

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 15, 2009

8:02 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

HOUSE BILL NO. 206

"An Act establishing a career assessment requirement in public schools; and relating to postsecondary courses for secondary school students."

-HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 206

SHORT TITLE: HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSM'T/POSTSECONDARY CLASS

SPONSOR(S): EDUCATION

03/25/09	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/25/09	(H)	EDC, FIN
03/27/09	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
03/27/09	(H)	Heard & Held
03/27/09	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/03/09	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/03/09	(H)	Heard & Held
04/03/09	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/15/09	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

DIANNE BARRANS, Executive Director

Post Secondary Education Commission
Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered advice during the hearing on HB 206.

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

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 206.

MARSHA OLSON
Teaching/Learning Support (TSL)
Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 206.

DAVID ARP, Business Manager
Sitka School District
Sitka, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 206.

SAICHI OBA, Assistant Vice President
of Student Services & Enrollment Management
University of Alaska (UA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 206.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:02:59 AM](#)

CHAIR PAUL SEATON called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Representatives Seaton, Buch, Gardner, Edgmon, and Keller were present at the call to order. Representatives Munoz and Wilson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

[8:03:25 AM](#)

HB 206-HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSM'T/POSTSECONDARY CLASS

CHAIR SEATON announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 206, "An Act establishing a career assessment

requirement in public schools; and relating to postsecondary courses for secondary school students."

[8:03:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 206, Version 26-LS0765\E, Mischel, 4/10/09, as a working document. There being no objection, Version E was before the committee.

[8:03:48 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON described the changes made in Version E. The first, in Section 1, subsection (b), changed language so that the school district in which the student is enrolled in secondary school shall "make arrangement for the fees for the appropriate postsecondary courses in which the student enrolls" [under AS 14.03.074], rather than "pay the course fees". Chair Seaton explained that some people interpreted the original language as saying the school districts would have to pay full tuitions and could not make other arrangements. The other change, he noted, was the addition of Section 2, which is related to the intent of HB 215 to provide incentives for schools to keep students from dropping out of school.

[8:05:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER opined that "shall make arrangements for the fees" is ambiguous and that a school district may not understand its obligations.

[8:07:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ said she received feedback from the school district in her constituency that it wanted to "have more involvement."

[8:08:00 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON directed attention to the committee packet and the e-mails received since the last hearing. He said he thinks the question regarding fees will be a good one to address with the State Board of Education & Early Development during an interim meeting.

[8:09:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER stated that she supports the idea of having career preparedness assessments; however, she suggested that an exchange versus the addition of more assessments would be prudent.

CHAIR SEATON agreed. He explained that this assessment has been indicated as a means to provide direction for vocational education. He said an e-mail forwarded from Representative Munoz, in the committee packet, indicates that Alaska needs to decide between the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) or the WorkKeys Assessment System "WorkKeys."

8:11:41 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER asked if the results of the WorkKeys test are primarily to help students decide their course or whether it is for another purpose. He recommended consideration be given to creating an incentive for taking the test, such as making it a requirement toward receiving a scholarship.

CHAIR SEATON noted that approximately 70 percent of students do not attend postsecondary education. The idea has been to use WorkKeys as a tool to assist students in assessing their own path. The other aspect would be whether to use it as an attachment to the high school diploma. The HSGQE also plays a part in this picture. WorkKeys can also be applied to postsecondary entry situations; it appears to have multiple uses. At the base of the issue is a non-effective HSGQE that has stimulated interest in an alternate assessment approach. Enmeshing WorkKeys may be the best way to address the interest of all students, he proffered. In response to a question from Representative Munoz, he said WorkKeys was going to be given to eleventh-graders, but its administration has been postponed a year because of assessment tool difficulties. WorkKeys can be given to students at various times, he said; a student's highest score would go on his/her transcript. He said a combination test, such as the Prairie State Achievement Test, may be better. The intent is to continue the discovery of what will best work for the goals established by the committee.

8:19:19 AM

CHAIR SEATON, in response to Representative Munoz, cited language on page 1, lines 9-10, of Version E, which read:

The commissioner shall select for use in the state an assessment designed to measure a student's

level of preparedness to make the transition to work or college.

CHAIR SEATON said it is not specified that the assessment must be WorkKeys. In response to a follow-up question, he said Version E would require that the assessment would be on the transcript. He said he thinks the intent of the bill is to "bring vocational education direction down through the school career." The attempt is to implement an appropriately stratified assessment test, and also provide exit information.

[8:23:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON suggested the discussion surrounding this concept is just beginning.

CHAIR SEATON responded that he expects to have ideas generated from what is on the table as a template.

[8:23:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to adopt [Conceptual Amendment 1], to insert language on page 2, following line 7, which would: "provide the Alaska Post-Secondary Commission with a report that is useful in determining eligibility for scholarships".

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER said since there may be competition among districts, it seems like the issue needs to be a statewide responsibility. In response to Chair Seaton, he said he thinks that language would be different from the language on page 2, lines 8-10, which read:

(3) provide a report to each student on the results of the student's assessment, based on nationally recognized criteria for evaluating a student's preparedness to make the transition to work or college.

[8:28:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER, in response to Representative Buch, explained that he anticipates a merit-type scholarship program that will also be needs based. He said he sees the benefit of utilizing the data from the exit testing. He said the details could be worked out but the concept is that the WorkKeys test might reveal when a student is not be able to pass one aspect of

the test, but excels in another, thereby providing quantitative information that could be used to help that student.

[8:29:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH said he is contemplating where all these assessments should begin. He reviewed the idea that the assessments can be used to follow the career of each student.

CHAIR SEATON said he presumes that if the department plans to provide each student an assessment, it would submit that information to the postsecondary officials.

[8:32:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER said he would like the results of the test to be used as a "scholarship carrot for kids that excel in particular areas."

[8:34:33 AM](#)

DIANNE BARRANS, Executive Director, Post Secondary Education Commission, Department of Education and Early Development, suggested including test results on a student's transcript, because a transcript is a standard document. She relayed that a separate application is not needed for the Alaska Advantage Education Grant - a needs-based grant. Every student is encouraged to complete the federal application for federal aid, to ensure they receive the full array of aide available to them. The name of each Alaskan student who completes that form is added to a pool of names of eligible students. Students who attend an Alaskan institution "cue up for that." Secondary institutions identify those students who meet the current criteria for academic excellence through Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT) scores. A WorkKeys score above a certain level also "flips that switch to academic excellence." Ms. Barrans said these records are kept electronically, and she encouraged the committee to "adopt practices that would just leverage the efficiency of that existing system."

[8:36:56 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked if Ms. Barrans would recommend additional language to ensure clarity in the bill.

MS. BARRANS said she is not certain what additional language, if any, is needed. She said the department is working on creating a database that would allow information sharing of student data; however, she said that may be a few years away.

8:38:10 AM

CHAIR SEATON said he thinks Representative Keller's idea is to make data available to the department.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER confirmed that is correct. He said he thinks the idea to have the information on the student's transcript is great.

MS. BARRANS suggested language could be added so that information is conveyed to the Post Secondary Commission for the purposes of determining eligibility "as needed."

8:39:10 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER suggested that the department may need to know an aggregate number if, for example, there were a program that selected the top 10 percent of students.

MS. BARRANS responded that the commission would not need to know the aggregate; it would just need to know "the score above which the top 10 percent sit." She said she thinks the commission would be able to "develop an interface with the department" in order to access that information.

8:40:03 AM

CHAIR SEATON proffered that conceptually it would be useful to have language that would provide, as needed, information to the Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education that would be useful for scholarship determination.

MS. BARRANS said yes.

8:40:23 AM

CHAIR SEATON noted that Conceptual Amendment 1 would add a new subsection.

8:40:53 AM

CHAIR SEATON asked if there was any objection to Conceptual Amendment 1 to Version E. There being none, it was so ordered.

[8:41:54 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON directed attention to the language on page 2, lines 11-12, which read as follows:

(d) The results of a student's career preparedness assessment shall be displayed in summary form on the student's high school diploma.

CHAIR SEATON questioned whether the language "and transcript" needs to be added to ensure that the results are noted on a student's transcript.

[8:42:31 AM](#)

EDDY JEANS, Director, School Finance and Facilities Section, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), recommended that the words "and on the transcripts" be added now, if that is the intent of the committee, so that the State Board of Education can consider those words when it meets during the upcoming interim to speak about and formalize an official position on this particular issue.

[8:43:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER moved to adopt [Conceptual Amendment 2], as follows:

On page 2, line 12, after "high school":
Delete "diploma"
Insert "transcript"

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER opined that it is more important to have the information noted in a transcript than on a diploma, since the transcript is more readily available and used.

[8:44:27 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON objected to Conceptual Amendment 2. He explained that the focus of the committee is to encourage students to graduate, and if the language simply states "transcript", the results will be listed whether or not the student graduates. He said he does not think it would detract from the intent to list both "diploma" and "transcript".

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER suggested that a diploma is a document that people frame and put on the wall, and therefore they may not want their test scores posted on it. Nevertheless, she indicated that the committee is in the early stages of discussing the issue.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ and [AN UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER] concurred.

[8:45:31 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON sought the will of the committee.

[8:45:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER stated support in having the information listed on both the diploma and the transcript.

CHAIR SEATON reiterated that [having the information listed on both the diploma and the transcript] is germane to addressing the drop-out issue.

[8:46:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER said she understands that the committee is ultimately working on drop-out prevention. However, she stated that the testing is an assessment, not a pass/fail test, which provides information to students, parents, and the school district, regarding a student's strengths and weaknesses. She remarked, "The diploma is something else again."

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON agreed that a diploma is a commemorative document.

CHAIR SEATON reiterated that a diploma represents graduation.

[8:48:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ expressed her preference that the scores be recorded only on the transcript and not on the diploma, which she agreed is more of a commemorative document.

[8:49:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON indicated that it would be more appropriate to require the information be put on the student's

transcript, since there is other information on the transcript that may be of interest.

[8:50:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH noted that currently school districts have two commemorative documents: a diploma and a certificate of attendance. The latter is given to a student who does not graduate, in appreciation of the time he/she spent in school. He opined that records should be kept in a usable form, on a document that provides information appropriately through electronic searches. He questioned how much information should be added to a diploma. He said it seems the committee is attempting to acknowledge the assessment process, and he questioned how that would be denoted on a diploma. He concurred with those committee members who acknowledged the diploma as a commemorative document.

[8:52:07 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked if there was any objection to Conceptual Amendment 2.

[AN UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER] objected.

[8:52:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER noted that this issue has been debated nationally.

[8:52:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER said [placing a student's assessment results on his/her transcript] would be like printing a legislator's election results on the commemorative document, which the lieutenant governor signs, following a legislator's swearing in oath.

[8:53:29 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Buch, Gardner, Munoz, Wilson, Edgmon voted in favor of Conceptual Amendment 2. Representatives Keller and Seaton voted against it. Therefore, Conceptual Amendment 2 was adopted by a vote of 5-2.

[8:54:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON directed attention to the language on page 1, lines 6-8, of Version E, which read as follows:

Sec. 14.03.073. Secondary student career assessment. (a) Each school district in the state shall require students in grade 12 to complete a career preparedness assessment as described in (b) of this section.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON questioned whether it would be helpful to add the language "after graduation from high school" following "assessment" if the intent is to assess the students after they graduate.

[8:56:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON suggested that it may be difficult to get students to return for a test once they have graduated.

[8:56:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON then directed attention to language on page 2, lines 8-10, which read:

(3) provide a report to each student on the results of the student's assessment, based on nationally recognized criteria for evaluating a student's preparedness to make the transition to work or college.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON suggested adding the language **"after graduation from high school"** to the word "college".

[8:57:04 AM](#)

MR. JEANS told Representative Edgmon that the definition of graduation from high school is "meeting the course requirements plus passing the high school qualifying exam." A student that meets all the course requirements gets a certificate of attendance. He said he does not think Representative Edgmon intends to limit the work-ready assessment to only those who graduate; every student should take the assessment. He added, "And, based on your previous amendment, you want it reflected on all their transcripts."

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON responded, "That's fine, thanks."

[8:58:23 AM](#)

MR. JEANS, in response to Chair Seaton, stated that currently districts are required to provide the WorkKeys assessment to students in the eleventh grade. He said that makes sense, because that gives children an idea of where they are going to score. He said if it were up to him, he would administer the assessment to students twice - once in eleventh grade and once in twelfth - and then take the higher of the two scores. He offered his understanding that the range of scores is three to seven in three categories.

[9:00:06 AM](#)

MARSHA OLSON, Teaching/Learning Support (TSL), Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), told the committee that she works in the current technical education units in the department and has been working with WorkKeys for a couple years. In response to Chair Seaton, she stated that according to regulations, a student must take [the assessment] in the eleventh grade and may take it one more time at the state's expense. Currently, that expense is \$5.00 per test per student, which is \$15.00 for the group of tests. Following exit of the school system, if a student wants to retake the WorkKeys test, he/she would have to do so at a job center or another testing center, which may include additional fees.

[9:01:55 AM](#)

MS. OLSON, in response to Chair Seaton, said ACT is the official keeper of scores; however, she said she does not know whether ACT keeps a student's highest score or his/her latest score. She offered to check with the company. In response to a follow-up comment from Chair Seaton, she said the department owns the data pertaining to test scores and, thus, has immediate access to it.

[9:03:53 AM](#)

MR. JEANS said current regulation requires eleventh graders to be administered the test, with an option for them to retake it. He offered his understanding that when the student can retake the test is not in regulation, and he suggested that that may be a better time frame than requiring them to take it in the twelfth grade. The eleventh-grade assessment could be used as baseline information listed on transcripts.

[9:05:03 AM](#)

MS. OLSON, in response to Representative Wilson, said regulations do not specify at which point in eleventh grade a student has to take the assessment.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON suggested that if the assessment is not administered early in the eleventh grade, then some children might not have enough time to amend their course of study. She opined that the tenth grade might be a better level at which to give students the test.

[9:06:18 AM](#)

MR. JEANS said there is another assessment, the Worldwide Interactive Network (WIN), which is aligned with WorkKeys, and he indicated that it must be given to students in sixth and eighth grades. Because of that, he said, he does not think the timing of the test given in eleventh grade is an issue.

[9:07:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON questioned why, if the one test is given in sixth and eighth grades, the other is not given in tenth grade, with the option for the student to take it again in the twelfth grade.

MS. OLSON offered her understanding that tenth graders take the HSQE and other standards-based assessments, and the State Board of Education & Early Development did not want to overload tenth graders with yet another mandated test.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON then said she hopes schools consider administering the assessment within the first month of eleventh grade.

[9:08:28 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON reminded the committee that the proposed bill does not specify WorkKeys, it would simply require an assessment regarding applied mathematics, reading for information, and information finding. Therefore, if another means is discovered, the commissioner will have the latitude to decide what test will be implemented.

[9:09:34 AM\]](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH indicated that in terms of the assessment, he supports not including exclusionary language.

[9:10:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ stated her understanding that the ultimate intent is to provide vocational opportunities to students headed in that direction. She said students are given the assessment when in the eleventh grade, in order for skills to be identified and fostered, but questioned how the repetition of the assessment in the twelfth grade would "tie in with the availability of those courses."

[9:10:47 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON spoke of the effort to get students actively involved in achievement and to prevent students from dropping out of school anytime after taking the HSGQE in eleventh grade. He said people have related through past testimony that if "everything's measured in eleventh grade," then senior year does not mean anything to some students.

[9:13:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ opined that the assessment should be provided in eleventh grade so that students can be aligned with vocational learning opportunities while they are still in high school.

[9:14:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH pointed out that on page 2, line 10, the language includes "college". He said the committee is acknowledging that the current system has not been working and is attempting to make it more responsive to what the state's requirements should be. He questioned why students are dropping out of school and what kind of a product the state has as a result of allowing students to advance from high school [when they are not prepared to do so]. He said he agrees with Chair Seaton that a credible assessment is not currently available, and he said the legislature is responsible for the system.

[9:17:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER stated that the committee is putting forth an effort to reconstruct a system that is not currently working for some students. Testing eleventh-graders can provide

assessment scores to alter the direction they are headed and help keep them engaged. She stated that college-bound students already know their path by eleventh grade, and the assessment may highlight their strengths and weaknesses and point them toward a suitable field of study. She questioned what the assessments can do for those students who don't even make it to eleventh grade, because "we've already missed them by eleventh grade."

[9:19:03 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON, in response to Representative Wilson, clarified what the adopted Conceptual Amendment would do, and he stated his intent to hold the bill through the interim.

[9:20:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER requested that the bill be divided into two separate bills with the issue of drop-outs and how the students are doing in one, and the matter of computations in another.

[9:20:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON stated support of that idea, and indicated that one of the bills may not have a fiscal note, while the other would.

[9:21:22 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON offered his understanding that if the question was divided, Sections 2 and 3 would be included in a separate bill. Section 1 would become a bill solely addressing the issue of the prevention of student drop-outs. He indicated that having all the sections together in one bill acts as a "dollar incentive for districts to maintain their membership and not have drop-outs."

[9:24:12 AM](#)

MR. JEANS, in response to a question from Representative Edgmon, stated that if the bill was divided, there would be two fiscal notes: one from Assessment and Accountability and one from the School Finance and Facilities Section.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked if there would be a fiscal note for "the assessment portion of the bill."

MR. JEANS replied that he does not think so, because districts are currently required to administer the assessment to students in eleventh grade. He said he thinks if legislation passed that required the assessment for twelfth graders, then the department would amend its regulations to reflect that change. However, the department currently intends for all districts to provide for the assessment in the eleventh grade, with the opportunity for students to retake it. In response to a follow-up question, Mr. Jeans said any fiscal note pertaining to [Sections 2 and 3 of HB 206] would be minimal, because he offered his understanding that there would not be a requirement for additional resources for the department.

[9:26:31 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON, in response to Representative Wilson, outlined the three disparate portions of the bill: page 1, line 5, through page 2, line 12, regarding career assessment; page 2, lines 13-24, regarding enrolling in postsecondary institutions; and page 2, beginning on line 25, providing an incentive for schools to keep students in class past an October count date. All three portions address different tangents related to graduation.

[9:27:45 AM](#)

MR. JEANS reiterated that there would be two fiscal notes from two separate sections of the department.

[9:28:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to adopt Amendment 3, to divide the bill into two parts "as per the semi-colon in the title."

[9:28:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER objected. She said she understands the second aspect of the bill is also an effort to improve graduation rates. Although that portion of the bill deals with the funding process, the focus is still the same.

[9:29:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER responded that the spirit is different. Regarding "the second half of the bill," he said, "You have to start with the premise that the school districts are pushing kids out," which he said "doesn't fit." He stated, "It may be

true, but ... I'd like us to go forward with a positive bill, where we're looking at getting involved with the kids and helping them out, ... rather than being a police action in the school district."

[9:29:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER responded that she appreciates Representative Keller's concern and does not want anyone to think she does not think teachers are doing what they can to keep children in school. She described part of the bill as a means to "build ... into the system an additional little piece of incentive for them to focus on retention."

[9:30:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON remarked that HB 206 is on its way to becoming an omnibus bill on education, with one portion addressing assessments and the other addressing student counts. He opined that those points merit two separate discussions going forward. He said he thinks at this point he supports Representative Keller's statement that both issues are important, but for different reasons.

[9:31:04 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON reiterated that the bill actually addresses three points. Furthermore, he reiterated that the intent of bringing the bill forward is primarily for discussion and to create a template. He stated that [HB 206] should be considered an omnibus bill. In response to Representative Edgmon, he confirmed that there is not necessarily any intention to keep the bill as "one package."

[9:33:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER withdrew Amendment 3. He asked about the possibility of making submissions to the omnibus bill.

[9:34:01 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON said that would be appropriate. He offered his understanding that there would be a conference held in the fall, and he expressed his hope that the committee members would attend.

[9:34:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked if it is the intent of the committee that there not be a career assessment in high school until the twelfth grade, because that is the current language in Version E.

[9:35:35 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON offered his understanding that current regulation requires the assessment to be given to eleventh graders, while Version E would require it be given to twelfth graders. He reiterated that the crux of that portion of the proposed legislation is to figure out how to keep students engaged through their senior year. He opined that the HSQE is obsolete, and said that topic will come under further discussion with the State Board of Education & Early Development.

[9:37:55 AM](#)

MR. JEANS, in response to a question from Representative Wilson, said there are between 6,000-8,000 students who graduate each year in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON remarked that if [the career assessment] is required more than once in high school, that would increase the fiscal note.

[9:38:22 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON stated that concern about the fiscal note is premature, and policy should be the focus. Nevertheless, he pointed out that the HSQE costs money, and another test could be substituted for it.

[9:38:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER said although there are problems with the HSQE, he would not abandon it without a lot of discussion. The state has spent a lot of money on it, and it provides data to the state regarding performance.

[9:40:04 AM](#)

DAVID ARP, Business Manager, Sitka School District, stated that he was surprised to hear that the bill was structured as a strategy to prevent drop-outs, because he was under the impression that the intent was to come up with tools for the

school district to use to "smooth out" its budgeting process. Therefore, Mr. Arp said his only testimony at this point is to ask the committee to allow the school district to stay involved in the process.

[9:41:03 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON invited Mr. Arp to provide any subsequent input via e-mail.

[9:42:12 AM](#)

SAICHI OBA, Assistant Vice President of Student Services & Enrollment Management, University of Alaska, concurred with Ms. Barran's recommendation that the [career assessment] score be included on the transcript. He stated that the University of Alaska should receive test scores so that it can help students who want to pursue a post-secondary education. In response to Chair Seaton, he clarified that currently students who take standardized tests in Alaska, including the Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT) and SAT, typically have those scores sent to the institutions that they are considering attending after high school. Mr. Oba related that the University of Alaska has not worked with WorkKeys yet. He continued:

If the student elects to send those on, then that would work. However, if the scores aren't sent on by the individual, then what I'm suggesting is that the school or the district, or [DEED] themselves, be prepared to share the scores with the university, so that we can help students who might show some deficiency in college preparedness in an area of math or writing for example. ... If we get that early enough in their high school career, then we can offer some type of guidance. If we only see it on their final transcript as a senior, when they apply for admission, ... it's too late.

MR. OBA, in response to Chair Seaton, said students indicate to which schools they would like the PSAT or SAT scores sent when they fill out the actual registration for the exam.

[9:46:15 AM](#)

MS. OLSON, in response to Chair Seaton, offered her understanding that the same option does not appear on the WorkKeys score sheet as is on the PSAT and SAT.

[9:46:27 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked Ms. Olson if a student has to send on his/her WorkKeys score to an institution, or if the institution can contact the Department of Education that it has received an application from someone and ask for that person's score.

MS. OLSON indicated that she needs to look into federal privacy issues to be able to answer that question.

CHAIR SEATON said these questions will be highlighted for further discussion.

[9:47:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH questioned how exceptional students are addressed. He said the system should not be an impediment to anyone.

MR. JEANS said he would look into that issue and respond at a later date.

[9:49:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON provided a personal story of an exceptional student at her district's local school.

[9:51:26 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON summarized the achievements of the meeting.

[HB 206 was held.]

[9:52:13 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.