

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 3, 2012

8:04 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
Representative Scott Kawasaki

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: CHATHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 256

"An Act repealing provisions relating to the power and duties of the Department of Education and Early Development to intervene in a school district to improve instructional practices."

- HEARD AND HELD

PRESENTATION: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

- HEARD

ALASKA COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION - ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP OUTCOMES REPORT

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 256

SHORT TITLE: REPEAL STATE INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) DICK

01/17/12	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/6/12
01/17/12	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/17/12	(H)	EDC, FIN
01/25/12	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
01/25/12	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/01/12	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/01/12	(H)	Heard & Held
02/01/12	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/03/12	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

SCOTT BUTTERFIELD, Superintendent
Chatham School District
Angoon, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the presentation of the Chatham School District.

NITA REARDEN, Member
Alaska Native Education Association (ANEA)
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced ANEA and provided the mission statement.

BERNADETTE STIMPFLE, Co-Chair
Alaska Native Education Association (ANEA)
Nome, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Expanded on the introduction to ANEA.

NEIL SLOTNICK, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Labor and State Affairs Section
Civil Division
Department of Law
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an understanding of the effects of repealing SB 285 and the implications of adopting HB 256, and responded to questions, during the hearing on HB 256.

JEAN MISCHEL, Attorney
Legislative Legal Counsel
Legislative Legal and Research Services
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions, during the hearing on HB 256.

ESTHER COX, Chair
State Board of Education & Early Development
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the annual legislative report from the State Board of Education.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:04:37 AM](#)

CHAIR ALAN DICK called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Present at the call to order were Representatives Dick, Seaton, Pruitt, and Kawasaki. Representatives P. Wilson and Cissna arrived while the meeting was in progress.

Presentation: Chatham School District

[8:05:17 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the first order of business would be a presentation from the Chatham School District.

[8:05:40 AM](#)

SCOTT BUTTERFIELD, Superintendent, Chatham School District, provided the presentation beginning with the mission statement, paraphrasing from the slide, which read [original punctuation provided]:

In partnership with families and communities, the Chatham School District will provide safe and stable educational experiences built upon the uniqueness of each community, to educate students to become self-sufficient adults who will be contributing members of our diverse and changing world.

MR. BUTTERFIELD said Chatham is an REAA (Regional Educational Attendance Area) district serving four unique communities, in an area roughly the size of Rhode Island State. The school population is 57 percent Native Alaskan, he noted, and described the demographics of each, which are: Angoon, a Native community

on Baranof Island, that is accessible by float plane and the Alaska State Ferry, it has two schools to provide K-6 and 7-12 classes, and is a Title I School-wide site; Tenakee Springs, a non-Native community on Chichagof Island, that is accessible by float plane and the Alaska State Ferry, one teacher serves the K-12 program in one building, and it is a Title I Targeted Assistance School; Gustavus, a non-Native school, is located on the mainland but accessible primarily by float plane and the Alaska State Ferry with limited jet service during the summer months, two schools house K-6 and 7-12 programs, and it is a Title I Targeted Assistance School; and Klukwan, a Native community, accessible via Alaska Highway 7 north of Haines, has two teachers administering the K-12 program housed in one building, and it is also a Title I Targeted Assistance School. The Chatham School District relies on Federal Impact Aid, Federal Forestry Receipts and State Foundation payments as sources of revenue. He said that due to the small size of the district, contractual services based in Juneau are used for operational tasks such as technology management, maintenance, payroll and financial accounting, as well as the annual CIP (Capital Improvement Project) application processes. These services represent a significant expense for the district. He reported that, in the past two years, new innovative technologies have been added, such as instructional use of the iPads and laptop computers throughout every grade level.

[8:13:10 AM](#)

MR. BUTTERFIELD continued, describing the physical condition of the school buildings. The CIP efforts have focused on repairing the building in Klukwan, which is 25 years old and in need of major renovation. Also, the district is assuming the costs associated with excessive damage incurred when a contractor reversed a backhoe into the building. The Tenakee Springs school roof requires repair, due to severe leakage areas throughout the building. The Gustavus School has recently completed a Phase III renovation, and will be in good shape for years to come. Finally, he reported the Angoon buildings are in decent condition but could use modernized heating controls.

MR. BUTTERFIELD said small class size is the norm throughout the district which allows for one on one attention, particularly when utilizing the previously described technological devices. Extracurricular opportunities exist in two of the schools, on a limited basis. Competitive sports include: cross-country, track, volleyball, and basketball. Only Angoon and Tenakee Springs qualify for the national school lunch program; the

latter of which has met standards to provide some local products for the menu.

[8:14:57 AM](#)

MR. BUTTERFIELD described the transportation program in the Klukwan, Haines area. Only six students live in the immediate Klukwan area, and the school board decided to bus students in to keep the school viable. Thus, nine students from Haines have elected to participate and commute north to the school. Transportation costs are not covered by the state, due to the out of district route, but the school board covers the expense. He pointed out, that as previously mentioned, the Federal Forestry program accounts for 10 percent of the district's total general fund revenue. Moving on to student achievement, he said 2011 saw 15 students graduate in the district, and there was a zero dropout rate. The majority of graduates were from the Angoon School. Further, he reported that last year, Klukwan, Gustavus, and Tenakee Springs made AYP (average yearly progress), but Angoon did not. A play structure was installed in Angoon, the first one since the district was created in 1976, he noted.

[8:16:16 AM](#)

MR. BUTTERFIELD directed attention to the committee handout indicating the graduation requirements, which were revised one year ago to comply with state standards. Additionally, on the same handout, he reviewed the standard based assessment (SBA) results, for 2011, and said Gustavus traditionally does well academically; Angoon has made AYP in the past, but not in 2011 due to the low math scores; Klukwan and Tenakee Springs also traditionally make AYP but the district doesn't post the scores, as the small class size might implicate specific efforts of individual students. He pointed out the demographic information chart, which read as follows, by percentage: Alaska Native 59, Caucasian 35, Others 8, Economically Disadvantaged 67, and Disabilities 22. Moving on to the student enrollment chart, he indicated the steady decline since 2005, from 223 to the current 153, which he predicts to remain steady. Returning to the topic of AYP he said the district has engaged in a new reading curriculum and is adopting additional new curriculum in other areas to remain current with state standards.

[8:19:43 AM](#)

MR. BUTTERFIELD said the school board recently requested that additional cohesiveness be developed throughout the district. With that in mind a video teleconferencing system was purchased in cooperation with Alaska Communications and Polycom. The system provides 70 inch screens in each of the schools, and allows interactive communications, during meetings.

[8:20:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA reported that she has visited the Klukwan School. She asked about the elders work to continue the infusion of Native culture in the life of the school, including the indigenous language.

MR. BUTTERFIELD reported that the elders have remained active in the schools, bringing cultural aspects, hosting events, and participating in other activities.

[8:22:31 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK noted that there were 15 graduates and no drop outs.

MR. BUTTERFIELD said that is correct, although several seniors are continuing to work on requirements.

[8:23:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE inquired about the steady decline of population and asked what it could be attributed to.

MR. BUTTERFIELD responded that the economic base for the district is minimal, particularly in Angoon, which has lost the greatest number of residents. The largest employer is the school district, and opportunity for employment exists on a minimal basis. The area's fishing industry is no longer a strong viable force, and many of the residents are retired or on government assistance.

[8:24:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE highlighted the note that parental support in Angoon is minimal, and asked about the lack of dynamic.

MR. BUTTERFIELD answered that each school has a different ethos, and Angoon is on the low end for community and parental involvement. When the school has activities that involve food, the Angoon families can be enticed in; or individual calls to

families can stir interest. The other Native community, Klukwan, has cultural similarities but the parents are more involved. He rated the parental participation in Gustavus as fantastic on all levels and said it is good in Tenakee Springs but without the ability for financial involvement as occurs in Gustavus.

[8:26:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked whether the students in the district have been able to take advantage of the Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS).

MR. BUTTERFIELD answered that it was not taken advantage of by any of the graduates in 2011, and he accounted for each of the fifteen graduates: one is a self-pay attending the University of Alaska, Fairbanks; one is a self-pay at University of Alaska Southeast; one Tenakee Springs student is attending university out of state; and one Angoon graduate is attending another college in Alaska. The other graduates, primarily from Angoon, are not known to be attending postsecondary schooling.

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI queried whether the students had the opportunity to take the appropriate classes for APS qualification.

MR. BUTTERFIELD said that if a specific class is not offered in the school, on-line distance class selections are available. He said that Chatham School District was the first grantee for the AKLN (Alaska's Learning Network) program, designed to improve student achievement through online learning and professional development opportunities; which the students find to be advantageous. He opined that as the rigor for the APS is honed and the standards are raised, awards will be restricted to the highest performing students who will be eligible for a variety of scholarships and predicted that the Angoon students may never qualify.

[8:29:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA recalled that Angoon is historically a fishing community and asked whether limited entry regulations have had adverse effects on the local fishing activity.

MR. BUTTERFIELD confirmed that fishing was once the major economy, but now few licenses are held in the area, and the local fishing industry no longer exists. He reported that a

local sport fishing lodge is in the area and does employ a number of people on a seasonal basis. As far as limited entry is concerned, he declined to speculate. The cost of living is high in Angoon, particularly with an electricity system supplied by a diesel generator.

Presentation: Alaska Native Education Association

[8:32:07 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be an introduction from the Alaska Native Education Association (ANEA).

NITA REARDEN, Member, Alaska Native Education Association (ANEA), provided an opening statement in Yupik, and then continued with a brief personal history. She said she was raised in a traditional house, until she was six, when western education was provided. As her families oldest daughter, she said she has been an educator all of her life, and even today, as a retired teacher, she still considers herself an educator and is fully involved in the welfare of Alaska's students. ANEA serves and supports the other Native associations across the state. She said:

The mission statement that we developed ... speaks to the years of what I lived, the years of my work, and having that experience from a BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) school to a state school and the time that I have taught in rural Alaska. Listen carefully: Our mission statement for [Alaska Native Education Association] we believe in it, we live by it, and we practice it. To enhance, promote and advocate for all Alaska Native cultures, values, languages, and traditions in the educational entities throughout Alaska. That's who I represent; thank you.

[8:35:29 AM](#)

BERNADETTE STIMPFLER, Co-Chair, Alaska Native Education Association (ANEA), provided an opening statement in Yupik, and then continued with a brief personal history, stating that she spoke no English until she attended school, at age five. A rural specialty teacher, when she began, she said she is now in her 23rd year and teaches grade school in the Nome area. The ANEA stems from the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, a joint educational reform project that was launched in 1996. The ANEA

board members are from Kodiak, Dillingham, Barrow, Bethel, Nome, and Fairbanks, and efforts to meet face to face are often in conjunction with other events. The association is involved in many projects, and partners with the Future Educators of Alaska, and the Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Program. Additionally, ANEA writes resolutions, in conjunction with AFN (Alaska Federation of Natives, Incorporated), regarding Native student rights. Presentations are given on a regular basis to various organizations, she finished.

[8:38:12 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK praised the knowledge and skill that the organization represents and said it is well staffed. He suggested that the ANEA may have a number of answers to questions that are current before the committee.

HB 256-REPEAL STATE INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS

[8:38:31 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 256, "An Act repealing provisions relating to the power and duties of the Department of Education and Early Development to intervene in a school district to improve instructional practices."

[8:39:19 AM](#)

NEIL SLOTNICK, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Labor and State Affairs Section, Civil Division, Department of Law, said three legal issues are raised by HB 256. He said first it creates uncertainty regarding EED authority, second it may have unintended consequences, and third it could leave a void for response by the legislature ensuring that children receive their right to an education as guaranteed to them under the education clause in Article VII, Section 1, of the Constitution of the State of Alaska, and upheld by the Alaska Supreme court. He said one element of that right is accountability. The rightful education is administered in Alaska via locally controlled schools in established districts, which must meet accountability standards established under AS 14.07.123 for the state, as well as under federal law. He said an inherent tension existed between state accountability and local control. Prior to 2008, the authority of EED to exercise accountability was implied through federal law, but not absolute. In 2008, the legislature adopted SB 285, which made it explicit and the department

understood that it had the authority to intervene in a district and redirect funding, within the limitations set forth in the bill. In order for the department to intervene requirements were specified, which included: to be initiated only for the purposes of improving instruction; an exit strategy to be pre-established; and the existence of a petition process. The bill provided clarity to help the department understand its scope of authority, and, thus, reduce the previously mentioned tension. He pointed out that HB 256 repeals SB 285 and removes the explicit authority of the department and the restrictions of authority, which results in uncertainty. Under HB 256, he interpreted, it will no longer be as clear how the department should react when implementing the accountability system that state law requires. Intervention can be arrived at via federal law, which is the source of the accountability requirement, but this, he counseled, creates problems. Federal law provides a menu to choose from for intervention purposes, but does not give explicit authority for any of the options. When the state legislature takes action, purposeful intent is behind the action, he said. Under SB 285 the department has explicit authority to redirect funds; if the department makes a finding that doing so will improve the instruction that is offered in a district. Federal law allows the option for intervention and the redirection of funds, but not in a decisive manner, and the resulting unknown allows room for legal debate and possible litigation from either side of the argument. Conversely, clarity increases the potential for collaboration and cooperation between school districts and the department. He provided an example of intervention preparations that were being made by EED, following the adoption of SB 285. The school district initiated a course of action that resulted in the adoption of school reform measures that the department had been considering. The collaborative, cooperative model that was followed subsequently became a model that has proven effective in other districts. He said:

Since the passage of SB 285, the department has not intervened in one single school district. Since the passage of SB 285 the department has not redirected the funding in any single district - including those that were already under intervention.

[8:46:31 AM](#)

MR. SLOTNICK referred to a question previously raised by a committee member regarding unintentional consequences of HB 256, and responded that SB 285 provides better direction than what is

available under federal law. Federal law is broad and directs that intervention may occur based on low test scores. However, SB 285 provides that the department may take action only when instructional practices are lacking and require improvement via intervention; representing a limited approach and providing concise direction and understanding. He said a third concern, regarding the adoption of HB 256, is that the legislature may fail to comply with the constitutional requirements, as found in Moore, et al. v. State of Alaska, 3AN-04-9756 CI, (2010); to wit: the state must exercise accountability when it has evidence of chronic low performance and take a more direct and assistive role in the district. When Moore was decided, an accountability and intervention system existed, but the judge found that local control was not adequate. The court required a legislative response, which came in the form of SB 285. By repealing SB 285, without taking alternative measures, he advised that the state would risk falling out of compliance with the legal directives under Moore. The obligation of the legislature is to provide an education for the children. He said it would be appropriate for the legislature to hold the department accountable for oversight, but the districts must also be held accountable. Repealing SB 285 would remove appropriate laws and methods that are in place and may create a void.

[8:51:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA noted that education in Alaska has been dependent for a long period of time on support from the federal government. The state has assumed a large percentage of the task and efforts have been made to acknowledge, cultivate, and preserve a locally based system, but western cultural rules continue to persist. She asked whether federal funding might be at stake if the state does not comply with mandates from the U.S. Department of Education.

MR. SLOTNICK said yes, federal funding could be lost, if the state lacks compliance.

[8:54:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON said that the size and diversity of the state creates unique issues, and communities may differ regarding educational goals. He asked whether repealing the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) would be a means to integrate flexible community standards; effectively removing the uniform requirement, which may not serve every

area's needs. Further, he queried whether the HSGQE is an underpinning criterion that is restrictive.

MR. SLOTNICK responded no, and added that nothing restricts school districts and communities from embedding local culture into the curriculum. However, it was made clear under Moore that children must be provided the opportunity to be proficient in reading, writing, and mathematic skills; it is the state's obligation to uphold this constitutional right.

[8:57:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE noted that the measurable attainment of performance benchmarks need to be required of schools and testing appears to be the only method for determining proficiency. However, if the scores are low there may be any number of contributing factors, including: lack of parental involvement, and poor quality/distracting facilities. The legislature can affect and rectify some situations through statutory requirement and funding directives. He noted that intervention may not be working well in the Yupiit district, but it has been successful elsewhere. Instead of eliminating SB 285, he opined, perhaps additional measures should be added to the statute to enhance the ability of the legislature to intervene specifically in other areas outside of curriculum and teaching methods. He asked whether there are there other legal options to consider, under the existing statutes.

MR. SLOTNICK agreed that the legislature has that authority; however, he declined to provide specific actions for committee consideration.

[9:01:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON said that Moore names the legislature as the ultimate responsible party. Referring to the committee handout titled "Excerpts from Moore v. State regarding the Need for State Authority to Hold Local Districts Accountable," page 7, she said:

[In evaluating the State's responses ... this Court returns once again to the language of the Alaska Constitution, which] places the responsibility 'to maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State' squarely upon the Legislature. ... To date, the State has not demonstrated that the delegation of this responsibility to school districts,

through local control, have been identified as chronically underperforming, but do not appear to have been accorded adequate assistance and oversight, will result in compliance with this constitutional responsibility.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON opined that the responsibility to establish the best course of action rests with the legislators, and specifically the current members of the House Education Standing Committee. The exit exam results indicate that there is a problem, but she said, administering the exam in high school might be too late to affect a student's outcome. She said the test could be given earlier with better results, and, thus the committee should consider re-evaluating current practices and making necessary changes, rather than repealing SB 285.

[9:04:09 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK agreed that the onus resides in the legislature. The Yupiit intervention has not had a good outcome, and the education committee is ultimately responsible. He underscored his concern for creating a standalone intervention approach that will not be dependent on administrative changes.

[9:06:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to the committee handout titled "Excerpts from Moore v. State regarding the Need for State Authority to Hold Local Districts Accountable," page 1, paragraph titled "Pages 100-101," and read [original punctuation provided]

... the opportunity to acquire the basic tools they need to succeed in both traditional and global societies.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON pointed out that the current testing regimen is based on the standards of the global society and does not measure whether a student is capable of functioning in a traditional society. He said if the traditional society concerns are a focus, they are being ignored. If the mission exists, as the court has stated, to address both of these areas, he asked if the state is in jeopardy of not fulfilling the court's directive. Additionally, he queried if there is a means for the disparate communities to have any influence on which of the two directions should receive the preponderance of focus.

[9:08:29 AM](#)

MR. SLOTNICK responded that parameters allow local control of education and the setting of local priorities; many examples exist throughout the state. However, Moore is clear that the students also need to have proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics, to a specific, accountable standard.

[9:09:32 AM](#)

JEAN MISCHER, Attorney, Legislative Legal Counsel, agreed with the assistant attorney general's statements, and added that options, other than federal law, exist for guidance in intervention should SB 285 be repealed. Statutory allowances include: an accountability system; reward provisions that are anticipated by the federal law in the form of grants; general supervisory authority as granted to EED over all aspects of the education system; and, she said, "Under Title 14, the legislature is delegated functions both to the department and to the local school boards." When Moore was handed down, stating that the responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of the legislature, she opined that the court was primarily concerned with the decentralized system of education. The decentralization may not work for some districts lacking the resources or expertise to improve school performance over a period of time; the subject of the Moore litigation. Until 2008, the school system operated under the existing state laws; NCLB was passed in 2001. She opined that in the past the legislature has given direction on how to improve schools and suggested that what may be lacking is a coordination of provisions. The legislative body cannot do specific hiring and firing of school board members or other immediate actions, but funding can be directed to support the hiring of qualified assistance for necessary leadership/expertise/consultants in identified districts. She referred to a previous question from Representative Feige regarding the delegation of responsibility, and said that in the past the Alaska Supreme Court has found that the status quo is a good idea; one size does not fit all but everyone must be afforded an adequate education - however that is defined. The state is required to intervene when failure occurs. Oversight authority by the State Board of Education and EED, in the form of an accountability system, allows for the withholding of funds, closure or take-over of schools, and hiring of experts and technical assistance to help the districts. All of these measures pre-date SB 285. The school system was directed by the state, at one time, prior to

local control; a change which may not be working for some communities as well as it does for others. The legislature could rethink the delegation and division of functions, as well as provide additional targeted grant funds. She recommended that the committee review the Moore consent decree, if restructuring is being considered. The settlement agreement came in part from the local school districts that were asking for the interventions. She said the ideas contained in the decree are on a statewide level. One of the main differences in the function of the consent decree versus the current school district authority is that kindergarten is not mandatory, neither is the funding of pre-schools outside of a few pilot programs. The Moore consent decree also calls for targeted grant funds to help with school improvement and specifically to pay for teacher development and training that includes a four week pre-classroom cultural training course, and an oversight advisory body. The consent decree goes beyond the five intervention districts and the legislature could devise a more specific system in state law. Also, curriculum and standards can be established under state statute.

CHAIR DICK asked the committee to hold further questions.

[HB 256 was held over.]

State Board of Education - Annual Report to the Legislature

[9:21:25 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be the Annual Report to the Legislature from the State Board of Education.

[9:22:35 AM](#)

ESTHER COX, Chair, State Board of Education & Early Development, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), provided the annual legislative report paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP [APS]

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS NEW SCHOLARSHIP HAS HAD THE ATTENTION OF THE BOARD AND THE DEPARTMENT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, BUT ALL THE ATTENTION CONTINUES TO BE WORTH IT

FOR THE OPPORTUNITY THAT IT PROVIDES FOR ALASKA STUDENTS.

THROUGH REGULATION THE BOARD ESTABLISHED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA INCLUDING GPA [Grade Point Average], CUT SCORES ON THE SAT/ACT/WORKKEYS [Scholastic Achievement Test/American College Testing/ACT WorkKeys assessment system], QUALIFYING COURSES, WITH A PHASE IN SCHEDULE SO ALL DISTRICTS WOULD HAVE TIME TO BEEF UP CURRICULUM AS WELL AS GIVE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED THIS PAST YEAR AND FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS AND WHO WILL NOT HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS THE FINAL CREDIT REQUIREMENTS.

ACCESS TO RIGOROUS COURSES CONTINUES TO BE A CONCERN OF THE BOARD, AND MANY STUDENTS ARE SUPPLEMENTING THEIR SCHOOL CURRICULUM WITH ON-LINE COURSES. THIS OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY PROVIDES THE RIGOROUS CURRICULUM DICTATED BY THE SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY, BUT IT PROVIDES A STRONG AND POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR OUR STUDENTS.

IT IS ENCOURAGING TO KNOW THAT DISTRICTS AS SMALL AS HYDABURG WITH ONLY 4 GRADUATES HAVE STILL BEEN ABLE TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY COURSES TO QUALIFY, AND IN FACT, DOES HAVE A STUDENT WHO QUALIFIED.

THE BOARD APPROVED A NUMBER OF COURSE TITLES THAT WOULD FIT THE APS CRITERIA IN DECEMBER, AND AS SOON AS THEY GO THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR REVIEW, THEY WILL BECOME REGULATION.

THE BOARD WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND TWEAK THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APS AS ISSUES OR CONCERNS ARISE.

THIS YEAR:

AS OF JANUARY 1, 2012, THE APS HAS AWARDED OVER \$3 MILLION TO OVER 900 ALASKA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM THE CLASS OF 2011.

NEARLY 29 PERCENT OF ALL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES IN 2011 WERE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE THE APS. OF THOSE ELIGIBLE, 36 PERCENT TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE APS FOR THEIR FIRST SEMESTER AFTER GRADUATING.

CONSISTENT WITH THE STATE'S POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA HAD THE MOST STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE AN APS. IN THE FAR NORTH AND INTERIOR-BERING STRAIT, NOME, NORTH SLOPE, AND NORTHWEST ARCTIC - NEARLY ONE HALF OF ALL ELIGIBLE STUDENTS ARE USING THEIR SCHOLARSHIPS

THE VAST MAJORITY OF AWARDS WENT TO STUDENTS WHO ENTERED UAA AND UAF TO STUDY FULL TIME TOWARD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

IMPRESSIVELY, THE PERCENTAGE OF ALASKA GRADS WHO TOOK THE SAT OR THE ACT GREW FROM 77 PERCENT IN 2010 TO AN UNHEARD OF 85 PERCENT IN 2011.

BASED UPON PRELIMINARY DATA FROM THE UNIVERSITY, APS STUDENTS WHO ENTERED THE UA SYSTEM WERE LESS LIKELY TO NEED REMEDIAL COURSES WHICH CERTAINLY MAKES A STATEMENT IN REGARD TO REQUIRED RIGOROUS CURRICULUM.

AND MORE GOOD NEWS IS THAT DISTRICTS ARE REPORTING MORE STUDENTS ENROLLED IN MATH AND SCIENCE.

SO IF THERE IS A QUESTION IN YOUR MIND IF YOU HAVE CREATED A GOOD THING, PLEASE BELIEVE ME THAT YOU TRULY HAVE.

ASSESSMENTS

THE BOARD ADOPTED SEVERAL AMENDMENTS REGARDING WORKKEYS ASSESSMENTS WHICH ARE CAREER READY TESTS GIVEN TO ALL 11TH GRADERS EACH YEAR. ACT WHICH OWNS WORKKEYS, HAS CREATED THOUSANDS OF JOB PROFILES WHICH ANALYZE SKILL LEVELS NEEDED FOR SPECIFIC JOBS, SO ASSESSED STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO COMPARE THEIR SKILL LEVEL WITH THE SKILL LEVEL OF THOSE JOBS. STUDENTS WITH QUALIFYING SCORES RECEIVE NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATES, AND THE TESTS MAY BE USED TO QUALIFY FOR THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP IF THE STUDENT IS GOING TO ATTEND A POST SECONDARY CORTICATED PROGRAM IN ALASKA.

THE BOARD ALSO DECIDED THAT IT WAS THE IEP [Individualized Education Program] TEAM OF STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES DECISION IF THE STUDENT SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE WORKKEYS ASSESSMENT. IN SEPTEMBER THE BOARD PUT OUT FOR PUBLIC

COMMENT THE ALASKA SUPPLEMENT FOR WORKKEYS ASSESSMENT WHICH CLARIFIES THE APPROPRIATE USE OF ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. FINAL ACTION WAS TAKEN JANUARY 2012.

OF THE 9,007 ALASKA STUDENTS WHO TOOK WORKKEYS IN THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR, 7,665 (85 PERCENT) EARNED A NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE.

BECAUSE WIDA (WORLD CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT) PROFICIENCY STANDARDS ARE RESEARCH BASED AND OF HIGH QUALITY, THE BOARD ADOPTED THE WIDA STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12.

AND THE BOARD AND DEPARTMENT DO RESPOND TO OUR CONSTITUENCIES WHEN A REGULATION CAN BE IMPROVED UPON TO LIGHTEN THE BURDEN ON DISTRICTS AND TEACHERS. THE BOARD EXTENDED THE TIME FOR DISTRICTS TO DISTRIBUTE RESULTS OF THE STATE'S STANDARDS BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA'S) AND THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION QUALIFYING EXAM TO TEACHERS AS THE PREVIOUS 20 DAY DEADLINE WAS BURDENSOME.

THE BOARD AMENDED TWO REGULATIONS REGARDING STATE ASSESSMENTS AND ADOPTED REVISED PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. THIS ALLOWED FOR RESPONSE TO SUGGESTIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS, CONTINUED TO IDENTIFY NEW RESOURCES, AND PROVIDED FOR KEEPING UP TO DATE ON PRACTICES IN ACCOMMODATIONS.

THE BOARD ADDRESSED SEVERAL HOUSE KEEPING ITEMS THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF A YEAR INCLUDING THE CLARIFICATION THAT THE SBA IS THE ASSESSMENT USED FOR CALCULATING STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION RATE IN REPORTING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS.

THE ONE ASSESSMENT THAT MANY OF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN IS THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION QUALIFYING EXAM (HSGQE). IT TRULY IS A MINIMUM COMPETENCY TEST OF BASIC SKILLS, AND ONCE STUDENTS HAVE PASSED IT, THEY KNOW THAT THEY CAN MOVE ALONG WITH THEIR CURRICULUM. IF A STUDENT DOES NOT PASS, THEN HE/SHE KNOWS WHAT AREAS MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR ADDITIONAL WORK. AFTER MUCH DELIBERATION, THE BOARD VOTED TO RECOMMEND KEEPING THE HSGQE FOR SEVERAL REASONS: IT DOES GIVE STUDENTS A

BASE LINE IN BASIC SKILLS, AND IN THIS DAY OF ACCOUNTABILITY, IT IS ANOTHER INFORMATION TOOL THAT CAN BE USED TO ADJUST PROGRAM AND/OR A STUDENT'S CURRICULUM ROAD MAP. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT IT DOES SHOW THAT STUDENTS HAVE DEMONSTRATED MINIMUM COMPETENCIES IN ESSENTIAL SKILLS NEEDED TO FUNCTION IN OUR SOCIETY.

IN THE 2010-2011 HSGQE, 83 PERCENT OF GRADE 10 STUDENTS PASSED READING, 71 PERCENT PASSED WRITING, AND 76.9 PERCENT PASSED MATH. STUDENTS HAVE FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO PASS THE EXAM IN GRADES 11 AND 12 AND AFTER LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL.

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

FOR THE PURPOSE OF REPORTING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS, THE BOARD AMENDED A REGULATION TO ALLOW DISTRICTS TO INCLUDE IN THE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SUBGROUP THOSE STUDENTS WHO EXITED THE PROGRAM IN THE PRIOR TWO YEARS SO DISTRICTS COULD HAVE CREDIT FOR SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITIONING STUDENTS OUT OF THE PROGRAM.

THE BOARD WAS BRIEFED ON SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS RESULTS AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING. THREE CHANGES TO THE CALCULATION OF 2011 DATA SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED THE RESULTS:

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO SHOULD BE PROFICIENT INCREASED FROM 77.18 PERCENT TO 82.88 PERCENT IN LANGUAGE ARTS; FROM 66 PERCENT TO 74.57 PERCENT IN MATH. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ACCORDING TO THE FEDS, WE WILL BE 100 PERCENT PROFICIENT BY 2014! I HAVE BEEN IN THIS BUSINESS A VERY LONG TIME, AND TRUST ME, I HAVE NEVER SEEN 100 PERCENT OF ANYTHING!

TEACHER CERTIFICATION/TEACHER QUALITY

THE BOARD ADOPTED SEVERAL AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION.

BRIEFLY, THE BOARD REQUIRED TEACHERS MOVING FROM AN INITIAL (3 YEAR) CERTIFICATE TO A PROFESSIONAL (FIVE YEAR RENEWABLE) CERTIFICATE TO HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED AS A TEACHER FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS. THOSE WHO HAVE NOT TAUGHT FOR TWO YEARS MAY APPLY FOR ANOTHER INITIAL CERTIFICATE. THE BOARD FELT STRONGLY THAT NO ONE

SHOULD HOLD THE STATE'S PROFESSIONAL TEACHER CERTIFICATE WITHOUT HAVING WORKED AS A TEACHER FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS.

BECAUSE THE STATE GIVES TEACHERS AN INITIAL PERIOD TO COMPLETE CREDITS BEFORE RECEIVING A PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE, THE BOARD ADOPTED AN AMENDMENT THAT WILL NO LONGER REQUIRE EDUCATORS SEEKING PROVISIONAL (2 YEAR) ADMINISTRATIVE, SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE AND SPECIAL SERVICES CERTIFICATES TO COMPLETE SIX SEMESTER HOURS OF CREDIT BEFORE RECEIVING THE CERTIFICATE. THOSE CREDITS MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE NEXT STAGE OF CERTIFICATION HOWEVER.

THE BOARD ALSO ACTED UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE TEACHER QUALITY WORKING GROUP TO:

CHANGE THE NAME OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION; REQUIRE DISTRICTS TO MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC THE BLANK FORMS USED IN TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATION; REQUIRE DISTRICT EMPLOYMENT APPLICATIONS TO REQUIRE TEACHERS TO DISCLOSE ANY PRIOR TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN ALASKA.

THE BOARD ALSO APPROVED TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS FOR ELEMENTARY K-5 MATH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SOUTHEAST, FOR AN ELEMENTARY ENDORSEMENT AT ALASKA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY, AND ADDED AN ENDORSEMENT IN THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE.

ALASKA'S TYPE M CERTIFICATE MUST BE INITIATED BY A DISTRICT WHO WANTS TO HIRE AN INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL WHO HAS NOT MATRICULATED THROUGH A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM. THE ASD [Anchorage School District] MIGHT WANT TO HIRE A WELDER TO TEACH WELDING FOR EXAMPLE. THERE IS A REGULATION THAT IS NOW UNDER REVIEW BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW THAT REQUIRES CTE [Career & Technical Education] ENDORSED TYPE M TEACHERS TO DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY IN READING, WRITING, AND MATH BY PASSING THE PRAXIS 1 WITHIN ONE YEAR OF OBTAINING THE CERTIFICATE AND TO DEMONSTRATE INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS.

IN ORDER TO RENEW A TYPE M LIMITED CTE CERTIFICATE FOR FIVE YEARS, THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD MUST SUBMIT ON THE

APPLICANT'S BEHALF A RENEWAL APPLICATION WHICH CONTAINS THE EVIDENCE OF THE FOLLOWING:

THREE SEMESTER HOURS OF CREDIT RELATED TO THE APPLICANT'S EMPLOYMENT

135 HOURS OF WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE SPECIALTY FIELD OUTSIDE OF WORK WITH STUDENTS.

A STATEMENT OF SATISFACTORY TEACHING PERFORMANCE UNDER THE LIMITED CERTIFICATE.

THESE NEW REGULATIONS ONLY APPLY TO THE TYPE M LIMITED CTE CERTIFICATE. TEACHERS IN THE SPECIALTY AREAS OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE OR CULTURE AND ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] ARE EXEMPT.

AND THE BIGGIE! FOR RECERTIFICATION, TYPE CERTIFICATED TEACHERS MUST TAKE CREDITS IN SUBJECTS RELATED TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT, ENDORSEMENT AREA, OR PROGRAM LEADING TO AN ENDORSEMENT. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THIS HAS NOT BEEN A REQUIREMENT FOR RECERTIFICATION IN THE PAST.

STATE STANDARDS

ONE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE IS TO SET PROPER STANDARDS FOR ITS STUDENTS.

THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION HAS SET THE DIRECTION FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING STUDENT STANDARDS FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS. STUDENT STANDARDS CURRENTLY INCLUDE BROAD CONTENT STANDARDS AND DETAILED GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS; ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS; ALTERNATE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES, AND CULTURAL STANDARDS.

SINCE FEBRUARY 2010, THE DEPARTMENT, ALASKA EDUCATORS, AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES HAVE ENGAGED IN A PROCESS TO REPLACE THE CURRENT CONTENT STANDARDS IN READING, WRITING, AND MATH WITH MORE RIGOROUS GRADE LEVEL STANDARDS. THE FOCUS HAS BEEN TO ENSURE THAT THE STANDARDS OUTLINE A PATH FOR STUDENTS TO GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE-READY AND CAREER-READY, AND THE NEW ALASKA STANDARDS WILL BE INCLUSIVE OF ALL GRADES K-12 UNLIKE THE CURRENT K-10 STANDARDS. THE REVISION OF

GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATION WILL FOLLOW AFTER THE STANDARDS ADOPTION BY THE BOARD.

UNDOUBTEDLY, YOU ARE AWARE OF THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS THAT HAVE COME DOWN AS A NATIONAL MOVEMENT. MANY STATES HAVE ADOPTED THESE STANDARDS, BUT ALASKA DID NOT. WE DECIDED EARLY ON THAT WE WOULD USE OUR ALASKA STANDARDS AS A BASE LINE TO IMPROVE AS WELL AS COMPARE TO THE COMMON CORE. WHAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED IS MORE RIGOROUS THAN THE COMMON CORE, AND THE DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN DONE BY ALASKANS FOR ALASKAN STUDENTS.

I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF STANDARD DEVELOPMENT SO THAT YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT THESE STANDARDS WERE NOT SIMPLY CREATED BY THE BOARD OR THE DEPARTMENT BUT INDEED, ARE A PRODUCT OF ALASKANS FROM EDUCATION, INDUSTRY, AND THE COMMUNITY.

BETWEEN FEB. 2010 AND NOV. 2010, A STANDARDS REVIEW COMMITTEE WAS FORMED. THIS COMMITTEE WAS MADE UP OF K-12 EDUCATORS, AND THEY MET TO COMPARE ALASKA STANDARDS WITH THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS.

FROM JAN. 2011 THROUGH NOV. 2011, INPUT WAS GATHERED FROM ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS GRADES 3-12; MATH TEACHERS GRADES 3-12; SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS, OTHER EXPERIENCED EDUCATORS, COACHES FROM THE STATE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT, UNIVERSITY FOLK, CTE PROGRAM TEACHERS AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES.

REPRESENTATIVES WHO WORK WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS, AND STUDENTS FROM ETHNIC SUBGROUPS MET TO ENSURE THAT ALL HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO THE NEW ALASKA STANDARDS.

THE NEW ALASKA STANDARDS:

ARE ALIGNED WITH COLLEGE-READY AND WORK-READY TRAINING EXPECTATIONS
INCLUDE RIGOROUS CONTENT AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HIGHER-ORDER SKILLS

BUILD UPON STRENGTH AND LESSONS OF CURRENT STATE STANDARDS

EQUAL OR MORE RIGOROUS THAN THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

RELATE TO REAL WORLD APPLICATION

AT NO TIME IN THE DESIGN OF THE ALASKA STANDARDS WERE THEY ALLOWED TO DIP BELOW THE RIGOR OF THE COMMON CORE.

AT THE DECEMBER, 2011, MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, A MOTION WAS PASSED TO OPEN UP AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF PUBLIC COMMENT FOR THE DRAFT ALASKA CAREER-READY AND COLLEGE READY STANDARDS. AFTER REVIEWING AND DISCUSSING ALL PUBLIC COMMENT, THE BOARD ANTICIPATES TAKING FINAL ACTION ON THE STANDARDS IN JUNE, 2012.

NEW STANDARDS WILL MEAN NEW ASSESSMENTS, SO WORK BEGINS ON THAT ASPECT IMMEDIATELY. STUDENTS WILL MOST LIKELY NOT BE ASSESSED ON THE NEW STANDARDS UNTIL SPRING 2016.

GRADUATION RATE

ALASKA'S GRADUATION RATE METHODOLOGY HAS RECENTLY CHANGED TO REFLECT A FEDERAL MANDATE REQUIRING ALL 50 STATES TO USE A UNIFORM GRADUATION RATE THAT IS TO BE REPORTED FOR ALL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.

I WILL NOT PRESUME TO TAKE YOU THROUGH THAT PROCESS BECAUSE I WOULD ONLY GET YOU AS CONFUSED AS I AM; HOWEVER, MR. MCCORMICK, DIRECTOR OF ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IS HERE, AND HE COULD ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS AT THE CONCLUSION OF MY REMARKS.

GRADUATION RATES ARE CALCULATED ACROSS 4 YEARS. DROPOUT RATES ARE CALCULATED OVER 1 YEAR AND BECAUSE THE TWO RATES ARE CALCULATED INDEPENDENTLY, THEY ARE NOT THE INVERSE OF EACH OTHER. MOST PEOPLE WILL TELL YOU THAT IF A STUDENT DID NOT GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL, HE/SHE IS A DROP OUT, AND THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY TRUE.

I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT OUR GRADUATION RATE HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY OVER THE PAST 7 YEARS. 2011 GRADUATION RATE WAS 68 PERCENT IN COMPARISON TO 2005 AT 61 PERCENT.

MENTOR PROGRAM

TEACHER RETENTION IN RURAL ALASKA IS A VERY REAL ISSUE. WHEN JIM HICKERSON WAS SUPERINTENDENT AT BERING STRAIT, HE TOLD ME THAT 85 PERCENT OF THEIR TEACHERS COME FROM OUTSIDE. THERE ARE SO MANY ISSUES FOR THEM TO DEAL WITH: A WHOLE NEW CULTURE, ISOLATION, COLD, TRANSPORTATION, ETC., THAT MANY SPEND THE YEAR AND LEAVE.

IN 2004, THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM WAS INITIATED TO INCREASE TEACHER RETENTION BY HELPING NEW RURAL TEACHERS BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES WITHIN THEIR FIRST 2 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM.

YOU AND I TALKED BRIEFLY LAST YEAR ABOUT THE BUDGET CUTS TO THIS PROGRAM. THIS PROGRAM DOES HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON TEACHER RETENTION AND A PROMISING IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

THIS SCHOOL YEAR, 24 MENTORS (DOWN FROM 28 LAST YEAR) ARE WORKING WITH 330 TEACHERS (DOWN FROM 401 LAST YEAR) IN 142 SCHOOLS (DOWN FROM 187 SCHOOLS LAST YEAR) IN 34 SCHOOL DISTRICTS (DOWN FROM 43 LAST YEAR).

THIS PROGRAM DOES WORK! FROM AN AVERAGE RURAL TEACHER RETENTION RATE OF 68 PERCENT, THE MENTORED TEACHERS HAVE RETAINED AT 84 PERCENT IN 2010-2011.

AT THE AMERICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE ON MAY 4, RESULTS WERE PRESENTED THAT SHOW THAT ALTHOUGH MENTORING NEW TEACHERS DID NOT BRING THE STUDENTS' STANDARDIZED SCORES OF NEW TEACHERS UP TO THE SAME LEVEL AS STUDENTS IN VETERAN TEACHERS' CLASSES; THEY ARE MUCH CLOSER THAN EXPECTED FOR READING, WRITING, AND SCIENCE.

IN THE CASE OF MATH, STUDENTS IN CLASSROOMS OF MENTORED TEACHERS PERFORM THE SAME AS THOSE IN CLASSROOMS OF VETERAN TEACHERS.

THERE ARE PROMISING RESULTS TO START CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP TYPICALLY SEEN BETWEEN THE STUDENTS OF NEW AND VETERAN TEACHERS.

THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, EDUCATION NORTHWEST AND UA STATEWIDE WILL EVALUATE THE

EFFECTS OF MENTORING ON TEACHER RETENTION AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. THE DETAILS FOR THIS EVALUATION ARE NOW BEING WORKED OUT.

EARLY LEARNING

THERE IS A WHOLE LOT GOING ON IN THIS ARENA. IN 2009, THE LEGISLATURE PROVIDED \$2 MILLION FOR A PILOT PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM THAT WOULD INCLUDE SIX SITES. PROPOSALS FROM DISTRICTS WERE SUBMITTED AND SIX SITES WERE SELECTED. THE LEGISLATURE THEN ADDED TWO ADDITIONAL SITES. THE PURPOSE WAS TO ALLOW VARIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO CREATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS THAT INCORPORATE ALASKA'S EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES IN WAYS TAILORED TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

THE TWO YEAR REPORT WAS A PART OF THE BOARD PACKET FOR OUR JANUARY TELECONFERENCE. I AM NOT GOING TO GO THROUGH ALL THE FINDINGS EXCEPT TO STATE THAT MANY CHILDREN SHOWED EXCEPTIONAL GROWTH, BUT THERE ARE STILL CHILDREN PERFORMING BELOW EXPECTATIONS.

FOR ALL ALASKA'S CHILDREN TO CLOSE THE GAP BY THEIR THIRD GRADE ASSESSMENTS, CONTINUOUS GROWTH MUST BEGIN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND BE SUSTAINED THROUGH THE PRIMARY GRADES.

COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN HEAD START AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS POSITIVELY AFFECTS THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

THE BOARD ENDORSED THE DEPARTMENT'S FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN WHICH INCLUDES ACTION STEPS FOR PARENTS, TEACHER AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS THAT WILL ULTIMATELY IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. THIS IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EARLY LITERACY PLAN THAT PROVIDES ACTIONS THAT PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, PRESCHOOL TEACHERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN DO THAT WILL HELP STUDENTS COME TO SCHOOL READY TO LEARN.

I HAVE TO TELL YOU LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THAT I AM CONVINCED THAT SCHOOL READINESS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT COUPLED WITH QUALITY TEACHERS ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

STATE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, THE BOARD HEARD REPORTS ON STATE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT ACTIVITIES: THE THIRD LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE AND THE ALASKA LITERACY INSTITUTE, WHICH WAS SPONSORED FOR INTERVENTION DISTRICTS AND INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM PRE-K PROGRAMS AND HEAD START PROGRAMS; THE CURRICULUM EXPOSURE ANALYSIS DONE BY THE STATE; AND ACTIVITIES OF THE YUPIIT SCHOOL DISTRICT.

THE BOARD RECEIVED UPDATES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RUBRIC ON CULTURAL STANDARDS FOR EDUCATORS AS A FOLLOW UP TO OUR ADOPTION OF THIS SECTION FROM THE PUBLICATION "ALASKA STANDARDS FOR CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOLS."

THE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONDING TO ITS CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES: FUNDING, STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT. WE ARE CURRENTLY INTERVENING IN THREE DISTRICTS IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE OVER SIGHT RESPONSIBILITY WHERE STUDENTS HAVE CHRONICALLY LOW PERFORMANCE. TWO DISTRICTS HAVE COME OUT OF THE INTERVENTION STATUS AFTER RAISING STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND BUILDING CAPACITY.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

ALASKA'S LEARNING NETWORK IMPROVES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BY PROVIDING DISTANCE COURSES TAUGHT BY HIGHLY QUALIFIED ALASKA TEACHERS; A NETWORK OF SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS TO COLLABORATE AND SHARE RESOURCES IN A DIGITAL REPOSITORY; PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS. ALASKA'S LEARNING NETWORK PROVIDES RIGOROUS COURSES THAT MEET ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS OF THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP.

MT EDGE CUMBE HIGH SCHOOL

MT. EDGE CUMBE HIGH SCHOOL IS A STATE OPERATED BOARDING SCHOOL IN SITKA FOR APPROXIMATELY 400 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM AROUND THE STATE. SEVENTY EIGHT PERCENT OF THE STUDENTS BODY SELF-IDENTIFY AS ALASKA NATIVE.

THE STATE BOARD WHICH SERVES AS THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR MT. EDGE CUMBE RECENTLY WORKED ON SOME CREDIT REQUIREMENT CHANGES WITH SUPERINTENDENT RANDY HAWK.

IN ORDER FOR MT. EDGE CUMBE STUDENTS TO MEET THE CREDIT REQUIREMENT OF THE ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIP, THE

BOARD REDUCED THE REQUIRED CREDITS IN SOCIAL STUDIES FROM 5 TO 4 AND ADDED A REQUIRED CREDIT OF EITHER SOCIAL STUDIES OR MATH OR SCIENCE BEYOND COURSES ALREADY REQUIRED. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REQUIRED CREDITS REMAINS AT 24.

END

IN NOVEMBER, COMMISSIONER HANLEY, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MORSE, BOARD FIRST VICE CHAIR JIM MERRINER, AND I ATTENDED ANCHORAGE MAYOR DAN SULLIVAN'S TWO DAY EDUCATION SUMMIT.

THE UPSHOT OF THE SUMMIT WAS EXACTLY WHAT OUR BOARD AND DEPARTMENT ARE DEDICATED TO:

WORLD CLASS LEADERSHIP: TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT

GREATER EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

EXPAND CHOICE, OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS.

WHERE HAVE YOU HEARD THAT BEFORE? SEEMS THAT WE ARE ALL ON THE SAME WAVE LENGTH WHICH BASICALLY IS PROVIDING THE BEST EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EACH AND EVERY STUDENT IN OUR STATE.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON?

TEACHER EVALUATION TIED TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

IF WE ARE GOING TO WANT TO CONTINUE RECEIVING FEDERAL DOLLARS, THIS IS A REALITY. AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS A MUCH MORE CONVOLUTED IDEA THAN AT FIRST BLUSH, BUT THE TEACHER QUALITY COMMITTEE IS WRESTLING WITH THIS WHOLE CONCEPT AS WE SPEAK.

CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE DEPARTMENT WORK WITH INTERVENTION DISTRICTS.

DIALOGS WITH THE BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENTS OF INTERVENTION DISTRICTS.

REPORT FROM DISTRICTS WHO HAVE EXITED INTERVENTION STATUS.

HOW DID IT GO? WHAT WAS GOOD? WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER?

A BOARD SESSION ON STRATEGIC PLANNING

CONTINUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE CAREER/TECHNICAL EDUCATION PLAN.

CERTAINLY MORE WORK ON THE NEW ALASKA STANDARDS AND THE ASSESSMENTS TO GO WITH THOSE STANDARDS.

MONITOR AND/OR AMEND REGULATIONS AS NEEDED FOR THE APS.

AND SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES WHILE I STILL HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT A BURR THAT HAS BEEN UNDER MY SADDLE BLANKET EVER SINCE I HAVE BEEN ON THIS BOARD, AND BELIEVE ME, I HAVE LEANED ON EVERY COMMISSIONER ABOUT THIS, BUT THERE IS AN OLD ADAGE: YOU CAN'T GET BLOOD OUT OF A TURNIP!

I KNOW THAT REPRESENTATIVE DICK HAS QUESTIONED THE MAKE UP OF THE BOARD, BUT OUR BOARD HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.

RIGHT HERE I WOULD LIKE TO CLEAR UP SOME MISINFORMATION. YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE BOARD NEVER HAS HAD A MEMBER FROM A DISTRICT IN INTERVENTION. NORTHWEST ARCTIC WAS IN INTERVENTION STATUS, AND BUNNY SHAEFFER WAS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD THE WHOLE TIME. THE DISTRICT HAS COME OFF INTERVENTION, AND BOARD MEMBER SHAEFFER IS STILL ON THE BOARD.

WE DO HAVE EVERYTHING TO DO WITH WHERE WE MEET; HOWEVER, THIS IS A STATEWIDE BOARD THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT, AND BECAUSE OF BUDGET CONSTRAINTS, WE ONLY MEET IN ANCHORAGE, FAIRBANKS (NOT OFTEN) AND JUNEAU. WE DID WANDER UP TO THE MAT-SU THIS YEAR, BUT IN ANYBODY'S DEFINITION, THAT IS NOT RURAL ALASKA.

I THINK IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THIS BOARD MEET IN RURAL ALASKA ONCE A YEAR.

IN MY TENURE ON THE BOARD, WE HAVE MET IN GALENA, KOTZEBUE, AND AT MT. EDGE CUMBE. I TRULY THINK THAT

THE ARGUMENT COULD BE MADE THAT THIS BOARD SHOULD ALSO MEET AT MT. EDGE CUMBE ONCE A YEAR. MEETING IN THESE PLACES WAS A GREAT EDUCATION FOR ALL THE BOARD MEMBERS. EVEN THOUGH WE ARE BROAD AND OPEN MINDED INDIVIDUALS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO REPRESENT THE DIVERSITY OF OUR STATE WHEN WE DON'T HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE IT.

THE OPERATION OF THE BOARD FALLS WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE PORTION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET, AND SPECIFICALLY, THE TRAVEL PORTION HAS BEEN CUT. EVEN THOUGH OUR COMMISSIONER'S TRAVEL EXPENSES ARE DOWN FROM PREVIOUS YEARS, WE ARE UNABLE TO FIND IN THE DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET FUNDING FOR THIS BOARD TO GAIN A FIRST HAND UNDERSTANDING OF AREAS OF ALASKA IN WHICH WE DON'T LIVE OR MEET.

THE OBVIOUS QUESTIONS WILL BE AROUND COSTS AND WHY THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT TRAVEL THE BOARD IN THE CURRENT BUDGET. PERSONALLY, I CANNOT ANSWER ALL THOSE QUESTIONS, BUT I DO KNOW THAT FOR THE BOARD TO TRAVEL TO RURAL ALASKA WE ARE LOOKING AT \$15-20,000. THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE DEPARTMENT STAFF.

SO I WOULD ASK, NO, I WOULD IMPLOR YOU TO CONSIDER MY REQUEST DURING THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION. IT CERTAINLY WOULD HELP US BECOME AN EVEN MORE EFFECTIVE BOARD.

AND BEFORE I WRAP UP, I NEED TO TELL YOU THAT AS I PUT TOGETHER THIS REPORT, I WAS AMAZED AND PROUD OF WHAT THIS BOARD HAS ACCOMPLISHED. WE ARE A VOLUNTEER BOARD AND WE MEET FACE TO FACE FOUR TIMES A YEAR ONLY. I CONTINUE TO BE VERY PROUD TO SERVE.

[9:50:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRUITT noted three points: 1) The qualifying exam is a minimum standards test and if the approach is to teach to the test it may not maximize a student's abilities to excel; 2) The test is administered in grade 10, once a student has successfully passed it, the challenge would be to maintain continued academic interest and engagement; 3) Some students struggle with test taking, which may be an inhibitor for individuals who otherwise are bright pupils. He asked if anything is being done to minimize these possibly limiting factors.

MS. COX said some students want to know what the minimum classes are that are required. Some students do not test well and may never pass the exam. A high stakes exam, the HSGQE remains a requirement for graduation, as a measure of basic skills. Regarding teaching to the test, she said, the advance placement teachers may take that tack; however, basic skills teachers are going to teach what is required, not necessarily to the test.

[9:57:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE observed that the APS was tailored for the University of Alaska System. He asked whether there was any interest in expanding the awards to include outside schools.

MS. COX replied that the intent was to keep students in-state if possible, based on statistics which indicate how local matriculation leads to students settling in the area.

[9:59:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON suggested that the basic skills should be established prior to high school and the test given in grade eight. She asked whether that has been a consideration.

MS. COX responded that the basic skills become gradually more difficult throughout the grades. The basic skills expected of an eighth grade student would be different than what a grade 10 student would be expected to have attained.

[10:00:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA established that the degree of difference between urban and rural Alaska creates a great divide, particularly in the testing realm. She said it is important to cultivate the diverse skill sets among the population. The current teaching model does not serve the Native culture, she maintained, and said hopelessness ensues in some communities. Urban school children have more support available, but imposing entirely western standards onto the indigenous people is not serving the need that exists.

[10:05:42 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced the next committee meeting.

[10:06:15 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.