

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

March 30, 2011

8:05 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Alan Dick, Chair
Representative Lance Pruitt, Vice Chair
Representative Eric Feige
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Sharon Cissna (via teleconference)
Representative Scott Kawasaki

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S): SUPERINTENDENT LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 15

"An Act relating to prevention and evaluation of and liability for traumatic brain injuries in student athletes."

- MOVED CSHB 15(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 5

"An Act requiring a standardized statewide history of American constitutionalism curriculum and a secondary school history of American constitutionalism examination in public schools in the state; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 5(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 199

"An Act amending the funding for statewide residential educational programs."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 198

"An Act relating to the special education service agency."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 15

SHORT TITLE: STUDENT ATHLETE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) DOOGAN

01/18/11	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/11
01/18/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11	(H)	EDC, HSS
03/16/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
03/16/11	(H)	Heard & Held
03/16/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/30/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 5

SHORT TITLE: CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY CURRICULUM

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) KELLER

01/18/11	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/11
01/18/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11	(H)	EDC, FIN
02/09/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/09/11	(H)	Heard & Held
02/09/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/18/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/18/11	(H)	-- CANCELED - Rescheduled to 02/21/11
02/21/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/21/11	(H)	Heard & Held
02/21/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/25/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/25/11	(H)	Heard & Held
02/25/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/07/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
03/07/11	(H)	Heard & Held
03/07/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/30/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 199

SHORT TITLE: FUNDING FOR STATE BOARDING SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

03/16/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/16/11	(H)	EDC, FIN
03/23/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

03/23/11 (H) Heard & Held
03/23/11 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
03/30/11 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

JOHN LAMONT, Superintendent
Lower Yukon School District
Mountain Village, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint entitled "Lower Yukon School District Our Communities."

FRANK AMEDURI, Staff
Representative Mike Doogan
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 15, on behalf of the bill sponsor, Representative Doogan.

GARY MATTHEWS, Executive Director
Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 15.

REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and answered questions on HB 5, as the sponsor of the bill.

SHEILA PETERSON, Staff
Representative Alan Dick
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and answered questions during discussion of HB 199.

ELIZABETH SWEENEY NUDELMAN, Director
School Finance and Facilities Section
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and answered questions during discussion of HB 199.

JERRY COVEY, Educational Consultant
JSC Consulting LLC
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 199.

ERIC GEBHART, Superintendent
Nenana City School District
Nenana, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 199.

TERESA MAYRAND, President
Nenana City School Board
Nenana, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 199.

DORENE LORENZ
Friends of the Jesse Lee Home
Seward, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 199.

BOB CRUMLEY, Superintendent
Chugiak School District
Chugiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 199.

JIM SMITH, Superintendent
Galena City School District
Galena, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 199.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:05:25 AM](#)

CHAIR ALAN DICK called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. Representatives Dick, Kawasaki, Pruitt, Feige, Seaton, P. Wilson, and Cissna (via teleconference) were present at the call to order.

PRESENTATION(S): Superintendent Lower Yukon School District

[8:05:59 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the first order of business would be a presentation by the superintendent of the Lower Yukon School District.

[8:06:22 AM](#)

JOHN LAMONT, Superintendent, shared that he was born and raised in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and that this was his sixth year with the district. He reported that there were 11 villages in the school district, with 10 schools that were K-12, 1 school that was K-8, and a total enrollment of 2,000 students. He noted that 99 percent of the district was Yupik Eskimo. He read the district purpose statement: "The purpose of our community is to ensure tradition, culture, and a quality education for all our children." He stated that the district was in intervention, as it was a low performance district. He pointed out that, since 2002, the district performance gains were higher than the state average, with a 14 percent increase in language arts, and a 13 percent increase in mathematics, compared to a state wide 5 percent increase in both of these areas. He stated that attendance was a challenge for the school district. He detailed some of the work within the community to keep the students interested in school, which included locals working with the home school coordinators and the counselors.

[8:11:46 AM](#)

MR. LAMONT pointed out that both vocational education and current technology education were very important elements for keeping students in school. He reported that past teacher retention had been at 50 percent, but that it had now increased to almost 75 percent. New schools, quality technology, professional development, and better teacher housing were all successful ways to decrease the teacher attrition. He spoke about the special intervention programs implemented in six of the lowest performing schools. He reviewed the new schools that had opened since 2002, and the time lines for educational changes. He announced his long term commitment to the school district.

[8:17:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON congratulated the superintendent on the improvements that had been made. She asked if the biggest changes had occurred within or outside of the schools.

MR. LAMONT replied that the changes had been equal. He opined that the hiring process had focused more on teachers coming to the bush for the love of the children, and not for the outdoor recreational opportunities.

[8:18:46 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK emphasized that today's students would be competing for jobs on a global basis.

[8:19:47 AM](#)

MR. LAMONT, in response, agreed that students were aware of the world competition and that the technology did exist in the classrooms.

[8:20:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked if the communities were working on "growing their own" instructors.

MR. LAMONT, in response to Representative Cissna, said that the teacher education programs in the state were active, and that almost 20 percent of his district teachers were from the villages. He said that he would like to see this percentage increased.

[8:22:05 AM](#)

HB 15-STUDENT ATHLETE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 15, "An Act relating to prevention and evaluation of and liability for traumatic brain injuries in student athletes." [In front of the committee was Version M.]

[8:23:11 AM](#)

FRANK AMEDURI, Staff, Representative Mike Doogan, Alaska State Legislature, recapped the purpose of HB 15, which was to reduce the possibility for a second concussion to occur before recovery from a first concussion. He pointed out that the proposed bill was modeled after the Zackery Lystedt Law in Washington State. He explained the three parts of HB 15: the education of parents, coaches, and students for the causes, signs, and responses to concussion; a requirement to remove a student from practice or a game if a concussion was suspected; and a requirement for a qualified medical professional to clear the player prior to their return to play. He declared that concussions will occur, but that the danger was increased when appropriate steps to prevent a recurrence were not taken. He noted that the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA) had already declared it would adhere to this practice, regardless of passage of the bill, and he expressed optimism that other youth

levels not covered by HB 15 would also adhere to these guidelines. He shared that district superintendents had indicated that these guidelines would be extended to the middle schools, as well, and that school nurses would lobby for these guidelines to be included for playgrounds. He acknowledged that the challenge for access to a "qualified medical or licensed medical professional is quite a bit more difficult" for rural communities in Alaska. He pointed to Version M, page 3, line 2, and shared that "a person who is acting at the direction and under the supervision of a licensed physician" had been added to the original version. He said that community health aides would be included if they worked under the direction of a physician. He declared the importance "to err on the side of health" and to offer no less protection in rural Alaska.

[8:30:06 AM](#)

MR. AMEDURI, in response to an earlier question from Representative Feige, said that the liability language had been scrutinized to ensure that coverage would include an injury that did not occur on school property. He noted that an amendment would be proposed to address this issue. He reiterated that there was no prevention to a concussion, but that the proposed bill would prevent further injury from "the stacking of concussions, one on top of the other."

[8:33:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE moved to adopt Amendment 1, labeled 27-LS0130\M.1, Mischel, 3/29/11, which read:

Page 3, line 12:
Delete "on school property"

[8:34:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI objected for discussion.

[8:34:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked if this proposed amendment would cover transportation to and from an event.

[8:34:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON, reading the proposed bill with the proposed Amendment 1 included, offered her belief that it could

include an activity, such as track, with participation both on and off the school grounds.

[8:34:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE opined that inclusion of proposed Amendment 1 recognized that facilities other than school property, especially in rural Alaska, were utilized.

[8:35:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI withdrew his objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

[8:35:53 AM](#)

GARY MATTHEWS, Executive Director, Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA), stated that ASAA, and its membership of more than 200 high schools, supported HB 15. He stated the desire of ASAA to implement procedures and logical processes to minimize injury and maximize safety. He said that ASAA worked with the national organizations "to develop rules and tactics to limit and reduce the potential of head injuries in contact sports." He referred to the issue of a "qualified person" and made three points: the State of Alaska did not have a registry that listed health care providers who had received training and were currently certified in the evaluation and management of concussions; the health care provider was the only person to know if he or she was qualified under the statute; the students, the school district, and ASAA had placed the burden of proof on the health care provider. He suggested a conceptual amendment to Version M, page 2, line 30, after "management of concussions," to add "as verified in writing by the qualified person." He offered his belief that coaches and administrators did not know the qualifications of the "qualified person."

[8:39:38 AM](#)

MR. AMEDURI suggested that, as ASAA was already moving in this direction, this stipulation could be addressed in the by-laws. He surmised that it could be implemented differently in each school district, and that it was important that the statute not specify every detail that may need to be addressed. He offered his understanding that a written release by a medical provider would indicate qualification.

[8:41:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON suggested that it was important to have a trained person at each school to attend to any injured students.

[8:42:29 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK asked if a conceptual amendment should be added to proposed HB 15.

[8:42:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE offered his belief that the proposed bill should give "adequate direction" and that micromanagement was not necessary.

[8:43:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON pointed out that some health care professionals were exempt from state licensing in Alaska, and he asked if this had been addressed in the proposed bill.

[8:44:14 AM](#)

MR. AMEDURI offered his belief that a conceptual amendment addressing this had been passed.

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[8:45:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to adopt Conceptual Amendment 2 which stated:

Page 3, line 2,
Insert "(2) a health care professional who is
exempt from occupational licensing by the state."

[This was adopted as Conceptual Amendment 1 by the House Education Standing Committee on 3/16/11.]

[8:46:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON objected for discussion.

[8:46:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON explained that a number of health care professionals working with the Indian Health Service (IHS) were not required to have the same state occupational licensing. He pointed out that IHS physicians in rural Alaska should be included in the proposed bill.

[8:47:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON removed her objection. There being no further objection, Conceptual Amendment 2 was adopted.

[8:48:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT moved to report CSHB 15, Version 27-LS0130\M, Mischel, 2/17/11, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note.

[8:48:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI objected. He stated that both the liability and immunity issues were still in question, and he pointed out that the proposed bill had not being referred to House Judiciary Standing Committee.

[8:48:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI withdrew his objection. There being no further objection, CSHB 15(EDC) was reported from the House Education Standing Committee.

[8:49:14 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[8:49:28 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK asked the committee to concur on a request to the Speaker of the House to have HB 15 referred to the House Judiciary Standing Committee, and the committee agreed to forward the request.

HB 5-CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY CURRICULUM

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 5, "An Act requiring a standardized statewide history of American constitutionalism curriculum and a secondary

school history of American constitutionalism examination in public schools in the state; and providing for an effective date." [In front of the committee was Version E]

[8:53:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER, Alaska State Legislature, directed attention to the closing remarks from Chief Justice Walter Carpeneti during his State of the Judiciary address. [Included in members' packets] He referred to the principles of democracy, and stated that HB 5 would mandate Alaska high school curriculum for US history during the fifteen years immediately following the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

[8:54:38 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK closed public testimony.

[8:54:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT moved to report CSHB 5, Version 27-LS0018\E, Mischel, 2/24/11, from committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note.

[8:55:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON objected. He said that proposed HB 5 put another segment of curriculum, another test, and further requirements on the school districts. He declared that the bill was not concise with its curriculum requirements and that he was not in favor of establishing vague testing to meet criteria.

[8:57:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON moved to adopt a conceptual amendment.

[8:57:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON withdrew his objection.

[8:57:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT withdrew his motion to move the bill.

[8:58:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON withdrew her motion to adopt a conceptual amendment.

[8:59:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT asked Representative Seaton for clarification of his concerns.

[8:59:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON replied that HB 5 added an "amorphous curriculum requirement" with a test, which was yet to be developed, to which passage was necessary for high school graduation. He stated that this placed a huge burden on the school districts. He opined that the high school graduation exam was already an issue. He pointed out that proposed HB 5 was not a statewide standard, but a standard to be developed by each district. He questioned whether it was the most productive use of time to develop a curriculum to discuss the values held during a 15 year segment of history and require it for high school graduation.

[9:03:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT asked if the proposed bill could be amended to provide instruction without testing.

[9:03:55 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK offered his understanding that the proposed bill empowered community members to confront local school boards regarding the importance of this topic. He opined that the mandate was for a conversation.

[9:05:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON replied that the requirement was not for a conversation, but for a test that was required to receive a high school diploma. He pointed out that the high school qualifying exam was a requirement for receiving a diploma, and that HB 5 required another "high stakes test" which was not precisely defined, as written in subsection (b), page 2, lines 26-28.

[9:07:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE stated that, as the proposed bill imposed a requirement on school districts, it was necessary to define its

intent. He opined that the intent was to ensure that a student graduated with a basic understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of the United States. He offered his belief that the principles of the Bill of Rights, the US Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence were the uniting factors for the United States. He declared the necessity to understand these principles in order to exercise the privilege of voting.

[9:10:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT offered Conceptual Amendment 1, which stated:

Page 1, line 2,
Delete "and examination"

Page 2, line 19,
Delete "and final examination"

Page 2, line 27
Delete "and examination"

[9:11:20 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK objected for discussion.

[9:11:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked if the proposed conceptual amendment would allow the development of course curricula without the test.

[9:11:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT replied that "the chief school administrator of a school district shall [develop] and submit to the governing body of the school district a syllabus for curriculum in the history of American constitutionalism." He explained that it would require each school district to create its own curriculum, but that a final examination would not be required for high school graduation.

[9:12:37 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA expressed a necessity to maintain the priority for increasing the number of high school graduates.

[9:13:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT expressed disagreement with the concept of increasing the graduation rate, if it meant that students were less educated. He stated his desire to be that "we've given them all the tools they need to succeed." He opined that this was "a good opportunity to help our kids be prepared as they step out into the real world and become a part of society."

[9:14:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE endorsed a need to demand a high standard for faculty and students in order to obtain improvement and performance from students.

[9:15:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON declared that the proposed bill did not state high standards, it designated some standards. He offered his belief that the values of the American people during the writing of the Articles of Confederation and the first state constitutions were not generally known. He agreed that it was a good academic exercise to read these documents, but he opined that it would be difficult to be tested on the values of the people during that era. He expressed approval for the removal of the examinations, as the segment could then be adopted into a theme-base curriculum. He stated that he would vote for the proposed amendment, but that he was not supportive of the proposed bill.

[9:19:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON stated her support for the proposed amendment, but she expressed her concern with making a mandate to the schools. She opined that the suggested topics should be taught in the schools, but that she did not support a mandatory test of the curriculum as a graduation requirement. She offered her belief that examinations should include a bit of everything that was being taught. She stated her support for proposed HB 5.

[9:20:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER stated his opposition to the proposed amendment, and directed attention to page 2, line 18, stating that the curriculum and the examination were to be submitted to the governing body of the school district for approval. He

offered his belief that the proposed amendment weakened the bill as the local school board would not be allowed the opportunity to discuss the curriculum. He declared an obligation to young voters to ensure that they understood their responsibilities.

[9:22:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON suggested that many parents would not support this examination.

[9:23:00 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK stated his opposition to the proposed amendment as "it takes the teeth out of the bill."

[9:24:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI removed his objection.

[9:24:13 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Kawasaki, P. Wilson, Seaton, Cissna, and Pruitt voted in favor of Conceptual Amendment 1. Representatives Feige and Dick voted against it. Therefore, Conceptual Amendment 1 passed by a vote of 5-2.

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT moved to report CSHB 5, Version 27-LS0018\E, Mischel, 2/24/11, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being no objection, CSHB 5(EDC) was reported from the House Education Standing Committee.

The committee took a brief at-ease.

HB 199-FUNDING FOR STATE BOARDING SCHOOLS

[9:26:18 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 199, "An Act amending the funding for statewide residential educational programs." [In front of the committee was Version B]

SHEILA PETERSON, Staff, Representative Alan Dick, Alaska State Legislature, recapped that HB 199 would double the monthly stipend amount provided to the boarding schools in three school districts. She relayed that this increase would be in effect

for two years, to allow for all interested parties to further discuss ways to deliver high school education in rural Alaska.

[9:30:02 AM](#)

ELIZABETH SWEENEY NUDELMAN, Director, School Finance and Facilities Section, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), offered to answer any questions on the fiscal note.

[9:30:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked if the amounts listed in the bill for each region reflected the proposed increase.

[9:31:19 AM](#)

MS. NUDELMAN explained that the stipends listed in HB 199 were for all the state regions, but would only apply to the three schools in the program. In response to Representative P. Wilson, she clarified that Mt. Edgecumbe High School was funded by "a separate funding stream through the department."

[9:32:47 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK clarified that the stipends listed in the proposed bill reflected the doubled amount.

[9:33:03 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK asked to clarify that the proposed bill only applied to Bethel, Galena, and Nenana schools. He noted that other districts would also like to participate in the stipend increase, and he asked for a financial projection for this increase, as well.

[9:33:22 AM](#)

MS. NUDELMAN, referring to the statute, stated that the program was available to "a district that existed January 1, 2005." She pointed out that there were three programs approved under the statute. She further explained that the statute regulations established a period of open applications, and that, currently, EED did not have a projection for when applications would be opened or what the cost would be to the state.

[9:34:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to the Alaska Administrative Code, AAC 33.090(c). [Included in members' packets] He pointed out that "when the department determines that establishment of additional programs are warranted, they can open those things, but our statute currently does not allow them to do anything." He noted that applications could be taken, but not instituted, as the funding formula was only for those schools formed prior to January 1, 2005. He stated that he would offer a conceptual amendment to allow EED to accept applications for three additional programs after July 1, 2011.

[9:35:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON read from AAC 33.090(d): "this section does not prevent a governing body from establishing an in-district residential educational program that is not eligible for state support for the operation of the residential aspects of the program." She asked if this could be done immediately.

[9:35:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON agreed that the district could have a residential program, but that it currently would not receive any funding.

[9:36:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked to identify the regions for Nenana, Galena, and Lower Kuskokwim.

[9:36:39 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK offered his belief that Lower Kuskokwim was in the Southwest Region, and that Nenana and Galena were in the Interior Region.

[9:36:47 AM](#)

MS. NUDELMAN offered her understanding that Lower Kuskokwim was in the Southwest Region, that Galena was in the Northern Remote Region, and that Nenana was in the Interior Region.

[9:38:09 AM](#)

JERRY COVEY, JSC Consulting LLC, stated his support for HB 199, and that he was convinced that this was an appropriate action,

as the districts were currently operating on a deficit mode. He said that he had worked on rural and statewide education issues for many years. He agreed with an earlier statement for the necessity to immediately study rural education. He referred to a report he had submitted to all the committee members, "A Time for Change Improving Educations Delivery for Alaska's Small Rural High Schools," [Included in members' packets] which addressed the issues critical to the success of small rural high schools.

[9:40:42 AM](#)

ERIC GEBHART, Superintendent, Nenana City School District, provided a PowerPoint, "Nenana Student Living Center," to highlight the Nenana Student Living Center (NSLC) enrollment and capacity statistics and to list the communities it served. The final slide illustrated a follow-up report on the 93 NSLC graduates. He stated that he supported HB 199. He pointed out that the original request had been for triple the current stipend amount.

[9:44:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked how the extra stipend money would be used.

[9:44:24 AM](#)

MR. GEBHART replied that it was not extra money, as the deficit was currently being paid through local and foundation support. He stated that, in addition to maintaining the current academic program, additional services would also be offered.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked if there would be more programs.

MR. GEBHART said that there would be more programs.

[9:45:10 AM](#)

TERESA MAYRAND, President, Nenana City School Board, pointed out that many of the students were very involved in the community. She stated her support of HB 199.

[9:47:03 AM](#)

DORENE LORENZ, Friends of the Jesse Lee Home, said that this proposed bill would allow funding for a statewide residential

leadership charter school for one semester of the junior year for 200 students. She stated support for the amendment that would be offered to allow further schools.

[9:49:13 AM](#)

BOB CRUMLEY, Superintendent, Chugiak School District, stated support for HB 199, and said that there was a great need for these schools. He expressed a desire for this bill to provide funding for the short term, grassroots, vocational residential programs which met many student needs in rural Alaska high schools. He asked to be included in any future conversations regarding regional boarding schools.

[9:52:56 AM](#)

JIM SMITH, Superintendent, Galena City School District, directed attention to the packet, "Galena City School District." [Included in members' packets] He referred to Exhibit A in the packet, and he reviewed the Galena Interior Learning Academy program and the challenges faced in rural Alaska education. He proceeded to Exhibits B and C, which mapped the home towns and home districts of the 53 students. He pointed out that Exhibit D was in response to a request for the 2010 Galena Interior Learning Academy graduates and their grade point averages. He explained that Exhibit E was a resolution reflecting the wide spread, community support for the Galena Interior Learning Academy. He directed attention to Exhibit F, which was a response to the questions regarding the funding. He stressed that this was a 24 hour per day service and included feeding and care of the students, while only a third of the cost was being funded by the state. He clarified that the school was in the Interior Region for funding purposes.

[9:58:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked what percentage of the budget was used for utilities and insurance.

[9:58:38 AM](#)

MR. SMITH replied that the utilities cost about \$1 million annually, and the insurance cost about \$260 thousand annually, as part of the \$10 million budget.

[9:58:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked if Galena Interior Learning Academy would prefer that the state pay the utilities and insurance, instead of doubling the stipend.

[9:59:17 AM](#)

MR. SMITH replied that the food service and residential cost was about \$3 million annually, so payment of utilities and insurance by the state would amount to about the same as the stipend request.

[10:00:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON agreed that the stipend may need to be increased. She questioned if there was another means to support these programs that could include all schools.

[10:01:29 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK stated that public testimony would remain open, and that the bill would be held over.

[10:02:06 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:02 a.m.