

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

January 21, 2009

8:01 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair  
Representative Cathy Engstrom Munoz, Vice Chair  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Wes Keller  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Robert L. "Bob" Buch  
Representative Berta Gardner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

OVERVIEW(S): DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT,  
SCHOOL FINANCE AND FACILITIES, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

EDDY JEANS, Director  
School Finance and Facilities Section  
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the EED budget overview.

LARRY LEDOUX, Commissioner  
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided the EED general overview.

MARK LEWIS, Director  
Administrative Services  
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Participated in the EED budget overview.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:01:38 AM](#)

**CHAIR PAUL SEATON** called the House Standing Committee on Education meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Representatives Seaton, Munoz, Wilson, Edgmon, Keller, Buch, and Gardner were present at the call to order.

OVERVIEW: Department Of Education And Early Development, School Finance And Facilities, Administrative Services

[8:07:28 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the only order of business would be an overview from the Department of Education and Early Development.

[8:08:20 AM](#)

EDDY JEANS, Director, School Finance and Facilities Section, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), directed attention to the handout in the committee packet outlining the education budget, prior to introducing the commissioner.

[8:09:48 AM](#)

LARRY LEDOUX, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), began with a brief biography of his 31 years working as an educator, principal, central administrator, and school superintendent. His experience has included work based in rural and urban Alaska. To achieve a goal of 100 percent graduation, he said education would need to be addressed along a continuum, requiring attention to the student throughout their educational career. Each student must be met on an individual basis, from pre-school through high school. Three factors must be in place for a child to have a successful education, he said, and elaborated:

The first is a strong academic program with quality teachers, world class standards, and the opportunity for kids to explore those interests. ... The second ... is healthy kids. Healthy physically, socially, [and] they have to be in safe schools - they have to be socially, physically safe. They have to have

experiences where they can risk take and have accountability. ... And finally ... we have to connect with our communities. I call that community culture and family. Children draw purpose place and meaning for what they learn from their family and community. Without that we graduate students without vision who don't know where they're going or what they're going to do.

[8:14:37 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX explained the reorganization and changes that the EED is implementing, to further the department's goal of creating world class schools throughout the state. The newly appointed Deputy Commissioner, Les Morris, is now directly responsible for consolidating school improvement efforts. He affirmed that, "The department exists to support what happens between a teacher and an individual student." The plan includes two new positions, authorized under SB 285, that assist in auditing and forming models for intervention, mentoring and grant writing. He stressed that each district/community are part of the reforms under this project.

[8:16:50 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX said that EED is undertaking an internal regulatory review. Districts report that meeting regulatory, paperwork requirements can be time consuming and, seemingly, without direct benefit to school improvements and operations. The department is working to assure that the districts are in compliance, and that the regulation requirements are relevant and on target to meet EED goals. A report will be made to the State Board of Education (BOE), when the review is completed; possibly spring of 2009.

[8:17:21 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX said that a superintendent's manual is being developed. This has not existed in the past and should prove to be a valuable tool, due to the turn over that exists in the ranks of the superintendents and central personal. The comprehensive manual will replace the past dependency of new appointees to carry out operations based on the local "folk lore," as well as consolidate information into an easily accessible format.

[8:18:26 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX reported that he has been conducting meetings with EED staff. These efforts provide him the opportunity to underscore the role that each member plays in the lives of the children they are serving. Additionally, he has established vital connections and garnered new ideas from within the ranks of the department.

[8:19:22 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX emphasized the need to rebuild the state's technical education infrastructure. Career education is an important aspect of education that is suffering throughout Alaska. He reported that the Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD) has already made rapid progress in developing technical training education programs. EED is working to establish a partnership with DLWD to work jointly on this front.

[8:20:50 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX said that a certification review is also occurring to assure the quality of teachers that are being appointed. Additionally, an administrator is being sought to direct the technical education aspect, and coordinate with DLWD. Finally, the technical support/advisors that the department once maintained are being reinstated. These positions underwent reassignment when NCLB (No Child Left Behind) was implemented in 2001. Thus, new positions are not being added, but rather reinstated and the roles redefined. Under this scenario, monitoring of NCLB will continue, and technical advice for program enhancement may also be tendered.

[8:22:34 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX recognized the need for EED to work with other departments for optimal effectiveness. Along with DLWD, EED expects to partner with the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). The proficient services that DHSS provides for nutrition and health, fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), and intervention work are areas in which EED expects to interface. The department has an authorized health position that has gone unfilled for many years. He suggested that school nurses would receive better support if this position were filled and supervised by DHSS, with EED acting as a translator within the system. He viewed this as a means for eliminating redundancy between departments.

[8:25:10 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX reported that he has been meeting regularly with Mark Hamilton, President, Statewide Programs and Services, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, to discuss the connection between kindergarten through high school and university education. He pointed out that university students are often in-state high school graduates, and that university graduates often become in-state teachers. These meetings are integral for ensuring the development of quality university level students and producing qualified university graduates, ready for in-state career placement. He emphasized the critical role that early childhood education plays in assuring a successful educational career. He noted the importance of supporting programs such as Head Start, Best Beginnings, and other organizations that support young children. These organizations are part of his meeting schedule. Additionally, he has been meeting with Native entities, and he expressed concern for the low success level of students in indigenous communities. He said that it is necessary to have ownership of the educational vision for rural Alaska.

[8:27:16 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX reported on a recent educational summit, which drew over 450 participants, including several legislators and members of the committee. The two days of meetings generated a plan for the development of a statewide education vision, producing 40 goals and objectives. These ideas are being refined and consolidated into a working draft, which will be made available to the committee. Additionally, the plan will be posted on the EED website with an invitation for anyone in Alaska to make comment. Approval of the plan will be sought in March from the Board of Education (BOE). He described the plan as having many facets to be addressed, as well as creating a clear snapshot of the status of education in Alaska. The expectation, he said, is to provide a coherent plan that is accessible by any education organization, or individual, to join the educational highway and work in a unified direction. Following approval of the plan, action groups will create goal related timelines.

[8:31:15 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX continued by reviewing four specific areas of the educational budget: the legislature approved foundation increase. This provided a \$100 increase in the base unit,

increased the multiplier from 9 to 11 for intensive students, and allowed a 0.125 percent increase in the cost differential. A gubernatorial proposal, in the FY10 budget, is for \$2 million to create an early childhood training pilot that will target those children who lack other avenues for services, and provide a means for them to be prepared for grade school; ready to read and ready to learn. He indicated that grant money will also be utilized for this project. The expectation is for pilot programs to occur throughout the state, serving up to 500 students, and generating data that will allow accountability/success reporting to the legislature. Meetings have been scheduled with existing organizations including Best Beginnings, Head Start, Rural Cap, and Native Corporations. He stressed the need for kindergarten age children to receive primary support from their parents. Grantees of this program will be asked the ways and means that will be used to support parents in providing appropriate early childhood care and school readiness. The young child is subject to early influences and actions that will affect them for the rest of their lives, and he underscored the need to focus on how and by whom meaningful care will be delivered to each child.

[8:34:23 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX noted another area that EED requested funding for is technical assistance. The department expects to contract with available in-state science, math, reading, social studies, and art, who can be dispatched centrally, as a cost effective way to fill this void. An effort will also be made to hire cultural specialists who can work with administrators, often from outside of Alaska, on how to connect with the indigenous communities. Additional funding is being sought for the Head Start program. He reported that this is a wrap around service with a waiting list of approximately 1,000. The \$800 thousand requested would allow an additional 60 children the opportunity to participate in this service. Finally, he said, funds have been requested to contract three auditors. These positions will track the funds allocated for intensive students, and report on the appropriate usage, and effectiveness of the application. The goal here is to prevent the designation of an intensive student from becoming a commodity in the system. He pointed out that adjusting the multiplier from 9 to 11 represents a \$21 million dollar increase.

[8:37:39 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON offered to have the minutes of this presentation be prepared as part of the committee's basis for referral.

8:38:37 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER pointed out that a red flag for effectiveness of the state's educational system is the state's graduation rate. She requested a statistical breakdown of who is not graduating and what is known about the eventual, timely, GED rate of those none graduates. Additionally, she asked for the department's view for creating mandatory school attendance through the age of eighteen, enacting truancy laws to enforce school attendance, how the graduation rate correlates with meeting the needs of special education students, the department's opinion on before and after school programs for pre-kindergarteners and school breakfast programs, and EED's expectations on how NCLB will be dealt with in the new congressional administration. Finally, as a supporter of Head Start, she expressed surprise that only 60, of the 1,000 identified, children would be served given the appropriated \$800,000.

CHAIR SEATON pointed out that answers to the majority of these questions may become apparent during the course of the imminently scheduled meetings, save the response regarding Head Start funds.

8:41:37 AM

MR. JEANS responded that the annual cost per child in a Head Start program is approximately \$10 thousand. Thus, the \$800,000 will provide services for 60-80 children. During preceding years, the numbers of children serviced in Head Start had been cut by about 300, due to funding not keeping pace with the increased costs of operation. The funding will help to add children back into the program.

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked for clarity on the federal match of state funds for Head Start, and she inquired how these costs compare with the cost of a kindergarten student in the school system.

MR. JEANS indicated that there is a base allocation that the state provides, which the Head Start programs use as a local match to receive federal grants. The \$800000 will be allocated, by request, to various programs to enable them to service a child, not receive more funding into an ongoing program. The

matching federal funds amount to approximately \$34 million. The wraps around services provided by Head Start include educational services, counseling, family counseling, a lunch program, and medical and dental care. These services are not provided to children in public schools, hence the higher costs per Head Start child. The cost for a public kindergarten child is between \$4,000 and \$5,000, he estimated.

[8:45:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON stated her understanding of the developing young child's brain, and how it is effected by domestic violence. New methods are being developed to provide teachers insights for serving a child that has witnessed or experienced domestic trauma. She asked whether Alaska's teachers are, or will be, trained with these methods in mind.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX said he has participated in workshops addressing brain research in the early development of the child. However, not every teacher in our state has had the same opportunity. He agreed that teachers and parents could all benefit from technical assistance regarding brain research. He offered to make the research available to the committee and to the school districts.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON followed up to provide an example of how a traumatized child might find security in the classroom simply by being seated away from the main door.

[8:47:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH observed that this committee exists because people are dissatisfied and that the overview indicates that everyone is on the same track. He opined how it would be important that satisfaction never be found, but that the striving for excellence remains continuous. He asked at what level vocational initiatives would be introduced. Additionally, he inquired by what authority and means EED directors would be able to implement change. The coordination effort, as discussed, with the various departments and private agencies, is a tremendous undertaking, which, he opined, must begin with the administration, in order to establish a unified direction. He acknowledged Chair Seaton's comment that discussion points would be taken up at a later time.

[8:53:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ pointed out that the aging work force, particularly on the North Slope, has become a recent concern. The Alaska Industrial Career Consortium (AICC) has taken up the effort to increase math and science education at the secondary level, and to work with the University on programs to prepare students for North Slope employment.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX replied that he is aware of a number of organizations that are concerned with increasing student math skills to prepare them to engage in technical training.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ requested that specific information on the vocational education programs be made available to the committee.

CHAIR SEATON reminded the committee that DLWD will come before the committee to provide a presentation on vocational education.

[8:55:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ stated that the Alaska Humanities Forum has developed and maintains a web site for the Alaska history curriculum. She asked whether EED is engaged with the forum, and if the department would be taking on the responsibility of that curriculum.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX responded that the department is in discussion with the Alaska Humanities Forum regarding that topic.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ noted an increased request for the WWAMI Program (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, Idaho Medical Education Program), and asked how many additional positions those funds would provide.

MR. JEANS responded that the increase in the budget reflects the increase in the program fees, not additional positions.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ inquired how many Alaskan's are enrolled in the WWAMI program.

MR. JEANS estimated about 60, and said he would provide a more solid number.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ asked if the department provides any type of cultural training for new teachers arriving from out of state, who are filling rural district positions.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX replied that EED intends to coordinate the development of cultural boot camps, to occur in late July. The department will not afford transportation or per diem costs, however, districts will be invited to send their new teachers. Cultural pre-training is considered critical, and three major Alaskan cultures will be targeted in this pilot program.

8:57:39 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER requested that a comprehensive overview of EED required reports be made available to the committee. He asked that it include where the information is found and what it is based on. Further, he asked for a brief history of school choice and educational options available in the state.

8:58:55 AM

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON noted that Commissioner LeDoux is a member of the governors rural subcabinet. He asked what EED will contribute towards costs for energy/operating bush schools, in light of his position on the subcabinet.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX responded that his role in the governor's rural subcabinet is to ensure that the voices of students are heard. School closures have a destructive impact on communities; moreover, parents of rural students have begun to question the quality of education in rural areas compared with that of urban centers. He stressed the importance of education to rural parents who may decide to move to urban centers for the [academic] success of their children. "So, my role is to make sure ... that all of our schools are places where children can find success, and [to] represent what parents want," he said. He expressed his belief that schools are part of the overall algorithm on what is happening in rural Alaska.

9:01:24 AM

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON further asked whether there is a timeline, during this session, for the subcabinet to report to the committee and the legislature on the issue of education.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX informed the committee that the attorney general is chairing the rural subcabinet and that question will need to be forwarded to the chair. He added that the subcabinet meets on a regular basis.

9:02:20 AM

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON opined that for many schools it is difficult to hire teachers qualified in specific subjects, especially when teachers from outside the state cannot be offered a competitive salary, or their years of experience are discounted. She asked whether this policy would be reviewed.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX said no. He explained that a teacher's years of experience are based on their negotiated agreement with the district; however, he will find out whether this issue is determined by statute.

9:03:53 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER observed that some teachers feel there is a disincentive to further their education in special education, or to obtain a special education certification, because terms of their contract could force them to take a special education classroom or to move to another school site. She asked what changes were possible in order to encourage and promote all teachers to take valuable special educational classes.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX agreed that districts are desperate for specialists in the areas of speech and language, physical therapy, psychology, and special education, and officials have no choice but to move teachers as needed. The law requires that teachers have a special education endorsement to be placed in a special education classroom. The result is that special education teachers are overwhelmed by their obligations. Through courses offered at the University of Alaska, the department is trying to increase the pool of special education teachers. Regarding other specialists, he advised that shortages throughout the country have led to a crisis situation.

9:06:31 AM

CHAIR SEATON warned that a school improvement plan is similar to an individual education plan (IEP) and can "eat up" time and energy with few results. He then asked how the statewide school improvement plan can avoid this problem and accomplish more.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX pointed out that crafting an IEP is a grave responsibility for a teacher and is much more than "filling in a box." He assured the committee that an IEP is given due attention by Alaska's teachers, although parents also have a responsibility to be attentive to the process. Regarding school

improvement plans, he noted that the improvement plans were initiated by NCLB legislation, and require school districts to review student assessment and performance data in order to ensure Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 Title 1 funding. Commissioner LeDoux opined that some districts do not understand the relationship between the improvement plan, school operations, and subsequent changes in student achievement. The inflexibility and bureaucracy of NCLB policies prevent some schools from seeing the relevance to school improvement. In fact, the department is working to connect school improvement plans to overall programs and impress on districts that they will be held accountable. He expressed the department's belief that schools, teachers, and communities, that use the data to improve programs, will see results. Prior to NCLB, Alaska was well on the way to developing accountability in schools; therefore, the department must "take the best out of [NCLB], put it together with what we know about Alaska, and start moving forward, and that's why we've reorganized the department."

[9:10:51 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON referred to the many questions from constituents about whether the benefits of NCLB outweigh the institutional costs. He asked whether the commissioner is considering withdrawing from NCLB even though federal funding would be lost.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX stated his expectation that NCLB, even when modified under the new administration, will continue to be unresponsive to Alaska's needs. Its benefits, such as accountability, are clouded by onerous federal regulations. However, without the federal funds that support a variety of programs, three-quarters of the department and millions of dollars "would disappear." Commissioner LeDoux assured the committee that the department can do what is necessary to satisfy the regulations in an ethical and complete manner, while developing the flexibility needed to respond to the needs of Alaska's schools. In fact, NCLB is designed to be inflexible in order to mandate accountability on the part of each state. For example, funding under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 has not increased in 18 years, even though the regulations are extensive. He stated that the department will continue to comply with NCLB.

[9:13:57 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON requested the department supply a document that would outline the effectiveness of NCLB and the impact of

federal funding on Alaska. He then turned to the subject of vocational education as the vehicle for career job training. He asked whether the commissioner views vocational education as job training or as a "hook" to draw students into [achieving] academic standards. The difference between these philosophies can affect how vocational education is implemented by a school district at the local level.

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX expressed his belief that both philosophies are true; academic standards at the secondary level must increase in order to prepare students for post secondary education or rigorous technical training, and students must also be prepared by vocational programs to engage in occupations after graduation. Currently developing around the U. S. is the concept of "middle colleges" that allows a student to obtain an associate's degree with his or her high school diploma. For example, a high school student may graduate with a computer systems certification, an associate's degree in education, or as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). The idea of "tracking" students toward vocations, further academics, or commercial professions is in the past; today the skills are seen as integrated necessities. Furthermore, high schools must provide a large selection of programs such as vocational education, vocational technology, the arts, and the humanities.

[9:18:31 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON expressed concern about the possibility that the first goal of vocational education may not be the interest of the student and stated his intent for further discussion on this subject.

[9:19:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER opined that when high school students are also taking college courses there is the possibility that the student may be academically ready, but not socially ready, and "may pay a price."

COMMISSIONER LEDOUX agreed and pointed out that middle colleges are often designed as alternative schools to meet the needs of students who have dropped out. He underscored that his interest is for the success of every child, in a setting with his or her peers.

[9:20:52 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON provided an open invitation to the commissioner to return and speak to the committee at any time.

[9:22:24 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:22 a.m. to 9:28 a.m.

[9:28:20 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON called the committee back to order at [9:28] a.m.

[9:28:29 AM](#)

MR. JEANS turned the committee's attention to page 1 of the FY2010 Operating & Capital Budget report and pointed out that 96 percent of the budget [is comprised of] grants for K-12 programs throughout the state. He continued to explain that Executive Administration, listed under agency operations on page 2, includes the commissioner's office, the state board of education, and three positions dedicated for school and district interventions. Mr. Jeans described some of the reorganization within the department resulting in better communication regarding accountability, assessment, and school improvement plans. The department views the state student assessment system, including teacher and principal mentoring, as its accountability system; therefore, the data must be used by school districts to affect instruction. He pointed out that the majority of funding for Executive Administration is general funds, and opined that the responsibility of the commissioner's office is to make policy and implement regulations, including technical assistance for school districts. The Administrative Support Services agency is responsible for the payment of bills and development of the budget. A separate agency, Information Services, is in the process of expanding data collection.

[9:33:27 AM](#)

MARK LEWIS, Director, Administrative Services, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), explained that Information Services supports the new information and collection process called the Longitudinal Data System; this system will collect data electronically from schools.

9:33:56 AM

CHAIR SEATON asked whether the system is in place.

MR. LEWIS indicated that the system is still under development but that some components are functioning.

MR. JEANS added that six districts are providing some data through the system. Eventually, the system will collect student assessment and financial data that will be available to the department as needed throughout the school year.

[9:34:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked whether the schools will save time using this system.

MR. JEANS responded that additional staff time to transfer data will not be necessary as the department will access the information directly. He noted that federal funds were used to develop and implement the system, but general funds will be needed for continuing costs.

CHAIR SEATON mentioned that the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) converted to a similar program with limited success.

[9:36:43 AM](#)

MR. JEANS pointed out the majority of the technology in villages is run through the schools creating a problem with bandwidth. He continued to report that the School Finance & Facilities [agency] has 13 positions that are responsible for the calculation of entitlements, prioritization of school construction and maintenance needs, and the distribution of foundation formula program funds in the amount of \$1.2 billion. One of the formula programs, the School Performance Incentive Program, has run its term of three years and will not be continued.

CHAIR SEATON reminded Mr. Jeans that legislative support was given to that program to help increase student performance in individual schools. He questioned whether the department was going to identify the elements that were successful from that program.

MR. JEANS confirmed that after the first year, a survey of the recipients of the performance incentives was taken. Under the incentive program, the department viewed each school and its entire staff as a community; therefore, the incentives were provided to encourage collaboration and creativity within the

school to improve student achievement. However, problems arose when [teachers and principals] "... felt like it was pitting school against school."

CHAIR SEATON acknowledged there was negative press, but emphasized some schools did move forward under the program. He encouraged the department to analyze the successful schools and present the programs they developed as models to other schools.

[9:43:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked what caused the competition between schools to be perceived as unfair.

MR. JEANS explained that the bonuses were based on statistics that may have put certain school populations at a disadvantage. He assured the committee that the collected information will be studied and reported.

CHAIR SEATON added that some educators saw the program as merit pay and were philosophically opposed to the program from the beginning.

[9:45:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER asked for a description and breakdown of what is provided by the Information Services agency, including the costs of ongoing maintenance for existing and new systems.

MR. JEANS agreed to provide a description of that agency and details regarding the grant for the Longitudinal Data system.

CHAIR SEATON suggested that information could be reported at the next scheduled overview and assessment.

[9:47:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked whether the department played any role in advocating for energy efficiency standards in school district facilities.

MR. JEANS responded that when schools can increase energy efficiency, those projects are funded through the maintenance program. On the other hand, new construction is designed with the most recent energy efficiency standards in mind. However, the department does not have a set criteria of energy efficiency guidelines for its facilities. Concluding the presentation, Mr.

Jeans reviewed the four agencies previously discussed and asked for questions from the committee.

[9:49:18 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked for the director's perspective on the State Board of Education & Early Development (BOE) and its role in the department.

MR. JEANS informed the committee that the Alaska Statute directs the BOE to approve the department's budget; however, due to the timing of the state budget process, that is not the reality. The department considers the BOE's issues and positions when it is developing the preliminary budget, but there is little communication with the BOE at that time. He stated that although BOE members were happy with the current budget, some members would like to be more involved in the budget process. Mr. Jeans opined that the BOE serves as a regulatory board in that it will implement the policies passed by this committee.

[9:52:01 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether the BOE develops standards and policies. He requested a broad outline of the distribution of authority within the education community.

MR. JEANS offered to provide the committee with the duties of the BOE as outlined in statute. He stressed that the department is responsible for developing educational standards and presenting them to the BOE for consideration. The BOE then reviews the standards and hears public comment prior to the adoption of policy. Additionally, the BOE implements policy established by the legislature.

CHAIR SEATON agreed that an outline would clear up any confusion about the role of the BOE.

[9:54:14 AM](#)

MR. JEANS gave an example of the high school qualifying exam requirement that was passed into law by the legislature. The BOE then determined how the law was to be implemented to meet the intent of the legislature.

[9:54:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON directed the committee's attention to page 12 of the budget report and asked whether the projects listed under FY10 Major Maintenance Grants are all of the projects funded this year.

MR. JEANS explained that the report represents the governor's budget that requested approximately \$40 million to fund the first 20 Major Maintenance projects.

[9:55:47 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the next meeting will include an overview on Teaching and Learning Support and Assessment and Accountability.

[9:56:37 AM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Standing Committee on Education meeting was adjourned at 9:57 a.m.