

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

March 21, 2001

8:03 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Con Bunde, Chair  
Representative Brian Porter  
Representative Gary Stevens  
Representative Reggie Joule  
Representative Gretchen Guess

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Joe Green  
Representative Peggy Wilson

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 94

"An Act relating to initiatives for quality schools; relating to pupil competency testing and the issuance of secondary school diplomas; relating to certain reports regarding academic performance of schools; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS:

Board of Education and Early Development  
Professional Teaching practices Commission

- CONFIRMATION HEARINGS POSTPONED

**PREVIOUS ACTION**

BILL: HB 94

SHORT TITLE: PUPIL COMPETENCY TEST; ANNUAL EDUC. REPORT

SPONSOR(S): RLS BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

| Jrn-Date | Jrn-Page |     | Action                             |
|----------|----------|-----|------------------------------------|
| 01/26/01 | 0171     | (H) | READ THE FIRST TIME -<br>REFERRALS |
| 01/26/01 | 0171     | (H) | EDU, HES                           |
| 01/26/01 | 0172     | (H) | FN1: ZERO(EED)                     |
| 01/26/01 | 0172     | (H) | GOVERNOR'S TRANSMITTAL LETTER      |

|          |      |     |                            |
|----------|------|-----|----------------------------|
| 01/26/01 | 0172 | (H) | REFERRED TO EDU            |
| 02/14/01 |      | (H) | EDU AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106 |
| 02/14/01 |      | (H) | Heard & Held               |
| 02/14/01 |      | (H) | MINUTE(EDU)                |
| 02/28/01 |      | (H) | EDU AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106 |
| 02/28/01 |      | (H) | Heard & Held               |
| 02/28/01 |      | (H) | MINUTE(EDU)                |
| 03/07/01 |      | (H) | EDU AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106 |
| 03/07/01 |      | (H) | Heard & Held               |
|          |      |     | MINUTE(EDU)                |
| 03/14/01 |      | (H) | EDU AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106 |
| 03/14/01 |      | (H) | Scheduled But Not Heard    |
| 03/21/01 |      | (H) | EDU AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106 |

**WITNESS REGISTER**

DANIEL WALKER, 1999 Alaska Teacher of the Year  
Kenai Borough Peninsula School District  
148 North Binkley Street  
Seward, Alaska 99669  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 94.

MARILYN ROSENE, 2000 Alaska Teacher of the Year,  
Dillingham City School District  
PO Box 170  
Dillingham, Alaska 99576  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 94.

PATRICIA TRUMAN, 2001 Alaska Teacher of the Year  
Mat-Su Borough School District  
125 West Evergreen  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 94.

DAVE REES, Immediate Past President  
Alaska Business Education Council  
3211 Providence Drive  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 94.

THOMAS HAMILL, First Vice President  
Alaska Business Education Council;  
Executive Director  
School to Work  
Chugach School District  
3211 Providence Drive  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 94.

JOHN HART, Treasurer  
Alaska Business Education Council;  
Director, Professional Continuing Education Office  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
3211 Providence Drive  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 94.

SONJA SCHMIDT, 1998 Alaska Teacher of the Year  
Denali Borough School District  
PO Box 280  
Healy, Alaska 99743

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 94.

### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

TAPE 01-16, SIDE A  
Number 0001

CHAIR CON BUNDE called the House Special Committee on Education meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Members present at the call to order were Representatives Bunde, Porter, Stevens, and Guess. Representative Joule joined the meeting as it was in progress.

### HB 94-PUPIL COMPETENCY TEST;ANNUAL EDUC. REPORT

CHAIR BUNDE announced that the committee would hear testimony on HOUSE BILL NO. 94, "An Act relating to initiatives for quality schools; relating to pupil competency testing and the issuance of secondary school diplomas; relating to certain reports regarding academic performance of schools; and providing for an effective date."

Number 0273

DANIEL WALKER, 1999 Alaska Teacher of the Year, Kenai Borough Peninsula School District, testified via teleconference. He stated that he has been involved in the development and implementation of state content standards for the last five to six years. He said he has written performance standards for geography and has worked with the math, reading, and writing standards in the classroom, in writing district curriculum, and in assessment programs through the Department of Education and Early Development (EED). He remarked that he sees the standards as a good guideline for teachers and curriculum committees for

guiding, structuring, and developing curricula. He said he sees the standards as a mission for the schools that provides a clear list of what should be accomplished. At the same time, he stated, the broad scope of the standards provides room for individual schools and districts to develop foci of current subject matter.

MR. WALKER stated:

The standards have two important parts. You have the content standards, which identify the skills and knowledge that students are supposed to have - we want them to gain. And then there are the performance standards that ... hopefully describe activities that students can do to demonstrate their level of competency in those areas. It's very important to remember ... the gap that exist between the ideal of the standards and the high-stakes assessment of the high school qualifying exam and the benchmark tests. We've given a great deal of attention in writing standards and developing the test, and now we need to focus our attention on filling that gap in between, which is filled through instruction.

Number 0424

MR. WALKER said:

We have to remember that these are content standards and they don't address modes, levels, or philosophies of instruction. There's a great misconception that the standards are a recipe for success. But in fact nothing could be further from the truth. The standards are not a recipe at all. They are more like a menu, a list of what we want our students to know and be able to do. ... The recipe for successful students is best practices, which is a list of skills of teaching and techniques and approaches that we have proven to be effective in the delivery of instruction. And you put those best practices in the hands of qualified teachers, and that's how we get the outcomes that we want - successful students who can not only pass the test that we put in front of them, but also have successful, independent lives.

The standards are written as broad statements of accomplishment that students should be able to do, but

they are not the Ten Commandments. And we have to always be thinking of them as being under construction. So, we have to periodically review these and see if they do state what the people of Alaska want our students to learn and [if] the performance standards are written in a way that teachers and schools can use them to develop teaching.

Number 0522

MR. WALKER stated that one thing he has learned from working with performance standards is that they can't just be handed out to teachers in the classroom; there has to be comprehensive training, and there has to be commitment. Few teachers, he said, in Alaska today are ready to truly implement standards-based education. He remarked that he has a strong concern that the performance standards in the last two years have been overshadowed by the high school qualifying exam, and that for some people in some districts the test may become the curriculum, which is a dangerous precedent. He added that many standards are not being tested; therefore, there is the risk of those being minimalized. He stated:

We also will have some students who may be capable of meeting the standards but not [capable] of passing the high school qualifying exam or the benchmark tests. Good teachers all know that we always use multiple assessments. We never just take one snapshot of a child and measure their ability from that. ... When we introduce the standards and we introduce the high school qualifying exam, we introduce a new component into our institution of teaching in Alaska. And right now those are kind of floating free and not tied in with the other elements that we have.

... The education of my students is based on the standards. Standards define what activities I design for my students, and any activity that I do design should be directly connected to the content standard and justified by good teaching practices. ... Teaching to the standard has no value if I don't teach in a way that has some pedagogy behind it grounded in what we know about learning. Teachers in Alaska schools need the support and encouragement to follow good teaching practices and not be drawn into a blind alley by those of us who would have us think that the

high school qualifying exam is a curriculum and all we need to do is drill and practice on those elements in order to have successful students.

We create special learning programs in our schools for students at risk. ... We teach our students to understand the idea of the standard - what does the standard mean and how does it relate to how they're taught and what they are doing in school? We do things like set high expectations for students and challenge them. We collect samples of student work and portfolios so that other teachers can assess students as we pass them on to other teachers or other grade levels. And we also give them practice in performing tasks that are ... defined and described in the performance standards. This is all part of good teaching to the standards.

Another part of what I'm doing is sharing my understanding of the standards with other teachers in my school and my district, because right now in Alaska there's a small handful of us that have a pretty good handle on what the standards are and how they relate to instruction. ... Finally, as part of continuing to be a good teacher, I'm trying to increase my understanding of the brain - of the learning process - because that's all part of how we make students able to succeed in life and meet the standards.

Number 0783

MR. WALKER addressed the future. He stated:

I would hope that four years from now I would be mentoring new teachers and guiding them into techniques of instruction that would use the standards. ... I would hope that in four years I would have time to plan with my fellow teachers, because planning with other teachers is the way you can best address the individual needs of students. ... In the future we will be seeing more individual learning plans where we are specifically addressing the individual needs of students, because we have more and more students that are staying in school instead of dropping out, as they were 20 or 30 years ago. ... Four years from now I would hope that the high school qualifying exam will be redesigned to reflect the

minimum competencies that we expect students to have and measure their true, essential skills of literacy.

We can look at the future in a pessimistic or an optimistic light. I might be struggling with large classes with many unsuccessful students without the resources to help them. Or I could be participating in ongoing staff development programs that support professional growth for teachers. I could be working with other teachers who have been trained in standards-based education and were familiar with the essential skills required of our students. I could be working with administrators that thoroughly understand the challenges and nuances of standards-based instruction.

Four years from now I hope the teachers and students have access to a resource room in every school where students in need of help can get extra reading, writing, or math instruction. ... Four years from now I would like to be able to reassure struggling students that the high school qualifying exam was something that was within their grasp. ... Four years from now I hope that I'd be working with a grading and assessment system that is tied in with the standards and that reflects students' ability to meet performance standards and their grades. Their high school credits [and] their high school diploma would all have validity that's all integrated and not distinct different programs that they have to pass through.

On the pessimistic side, I could be sitting where I am today, four years from now. And I would be better informed than most of the people that I work with about standards and their relationship with our curriculum, working without sufficient planning time with other teachers, without sufficient support to meet the needs of my students, and unable to reconcile how a student can pass their high school classes and fail the high school qualifying exam.

Number 0982

MR. WALKER stated that in conclusion he would like to identify what needs to be focused on over the next few years in order to fill that gap. He said:

Number one, I think we have to look at our performance standards and say, "Which of these standards are essential? ... Kids should [not] exit high school unless they have these skills." ... We should also take those same essential skills and relate them to the classes that are taught in the high school, so that if I'm giving credit for high school English, ... that English class should be directly connected to the performance standards for high school English, and the students' grade in that class should be directly connected to their success in those performance standards. This needs to be tied in with an ongoing revision and update of the standards.

... The second item we need to focus on is the recruit[ment], training, and retaining [of] quality teachers and principals. And we are going to [accomplish] that by having ongoing staff developments that train the teachers in the things they need to be able to do in order to have good, solid standards-based education. I think one way to address this is to have master teachers in each school who work as mentors ... leading instruction, mentoring young teachers, and supporting mature teachers in their task of teaching.

We also need to make sure that there's a positive work environment in the school, because right now we're competing with almost every state in the union for every good teacher that's out there. That means good salaries and benefits, that means participation in decision-making, and that means a place to work where you feel welcomed and important and where you are held to a higher standard, just like you're holding you students to high standard.

... Finally, there needs to be a connection in [the] recruitment, training, and retention of quality teachers [among] the state, the Department of Education [and Early Development]; the school districts and the schools, and our university system. Sometimes these three groups, all in the same business, don't talk very much. And I don't feel like we're working together toward preparing teachers and, therefore, preparing students.

My third item is we need to have support for school-based programs for unsuccessful students, because even the best of us have students we can't give all the help they need to be successful. We need resource rooms where students who are not on track to meet standards [are] identified through benchmark tests in extra classes in reading, writing, and math. We need to have tutor programs available for them and for their parents. And we need to have support for teachers in helping them learn how to work with those kids.

I think that if we work through these three key areas of addressing the needs of students, addressing our need for good quality teachers, and making sure that our educational program of assessment and measurement is balanced, we are going to get a lot closer to the goals that we all [have] in common.

Number 1177

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS asked if Mr. Walker could give more insight into what it requires [to train teachers in standards-based instruction] and how long it will take.

MR. WALKER responded that standards could be used as merely a way of defining what the curriculum is going to be. The other model of true standards-based education says, "You use these performance standards not only to instruct what students are learning, but also to evaluate whether or not they are successful." He said standards-based instruction is very much like a vocational program. He stated that intensive programs for teachers should be school-based. He said there needs to be time, before the school year starts, for teacher training. Ongoing, throughout the year, there needs to be someone working with those teachers, meeting periodically, to give them support as they go through a transition. Also, he said, there needs to be some type of framework for supporting record-keeping and documentation, which is very different from what most districts now have for grade-keeping and credit-giving.

Number 1372

MARILYN ROSENE, 2000 Alaska Teacher of the Year, Dillingham City School District came forth to address the State Performance Standards. She stated that she agrees it is good idea to bring [performance and content standards] closer together for the

students and for fellow staff members because standards are a measuring tool. She said:

I would like to believe that if I was measuring two-by-fours - an inch is an inch is an inch - and if I measure and cut my board, it's going to work. But children aren't two-by-fours and they don't come measured in inches. I have no control about what they are when they come to me. ... We have many special-needs preschool children in our schools. ... I believe that public education is like a funnel. ... We are accepting more and more children into our schools, and I don't disagree with that, but that increases our responsibilities. I believe that the funnel is getting smaller and smaller [at] the bottom. And it doesn't mean that most won't get there, but they sure won't get there at the same time. ... And some are not going to make it through this funnel.

... I'm proud that I don't work with predictable widgets; I work with Dustin and Caleb (ph) and Mahai (ph) and Ethan. ... I believe that public education can provide different opportunities for all of these children. One student I don't work with, his name is Noah and he's four years old. And two years ago, when he was in the special-needs preschool program, his teacher came to me and said that Noah had some baby food through his mouth for the first time in his life. ... This is part of the wide funnel. We've got lots and lots of children who need extra help in our districts.

And I'm also worried about a friend of mine in Anchorage, Matt, who is now a former high school student - he's 16. And he's out of state right now dealing with some chemical dependency problems as well as academic problems, and I was thinking, "I wonder if benchmarks would have helped him." ... And I think they would have, because I think they would have been another flag for his teachers, and for his parents, and for his community. Even though he was receiving special-education services, there was no way to really monitor other expectations that we would have, other than he's just going down the road.

Number 1555

MS. ROSENE explained to the committee:

I teach fifth grade, ... so the students I have this year have no benchmark experience at all. Part of my job is to prepare them for a benchmark, and one of the concerns I have about a district like Dillingham is we don't have a system down like the Kenai district has. They're much bigger, much more stable in many, many ways than my district. I think that there are lots of ways that a district can do a better job, but ... it's a difficult job to teach in rural Alaska and to stay there. You were talking with Dan [Walker] about having a two-year program to train; well, that's if your people are there two years from now, and that's not always the case. This is the time of year when the buzz [is], "Who's coming back next year, who's going to job fair, who's not going to job fair, who's got a contract, who's signing it, who's not, who's leaving, who's staying, who can afford to leave, who can afford to stay. ..." And that's exactly what's happening in school district offices all over the state, especially in rural Alaska.

I've also had an opportunity to attend job fairs in Anchorage and in Fairbanks. ... And I've seen a lot of people come in, not as many as there used to be. ... You can't keep and train our people if we don't get people. When I spoke with the state school board last June, we talked about recruiting and retaining teachers and the realization that we can't train as many in the state of Alaska as we need. ... So we're always in the business of importing teachers. ... Can we remediate teachers and students? I think we can. I know that I am looking forward to having more training on how to be a better performance-based teacher in my classroom. And I believe that accountability is very important, and I believe that I have high standards for my students as well as for myself.

Number 1682

MS. ROSENE, in regard to the high school qualifying exam, stated that she has spoken to kids in her class. She told the committee:

As fifth-graders, they're getting a picture of what this looks like. They're community members, and they hear cousins or brothers and sisters talking about it. But I don't think they're worried about it. ... We have a school store ... and I believe that's a really important performance standard for my class. ... And aligning the curriculum to the standards is very important. ... It's a time factor. ... We need standards 101 every year. And Dillingham is not as fluid of a district as many districts are. I encourage you to keep that in mind, that when districts are small, people wear many, many hats and they have to do more than one job. A dream for me would be in four years ... having teachers who are experienced and are willing to work with new teachers.

Number 1789

CHAIR BUNDE noted that Ms. Rosene is looking at the high school qualifying [exam] as diagnostic and that [the fifth-graders] are not running scared.

MS. ROSENE responded that they're not running scared, but they also haven't had a benchmark to see what it looks like. She stated that a several of the staff members are working on getting a grant for a class to offer practice tests. She added that she has worked with seven principals, not counting last fall when there wasn't one until January, and six superintendents.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS asked how and when it would be practical to [train teachers in standards].

MS. ROSENE answered that it is a concern and she thinks some of that is happening in the training of new teachers. However, she said, she thinks "we're" looking at an extended school year, concentrated times of in-service, and that it's going to take people awhile to help mentor each other through the year.

Number 1938

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE asked how much time there is, currently, set aside for in-service trainings.

MS. ROSENE replied that there is about ten days, on the school calendar, that are dedicated for in-service. She noted that these run the gamut from curriculum to behavior.

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE asked if this is varied from district to district.

MS. ROSENE answered that she thinks the number of days is typical but what is done is different.

Number 2014

PATRICIA TRUMAN, 2001 Alaska Teacher of the Year, Mat-Su Borough School District, came forth and stated:

I want to begin this morning with a few biographical and philosophical remarks. ... I have lived and taught in Alaska for 23 years. In 1978, I moved to Fort Yukon where I taught primary. I taught there for two years, then I moved to Fairbanks where I worked as a reading specialist and a gifted-talented teacher. I taught there for five years, and in 1985 I moved to the Mat-Su, and I have been there ever since. In the Mat-Su I have worn many hats as a gifted-talented teacher, as a reading specialist, and currently I teach middle school language arts at Palmer Junior Middle School. Palmer Junior Middle School is a school of 750 students, and I do believe that we are representative of the unique diversity of Alaska. I'm also a National Board Certified Teacher in language arts and I have a master's degree from BreadLoaf School of English. ... I had the opportunity to travel to Japan on a Fulbright to work with Japanese teachers and compare our systems of education, which was interesting and enlightening. I also sit on the Board of Professional Teaching Practices, so I also see that side of education.

Throughout my teaching [career], ... I've worked very hard. All teachers I know work very hard. And I expect the best and beyond for myself; I expect the best and beyond from my students. Their success is our teachers' accomplishments. Teachers don't work for recognition, or fame, or fortune, ... but they work for our future, and our future [is] our children.

As a National Board Teacher, I definitely understand the meaning [and] implication of standards as well as the process of demonstrating competency in meeting those standards. I believe that performance standards

are important for students. Performance standards are important for schools, administrators, and teachers. I know that Alaska's performance standards were developed by educators, and they match standards of many other states. I believe that standards are essential, but I do not believe they are sufficient to encompass everything students need to learn in school.

The math, reading, and writing performance standards clearly speak to the following: they define expectations; they drive the realignment of curriculum; they provide a framework for assessment and instruction; they provide evidence for educational delivery and reform; and they also provide evidence for intervention and elaboration. And when I use the term "intervention" it's what most people use [as] remediation.

Number 2157

MS. TRUMAN continued, stating to the committee:

Currently, there is much panicked discussion about the math standards. And although I am not a math teacher, I integrate math standards into the language arts curriculum and am familiar enough with them to suggest that rethinking and regrouping is necessary. And that process should include educators, parents, students, and community members as we struggle with the answers to two basic questions: What do students really need to know, and when do they really need to know it? In reference to the "when" question, it makes more sense to move the sixth-grade benchmark to fifth grade. Presently, sixth-grade students are asked to demonstrate proficiency relative to fifth-grade standards in all three areas. What this means is that students then only have one and a half years, which is seventh and part of eighth grade, to thoroughly prepare for the eighth-grade benchmark. Additionally, access to test data at the end of the fifth grade would provide clear evidence for the kind of instructional strategies necessary at middle school, thus ensuring a smoother, more defined transition.

The reading standards clearly articulate definite transitions as students progress from learning to read through reading to learn. Students are asked to

demonstrate basic proficiency in comprehension, summarization, analysis, [and] evaluation, which are all an application of the higher-order thinking skills. Reading standards provide students the tools needed to function as informed, literate, and creative thinkers.

In the 16th century, Francis Bacon wrote, "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man." Accordingly, writing standards provide the framework for effective, exact communication. Students absolutely should be able to demonstrate proficiency in the art of paragraph writing and skill in the writing for a variety of audiences - business, employment, observations, letters, essays, inquiry, research, just to name a few. I believe that the math, reading, and writing standards clearly define essentially what students should know and be able to do, and to ask students to demonstrate proficiency is fair and right.

Number 2246

MS. TRUMAN continued, stating:

In the Mat-Su School District we are working to ensure program deliver includes standards assessment and instruction. This process involves realignment of curricula to reflect standards-based, assessment-driven delivery - a metaphorical weeding and watering. As I see it, the dilemma for teachers is not in standards-based instruction. And this is my response to the ubiquitous outcry: "If you haven't been teaching standards for all these years, what have you been doing?" Teachers have been teaching to standards since time began, but assessment has been different. Assessing performance standards precludes performance assessment; it's the assessments that drive the instruction, ultimately ensuring learning proficiency. At the same time, while students may be meeting standards through instruction, they are not necessarily guaranteed proficiency simply because they are not practiced in performance assessment. Both teachers and students need to get up to speed. If folks don't know about assessment, it's impossible to begin to talk about intervention and elaboration.

In my classroom, and in some pockets across the district in the state, I am integrating curriculum more thoroughly and comprehensively. When thinking about intervention and elaboration, I don't think more, I think different. My students have been through eight years of school. If they don't have the skills, they don't need more of the same. If they do have the skills, they don't need more of the same. [When] integrating the curriculum ... the integration has to include humanities, which is art, and history, and science, and math, and technology, and employability, and assets. ... Integrating the curriculum, creates an environment of discovery and making connections, and provides that authentic experience. My most compelling fear about standards-based instruction and assessment is that intervention will limit student participation in the sciences and arts.

Alaska is geographically rich and culturally diverse. Why not recreate informational landscapes for students as beautiful, exciting, and full of wonder as our state through the arts and science? That's where students discover the wonder and the learning begins, and the learning changes, and the learning continues. Other happenings in my classroom, and across the state and across the district, are community-based and more parent-involved activities. An example of a community-based activity that begins in my classroom is a weekly radio show. They [students] write the copy and they talk about our school and they talk about their issues and they talk about our community. That's authentic assessment.

TAPE 01-16, SIDE B

MS. TRUMAN continued [begins mid-speech because of tape change]:

... provide students with authentic experiences to validate the importance and usefulness of their learning. And in addition, all teachers should work with students on test-taking strategies - the "how" of the assessments. Finally, across the buildings and districts and state, professional conversations and development are taking place as we strive to improve student-assessment instruction through data-driven instructional audits. How do we know our programs are

successful? I have been personally involved in this process as a quality school consultant and have worked with the districts throughout the state as well as in my own building with teachers and working on the standards-based instruction and assessment.

Looking ahead four years from now, I would expect my classroom will actually look much the same, except that I expect to be more practiced and more intentional with gathering and using data. I expect that this will be the case across classrooms and districts and across the state. At the district level I expect we will have developed a variety of measures to check students' progress toward state as well as district standards. In addition, the district will have well-developed early intervention strategies to ensure all students' success in demonstrating proficiency in meeting standards.

Having said this, however, I must point out the following: Fifteen years ago, PTR (pupil teacher ration) at Palmer Junior Middle School was 15 to 1 - class sizes were optimal. Today, because of cutbacks due to budget cuts, the average number of students in my classes has doubled. This is unacceptable. Think about what is being asked of me as well of other teachers across the state: quality instruction, quality writing instruction. ... It's humanly impossible to assess 120 essays a week and to provide individual feedback; yet the bar continues to be raised. And what are the ramifications? During my tenure at the Mat-Su I have enjoyed the company of five different principals and seven different superintendents.

Number 2267

MS. TRUMAN continued, stating:

I might also mention our textbooks - which there are not enough for every student - are 12 years old because there's no money to buy new ones. Perhaps literature is timeless, but textbooks are not. Think about what you're asking, and think about to what length you are willing to support the response. I had a professor once tell me, "Don't worry so much about the answers, just enjoy the questions." ... I have

some questions for you to enjoy. ... How do benchmarks [and] the high school qualifying exam correlate with the California Achievement Test? They are different kinds of test: one's performance, one's norm-referenced. And what are the implications? In what ways do parent-teacher ratio and student attendance influence success? What's the level of parental involvement? What about the community? Instructional materials, are they adequate? Are they current? Do they meet the standards?

MS. TRUMAN continued, asking:

Does professional development reflect community and educational needs at the grassroots level? Are "drive-by" in-services a thing of the past? Does instructional delivery embrace integrated curricula? What about higher ed [education]? Are they on the same page? Teacher training, pre-service, continuing ed, do these services reflect standards-based assessment instructions? ... How many teachers are seeking National Board Certification - a process that is representative of the ultimate in professional development? And by the same token, are teachers who have earned National Board Certification being rewarded and/or recognized as experts in the field? ... Do assessments take into account individual differences? And what about intervention and elaboration? What about the kids who pass the first time? And the final question: to delay or not to delay?

Number 2128

MS. Truman concluded by stating:

And might I just suggest ... if we allow for individual differences in the classroom, why not allow for individual differences for the districts across the state and let the districts decide, through writing an educational reform plan, taking a look at what's happening in their district, and let them decide when it's appropriate - 2004, 2006 - for the High School Qualifying Exam to begin to count.

Number 2142

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS remarked that it sounds as if Ms. Truman is not entirely satisfied with the exit exam. He asked her to comment on the content of the test.

MS. TRUMAN responded that her dissatisfaction is not so much with the exam itself but with the limitations of the exam. She stated that she would hate to see kids who have not passed tenth grade be funneled into an intervention track, where they would not have the experience of the arts and the sciences. She added that she would strongly suggest that performance standards be taught primarily through integrated curricula.

Number 1945

DAVE REES, Immediate Past President, Alaska Business Education Council (ABEC), came forth and explained that ABEC started in 1998 and that some of the members on the board were members of the original Alaska's Youth Ready for Work group. He said in 1989 that group of employers met with a number of educators across the state representing about 60 percent of Alaska's employment. They began looking at what kinds of skills, behaviors, and attitudes need to be developed within the school system. He remarked that ABEC's real focus has been employability of students - how to get the transition of students into the world of work. He said the purpose for being here is to respond to the question of what ABEC can do to assist in this case.

CHAIR BUNDE remarked that Mr. Kronberg, head of NEA [National Education Association], had invited him to a conference with business leaders who expressed frustration that even though their standards weren't very high, high school graduates weren't able to meet them. He asked what ABEC expects of someone who leaves high school.

Number 1765

THOMAS HAMILL, First Vice President, Alaska Business Education Council; Executive Director, School to Work, Chugach School District, came forth and stated:

Since inception the ABEC has researched, evaluated, awarded, and promoted best practices in education that are found throughout our great state. ... From our efforts we have discovered a strong correlation between the presence of the following system component, which when found in an aligned system

optimize results and, most importantly, improve student achievement.

MR. HAMILL spoke of shared visionary leadership. He stated:

District leadership provides direction, resources, staff development and professional development opportunities; removes barriers; promotes best practices; aligns and coordinates all processes and components to ensure an effective, efficient system and staff that are accountable for results and student achievement.

MR. HAMILL listed performance-based quality standards and measures:

Strong foundation in basic skill, integrated and applied at higher levels; clear, high developmental expectations and standards for all students; continuous authentic assessment and evaluation; progression through performance; accountability for all for performance; an integrated curriculum including thematic units, critical thinking, problem solving, and projects; application of learning through simulations, contextual experiences, work-based learning opportunities; and including the employability and SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) skills. There needs to be a character education piece; there needs to be transition planning and practice; there needs to be regular goal-setting and continuous improvement throughout the operations - all coming to fruition with a meaningful diploma.

The results: [Graduates] prepared to pass the exit exam and apply their learning. [Individuals] fully prepared and qualified to transition into their next phase of training or employment, live and learn independently, and be a contributing member of society. All the individual needs of students need to be met.

Number 1642

MR. HAMILL explained that learning-centered education develops the full potential of all students and promotes active and

applied learning. He said lessons and units are made relevant and meaningful to all learning; there need to be individual learning plans and career plans for each student. Student learning profiles that find out which way each student learns best and make them fully aware of those practices [are discovered through such questions as]: What are their learning styles? What is their emotional intelligence? And what [are] their values?

MR. HAMILL stated that it is necessary to involve all aspects of communities, and for everybody to be accountable for the system and the results of the system. He said it is important to formulate community-learning partnerships that have input into the curriculum and reinforce, regularly, the learning and values of the system. He added that the prescriptive prevention is accomplished through engaging students and building strong assets, strong community connections, resiliency skills, and relationships with significant adults.

Number 1593

MR. HAMILL stated that as far as staffing, the staff has to be philosophically aligned and participate regularly in staff and professional development. Teachers are professional learning facilitators and are responsible for the success of each student; they should be compensated accordingly. And, he said, the staff need to be competent, compassionate, and life-long learners.

MR. HAMILL concluded by saying:

We firmly believe that the aforementioned components in an aligned education system that is valued by all stakeholders will provide the best opportunity for all youth to experience success. As we are establishing clear standards for students we need to establish clear standards of expectations for our students. We also need to establish clear standards of excellence for our districts.

CHAIR BUNDE asked Mr. Hamill to define for the committee the individual learning plan.

MR. HAMILL answered that each student [in the Chugach School District] has a regular, ongoing individual learning plan. In the classrooms the mornings are spent on the basic skills and the afternoons are spent on the thematic unit area applying

those skills. If there are areas in which students are not meeting the standards at the time, an individual learning plan is created related to performance tasks as to how the student is going to accomplish proficiency in those levels.

CHAIR BUNDE stated that he was impressed that children [in the Chugach School District] are very thoroughly tested to find out if they are visual learners or auditory learners. Their individual learning plan, then, presents lessons in their primarily learning mode.

REPRESENTATIVE PORTER asked if there is some degree of career planning or goal-setting.

MR. HAMILL responded that the Anchorage House Program, which is a residential program for students, teaches employability skills. The students then go out and practice those [skills] in the work place.

REPRESENTATIVE PORTER asked if those would just be the necessary skills to work.

MR. HAMILL answered that [they would first learn] the basic transferable skills such as how to clarify and paraphrase in front of a prospective employer.

Number 1423

MR. REES stated that the ABEC has been closely aligned with the Chugach School District by lining up employers with the students.

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE asked: "How long has Chugach gone through this evolution to where you're really enjoying some of the fruits of your efforts?"

MR. HAMILL responded that the Chugach School District began six years ago.

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE asked if this is able to be done through state funding or through grants.

MR. HAMILL answered that [the Chugach School District] brings in about 60 percent additional funding, which is about \$1.2 million outside the general fund.

Number 1346

JOHN HART, Treasurer, Alaska Business Education Council; Director, Professional Continuing Education Office, University of Alaska Anchorage, came forth and stated that most of the work he does is professional development for teachers. He stated that in most school districts students are held accountable for the results of their experiences at the hands of the districts. He remarked that it is necessary not to underestimate that the systems will dramatically impact the results that the students see in their own learning. Most schools and districts, he said, are accredited by some sort of association. An accreditation merely says that the organization has met minimum standards.

MR. HART stated that other districts around the United States have sought to go beyond minimum standards by looking for other assessments. Two [assessments] that many use are the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria and the ISO (International Standards Organization) standards that are primarily used by manufacturing businesses. He explained the history of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award:

Back when we were coming out of the price controls that were imposed, ... during the days of the Nixon White House, a group of people got together and they said, "Well, Japan is eating our lunch economically. But we do have some excellent organizations here in the United States and in Japan." And they went out and they talked to these excellent organizations - the most successful businesses in the world - and they said, "What do you do? What makes you successful?" They did comprehensive studies of all these businesses. They took the data back and synthesized it. Behind the Baldrige Award and the criteria is the assumption that if excellent companies have these common practices, if we can somehow elaborate these practices ... and other companies and organizations can use them and follow those practices, they will, by definition, then improve their operations. ... ISO is a little bit different program that companies use that want to do business in international markets. It's similar to the Baldrige in that it's an assessment of quality practices.

Number 1112

MR. HART continued, stating:

Characteristics of these high-performance organizations [are that] they have a set of core values. Baldrige will list 11 core values that the organization holds dear. ... Malcolm Baldrige National Award criteria is an organizational assessment instrument. ... It assesses that organization in seven major areas: leadership; strategic planning; student, stakeholder and market focus; information and analysis; faculty and staff focus; and process management. ... On a Baldrige assessment itself these are all "pointed". And those things add up to 650 points. They put 450 points in the results. So, for an organization to score well on a Malcolm Baldrige criteria assessment, 45 percent of that assessment is on results.

MR. HART explained that the Brazosport Independent School District, in Texas, has had tremendous success with this kind of assessment instrument. He said this school district is a very ethnically and economically diverse area. Ten years ago, on the Texas exit exam, Brazosport Independent School District had about 20 percent of its minority group passing the exam and about 70 percent of the [Caucasian] students passing the exam. Today, there is over a 95 percent "pass" rate for every group. He stated that a lot of this comes out of work that Edward Demming did. He noted that Edward Demming had said, "The People are great; change the system."

MR. HART stated that originally the Baldrige Award had one criterion for performance excellence, which covered all organizations. In 1995, there was some thought that if this works for businesses, perhaps it can work for schools. In 1999, [Baldrige] published criteria for schools. Mr. Hart said that because the national award went so well, 42 states now have state quality awards. He added that Florida, Indiana, and some other states are now aligning the school assessment system with the state quality award system.

Number 0764

CHAIR BUNDE asked if school districts in Alaska are using the Baldrige system.

MR. HART answered that he is aware of two: Chugach and Mat-Su.

CHAIR BUNDE asked if this is available to all school districts.

MR. HART said yes.

CHAIR BUNDE asked Mr. Hart if he knows why more schools wouldn't want to adopt the Baldrige system.

MR. HART responded that it requires to change the way "you" think. It takes time, and teachers don't have time to plan, organize, and work together to change the system.

CHAIR BUNDE asked if an entire state has adopted this system.

MR. HART answered that North Carolina leads the nation in terms of an aligned system with the state. It works best if the legislature, governor, school districts, school boards, principals, teachers, and students are all together "on the same page." He remarked that around the country, almost every school district has three goals: high student achievement, safe schools, and efficient operations.

Number 0556

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE asked Mr. Hamill if Chugach School District is able to keep the turnover rate down and if the teachers are being paid differently through the grants.

MR. HAMILL answered that the [Chugach School District] has kept the turnover rate down compared to the state rate. He said a majority of the staff have been paid by "soft money". He added that there is a performance pay system in place, but that he doesn't know if that is soft money or not.

MR. REES remarked that the primary role of ABEC is to help connect education and business, as well as to connect education systems across the state with models that are working. In order to have changes in the education systems, there have to be changes in the systems that will accommodate the quality approaches. In response to Chair Bunde's earlier question, regarding what the expectations of the business community are, Mr. Rees stated that [ABEC] has not yet met the expectations that were stated in 1989. The [ABEC] wants to first make sure that students can apply the skills. He added that it is important to look at employability skills.

Number 0237

CHAIR BUNDE remarked, "We certainly want students that are functionally literate, but ... we also don't want students who are dumb-smart, that have a lot of answers but not very many questions." He asked Mr. Rees, Mr. Hamill, and Mr. Hart for their definition of a "meaningful diploma."

MR. REES responded that when a job application comes in now, [employers] don't know now what the high school diploma means. In order to do the job of pre-assessment for employability, there needs to be a testing process.

MR. HAMILL replied that his concept of a meaningful diploma would be one that is valued by all the stakeholders, such as the exit exam, the application piece, and the employability skills. He added that [there should be] a document that is a pictorial representation as well as a narrative representation [similar to an individual portfolio].

MR. HART remarked that he has two daughters; one just received her diploma, and the other just took the high school exit exam last year and will hopefully get a diploma in 2002. He stated that he doesn't think there will be a great deal of difference in the two diplomas.

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MR. HART continued, stating that in order for a diploma to be meaningful it should represent concrete information about what that student knows and is able to do.

Number 0058

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS shared a quotation he had heard, "It's easier to change the course of history than change a history course."

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE remarked that he is familiar with the school-to-work program, and asked if there is any movement for work-to-school.

MR. REES responded yes. For example, the ABEC will be having a contextual workshop for teachers from a variety of schools at which people from the industry will be working with the teachers to see how they can add some of the concepts of the workplace into the actual curriculum. Also, the ABEC is looking at assisting in the provisions of both interns and externs.

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS asked whether [those from the business perspective] care if there are modifications or different assessments for students with IEPs (individual learning plans).

MR. REES answered that the ABEC looks at the portfolios as part of the application process.

Number 0370

SONJA SCHMIDT, 1998 Alaska Teacher of the Year, Denali Borough School District, came forth and stated:

Teachers have always used assessments; teachers have always used a standard of measurement for good instruction in the classroom. But the difference is the change that we're making now, from past practice ... to a standards-based program. ... A teacher is now addressing what students can do, rather than the specific knowledge of content. We're looking at how students can demonstrate what they know versus isolated knowledge.

MS. SCHMIDT outlined some areas that are critical to her in the classroom and the way teachers teach. She said:

One is the school district curriculum guide. And in order to move to a standards-based program the curriculum guides for the district need to reflect the standards. There are implications there; those need to be updated and changed. Instructional materials ... are the framework from which teachers work. All teachers use textbooks and supplement to one extent or another, and most textbooks in a standards-based program need to be aligned to our standards. There are national standards that textbooks need to address. ... We need to align our textbooks to our state standards, to our district performance standards, and the textbook industry needs to catch up as well.

Currently, teachers assess our students and reevaluate them on the content that we have taught. Students will be assessed in a standards-based program on what they demonstrate. That assessment piece, as a classroom teacher, has probably the biggest impact. ... You're asking the question, "What can a student do to demonstrate [that] they have met these performance standards?" It's not always a simple test.

Collections and bodies of work are needed to determine that a child really has met a [criterion] or a standard. The process of change is complex for a classroom teacher at that level.

The communication aspect: We rely on a system of parent conferences, report cards; communication is based on mostly whether students have completed work. Those who argue on the high school level about the outdated Carnegie units will say it's based on seat time. ... But our reporting system for students has, in the past, been completion of a course [and] course content material. We assess reading, writing, and math, ... but it tends to be in the course. In a standards-based [system] this communication piece is a really important part that has to change; that's the reporting process.

Number 0718

MS. SCHMIDT continued, stating:

Currently, in a typical class of 30 students, students who have not demonstrated that they have mastered a content do get review and re-teaching. But the practice generally is that teachers move on in instruction if the majority of the students have the material. In a standards-based program that's not going to be what you see, because the standards are going to reflect what the students have learned. So students will receive remediation until they're proficient in the standards. ... The goal, then, is that students will be successful, not just based on what the rest of the class has done.

... Professional development is the last aspect that needs to be changed. ... The past practice has been that teachers participate in professional development in order to improve their teaching. ... Teachers in a standards-based are going to participate in professional development to improve student performance. ... The implications of all this ... [is that] most of the changes are done by classroom teachers. The curriculum guides that need to be written are not generally written by professional curriculum writers, except in larger districts. ... My message is: When you ask about standards, this is the

model that we're moving to, and it takes cooperation, and patience, and it takes a lot of work.

Number 0934

CHAIR BUNDE asked Ms. Schmidt if it is her opinion that the move is worth doing.

MS. SCHMIDT answered absolutely.

CHAIR BUNDE asked what Ms. Schmidt thinks a meaningful diploma is. He also asked how her eighth-grade students are reacting to the notion that they will have to demonstrate knowledge in tenth grade.

MS. SCHMIDT replied that this year, in the middle school, individual learning plans have been implemented and students are becoming proficient in talking about standards that they need to meet. [The eighth-graders] are well versed because they have benchmarks to meet. As far as their acceptance that they need to pass a high school equivalency exam, she remarked that she thinks they are at a "point of not believing that what they do today affects them in two weeks." She stated that at the current high school level, the district is happy with the students' success rate. She said, "I know the individuals who haven't passed. And they're the ones that my heart pulls for. ... These are not students with IEPs; they are students who expected to graduate from high school. They had no reason to believe they wouldn't."

Number 1149

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS asked Ms. Schmidt what she thinks needs to be done in her school, with her colleagues, and with incoming teachers in order to bring [the students] up to speed.

MS. SCHMIDT answered that teacher-training programs need to start training teachers how to teach in a standards-based program. She added that her district spends quite a bit of time on professional development. She said these kinds of transitions are easier for some people to make than others, and examples of success are the best demonstration for professional development.

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE asked, for thought, how students from the rural areas, where there is not a lot of economic stimulation, recognize the value of the high school diploma.

[HB 94 was held over.]

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Education meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.