

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

April 25, 2001

8:40 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Con Bunde, Chair  
Representative Joe Green  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Gary Stevens  
Representative Reggie Joule  
Representative Gretchen Guess

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Brian Porter

**OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT**

Representative Fred Dyson  
Representative Sharon Cissna

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 239

"An Act establishing a pilot program for a regional learning center."

- MOVED HB 239 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 171

"An Act relating to a curriculum for Alaska history; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 171(EDU) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 218

"An Act relating to funding for school districts operating secondary school boarding programs; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 86(FIN)

"An Act relating to employment of teachers who have subject-matter expertise; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 86(FIN) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS ACTION**

BILL: HB 239

SHORT TITLE: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) FOSTER

Jrn-Date	Jrn-Page		Action
04/09/01	0903	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/09/01	0903	(H)	EDU, HES, FIN
04/11/01	0971	(H)	COSPONSOR(S): JAMES
04/18/01		(H)	EDU AT 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/18/01		(H)	Heard & Held
04/25/01		(H)	EDU AT 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519

BILL: HB 171

SHORT TITLE: ALASKA HISTORY CURRICULUM

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) KAPSNER

Jrn-Date	Jrn-Page		Action
03/09/01	0520	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/09/01	0520	(H)	EDU, HES, FIN
03/13/01	0579	(H)	COSPONSOR(S): MORGAN
04/18/01		(H)	EDU AT 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/18/01		(H)	Heard & Held
04/25/01		(H)	EDU AT 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519

BILL: HB 218

SHORT TITLE: BOARDING SCHOOL FUNDING

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) COGHILL

Jrn-Date	Jrn-Page		Action
03/27/01	0742	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/27/01	0742	(H)	EDU, HES, FIN
03/27/01	0742	(H)	REFERRED TO EDU
04/18/01		(H)	EDU AT 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/18/01		(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard

04/25/01 1218 (H) COSPONSOR(S): DYSON  
 04/25/01 (H) EDU AT 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE  
 519

BILL: SB 86

SHORT TITLE:TEACHER EMPLOYMENT & SUBJECT EXPERTISE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) KELLY

Jrn-Date	Jrn-Page		Action
02/13/01	0355	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/13/01	0355	(S)	HES, FIN
02/13/01	0355	(S)	COSPONSOR(S): DONLEY, TAYLOR
03/16/01		(S)	HES AT 12:00 PM BELTZ 211
03/16/01		(S)	Scheduled But Not Heard
03/19/01		(S)	HES AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/19/01		(S)	Heard & Held MINUTE(HES)
03/20/01	0739	(S)	COSPONSOR(S): WILKEN, LEMAN
04/09/01		(S)	HES AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/09/01		(S)	Moved CS(HES) Out of Committee MINUTE(HES)
04/11/01	1067	(S)	HES RPT CS 4DP 1NR SAME TITLE
04/11/01	1067	(S)	DP: GREEN, WILKEN, LEMAN, WARD;
04/11/01	1067	(S)	NR: DAVIS
04/11/01	1067	(S)	FN1: ZERO(EED)
04/20/01	1192	(S)	FIN RPT CS 9DP SAME TITLE
04/20/01	1192	(S)	DP: DONLEY, KELLY, AUSTERMAN, GREEN, HOFFMAN, OLSON, WILKEN, LEMAN, WARD,
04/20/01	1193	(S)	FN1: ZERO(EED)
04/20/01		(S)	FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
04/20/01		(S)	Moved CS(FIN) Out of Committee
04/23/01	1216	(S)	RULES TO CALENDAR 4/23/01
04/23/01	1220	(S)	READ THE SECOND TIME
04/23/01	1220	(S)	FIN CS ADOPTED UNAN CONSENT
04/23/01	1220	(S)	ADVANCED TO THIRD READING UNAN CONSENT
04/23/01	1220	(S)	READ THE THIRD TIME CSSB 86(FIN)
04/23/01	1221	(S)	PASSED Y19 N- A1
04/23/01	1221	(S)	EFFECTIVE DATE(S) SAME AS

			PASSAGE
04/23/01	1220	(S)	COSPONSOR(S): HALFORD
04/23/01	1224	(S)	TRANSMITTED TO (H)
04/23/01	1224	(S)	VERSION: CSSB 86(FIN)
04/23/01		(S)	RLS AT 10:45 AM FAHRENKAMP 203
04/23/01		(S)	MINUTE(RLS)
04/24/01	1157	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/24/01	1157	(H)	EDU, FIN
04/25/01		(H)	EDU AT 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519

**WITNESS REGISTER**

LARRY LaBOLLE, Staff  
to Representative Richard Foster  
Alaska State Legislature  
Capitol Building, Room 410  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of the sponsor of HB  
239.

REPRESENTATIVE MARY KAPSNER  
Alaska State Legislature  
Capitol Building, Room 424  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as sponsor of HB 171

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN COGHILL  
Alaska State Legislature  
Capitol Building, Room 102  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as sponsor of HB 218.

TERRY BENTLEY, Superintendent  
Nenana City School District  
PO Box 10  
Nenana, Alaska 99760  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on HB 218.

KRISTOPHER KNAUSS, Staff  
to Senator Pete Kelly  
Alaska State Legislature  
Capitol Building, Room 518  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of the sponsor of SB  
86.

RICH KRONBERG, President  
National Education Association-Alaska  
114 2nd Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 86.

LARRY WIGET, Executive Director  
Public Affairs  
Anchorage School District  
PO Box 196614  
Anchorage, Alaska 99519  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 86.

BRUCE JOHNSON, Deputy Commissioner of Education  
Office of the Commissioner  
Department of Education and Early Development  
801 10th Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 86.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

TAPE 01-31, SIDE A  
Number 0001

CHAIR CON BUNDE called the House Special Committee on Education meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. Representatives Bunde, Green, Stevens, Wilson, Joule, and Guess were present at the call to order. [The minutes for the joint House Special Committee on Education and House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee confirmation hearings to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission and the Board of Education & Early Development are found in the 8:10 a.m. House Special Committee on Education minutes of the same date and the 8:10 a.m. minutes of the same date for both committees.]

HB 239-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM

CHAIR BUNDE announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 239, "An Act establishing a pilot program for a regional learning center."

Number 0071

LARRY LaBOLLE, Staff to Representative Richard Foster, Alaska State Legislature, came forth on behalf of the sponsor of HB 239. He explained that this bill would establish a pilot program that creates a regional learning center. He stated that this primarily emphasizes special and vocational skills. Students would be brought in for short periods of time from the outlying areas to take programs and possibly do job shadowing. Students could be there for as short as two weeks, depending on the course. He said if this is successful, this could probably expand out so that a student could be there for a full year for a specific vocational course.

MR. LaBOLLE stated that since this is a cooperative agreement between two school districts, the bill asks for support from the Department of Education and Early Development (EED). This would allow both districts to expand their curricula and provide learning opportunities that neither provide at this point. He explained that the \$75,000 in the 2002 fiscal note would be to hire a coordinator to bring the two school districts together, to plan what the program is going to look like. He added that this is not a traditional boarding school program in which a student goes away from home for a year. With this the student is able to attend because he or she has demonstrated responsibility and is pursuing academics seriously. The additional "hammer" that the school district would have is that if the student does not perform in the program he or she goes home.

Number 0346

CHAIR BUNDE asked if he is correct in saying that this program is unique because it uses an existing [facility], the Nome Beltz High School, and because it is a cooperative agreement between separate schools.

MR. LaBOLLE answered that he was correct. He said the other difference is that students are going for only a short period of time.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS asked if this would be under the control of the school district and whether the superintendent would be in charge of the program. He also asked if funding would eventually come through the foundation formula.

MR. LaBOLLE responded that the concept is that the foundation formula should pick up the bulk of the expenses. The [attached fiscal note] is for the dormitories, food service, and travel.

Number 0595

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS asked, besides the funding issue, why there needs to be a bill for the pilot program.

MR. LaBOLLE answered because the EED does not clearly have the authority to do this type of program. The department is being asked to provide some oversight and funding.

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS said she thinks it is a great idea but questions why [the legislature] should fund this program versus other [programs] that districts have done on their own.

MR. LaBOLLE responded that the total cost of the program is going to be in the millions. In terms of why fund this one and not another, he said, it is because a pilot program is being asked for. If this applies to every school district in the state, then it is not a pilot program. He added that this is going to be expensive because it is in a rural center.

Number 0704

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked how many different villages are involved between the two schools.

MR. LaBOLLE answered 15.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked if [the students] would normally have to fly to get back and forth.

MR. LaBOLLE answered yes.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN asked how many students are going to be served each year for \$300,000. He asked if the 20 students times 40 units means that 20 students will be going through the program 40 times.

MR. LaBOLLE answered that Bering Strait is looking at bringing in approximately 20 students at one time. Nome would also have students who participate in the program; however they are not counted in the boarding portion. He clarified that 40 units is the number of cycles, and a student may be there through one, two, three, or four.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN asked if that means 40 different groups of 20 [students], although some may repeat.

MR. LaBOLLE answered that he is correct.

Number 0842

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked if there is an age range.

MR. LaBOLLE responded that the concept is that this would be limited to juniors and seniors. He explained that the age limit is high school because the foundation formula is what is being used to "drive" the majority of the cost at this point in time.

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA commented that often adolescents are not emotionally ready for this kind of transition. She said high school is an appropriate time.

CHAIR BUNDE asked if these kids do not have to go.

MR. LaBOLLE responded that students will have to elect to go.

Number 0968

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE stated that he would like to commend [Mr. LaBolle] on this concept. He said when this kind of program is exposed to students in the villages, it then makes sense why the high school exit exam becomes so important, because it starts to matter to them. Students can see economic opportunities that they can have in their communities.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON stated that one of the candidates [in the earlier confirmation hearings] made a comment that it is important for kids to have choices. Representative Wilson said she thinks this will give [students] a brief "snapshot" into the future of possible choices for them.

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL stated that he first equated this to costing over \$15,000 per student a year, which he said seems to be excessively high. However, after clarifying with Mr. LaBolle that really 600 or 700 students each year will be associated with this for a week or two, he said he thinks that actually equates to a worthwhile endeavor. He asked what [the legislature] will get back, when this either sunsets or is extended, that says whether this is a success or not.

MR. LaBOLLE answered that if the program runs for four years, the measure, in his opinion, would be what students do once they get out of high school, and if they are pursuing the types of

careers they were exposed to when they were in Nome. He stated that since one of the components of this program is to teach independent living skills, the students' transition in finding employment is a measurable thing.

Number 1225

CHAIR BUNDE asked if there would be a formal report back to the legislature.

MR. LaBOLLE responded that he would assume that would be a part [of the pilot program] because there is going to be a need to extend the sunset.

CHAIR BUNDE remarked that [the committee] is anticipating, if this bill goes forward, that there will be a formal report to the legislature.

MR. LaBOLLE commented that it has also been suggested that there be a third-party evaluation so that it would not just be in-house.

Number 1283

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS stated that if [the legislature] were adequately funding the foundation formula, districts would be able to do this through their district foundation formula. He asked if this is a pilot program for the Nome area in that this is the first time it is being done, or if it is a pilot program for the entire state whereby other districts can learn from what is being done.

MR. LaBOLLE responded that the concept is that once there is experience with this and it begins to prove out, hopefully it will be applied statewide.

Number 1341

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE moved to report HB 239 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 239 moved from the House Special Committee on Education.

HB 171-ALASKA HISTORY CURRICULUM

CHAIR BUNDE announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 171, "An Act relating to a curriculum for Alaska history; and providing for an effective date."

Number 1341

CHAIR BUNDE stated that Representative Kapsner, sponsor, had an amendment she would like to offer. He made a motion to adopt Amendment 1, 22-LS0070\P.1, Ford, 4/21/01, which read:

Page 3, line 19:

Delete "school board"

Insert "governing body"

Page 3, following line 22:

Insert a new subsection to read:

"(b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, a governing body may waive completion of the curriculum described under (a) of this section as a requirement for graduation for a student who transfers into the district after completion of the student's junior year or for a student who receives special education services."

Reletter the following subsection accordingly.

Page 3, line 26:

Delete "."

Insert ";

(3) "special education" has the meaning given in AS 14.30.350."

CHAIR BUNDE objected to allow Representative Kapsner to speak to the amendment.

REPRESENTATIVE MARY KAPSNER, Alaska State Legislature, came forth as sponsor of HB 171. She stated that individual school districts can choose that [the Alaska history class] be a stand-alone class or be integrated into current curricula. She said she thinks this is one of the things that makes school districts most comfortable with the bill. She added that the Department of Education and Early Development (EED) has been very cooperative in creating "modulars."

REPRESENTATIVE KAPSNER explained that the first portion of her amendment deletes "school board" on page 3, line 19, and inserts

"governing body". She said it was unclear to some people whether school board meant regional school board or the state school board; inserting "governing body" clarifies that it is the local school board. She explained that on page 3, following line 22, a [new sub section (6)] will be inserted: Finally, she said, "special education" will be defined in statute.

Number 1457

CHAIR BUNDE asked why special-education students would be excluded from taking Alaska history.

REPRESENTATIVE KAPSNER responded that the intent of this language is for the school district to determine who can finish the course and who may not be able to. She stated that the EED thought that different school districts would have different standards, and since this would be a requirement, she said she didn't want some special-education students not to be able to graduate because they couldn't finish this course.

CHAIR BUNDE stated that a "regular" student who did not pass this course would be denied a diploma, but a person who had an IEP (Individual Education Plan) would basically be guaranteed a diploma.

REPRESENTATIVE KAPSNER replied that it is at the discretion of the local school district.

Number 1579

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Wilson, Stevens, Joule, and Guess voted for Amendment 1. Representatives Green and Bunde voted against it. (Representative Porter was absent) Therefore, Amendment 1 was adopted by a vote of 4-2.

Number 1600

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS moved to report HB 171, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. He commented that there is so much misunderstanding about Alaska's history among students, but he knows of districts that do attempt to include the curriculum from kindergarten through 12th grade. He added that there was a discussion during the last hearing about how many teachers that come to [Alaska's] schools without training in Alaska history are required to study it. Therefore, he said he thinks there is a tremendous amount of knowledge [among educators].

CHAIR BUNDE announced that there being no objection, CSHB 171(EDU) was moved from the House Special Committee on Education.

HB 218-BOARDING SCHOOL FUNDING

CHAIR BUNDE announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 218, "An Act relating to funding for school districts operating secondary school boarding programs; and providing for an effective date."

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN COGHILL, Alaska State Legislature, came forth as sponsor of HB 218. He explained that HB 218 expands what can be done with boarding schools. He said his hometown, Nenana, is putting together a boarding school program, there is also one in Bethel, Galena, Iditarod, and Saint Paul (Pribilof Islands). House Bill 218 will expand the stipend for students who actually can attend their own school. At this point the boarding school dollars will go with the student if he or she can't go to a school in his or her own district. He stated that if anybody tries to expand the "menu" of education, he thinks [the legislature] should try to make accommodations for that.

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL stated that with boarding schools there is a kind of camaraderie in education, which allows for the combining of resources. There are two issues in HB 218: the costs that can be claimed for district reimbursement on one round trip [ticket] per student per year, and a student stipend. He stated that the big difference between this bill and what is practiced right now is allowing a student [to attend a boarding school] who does have a school in his or her district. He added that his intention is not to rob other school districts, and that he has been trying to figure out a way to include a waiver that holds the original district from being penalized on the student count.

Number 1866

REPRESENTATIVE JOULE asked if there have been discussions with surrounding school districts that might be affected, and if they support this.

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL answered that he hasn't gone through a lot of discussions.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON stated that there is another bill circulating that is trying to correct the problem that occurs when school districts drop [students], making a significant difference in the funding. She said in that bill, if the amount of students is dropped drastically, the first year the school still gets 75 percent of its funding, the next year it gets 50 percent, and the next it gets 25 percent.

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL responded that he doesn't know that bill, but his intention would be that if a school is actually losing students to the degree that it can't be supported, he doesn't want this to keep them from going down that road. However, he said, he doesn't want the lack of student attendance there, if they are getting further education, to penalize that.

Number 1959

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS stated that she has seen a trend with the bills and that maybe [the legislature] needs to take some time to discuss its role in funding alternative programs.

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL responded that he is open to that discussion, but told her to be aware that many people are already putting these boarding schools together with community funding. He stated that one of the things he has thought about is how to allow some flexibility in the student count and still keep the primary grades solid within that base allocation.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS stated that he would like to explore how this fits in to the foundation formula and perhaps talk with the EED to see if that should be involved in the formula.

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL responded that he would probably resist that because the formula follows the student, for the most part.

Number 2157

TERRY BENTLEY, Superintendent, Nenana City School District, testified via teleconference. He stated:

This bill, [HB] 218, gives other school districts, including ourselves, the same boarding monies that's received for travel, room and board (indisc.) that you already fund in the state. And educationally, it is our belief that the students should receive a well-rounded [technological-preparation] education so that they can go on into [the] world of work, or into the

world of college and then into the world of work. Educationally, we're trying to expand our ... technological-prep areas to include boiler maintenance and refrigeration, but without this bill, the expansion into some of the areas of the legal field and the health care fields makes it rather difficult. And we're trying to allow parents another educational choice for their children.

CHAIR BUNDE announced that the committee would set this bill aside for further consideration.

[HB 218 was held over.]

SB 86-TEACHER EMPLOYMENT & SUBJECT EXPERTISE

CHAIR BUNDE announced that the final order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 86(FIN), "An Act relating to employment of teachers who have subject-matter expertise; and providing for an effective date."

Number 2255

KRISTOPHER KNAUSS, Staff to Senator Pete Kelly, Alaska State Legislature, came forth on behalf of the sponsor of SB 86. He stated:

We all know that there is a teacher shortage in the state. Senate Bill 86 would help alleviate some of that problem by allowing persons with subject-matter experience to enter the classroom and teach with a limited certificate. ... Senate Bill 86 requires that a person have a bachelor's degree, at least five years of work experience before they can enter the classroom. ... If I'm a subject-matter teacher or wanting to become a subject-matter teacher, I would approach the local school district, [and] I would take a competency exam on whether or not I'm suitable to teach in that subject matter.

[For the reader's information, SB 86 requires that a person seeking to be a subject-matter teacher have at least a bachelor's degree and either have majored or minored in the subject that person will be teaching, or have five years of work experience in that subject.]

CHAIR BUNDE stated that he noticed that [the bill] says a person has to take [the competency test], but it doesn't say he or she has to pass. He asked if that is assumed.

MR. KNAUSS responded that he would hope so.

CHAIR BUNDE announced, "For the record, you will take and pass a competency exam."

MR. KNAUSS stated:

Once the competency exam is passed, the [teachers] can then start teaching in a classroom. However, for the first year they must have a mentor teacher ... overseeing the introductory process to the classroom. ... During that time, during the first year, they have a limited certificate. They can receive pay, they can be working on their tenure ... [and] they have to enroll in a methodology course requirement [that] approximately has to be finished in two years' time. ... Once that is completed, they have a regular teaching certificate.

Number 2338

CHAIR BUNDE asked how many people might be interested in this alternative route to teaching.

MR. KNAUSS responded that there have been a lot of letters and public comments from people who either want a change in career or want to teach. He said from studies, one of the most important things in the classroom is the subject matter.

TAPE 01-31, SIDE B

CHAIR BUNDE stated that he assumes this refers to secondary education.

MR. KNAUSS responded that the person would receive a regular teaching certificate after two years, which is a type A certificate, and could teach in a variety of subjects after that.

CHAIR BUNDE asked if [the requirement of five years of work experience] must be in the area of the subject matter.

MR. KNAUSS answered yes.

Number 0061

REPRESENTATIVE STEVEN said he has been reading quite a bit about this lately and that New York City has been working hard to implement a program like this. He stated that it seems to him that in his community there are a lot of U.S. Coast Guard people retiring after 20 years who have had a lot experience, but not necessarily in a field that would transfer immediately to being a high school [teacher]. He remarked that he has some concerns with the issue of having five years of work experience. He said he read that in New York City, for example, a stockbroker who was tired of the "rat race" started teaching physics in a high school. The big problem for him was that he had not been working for five years in the area of physics. He asked, in regard to the issue about mentoring, whether this would be a one-to-one mentor or if there would be multiple mentors.

MR. KNAUSS responded that as the bill reads, [mentoring] would be at the discretion of the local school district.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS stated that he thinks this is just another way to try to help solve the problem of teaching shortages.

Number 0209

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN asked if there would be a requirement that the person go directly from his or her work experience into teaching, for example, if he and [Representative Fred Dyson] had been working for 35 or 40 years, then took a 10-year break in the legislature, and then taught.

MR. KNAUSS responded that the bill doesn't mention any timeline or a lapse.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON stated that she thinks [the committee] needs to look at the fact that it is possible people will be retiring from their fields and then realizing that they want to go back and do something else. She stated that [the bill] should be careful not to say that it has to be right away [after the person retires]. However, she added, just because someone is good at what he or she does, does not mean he or she can teach it.

CHAIR BUNDE remarked that Representative Wilson hit on something that often comes to mind when people say, "Well, if we just had

mathematicians teaching math." He said he would refer [the committee] back to college professors who were experts in their fields but were far more of an impediment to learning than an asset.

Number 0366

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS asked if this bill would only be for secondary school, since there are just as many problems in some areas for primary schools.

MR. KNAUSS stated that it is his understanding that the majority of these people would be in the secondary school.

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS asked who judges whether the teachers are working in the subject matter.

MR. KNAUSS responded that he believes it would be the local school district.

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS referred to page 2, paragraph (3), and asked if the regionally accredited institution would preclude a possible teacher in a distance education program.

MR. KNAUSS responded that he is not sure about that.

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS asked whether the competency examination that teachers currently have to take is the Praxis, or is an actual competency examination in the subject matter.

CHAIR BUNDE responded that in the statute that passed it was a basic literacy test; however, the university chooses to use the Praxis as its competency test. He stated that in this case it would probably be a basic literacy test unless the university would require it as part of [the teachers'] participation in the [program].

REPRESENTATIVE GUESS stated that her only concern is that there may be some problems in transitions when certain restrictions are required. For example, someone who had a course of study in which he or she had to use math all of the time may not have minor in math.

Number 0655

RICH KRONBERG, President, National Education Association-Alaska (NEA-Alaska), came forth and stated:

National Education Association-Alaska appreciates the efforts of Senator Kelly and his cosponsors to address the issue of teacher shortages around our state. And we also want to thank Senator Kelly for working with us to improve, in our mind, the bill. This is an extremely serious problem, and all efforts to deal with it ought to be considered. National Education Association-Alaska believes that the best program for all children is a quality teacher in every classroom. We know you believe this as well. ...

Senate Bill 86 provides us with one tool to meet our needs. In the scheme of things it can't be viewed as a panacea or a silver bullet. In fact, it will only allow our districts to meet a relatively small portion of their needs. We don't believe that there is any one single solution to teacher shortages, though offering competitive compensation is undoubtedly one area where we've lost ground to other states. I've provided you with some data. It comes from what we fondly call a competing organization, and it shows that we are dead last in the change in teacher compensation during the decade of the 90s.

... In relation to SB 86, NEA-Alaska is generally supportive. We have some questions about the details. These questions relate to the tests [that] districts are going to administer, and who's going to gauge the progress of subject matter teachers toward completion of the programs. We want to know whether the tests are going to be appropriate and that the university, which is offering the coursework, is going to be involved in gauging the progress towards meeting the degree. We are reassured by language in the bill that individuals who are employed as subject-matter teachers will receive mentoring from veteran teachers, that they're going to be part of an approved apprenticeship program, and that they are going to need to meet the same performance standards as all other teachers. Our goal is your goal - to make sure all children in the state get to work with quality teachers. We are hopeful that SB 86 will move us closer to that goal.

Number 0850

LARRY WIGET, Executive Director, Public Affairs, Anchorage School District, came forth on behalf of the Anchorage School Board in support of SB 86. He stated:

Senate Bill 86, we feel, will give school districts such as any school district in the state more flexibility and options to deal with the shortage areas such as special education - for us - related services, librarians, foreign-language teachers, math, and science teachers as well. Debbie Ossiander also told me this morning ... that it also encourages people, she believes, to get into the profession, something we hadn't considered previously. So for all of us within the state, we recognize that this is not a panacea to solving teacher shortages, but it does become for us another tool to help us meet our critical needs. And there are some built-in things within the bill that provide local control over the process.

CHAIR BUNDE remarked that there was an attempt a few years ago to have an alternative entry into teaching. However, it "fell of its own weight" because it was too cumbersome. He asked Mr. Johnson, Deputy Commissioner of Education, if he has a view regarding how many people might be interested in taking advantage of this.

BRUCE JOHNSON, Deputy Commissioner of Education, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development [EED] answered that [the EED] is not sure how many people will take advantage of this. He stated that in rural Alaska there's rarely a full-time job in mathematics or science; therefore, it would be part-time. However, this would add to an individual's capacity to take the teacher education program in conjunction with his or her part-time work. In an urban area, he said, he thinks there is more of a possibility for a full-time assignment. He added that he thinks one of the major differences here from previous conversations is that these people would be paid as teachers from day one. Therefore, a person can earn a salary and move quickly toward the type A certificate, which then gives him or her the opportunity to teach not only courses in the subject area of expertise, but other classes as well.

Number 1022

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS continued, stating that the stockbroker he was talking about earlier had a good deal of experience in graduate school when he went back to teaching. However, his big problem when teaching in an inner-city school was that he wasn't quite prepared for classroom management. Representative Stevens asked if this bill allows for the teacher to be brought up to speed in classroom management.

MR. JOHNSON answered that [the EED] has talked with the University [of Alaska] about this concept, and it needs to be front-end-loaded so the subject matter specialist has the survival skills necessary for classroom management. The university has committed to looking at restructuring how things are done. He stated that rather than offering theoretical ideology at the beginning of the program, [students] will look at some of those very practical kinds of things. He added that in the best of all worlds, the person would be hired in the district and get that training prior to actually teaching. If not, the university would offer those courses while the teacher is on the job during the fall semester.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS asked if the mentoring program is on a one-on-one basis whereby a regular teacher would be "tied up" all day.

MR. JOHNSON responded that usually an individual master teacher is paid a stipend to offer guidance and support to a beginning teacher. [The master teacher and the beginning teacher] might coordinate joint "preps," or get together before or after school. For example, some districts have provided substitute time so the mentor-teacher can go into the beginning teacher's classroom to observe and provide feedback.

Number 1186

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN stated that some years back he taught in a junior college, but because he had not taken any education courses, he was allowed to teach as long as he [enrolled in] education classes. He said that there wasn't a limit on how long this would go on. He asked, if he and [Representative Dyson] were younger but decided to go into a vocation like this, how long they would be given to get a certificate.

MR. JOHNSON replied that he thinks it is conceivable to accomplish the teacher certification program and secure a license within two summers and one academic year. The person would be on campus the first summer then, during the year, he or

she would take courses in methodology, which would provide an opportunity for reflection on what he or she is doing and experiencing. Finally, the person would come back [to campus] the following summer and "wrap" it all together.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN asked, if a person were to get this certificate, whether he or she would have to actually have a degree in education.

MR. JOHNSON responded that [the EED] is anticipating that if the person completed this [program], he or she would be within 15 or 20 hours of a master's degree.

Number 1299

CHAIR BUNDE noted that on page 2, paragraph (3) [of the bill] it states, "currently enrolled in an approved post-baccalaureate teacher education program". He stated that he supposes a person could enroll and take one course. He asked if it would be appropriate to add, "and making satisfactory progress toward completion".

MR. JOHNSON responded that [the EED] would not object to that. He stated that that is the intent - a person has to complete [the program] in two years or he or she is "out of luck."

CHAIR BUNDE asked if the committee and the sponsor would support a conceptual amendment that would add the words "making satisfactory progress".

MR. KNAUSS responded that page 3, subsection (d), refers to the limited teaching certificate.

CHAIR BUNDE remarked that he thinks that answers his question. He asked Mr. Johnson if he could describe the different endorsements as far as secondary and primary.

MR. JOHNSON replied that he doesn't think there is any prohibition in [the bill] for mathematicians to work with primary age students, be paid, and receive a certificate for that period of time. Obviously, he said, a math period at the primary level is about 30 minutes, so it is highly unlikely for that to occur. He added that it has been talked about that this should be a secondary program, mainly at the high school.

CHAIR BUNDE asked if, when the person completes the program and gets the type A teaching certificate, it would have an endorsement of either primary or secondary on it.

MR. JOHNSON stated that it would.

Number 1475

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS made a motion to move CSSB 86(FIN) from committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, CSSB 86(FIN) moved from the House Special Committee on Education.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committees, the House Special Committee on Education meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m. [The minutes for the joint House Special Committee on Education and House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee confirmation hearings to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission and the Board of Education & Early Development are found in the 8:10 a.m. minutes of the same date for both committees.]