houses — this means that if the second chamber makes amendments

to the bill, the other chamber must approve them (or ask the chamber to reconsider their amendments). If the bills are not identical, sometimes a Conference Committee is called to resolve the differences between the two chambers. Three members of the House and three of the Senate form the committee. Their goal is to find a compromise that the majority can agree upon. If they are not successful, the bill dies. If they succeed, the bill is sent to the Governor.

According to the Alaska Constitution, the Governor has three options when dealing with bills. The Governor can sign the bill, veto the bill, or allow the bill to become law without his or her signature. A bill becomes law 90

days after it is signed, unless it has an effective date clause. Effective date clauses specify a particular day that a law comes into effect. Once signed, the bill becomes an act and is sent to be published in Alaska's codified body of laws. In order to be enforced, a law must have regulations written for it. Writing regulations is an important but time-consuming process.

The Governor's Council has many opportunities to advocate for change throughout the legislative process. By understanding how laws are made, the Council and others can better create change that improves the lives of people with disabilities.

The following is a list of the bills the Council will be following during the upcoming legislative session:

Disability Related Bills

SB 127 — A bill to permanently establish Sept. 9, 2011, as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Day in an effort to promote awareness of the disorder.

SB 74/HB 79 — These bills would require health insurers to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders, with a variety of provisions.

SB 86/HB 150 — These bills strengthen the laws against financial exploitation of vulnerable adults and enhance the ability to obtain emergency protective orders.

Education Related Bills

SB 6 — A bill to require school districts

to provide a pre-kindergarten program for students ages 4 and 5 using a model curriculum.

SB 10 — A bill to repeal the statute requiring secondary students to pass a competency test (High School Graduation Qualifying Exam) to receive a high school diploma.

HB 198 — This bill changes the way funding for the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) is calculated and eliminates the sunset requirement.

Early Intervention Related Bills

HB 49/SB 120 — These bills create a statewide “Parents as Teachers” program

for children under 5.

HB 154 — This bill requires the Department of Education and Early Development to devise a statewide early childhood education plan for 3 and 4-year-old children.

Transportation Related Bills

HJR 4 — A resolution to make a constitutional amendment creating a dedicated transportation infrastructure fund.

HB 30 — A bill that would provide a statutory basis for the administration of a dedicated transportation endowment fund to receive income from motor fuel tax, vehicle license fees and other transportation-related receipts.

HB 31 — This bill would appropriate \$1 billion in general funds to capitalize the transportation infrastructure fund.

SB 37 — This bill would establish a transportation infrastructure fund for transportation projects, including public transit. It also creates an advisory council to make annual recommendations for fund expenditures.

SB 77 — This bill would appropriate \$3 million to provide matching grant funds for operating expenses for locally or federally funded public transit programs that are not also state projects.

HB 131 — This bill would establish a board to develop a long-range plan for coordinated community and public transportation.

ARTICLE:

Disaster Preparedness for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs

Preparing for a disaster ... it may not be the happiest of subjects, but disaster preparedness is vital and very necessary, especially for individuals (and their families) with special health care needs. Earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, blizzard conditions ... these are all part of the package when you are an Alaska resident.

Individuals with disabilities and/or special health care needs may depend on medical equipment that requires electricity or require medication that must

remain refrigerated. It is vital that these unique and oftentimes life-dependent pieces of equipment and medication are taken into account when planning for a disaster. Do you have at least seven days of medications or medical supplies stocked up in case pharmacies are not open? If electricity is lost for several days, do you have a back-up power supply to generate the electricity needed to power needed medical equipment? If water supply is affected during a natural disaster, do you have an alternate supply stocked away so that you can mix medication? All Alaskan families must be prepared in case a disaster strikes, but for individuals with disabilities and/or special health care needs, there are other considerations that must be taken into account when planning.

Several resources exist for disaster planning for individuals with disabilities and/or special health care needs.

Thanks to funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services recently developed a new booklet, *Disaster Preparedness: for Families of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs*. This booklet is available at the following website:

<http://hss.state.ak.us/dph/wcfh/PDF/Prepared4HealthCare.pdf>. Included in the booklet are several worksheets to help you plan for a disaster, crisis or emergency situation. They also created an emergency communication card for individuals who are non-verbal. For free copies of the booklet or communication card, contact Maria Cocom at maria.

cocom@alaska.gov or call her at 269-3402.

Here are some simple tips excerpted from the Disaster Preparedness: for Families of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs.

- Have a plan and know what you will do. Having a plan makes the unknown less scary, especially for younger family members. Keep a copy of the plan in your emergency supply kit or in a safe place that can be accessed easily in case a disaster or emergency situation strikes.
- Talk on a level that your child (and all family members) can understand. Even very young children will sense that something is wrong; take the time to let them know that you are there for them and that you will love them and

protect them. Involve older children in developing the family's plan. Playing calming games or singing songs can help family members remain calm.

- Keep routines and a regular schedule. Everyone is comforted by a routine, but this is especially important for children and those that cannot communicate.
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions such as a disability, diabetes, asthma, allergies, or implanted devices should have a medical alert tag or bracelet. If possible, keep a health history information form on your child or family member and make copies to keep with you. Keep paper copies of any prescriptions so you will be able to get refills. This will help to ensure

that others can care for them if you are absent.

- Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities may respond to the crisis based on their observations of those around them, more so than any explanation that is given to them. Discussions with them need to be specific and concrete, yet easy to understand.
- Individuals with visual, hearing or physical limitations may be frightened by the limitations that their disability poses on them. They need to know that they are going to be safe and that they can find a safe place to go during the emergency situation. Individuals with visual impairments will need to have the surrounding area carefully

described to them. Individuals with hearing impairments may need visual aids to help them know what to do and where to go.

- Teach your family members to recognize and accept help from emergency officials. Make sure that young children can recognize emergency officials, such as the police, firemen, Red Cross workers and volunteers, etc. Help them to understand that these people are there to help them and that they can go to them for help. It is very important that all family members learn to not be afraid and that you should never hide from emergency officials.
- ALL family members should carry a personal emergency kit with them

during an emergency situation, which includes a flashlight and whistle.

- Many other resources are available to help families plan for a disaster, emergency or crisis situation:
- The state of Alaska's disaster preparedness and response website: www.ak-prepared.com.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency website: www.fema.gov.
- The Homeland Security Office website: www.ready.gov/america.
- The Red Cross website: www.alaska.redcross.org.

Don't delay ... make your family's plan today!

ARTICLE:

New EI/ILP Regulations

New Regulations on Early Intervention Programs for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 2004. Regulations that provide additional guidance for early intervention programs and reflect changes made under the new law were not completed. As a result, Infant Learning Programs (ILP) have been operating under the old regulations. New regulations for early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities (Part C of the

IDEA) were finally published on Sept. 28, 2011. This means there will be some changes for programs that provide early intervention services to young children with disabilities.

The following is a summarization of some of the key changes in the new regulations but is in no way a comprehensive overview of all the changes. For more details of all revisions and new additions, it is important to read some of the documents suggested later in this article.

Multidisciplinary Teams

One change in the regulations is the clarification that multidisciplinary teams are defined as the involvement of two or more separate disciplines or professions.

With respect to the evaluation of the child and assessments of the child and family, the Individual Family Support Planning Team must include the involvement of the parent and two or more individuals from separate disciplines or professions, and one of these individuals must be the service coordinator.

Evaluation Timelines

When an ILP provider receives a referral, the provider must complete an evaluation, determine if the child is eligible and, if eligible, hold a meeting to create a plan within 45 days. The new regulations allow exemptions to this timeline when the provider is not able to obtain consent or if the child is unable to participate in an evaluation due to medical or family reasons.

Use of Insurance

A state may not use the parent's private or public (Medicaid) insurance to pay for ILP services unless the parent consents. The use of private or public insurance to pay for ILP services cannot decrease the lifetime coverage or other insured benefits for the child or the family. The state may not require that a family apply for public benefits such as Medicaid to pay for services.

Use of Native Language

When children who have limited English proficiency are evaluated or screened, the assessments must be provided in the child's native language. The proposed requirement that the native language of the parents be used in all direct contact

with the child was not included in the new regulations.

Child Find and Eligibility

The new regulations provide clarification as to how ILPs handle referrals for children who are about to turn 3 years old. Local school districts are required to provide services to eligible children after they turn 3 years old. The new regulations say that if an ILP provider receives a referral for a child who will turn 3 in less than 45 days, the ILP provider will send the referral to the local school district for an eligibility evaluation.

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center website has links to a side-by-side comparison of the new 2011 regulations with the 1999 regulations.

They also have a link to the final Part C

regulations. To access either of these documents go to: <http://www.nectac.org/partc/partc.asp> . The Office of Special Education Programs is posting a video of Alexa Posny presenting the new Part C changes at: <http://videos.tadnet.org/videos/88>.

If you are interested in more information or would like a detailed summary of the major changes, please feel free to contact Jennifer Jones at 907-269-8462 or email jennifer.jones@alaska.gov. Information is also available on the Council website at <http://hss.alaska.gov/gcdse/> under the Early Intervention Committee section. As more information becomes available, it will also be posted to the Council Listserv on Early Childhood.

ARTICLE:

Asset Building: Disability Employment Initiative

On Sept. 27, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, partner agency in the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant, was presented with one of four "City of the Year" awards in Boston, Mass., at the annual Real Economic Impact Tour's Mayor's Leadership Academy for its combined work with the Anchorage Financial Partnership in asset building activities.

Asset building refers to strategies that increase financial and tangible assets, such as personal savings, owning a home, and starting businesses of all

kinds. Asset-building policy focuses on long-term development of individuals, families, and communities (Center for Social Development, 2011). The development and integration of promising practices in asset building in Alaska is happening through the One Stop Job Centers and other community partnerships. Asset-building activities can increase the financial stability of Alaskans and, in turn, enhance the stability of their careers and long-term employment.

One of the primary focus areas of the Alaska Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) is to develop asset-building strategies and options for job seekers to enhance long-term economic self-sufficiency. These

include implementation of financial literacy training for youth and adults; increased awareness and use of the Earned Income Tax Credit and other tax credits through free tax preparation at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites; increased availability of individual development accounts for homeownership, education and small business development; and increased use of Social Security work incentive programs that provide a safety net for job seekers receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) in their return to work.

Through the DEI, job center employees across the state have been participating in extensive training in this area since

the spring of 2011. Additionally, the State Lead Disability Resource Coordinator has been involved in community efforts in Anchorage through the Anchorage Financial Partnership, a collaborative coalition of representatives from financial institutions, consumer credit counseling providers, the Internal Revenue Service, the United Way of Anchorage, Ninestar Enterprises, the YWCA and AARP through its VITA program. Through this partnership, a yearly effort takes place in the Anchorage area to market and coordinate “Super Saturday” events. AARP tax volunteers have considerable experience and training in tax preparation to provide tax assistance to individuals with low income, and also have the opportunity to meet with a variety of social service

and financial service providers in one accessible location. Over the past year, three “Super Saturday” events were held in various locations and times in the Anchorage area. In the 2011 tax season, these events and other free tax sites around Anchorage had 3,810 tax returns prepared, of which 578 individuals indicated having a disability. From those 578 individuals, over \$580,000 was realized in tax refunds with nearly \$130,000 coming from the Earned Income Tax Credit, one of the best ways for individuals and families with low income to recoup some funds toward asset building.

In terms of financial literacy, the One Stop Job Centers provide access to the online FDIC “Money Smart” curriculum.

Other local Disability Resource Coordinators have collaborated with local banks and credit unions to provide ongoing classes at the job centers in topics including budgeting, managing credit, and other topics such as homeownership and avoiding predatory lending programs. As it is recognized that Alaska's regions present some very unique economic conditions, partnering with local financial institutions is a strategy that will continue to be implemented in partnerships with One Stops across the state.

In July of this year, a State Asset Building Summit was held in Anchorage with representatives from state agencies, nonprofits, self-advocates, financial institutions and philanthropic

organizations to learn more about asset-building strategies, strengthen the local Anchorage coalition and identify representatives to develop a statewide Asset Building Coalition. The purpose of the coalition is 1) to share resources and best practices to assist those they serve in escaping poverty; and 2) collaborate and coordinate in developing, proposing and establishing policy and individual development (matched savings) account programs across the state to offer job seekers a “hand up” in how to best use their finances to escape poverty through homeownership, financial education and accumulation of assets over time.

For more information regarding asset building in the DEI grant, contact the state Lead Disability Resource

Coordinator, Rich Sanders, at 907-269-5703 or via email at richard.sanders@alaska.gov.

ARTICLE:

Kenai Peninsula Next Stop for Project SEARCH

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education continues to lead the way on development of the innovative Project SEARCH program in Alaska. Project SEARCH is a one-year, high school transition program that provides training and education leading to employment for students with developmental and intellectual disabilities. The program occurs on-site at a high-status community business.

The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total immersion in a large health care organization or business. Each day, students report to the host business, and learn employability skills and job skills while participating in three internships during the year. Students participate in monthly progress meetings to define their career goal and plan necessary steps to achieve their goal.

Currently, there are three Project SEARCH sites in Alaska. Providence Hospital in Anchorage hosts eight student interns, all from the Anchorage School District's ACE/ACT program. Fairbanks Memorial Hospital is hosting six students, and Mat-Su Regional Health Corporation (Mat-Su Regional Medical Center), has seven active

students. Two of the students in Mat-Su were employed in summer jobs at the hospital, and one has been permanently hired in Materials Management.

In addition, the Project SEARCH statewide coordinator, Patrick Reinhart, is now working with a planning group from the Kenai Peninsula to add a fourth site at Central Peninsula Hospital in the fall of 2012. Recently, the Council received a \$65,000 grant award from the Alaska Youth First program through the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships. Funds will be used for planning and expansion efforts and for supporting job coaching and job development.

Project SEARCH is a true collaboration

with very active and committed partners. First, the program would not have even started without seed funding provided by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, which helped pay for and continues to support planning and technical assistance for the three projects. In addition, the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provided funding for job coaching at the three sites, and uniforms and other supplies needed by students. Plus, each of the three school districts involved (the Anchorage School District, Mat-Su School District and the Fairbanks Northstar Borough School District) supply a full-time teacher and aide on-site at the three hospitals to support the students in their learning and career development. However, none of this is possible without

the commitment and resources provided by each of the hospitals involved in this project. They provide a classroom for the students, the internship experiences, and so much more. In addition, each of the hospitals is leading the way in getting other businesses interested in the program. For instance, Providence Hospital hosted a Project SEARCH business-to-business luncheon on Nov. 10.

For more information about Project SEARCH in Alaska, or for a presentation to your group, please contact Patrick Reinhart: patrick.reinhart@alaska.gov, 907-269-8554.

ARTICLE:

Highlight on Staff Members

This year's UAA Interns

Jasmine Woodland is the Council's new legislative intern for this year. She is a fourth-generation Alaskan who was born and raised on the Kenai Peninsula. She graduated as salutatorian from Soldotna High School in 2010 and is currently a sophomore at the University of Alaska Anchorage. She is majoring in environmental studies and political science, but also enjoys studying history and French. In her free time, she loves traveling, baking, photography, and enjoying the great outdoors.

Josie Boggs is a master's in social work intern for the Council focusing on revitalizing Alaska's Statewide Self-Advocacy group for individuals with intellectual disabilities. She will be working with the Council until early May 2011. She graduated in 2004 with her bachelor's in pre-professional psychology from the University of Montana and is now in her final year of her master's work at UAA. Josie has several years' experience working as a program manager in group homes for adults with developmental disabilities and co-occurring disorders. She also has experience working for a mental health agency and as a caregiver. Josie grew up in Anchorage, but just recently returned after being away for a decade. She wonders why she stayed away for

so long, and is excited to be back in the mountains and snow!

ARTICLE:

Spotlight on Council Member

Kaleene Lamb is a self-advocate who is serving her first term on the Council. Originally from California, Kaleene now resides in Fairbanks. Kaleene is heavily involved with the two self-advocate groups active in Fairbanks. She is a model self-advocate, speaking passionately and clearly about why she advocates for herself and others with developmental disabilities. Kaleene is an active member of her community — working, shopping, meeting with friends,

and enjoying cultural events. She is also a pillar of her family and a loving cat owner!

ARTICLE:

Patrick Reinhart's Earl Walden Award

Patrick Reinhart has advocated for Alaskans with disabilities for 24 years, working to provide them with the means to live independently in rural areas.

He recently received the national Earl Walden Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rural Advocacy for advancing rural independent living, not just in Alaska but nationally.

Reinhart is a program coordinator with the Governor's Council on Disabilities

and Special Education. The award, given by the national Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living, recognizes his leadership in three areas.

- Reinhart was the executive director for the Statewide Independent Living Council when that agency received the U.S. Administration on Aging grant for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs). As the managing grant partner for Alaska, he advocated for the “D” in ADRC to be meaningful in all states. As a board member of the National Council on Independent Living, he connected that agency with the Administration on Aging, resulting in a national meeting between the agencies and several \$100,000 grants to the national council over the years.

- Reinhart led advocacy efforts to bring more transportation funding to Alaska and rural areas nationwide in the last reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU. Alaska's annual rural transit funding rose to more than \$5 million from less than \$500,000. As a result, there are several new transit systems in small communities statewide, benefiting Alaskans with disabilities, seniors and other groups who depend on public transit.
- Reinhart worked with Alaska's congressional delegation to obtain more than \$1.4 million in funding for the state's independent living programs, expanding outreach to rural and very remote areas of Alaska, and ensuring the funding went to improve services there.

“Overall, Patrick’s advocacy both in Alaska and nationally,” wrote the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living, “has led to increased and improved opportunities for rural independent-living consumers.”

Patrick Reinhart

Project Coordinator

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Council Members

Marlene (Anna) Attla

Self-Advocate from Anchorage

Committee: Education, Rural Services
Chair

Julie Broyles

Parent and Special Education Teacher
from Anchorage

Committee: Education

Milton (Smitty) Cheemuk

Self-Advocate from St. Michael

Committee: Rural Services, SESA Board

Art Delaune

Parent from Fairbanks

Committee: Developmental Disabilities,
Legislative

Don Enoch

State Special Education Administrator
from Juneau

Committee: Education, SESA Board

Kathy Fitzgerald

Parent and Center for Human
Development representative from
Anchorage

Committee: Developmental Disabilities
Chair, Legislative, Executive, Autism Ad
Hoc

David Flynn

Parent from Fort Greely

Committee: Legislative Chair, Executive

Dean Gates

Self-Advocate from Anchorage

Committee: Legislative, Early
Intervention

Eric Gebhart

Parent and Special Education

Superintendent from Nenana

Committee: Council Chair, Executive,
Legislative, Education, Early Intervention,
SESA

Taylor Gregg

Self-Advocate from Ketchikan

Committee: Education Co-Chair, Rural Services, SESA Board

Heidi Haas

Parent from Fairbanks

Committee: Education, Early Intervention Co-Chair,

Autism Ad Hoc

Tara Horton

HSS Commissioner's Office representative from Anchorage

Committee: Developmental Disabilities

Wes Keller

Legislator from Wasilla

Margaret Kossler

Parent from Anchorage

Committee: Autism Ad Hoc, Legislative, Education

Banarsi Lal

AK Commission on Aging representative from Fairbanks

Committee: Legislative, Rural Services

Kaleen Lamb

Self-Advocate from Fairbanks

Committee: Developmental Disabilities

Ernest (Ernie) Manzie

Special Educator from Fairbanks

Committee: Education, SESA Board

Sharon Miranda

Self-Advocate from Anchorage

Committee: Early Intervention

Ric Nelson

Self-Advocate from Anchorage

Committee: Council Vice Chair,
Executive, Legislative

Sean O'Brien

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
representative from Juneau

Committee: Developmental Disabilities

Lelia (Lucy) Odden

Self-Advocate from Anchorage

Committee: Developmental Disabilities,
Executive, Legislative

Robert (Bob) Petersen

Disability Law Center representative from Wasilla

Committee: Developmental Disabilities, Education

Justine Sheehan

Self Advocate from Barrow

Committee: Education, Rural Services

Amy Simpson

Infant Learning Provider representative from Eagle River

Committee: Early Intervention Co-Chair, Legislative

Donna Swihart

Parent from Wasilla

Committee: Education, Autism Ad Hoc

Tonja Updike

Parent from Soldotna

Committee: Education Chair, Executive,
Autism Ad Hoc, SESA Board

Fredrick Villa

Parent and UAA representative from
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Committee: Education, Legislative,
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Advertisement:

**Ric Nelson UAA Student and
Member, Governor's Council
on Disabilities and Special
Education**

All my life people have underestimated
me.

you know me ...

Having cerebral palsy has never slowed me down. Early intervention helped get me on the right path and with hard work I'm fulfilling my goals. I graduated in the top 10% of my high school class, earned a full tuition college scholarship and today I'm a business major at UAA.

Ninety percent of brain development takes place in the first three years of life. Early intervention services, such as speech and hearing services, family training and physical therapy, for children with developmental delays or disabilities increases their opportunities for leading successful lives.

For early intervention resources contact:

Governor's Council on Disabilities &
Special Education

1-888-269-8990 or at

www.hss.state.ak.us/gcdse

or

The Trust

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

www.mhtrust.org