

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

February 3, 2005

11:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mark Neuman, Chair
Representative Carl Gatto
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Bill Thomas
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Les Gara
Representative Woodie Salmon

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION IN ALASKA

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 30

"An Act making appropriations for K-12 education operating and school debt expenses; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 65

"An Act making special appropriations for the support of K-12 public education in the state; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 30

SHORT TITLE: APPROP: K-12 EDU OPERATING/DEBT EXPENSES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) HARRIS

01/10/05	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 12/30/04
01/10/05	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/10/05	(H)	EDU, HES, FIN

02/03/05

(H)

EDU AT 11:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

ROGER SAMPSON, Commissioner

Department of Education and Early Development

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of education in Alaska.

TOM WRIGHT, Staff

to Representative John Harris

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsored HB 30 and presented it to the committee.

EDDY JEANS, Director

Finance Department

Department of Education and Early Development

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the changes necessary so that HB 30 reflects the actual budget request.

CARL ROSE, Executive Director

Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 30.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR MARK NEUMAN called the House Special Committee on Education meeting to order at [11:04:41 AM](#). Representatives Wilson, Gatto, Thomas, and Salmon were present at the call to order. Representatives Lynn and Gara arrived as the meeting was in progress.

Overview of Education in Alaska

CHAIR NEUMAN announced that the first order of business would be the overview of education in Alaska.

[11:06:22 AM](#)

ROGER SAMPSON, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), explained that the "first initiative" is

tiered performance-based certification for Alaska teachers. He said the system includes a performance component for those who are newly seeking licensure to teach in the state of Alaska. Furthermore, the [tiered performance-based certification] system will [ensure that the teacher] understands his or her content and can effectively deliver it. Moreover, there is the desire to use research and best practices for recency and relicensing purposes. He informed the committee that [the department] also wants to simplify the over 20-year-old system.

MR. SAMPSON referred to the slide in the power point presentation entitled, "Tiered Certification in Alaska: An informational summary of the proposal to be opened for public comment". This slide shows the current system and illustrates that the proposed regulations do not impact type B or C certificates, only type A teacher certificates. He explained that the parenthesis behind these various types of type A certificates specify the amount of time an individual under the current system could have that type of license, which is one to three years. The aforementioned is important to note when one reviews the new tiering. Therefore, the [proposal] is to go from type A certificates that are quite large in scope to three types of licenses.

[11:09:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO asked whether a provisional license for two years includes the temporary [license] for one year, and therefore is provisional for one additional year, or is the two years in addition to the temporary license.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON answered that it would only be one designation and thus it wouldn't be the total of both.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO asked then if a person could have a provisional certificate and be in his or her third year.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON replied no.

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COMMISSIONER SAMPSON said that under the proposed system there would be three tiers, three categories. This, he clarified, has nothing to do with the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) and the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS). The tiers are identified as follows: tier 1 - initial, tier 2 - professional, and tier 3 - master. Under the initial tier there is a

performance component and for each tier a demonstration of knowledge [is required]. He reiterated that types B and C are not impacted by these regulations. He then provided the committee with a visual of what the certification columns would look like, and highlighted that tier 1 is valid for three years. Under this proposal everyone new to the state or with incomplete requirements would be placed in the initial tier and have three years to meet both the statutory and regulatory requirements. The belief, he opined, is that this will increase the pool of applicants. Tier 2 professional only has one change to the current system such that the department or the state would have the ability to identify what three of the six renewing credits would be so that either the [state or the department] could apply new research or best practices. Tier 2 is valid for five years and a teacher could stay there for his or her entire career. Tier 3 is the top tier and is valid for 10 years. Commissioner Sampson explained that in order to move from tier 1, the initial tier, to the next tier, the teacher would be expected to have completed Alaska multicultural studies, pass the content examination, and sometime during that three-year period of initial licensing the teacher will have to be able to effectively deliver his or her content and expertise. The aforementioned is the performance review. He noted that many teachers in Alaska come from a different state and thus have not completed Alaska studies.

[11:12:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO asked if a teacher from another state would be able to substitute another state's multicultural credits for the Alaska multicultural credits.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON informed the committee that there are 66 different multicultural courses that have been approved over the years to fill that need. He explained that the department reviews the course syllabus and the specific statutory requirement makes sure that perspective candidates coming to Alaska understand the diversity of rural and urban Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO asked whether people from Southern California or Arizona who know quite a bit about diversity would still have to meet Alaska's multicultural standards even though they are very comfortable with the subject content.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON specified that the experience has been that individuals coming into the state to teach need to take one of

the many Alaska courses in order to meet that requirement; only rare exceptions have been made.

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COMMISSIONER SAMPSON turned to tier 2, the professional tier. He explained that when it comes time for all of the existing regular type A certificate teachers in Alaska to renew their certificate, they would be dropped into tier 2, professional tier. Therefore, those teachers would not have to meet the requirements from the initial tier, tier 1, at any point in their career. Therefore, existing regular type A certificate teachers in Alaska would go to tier 2 and could stay at that tier for their entire career, if they chose, just by meeting the recency requirements. Commissioner Sampson highlighted that there has been considerable concern regarding how to get all of the teachers in Alaska to meet the federal criteria of highly qualified under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). He expressed concern with those teachers who are teaching multiple content areas because the federal requirement for highly qualified states that a teacher must have a major in the areas in which he or she is teaching or pass a specific content competency exam for each content area. However, some of those exams aren't even available for Alaska because there isn't a large enough population taking the exams to develop a cut score. Therefore, each state is allowed to also have an instrument called the HOUSSE (highly objective uniform state standards of evaluation) in which credit is given for experiences that teachers have had, such as working on curriculum development and teaching for a certain number of years. He noted that the department has been able to work with the US Department of Education to establish a very high point value for completing the performance review part. Therefore, Alaska has a huge advantage because a teacher could meet the federal definition of highly qualified through the performance review. Additionally, a teacher would also be eligible to move to a master tier if he or she scored very high on the performance review.

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REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked if the federal government has approved this [performance review, HOUSSE].

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON replied yes, but reminded the committee that everything that has been done to this point is subject to each state's site review, which is staggered between this year and the next three years. He specified that everything that in

the accountability workbook will still be subject to review, although everything in the [department's] accountability workbook has been tentatively approved.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON surmised then that the federal government is going to come to Alaska to observe and determine whether what is in place meets the federal criteria.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON said, "That's correct." Therefore, each state will go through an alignment review to make sure that states are doing what has been approved with their accountability workbook. Although some states will receive their alignment review as early as this year, Alaska does not have a date yet.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked if a new teacher to the state could get busy and reach tier 1 in one year.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON responded yes, and noted that this is a performance-based system. In further response to Representative Wilson, Commissioner Sampson explained that if a teacher has not met the criteria during the three active years of [teaching], that teacher would not be eligible to stay in that tier. "They would not be eligible for a license," he specified. Therefore, a new teacher to the state who didn't qualify after three years would not have a license to continue. The aforementioned is similar to the current situation in which teachers new to the state have two years to complete multicultural and Alaska studies, and if they don't complete those, they're not eligible for a license.

CHAIR NEUMAN related his understanding that these [proposed] changes in certification are to being done to bring state schoolteachers in line with NCLB regulations.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON replied, "That's not correct, necessarily." He highlighted that there is a positive benefit that with this system, the department could help many teachers meet highly qualified criteria that is required by NCLB. However, it's not the primary purpose of this set of regulations for teacher certification.

[11:21:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARA asked if the HOUSSE standards are the answer, leeway from the federal government, for the problem of teacher qualifications in Bush schools.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON replied yes, but added that it's not an effective tool because it highly favors teachers with a great deal of experience not those with only two or three years of experience.

REPRESENTATIVE GARA surmised then that until there is some sort of waiver from the federal government, the state is in violation in some of the smaller schools where there isn't a teacher who is highly qualified in math, science, social studies, and languages.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON informed the committee that the state has until 2006-2007 for districts to come into compliance on all the highly qualified components. Initially, Alaska was alone in regard to its rural issues and finding a different way to come into compliance on all the highly qualified components. However, now Alaska is receiving tremendous support from other states that are experiencing similar difficulties with teachers who work in resource rooms with children with disabilities because they often teach five and six content areas.

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REPRESENTATIVE GARA asked whether a statutory fix for NCLB is necessary or is there leeway in the statute to accommodate those concerns.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON opined that the department believes a statutory or federal regulatory change in NCLB is necessary.

[11:24:16 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON continued with tier 3, the highest in the tiered system. He informed the committee that there are three ways to get to tier 3. First, one can become nationally board certified, which is a very rigorous program. There are only 53 teachers in Alaska who are nationally board certified, which normally takes one to two years and is quite expensive. Second, a teacher can reach the master tier by scoring very high on the performance review process. He explained that there is a possible score of six points on each of the nine performances and to move to the master tier one has to score a five or higher on each of the nine performances. If another national certification process comes about and the department approves it, [the department] would want that path available for teachers to reach that master tier.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON highlighted that if these regulations become law, the department is not suggesting that a performance review is of the same rigor as national board certification. However, the department believes that both, for licensing purposes, are acceptable.

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COMMISSIONER SAMPSON reminded the committee that tier 3 is valid for 10 years and a teacher could remain in that tier by meeting the renewal requirements through the same process that got that teacher to that point. He then informed the committee that when existing type A teachers, of which there is a huge majority in the state, renew their certificate and proceed to tier 2, they will never have to do the performance review unless they so choose. Commissioner Sampson explained that if a teacher's current certificate is due for renewal in March 2005, these regulations would not have been adopted and the teacher would apply under the current system and his or her certificate would be good until March 8, 2010. However, if these regulations are adopted in June, July, or September, it would not be until March of 2010 that the aforementioned teacher would drop into this new system. Furthermore, that teacher would have five years to meet any of the requirements for that and thus it would not be until 2015 that any of those requirements applied to that teacher, technically. He reminded the committee that in tier 2 there is nothing new for [a certificated teacher] to meet except that the department might identify three of his or her six recency credits.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON informed the committee that educators from around the state came together months ago and started with a document that is the Alaska teaching performance standards, which includes many characteristic traits and skills that the department believes effective teachers ought to have. Those are identified in the Alaska Professional Teaching Standards. In narrowing those down, the department reviewed whether those skills, characteristics, and traits were observable and measurable. From that the hundreds of skills and traits were narrowed down to about 20 or 21. Those were then narrowed further after review as to whether the remaining skills and traits were measurable and observable in a short amount of time, such as a 45-minute observation. The remaining skills and traits were narrowed further regarding whether these skills are generic to the course and the age of the students. He explained that the aforementioned is referring to whether these skills are

desirable for teachers who teach high school, kindergarten, and middle school teachers teaching science to band. When the aforementioned parameters, which are generic to age and content, were placed on the proposed skills and traits there ended up being only nine performances of which only eight were designed to be captured in an observation because one of them is professionalism. There is no expectation that in a short amount of time one could determine whether a person is demonstrating professionalism. The eight performances came from the following categories: planning and preparation; environment of learning; instructional implementation; and professionalism.

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CHAIR NEUMAN opined that some of these [performance] requirements might be beyond the teachers' control.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON said the committee didn't think so and tried to be sure that the [performance requirements] were about instruction rather than age or size of classrooms.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO commented that the strategies could be entirely different depending upon the location, size of the class, and subgroups of the class. What is being reviewed is how well a teacher performs in the situation with which he or she is presented.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON agreed, and added in order to obtain an accurate assessment there should be information regarding the classroom description and its demographics. Furthermore, during a 45-minute observation in a kindergarten class one will see multiple lessons delivered as opposed to a high school class in which probably only one lesson will be delivered.

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REPRESENTATIVE GARA turned to the individuals who are the reviewers, and opined that it will be problematic if the reviewers know the teacher. He further opined that it would be best for the reviewers to be individuals who don't know the teachers being reviewed and are consistent with reviewers across the state. Therefore, he asked whether the aforementioned problem will be guarded against. He also asked whether a professional staff of reviewers will be paid to go into the classrooms, and if so, he inquired as to the cost of that.

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COMMISSIONER SAMPSON explained that there will be a call for reviewers, whom he anticipated would be educators, both administrators and teachers. He said he would hope that there would be a pool of 100-200 reviewers. However, in order to be considered part of this pool, the individual would have to go through the intensive training on an annual basis and demonstrate that they can effectively and consistently apply the performance rubric while viewing teachers on the actual videotapes. He noted that there would also be about four department personnel who would be trained to the same rigor and proficiency on an annual basis. Therefore, one to two people from that pool would be brought to the department weekly to work with one to two trained people in the department. When the videos are reviewed if the scores of the two reviewers vary by more than one, another reviewer reviews it and a score is established. Commissioner Sampson informed the committee that the model is taken from the Alaska writing project that was used for years in the state to score student writing on a six-point rubric.

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REPRESENTATIVE SALMON inquired as to how the aforementioned would be accomplished for small rural schools.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON clarified that the observations are done by viewing a videotape. Therefore, a new teacher in the initial tier required to do the performance review would be required to submit two 45-minute videotapes. The teacher would decide when the videotaping would occur and could videotape as many times as desired, but the videotape can't be edited. The general public has criticized the aforementioned concept. However, the department views its responsibility in relation to licensing purposes and thus is responsible for ensuring that the teachers in the state know the content and are capable of effectively delivering it. The district's responsibility, through the district evaluation process, is to ensure that teachers consistently, effectively deliver their knowledge. Teachers, on the other hand, have expressed concern that the two processes are duplicative. However, Commissioner Sampson opined that the department and the district serve different purposes.

[11:38:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON characterized the aforementioned process as a safety net for the teacher so that the reviewers aren't biased.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON agreed, and added that the pool of reviewers will have to meet some rules and criteria. For instance, reviewers would never be allowed to score teachers from the reviewer's school district or to score teachers with which the reviewer has a relationship. It was felt that building principals have relationships with the teachers such that they might interfere with using a performance rubric for scoring. Therefore, having a separate third-party reviewer was suggested.

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REPRESENTATIVE GARA inquired as to the cost of the reviewers.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON informed the committee that the projected approximate cost is estimated to be \$283,000 a year. The cost includes the cost of training, travel, and per diem. He noted that all of those costs wouldn't be in addition to the current system because there are already EED staff who are involved and will remain involved in the licensing process. Furthermore, the department doesn't know how many people in tiers 2 and 3 will take advantage of the performance review. However, the department does know that it does between 1,500 and 2,000 licenses per year, many of which are renewals.

REPRESENTATIVE GARA opined that the cost could be more than the \$283,000. He then said he didn't want this money to come out of the foundation formula funding or to be charged back to the school districts. Therefore, he suggested that this be a separate funding component that isn't drawn from the school districts.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON assured Representative Gara that [would be the case]. He then pointed out that statute requires that the division doing teacher licensing is to be solvent based on teacher licensing fees. Commissioner Sampson mentioned that teachers are concerned that this proposed system will increase their cost of licensing to an excessive level. Although there are some unknown variables, such as the budget of the Professional Teaching Practices Commission and the number of licenses that will be renewed, the fees will be borne on the backs of the users. However, the desire is to not let the fees become excessive.

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COMMISSIONER SAMPSON, in response to Representative Gatto, stated that if there is the ability to take advantage of video conferencing, it would be utilized.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON assured the committee that this proposed teacher certification is much cheaper than nursing certification.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON moved on to the proposed timeline and informed the committee that the proposed regulations are to be taken to the State Board of Education this March. The hope is that the State Board of Education will be comfortable enough to move the regulations out for public comment at that March meeting. If the aforementioned occurred, the board could take action at its June meeting. If approved, the regulations would be sent to the Department of Law for review and could be in place during the 2005-2006 school year.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON then provided the committee with a quick summary in which he related the following information. None of Alaska's type A teachers would have to do the performance review, and when their certificate renews it will move to tier 2 professional. The teacher performance review is only there as a way to benefit teachers such that they can meet the highly qualified standards or move to a higher tier. Only tier 1, who are people new to the state or a teacher without a regular type A, are required to have a performance review. Again, this doesn't impact type B and C certificates.

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REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS asked if an individual graduating from the Alaska university system would have already met these requirements. He also asked what tier such an individual would be.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON clarified that regardless of where the individual received his or her degree; a newly licensed teacher will be tier 1. A teacher stays in tier 1 only as long as it takes for the teacher to meet the criteria to move to a higher tier, provided it is accomplished within three years.

REPRESENTATIVE SALMON asked if there is a pay difference between the tiers.

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COMMISSIONER SAMPSON clarified that the department has nothing to do with pay, that's left to each school district to determine. He related that each of the state's 53 school districts' salary schedules are different. However, there are a few school districts in Alaska that pay an additional amount for a national board certified teacher.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON returned to the tiered certification, which he noted is part of a much larger picture. He then turned to the partnership between the University of Alaska and the state's 53 school districts. There is a statewide teacher-mentoring project, which was put forward in order to increase teacher retention and student achievement. He noted that there are few mentoring models that increase teacher retention while also increasing student achievement. Furthermore, there was only one mentoring model that illustrated increased student achievement in as short a time as one year. The aforementioned model, with 14 years of research behind it, was chosen. Commissioner Sampson shared a graph with the committee that illustrated that the teacher turnover rate in Alaska is a bit higher than the national [average]. He mentioned that most of the districts in the state had to look out of state to find teachers to fill vacancies. He then shared with the committee a graph that illustrated that more teachers are leaving the profession than entering it.

11:50:39 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO pointed out that the graph was provided by the American Education Research Journal and the first graph referred to the assistant superintendent in Alaska. He asked if one person decides the facts are true.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON said, "It's coming out of teacher placement." He then turned to a chart with regard to the Alaska job fair, which illustrates that in 1997 the state reached a peak with regard to the number of people looking for jobs. The steady decline is reflective of the national shortage of [teachers]. He indicated that this relates to early funding in that those who are employed and doing a good job have to be kept. Furthermore, the school districts have to have the advantage of having access to the pool when there are openings early enough to obtain good candidates. Commissioner Sampson then presented the committee with a graph illustrating the need

for the mentoring program for teachers. He then provided the committee with details of the mentoring program, which employs 23 full-time mentors who serve 377 teachers statewide. Commissioner Sampson highlighted that Alaska is the first state to implement a statewide mentoring program. He then highlighted that research has shown that after being a mentor for two years, half of the mentors return to the classroom while the other half split and either move into leadership roles or remain mentors. Therefore, the mentoring program is impacting more than just those directly involved. He mentioned that there is also a principal mentoring program as well.

11:58:40 AM

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN inquired as to what Commissioner Sampson views as one of the largest deficiency of the various programs.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON answered that it would be effective strategies that meet individual needs of kids while teaching 25-30 students. In further response to Representative Lynn, he related that it has been most effective to have clear targets such that a teacher can deliver a general lesson to a wide group and vary the needs by the expectation of the result coming back.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON then turned to NCLB, which the department supports conceptually. However, he noted that some pieces have to be fixed. The following four major areas [are being] targeted at the national level for change, both statutory and regulatory changes. First, children with disabilities, once identified, need to be treated differently [in relation] to how effectively those children are learning. The achievements of children with disabilities should be based on individual education program (IEP) targets rather than adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets. Second, [the department] needs to determine how to calculate how students with limited English proficiency are achieving because those students who don't speak English proficiently wouldn't be expected to do well on an English exam. Third, the highly qualified issue has already been discussed and possible solutions mentioned. Finally, [there is a need for] a growth model. He explained a chart that he provided the committee which took four hypothetical schools and used the AYP model, noting that the AYP mark periodically moves. He emphasized the need to include something that demonstrates growth is important. Therefore, the department is proposing the growth model.

12:04:03 PM

REPRESENTATIVE SALMON recalled a graph Commissioner Sampson shared which illustrated the survival mode [of new teachers]. He opined that new teachers in their own environment [wouldn't send new teachers] into such a low [survival mode].

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON said that [no matter whether the new teacher is in a rural or urban area], such a low occurs. Although there are some schools and teachers that don't reach the low [specified in the graph], generally teaching is a very lonely job regardless of the location. He noted that the graph was produced from national research that reviewed large and small schools and schools in urban and rural areas. "Even in many of our large schools, it's a very lonely job. You walk in that classroom and that door closes," he related.

[12:05:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON recalled a recent presentation by Commissioner Sampson when he provided information regarding students who lack English proficiency and the inability to meet the AYP in some areas for such students. She requested that he relate that to the committee. She then asked whether Commissioner Sampson believes the federal government will realize [the problems with NCLB] and make some changes.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON opined that Alaska is gaining some support from larger states that may have more political clout than Alaska. Commissioner Sampson highlighted that the aforementioned changes that have to be addressed with NCLB include addressing children with limited English proficiency. Those with limited English proficiency will obviously not do well on a test written in English, and therefore that needs to be addressed.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON surmised then that a school that passes the AYP in all categories besides the aforementioned category could be kept from looking like a good school because of not achieving in that category.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON agreed, and informed the committee that Alaska's diverse schools have up to 31 cells of different categories of students. A single cell, with a small number of students, could not hit the mark and could result in the entire school not being listed as meeting AYP.

REPRESENTATIVE GARA highlighted that under NCLB schools are told to get better, and once the schools reach what is specified as better, the schools have to get better the next year. At some point, a school that betters itself can't get better every year. The growth model includes the same problem in that it contains the same unattainable goal as AYP. He asked if there is a way to alter the department's growth model to account for that.

[12:09:32 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON pointed out that the growth model is based on individual students, no matter where they start. He then noted his agreement with Representative Gara with regard to [it being unrealistic to expect increased achievement every year after reaching a certain high level]. Therefore, he opined that the goal should be to maintain a certain realistic [high level].

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS asked whether the problem with children with limited English proficiency was aggravated when the foundation formula was capped at 20 percent for special needs. He recalled that the special needs in rural areas was as high as 35-40 percent.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON responded that he didn't know whether the aforementioned cap impacted students with limited English proficiency. The NCLB doesn't discuss quality or how it's changed, but discusses "what is" and has nothing to do with instruction per se. He recalled that in the past districts were using funds for different purposes, some of which were to enhance bilingualism and others to increase English proficiency.

COMMISSIONER SAMPSON concluded by addressing the statewide mentoring program. He informed the committee the department has secured the funding for the mentoring program for this year and next. Although this is more than a \$3 million program, the department isn't coming to the legislature asking for money. If the mentoring program is successful after two years, the department will come to the legislature highlighting what "it will buy" and request the legislature's support of it.

[12:12:47 PM](#)

HB 30-APPROP: K-12 EDU OPERATING/DEBT EXPENSES

CHAIR NEUMAN announced that the final order of business would be

HOUSE BILL NO. 30 "An Act making appropriations for K-12 education operating and school debt expenses; and providing for an effective date."

12:13:35 PM

TOM WRIGHT, Staff to Representative John Harris, Alaska State Legislature, stated that HB 30 in its current form is merely a starting point. He opined that there will be numerous discussions related to possible changes in the base student allocation portion of HB 30, as well as the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) and the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) costs and whether to include those in the foundation [formula] or as a separate item. As it is now, he explained, [the cost of PERS/TRS] is a separate item in [HB 30] and not included in the foundation formula portion of HB 30. This legislation includes school bond debt retirement for which there will be some increased costs as will also be the case for pupil transportation. He highlighted that the base student allocation will determine how HB 30 appears when, and if, it moves out of committee.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON inquired as to why there are so many different issues included in HB 30.

12:16:21 PM

MR. WRIGHT said that all of the issues included in HB 30 are related to education funding. He highlighted that HB 30, unlike the governor's proposal, is one-year funding. Also, the administration's proposal includes an appropriation for \$425,100 to the Alaska Military Youth Academy.

REPRESENTATIVE GARA said that he does not know how to evaluate HB 30 without first hearing from school districts [regarding what is needed]. He emphasized that he wants school districts to be able to add staff. He related that preliminary numbers that school districts have submitted for increased foundation formulas are \$40 or \$50 million more than the governor's proposal. He inquired as to whether [Mr. Wright] would view the aforementioned as out of range for a foundation formula funding component.

CHAIR NEUMAN interjected that he has scheduled time for testimony from school districts regarding their needs.

MR. WRIGHT stated that the House Special Committee on Education has to decide what level to fund the foundation formula.

[12:19:44 PM](#)

EDDY JEANS, Director, Finance Department, Department of Education and Early Development, (EED), said that he understood the numbers put forward in HB 30 were intended to reflect the governor's funding level of the current programs as they currently exist in statute and not reflect the governor's proposed increases. Therefore, changes would be necessary so that HB 30 reflects the actual budget request. He explained:

The first one would be under special schools. The actual dollar amount that should be reflected there is \$7,469,600; that's on line 13. Under pupil transportation ... that number should be \$55,027,100 and that would be on line 14 The number on line 5 would also have to be amended ... [to] \$826,037,800 Mr. Chairman, on page 2, line 2, for the general fund, that number would have to be amended to be \$793,299,500 Mr. Chairman, on line 5, the school debt reimbursement program - that is actually the fiscal year '05 number - the fiscal year '06 number will be \$86,463,479 ... that would be on line 5, page 2 The revenue sources would also have to be amended, line 9 "debt retirement fund" would be \$59,463,479 and the school fund under line 10, would be \$27 million even.

[12:22:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARA related his understanding that the numbers on page 1 through line 2, on page 2, are the current fiscal year numbers, and the numbers for lines 6, 9, and 10 are the numbers projected for the fiscal year (FY) 06 debt reimbursement program.

MR. JEANS stated that the numbers given for all of the programs reflect the FY 06 entitlement numbers based on the current programs in statute. Therefore, in all cases it would be the FY 06 budget numbers.

REPRESENTATIVE GARA surmised then that the foundation formula numbers remain as long as the base student allocation does not change.

MR. JEANS stated that is correct.

12:24:45 PM

CARL ROSE, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), said that AASB supports HB 30 because it has valuable components of the overall education appropriation. He explained that he recently returned from Washington, D.C., where AASB has been working with the National School Board Association and has had a chance to review some of the impacts of NCLB and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Federal funds over the last four years, he related, have resulted in the \$64 billion difference between what was authorized and what was appropriated, nationwide. He said that he has yet to determine what that means for Alaska, and therefore he said he will be working with Mr. Jeans to try to come up with some numbers. He continued:

The cost of some of these federal mandates have been balanced on the back of state, local funding mechanisms. Much of what we do at the local level requires us to meet mandates, requires monies to be spent that we are not receiving, which brings us back to the point of the whole educational discussion that we are having. We have been taking a look at some of the trends ... that will show a relatively flat level of funding from the years 1999, 2000, 2001 ... our basic student allocation was at ... \$3,960 from '01 to '02, it was moved up \$50 dollars and that was to \$4,010 dollars, a relatively flat trend. In fiscal year '04-'05, we have started to make a move to increasing the investment in public K-12 education In '04, we didn't have PERS and TRS in the foundation formula, in '05 we did and we are starting to look at '06 and '07, and I really appreciate the whole idea of capturing the cost of PERS and TRS.

12:27:00 PM

[Due to technical difficulties, the recording ends at 12:27 p.m. and the remaining testimony was taken from the Legislative Information Office's recording.]

MR. ROSE continued:

The point I'm trying to make is our experience has been ... the year we're in right now ... we received

an \$82 million increase. With that \$82 million, \$36 million of that went to PERS and TRS. The remainder, \$46 million, is what we experienced in terms of an increase to public K-12 education. The numbers aren't being discussed right now, but in the governor's proposal for '06 he's talking about \$62 million; \$38 million of that is for PERS and TRS, and the remainder, about \$22 million, is what the difference is from last year. The only reason I bring this up is that if we continue on a trend such as this, we will start to reduce the impact of the increase that we received last year. And the proposal that has been placed before us by the governor ... merits consideration, a two-year funding package, ... which we support ... as a starting place. Representative Gara, you have mentioned we haven't heard from all of the school districts yet ... but what we're finding by running our numbers at the \$62 million level [is] that we are experiencing shortfalls across the state. ... we want to create a trend line, if you will, that increases the level of education funding commensurate with what the needs are in our state. We've experienced the flat period of funding; we have started to climb in '04, and now [in] '05 we'd like to continue that. And so, I want to bring you some documents that will, I believe, take a look at ... a trend line that I think is manageable for us into the future.

[HB 30 was held over.]

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Education meeting was adjourned at an unspecified time.