

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

January 25, 2010
8:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Wes Keller

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: VIEWING OF "A WHOLE NEW MIND" AND DISCUSSION OF
POTENTIAL EDUCATION IMPACTS~ AND PROPOSED POSTSECONDARY
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CRITERIA

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:02:29 AM](#)

CHAIR PAUL SEATON called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Present at the call to order were Representatives Seaton, Munoz, Peggy Wilson, Edgmon, Buch and Gardner.

OVERVIEW: Viewing of "A Whole New Mind" and discussion of potential education impacts, and proposed postsecondary scholarship program criteria

[8:03:43 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the only order of business would be a viewing of a motivation speech by Daniel Pink, titled "A whole New Mind," and discussion of potential education impacts, and proposed postsecondary scholarship program criteria.

[8:04:25 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON said that the video is in preparation of the broad-based scholarship program that is being developed statewide. The SAT and ACT tests have been the standard filter for providing scholarships, and this presentation will challenge that approach. It also coincides with the required committee reading by the same author.

[8:06:43 AM](#)

[Due to copyright concerns, the audio of the DVD presentation is not available.]

[9:07:31 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON referred to the book, of the same title, and reiterated the purpose for bringing the DVD. Technology Engineering and Design (TED), TED.com, is also an influential source, and discusses motivation by the same author, Daniel Pink; under the science tab in the committee packet. Another book by Mr. Pink, DRIVE, is a current publication that may affect how scholarships will be addressed in the future. The committee will be reading both of these books as review for discussion and consideration, regarding what criteria to use for scholarship awards. Education program reform needs to align with what will serve students and meet the current needs of our society. The jobs that are being trained for, in our schools today, may end up being industries that are not centered in America, or become automated and obsolete in the nation's workforce.

[9:08:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON offered her review of the book and the helpful self tutorial at the end of each chapter, which assists readers to address a realm that may not have been included in their school curriculum. She noted that one area of emphasis is art and design, programs that have been eliminated in many schools due to budget cuts. Minimizing art, music, and other creative classes has a dampening effect on what the book suggests should be focus skills given today's economy and changes in future workforce requirements. She stressed that it

is important to establish a system that prepares students for the future, and two important approaches would be: "zeroing into our workforce development as far as some type of ... technology, but also bringing out those qualities in kids that are there but probably need to be developed a little bit more." The curriculum that addressed this aspect has fallen by the wayside and figuring out how to re-implement it is of concern, she said.

[9:11:06 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON said that this has been one of the primary complaints about NCLB, which focuses on the fundamental teaching principles, tending to inhibit the ability to bring arts back to the classroom. The focus became narrowed under NCLB for reading, writing, and mathematics, cutting off or eliminating other areas. The material being reviewed is a stimulus for establishing design criteria for future curriculum. The educators will take their cue from what policies are set regarding testing standards for scholarships.

[9:13:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH commented that the means of assessment is an aspect for consideration. A question that should be asked is what has been accomplished when a student leaves the school system. A radical change may not be called for, but accurate assessments should indicate what is occurring in our school system. The WorkKeys is one method, and other creative means will help identify which direction to take in school reform. He stressed that the object is to reach the majority of the students, and tailoring the right process is important.

[9:16:18 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON underscored the importance of expanding the scope for how students are addressed and assessed. Expanded skill assessments other than ACT and SAT may be required. WorkKeys, which committee members took as a sample test, required a broad thought process and integrated a number of skills for problem solving. He reminded the committee that WorkKeys will be implemented for eleventh grade students, as a required assessment test. He directed attention to the committee packet, and pointed out the power point from Tufts University, titled "Intelligence, Creativity, and Wisdom: Assessments of Abilities for the 21st Century." The power point is a presentation of an assessment alternative to SAT. He discussed the predictability

for success as indicated in the report. There is a high correlation between taking a rigorous curriculum, and success in college. However, there is no difference in the predictive success between maintaining a high grade point average (GPA) throughout a rigorous curriculum and receiving high assessment scores. However, a higher GPA did indicate a higher success rate in college classes.

[9:21:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON commented on the handout titled "The Dreaded "P" Word, An Examination of productivity in public postsecondary education," by Patrick J. Kelly. She said that Alaska has the highest tuition costs in the United States, but the cost versus outcome, as indicated by this nationwide report, does not indicate a positive for Alaska. She questioned the wisdom of raising the cost of tuition given the apparent outcomes.

[9:24:22 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON pointed out that only 10 pages of this report were inserted in the packet, however, it is a 33 page document; available as a Delta Cost Project white paper series, supported by Making Opportunity Affordable, an initiative of Lumina Foundation for Education.

[9:27:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH referred to the postsecondary loan forgiveness programs. Legislation has been introduced to provide this opportunity for retaining students in state, and he solicited the chairman's opinion.

[9:28:23 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON recalled that the committee has passed out a broad loan forgiveness bill, based on filling career needs identified by the Department of Labor & Workforce Development. The bill is currently in the House Finance Committee. He opined that it appears to be an incentive and alternative mechanism for retaining Alaska's youth. What will be proposed in a scholarship program will not only be for college degrees, but will include vocational education and certificated programs. He drew attention to the productivity models and stressed that the University of Alaska is unique among the western states. As a single entity it combines two and four year programs. Two year

institutions may sometimes educate a broader spectrum of the population but may not be as degree productive as a four year college. Given that fact, the number of completed courses versus degrees should be considered, when reviewing the committee packet. The population of Alaskans who hold a bachelor's degree, or higher, appears to be shrinking, and an educated work force is a means to attract business. Additionally, information on adult learners is included in the packet. Adult education is also an important aspect to consider. He pointed out that even if every graduating high school senior went on to enter Alaska's workforce, they could not fill all of the positions being vacated by the aging out populace.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.