

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 9, 2012

8:08 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: CRAIG SCHOOL DISTRICT

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: NIKOLAEVSK SCHOOL MODEL

- HEARD

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 83(EDC)

"An Act providing for payment and loan incentives to public school teachers for national board certification."

- MOVED OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 83

SHORT TITLE: TEACHER BOARD CERTIFICATION INCENTIVES

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

02/04/11	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/04/11	(S)	EDC, FIN
02/14/11	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/14/11	(S)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/16/11	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/16/11	(S)	Heard & Held

02/16/11 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
02/21/11 (S) EDC RPT CS 2DP 1NR SAME TITLE
02/21/11 (S) DP: THOMAS, MEYER
02/21/11 (S) NR: STEVENS
02/21/11 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/21/11 (S) Moved CSSB 83(EDC) Out of Committee
02/21/11 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
02/01/12 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
02/01/12 (S) Heard & Held
02/01/12 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
02/03/12 (S) FIN RPT CS (EDC) 5DP 2NR
02/03/12 (S) DP: HOFFMAN, THOMAS, EGAN, MCGUIRE,
ELLIS
02/03/12 (S) NR: STEDMAN, OLSON
02/03/12 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
02/03/12 (S) Moved CSSB 83(EDC) Out of Committee
02/03/12 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
03/06/12 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
03/06/12 (S) VERSION: CSSB 83(EDC)
03/12/12 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/12/12 (H) EDC, FIN
04/09/12 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

JIM THOMAS, Superintendent
Craig City School District
Craig, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint titled, "Craig City School District."

REPRESENTATIVE PAUL SEATON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the Nikolaevsk School Model.

SENATOR JOE THOMAS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced CSSB 83(EDC), which was sponsored by the Senate Education Committee of which he was the co-chair.

MURRAY RICHMOND, Staff
Senator Joe Thomas
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during discussion of CSSB 83, as aide to the Senate Education Standing Committee.

DOUG WALRATH, Director
Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC)
Nome, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 83.

MICHELLE ACCARDI, Director of State Policy
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
Arlington, Virginia

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 83.

DEENA PARAMO, Superintendent
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 83.

PETE LEWIS, Superintendent
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 83.

STEVE ATWATER, Superintendent
Kenai Peninsula School District
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 83.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:08:53 AM](#)

CHAIR ALAN DICK called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:08 a.m. Representatives Dick, Seaton, P. Wilson, and Feige were present at the call to order. Representatives Kawasaki, Cissna, and Pruitt arrived as the meeting was in progress.

Presentation: Craig School District

[8:09:12 AM](#)

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

[8:10:02 AM](#)

JIM THOMAS, Superintendent, Craig City School District, provided a PowerPoint presentation titled "Craig City School District," and directing attention to slide 1, "Student Profile," said that the district supported 316 students in grades pre K - 12. He shared that there were also correspondence and alternative programs. He reported that, although the elementary and high schools both made adequate yearly progress (AYP), the middle school had required steps to correct the low math scores. He stated that the high school had maintained a 100 percent graduation rate over the last few years, with no drop outs. He declared that there was very high student involvement in extracurricular activities, which included basketball, volleyball, academic decathlon, talent shows, and drama. He moved on to slide 2, "Positive Developments," and touted the increased opportunities for training with construction of the new Prince of Wales' Vocational-Technical Center. He reported that the project was a partnership among all four Prince of Wales school districts, and was currently in the design stage. He lauded that it would provide current technical training for both youth and adults in the community. He listed the training requests for health services, hospitality, welding, construction, and small engine repair from the community. He added that skills' training for a workforce in the mines was also projected. He noted that the new building design would allow flexibility for different training programs.

[8:16:23 AM](#)

MR. THOMAS discussed slide 3, "Energy Cost Reduction," and explained that the energy costs were being reduced by an effective wood heat boiler system, built in partnership with the local timber industry. He noted that this boiler heated the city pool, the elementary school, and the middle school, and was plumbed to heat the Craig Tribal facility. It had already saved the school district more than \$20,000. Directing attention to slide 4, "Challenges," he spoke about the various challenges to the school district: maintaining staffing levels in the current economic climate, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the new Vocational Technical Center, and funding the increased costs for health insurance, transportation, heating, supplies, and food.

[8:19:37 AM](#)

MR. THOMAS, reviewing slide 5, "Challenges," reported that preventive maintenance costs were increasing as the condition of

the buildings deteriorated. He directed attention to the correspondence programs, and its dilemma from students transferring into private schools or home schools, which reduced the correspondence program graduation rate.

[8:21:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked for more information to the aforementioned mercury exposure from the deterioration of the gym floor.

MR. THOMAS responded that the school had reduced the mercury levels to well below the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) standards; however, different studies varied on the toxicity levels and its effects. He said that increased air circulation in the middle school gym, where the mercury was present, had improved the air quality.

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA emphasized the importance for elimination of these types of problems that had the potential for lasting effects on children's health.

[8:24:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked for more detail on the middle school gym floor and the release of mercury.

MR. THOMAS explained that mercury had been used in the adhesive that secured the rubber matting to the floor. He reported that subsequent wear on the floor had caused cracks, which allowed the mercury to be released. He shared that, as the floor settled, the floor cracking was exacerbated. He declared this to be an emergency project because of the potential for long term impact on the students.

[8:26:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the correspondence school was district run, and if the students lived in the district or around the state.

MR. THOMAS replied that the correspondence program had students throughout the state. He reported that the majority of students were home schooled or private schooled.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked if the Craig City School District operated the correspondence program.

MR. THOMAS replied that, even though it was run by the Craig City School District, the correspondence program created a challenge to the school district's graduation rate as many of the seniors transferred to private schools, which affected the correspondence program's graduation rate.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked for a more detailed written explanation for the correspondence program. He asked if the main schools were meeting the AYP.

MR. THOMAS reiterated that all the standards had been met, except the middle school math standard. He pointed out that the standard became more rigorous each year, as 2014 was the target year for 100 percent of the students meeting the AYP.

[8:30:35 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK asked if another gym was available for use.

MR. THOMAS, in response, said that the scheduling made it difficult, and that the Klawock gym floor was also experiencing problems, though not the same problems.

[8:31:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked how old was the gym floor.

MR. THOMAS offered his belief that it was built in 1985.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked whether the floor adhesive would be used today for installation.

MR. THOMAS said that it would not be used.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked if all three school facilities had a gym.

MR. THOMAS replied that there was a gym at the high school, and that the aforementioned middle school gym was also used by the elementary school. In response to Representative P. Wilson, he clarified that the middle school was too far from the high school to use its gym.

Presentation: Nikolaevsk School Model

[8:32:54 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be a presentation on the Nikolaevsk School Model.

[8:33:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PAUL SEATON, Alaska State Legislature, directed attention to a handout, "Warrior World," [Included in members' packets] and explained that this was the model for the Nikolaevsk School, which was the Russian old believer school near Anchor Point. He referred to page 5 of the handout, "Prove It to Me Day," and reported that the district had developed a K-12 program, which offered the opportunity to challenge the mastery of grade level expectations, and then move on to individualized education.

[8:35:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked if the school operated in conjunction with the Kenai Peninsula School District.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON replied that it was a regular school in the Kenai Peninsula School District which was advancing grade level expectations through its innovative methods.

SB 83-TEACHER BOARD CERTIFICATION INCENTIVES

[8:36:42 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the final order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 83 (EDC), "An Act providing for payment and loan incentives to public school teachers for national board certification."

[8:36:48 AM](#)

SENATOR JOE THOMAS, Alaska State Legislature, introduced CSSB 83(EDC), paraphrasing from a prepared statement [Included in members' packets], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Senate Bill 83 is designed to improve teacher quality in the state of Alaska by providing incentives for teachers to become nationally certified.

Senate Bill 83 helps them become certified by providing an interest-free \$2,500 loan to cover the

cost of tuition. If a teacher is from a high poverty, low performing area they get a stipend of \$1,000 to defray additional expenses, such as transportation.

When a teacher becomes nationally certified, they will receive a \$1,000 annual stipend for the duration of the certification period, which is ten years. If a teacher is serving a low performing, high poverty area, they receive an annual stipend of \$1,500.

Some school districts already provide an incentive for teachers who have achieved national certification.

National board certification is a rigorous process. Many people who have gone through the certification process have told us that it is as rigorous as a master's degree.

Better teachers are one of the keys to better education. While we are discussing how to best fund our schools, we should also be talking about how we can make our schools better. Senate Bill 83 will improve the quality of teaching in our state, and I urge you to support this bill.

Greater degrees of teacher training are the primary reasons why other countries have surpassed the US in better student performance. High expectations for teachers have a positive impact on students.

SENATOR THOMAS cited Finland, and its focus on teachers as professionals.

[8:39:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA, noting that need based bills were often sponsored by interest groups, asked what group was supporting this legislation.

SENATOR THOMAS deferred to the upcoming public testimony.

[8:40:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI expressed his support for the additional stipend to low performing, high poverty areas, and asked how the high poverty areas would be identified.

SENATOR THOMAS deferred to Mr. Richmond.

[8:41:26 AM](#)

MURRAY RICHMOND, Staff, Senator Joe Thomas, Alaska State Legislature, clarified that this was the language used in statute by Department of Education and Early Development to identify these areas.

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked if the national board certification was handled by a specific group.

MR. RICHMOND replied that, although no group was mentioned by name, the intent was for the National Board Professional Teaching Standards Certification. He explained that if the group were mentioned by name in the proposed legislation, and subsequently changed their name, then the statute would become invalid.

[8:42:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE questioned whether teachers expected higher compensation with additional certification.

SENATOR THOMAS replied that higher degrees generally resulted in a higher salary and that this certification would also offer that possibility.

MR. RICHMOND added that, although some school districts already provided incentives for nationally board certified teachers, most of the rural districts did not offer incentives.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE expressed his concern for the state becoming involved with salary arrangements between districts and teachers, and asked why a district would not offer this incentive.

SENATOR THOMAS offered his belief that some school districts were not aware of the opportunity, and may require prompting to better understand the importance of the certification and its overall impact for the students.

[8:45:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON referred to the fiscal note, which indicated that participation by 120 teachers was anticipated in the first year, with an additional 21 teachers in each of the

following years. She opined that large school districts could afford the incentive, but she questioned whether rural schools could afford these extra costs.

[8:46:35 AM](#)

SENATOR THOMAS noted that there were not any provisions in the bill to offset the costs to the district, and that it was a decision for each school district.

MR. RICHMOND clarified that the subsidy was paid by the state, not by the school district.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked about the percent of the loan.

MR. RICHMOND replied that it was a zero percent loan.

[8:48:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON pointed out that with the proposed bill, the state paid an incentive to the teachers, instead of asking the school district for payment. He offered his belief that this was a creative approach to provide the best qualified teachers, and he expressed his support.

[8:50:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI stated his support for the intent of the proposed bill, but he expressed his concern for the language, page 1, line 6, that the school district or the department should provide the payment. He asked who would be liable for payment if the legislature did not fund the incentive.

SENATOR THOMAS replied that, should the department not have sufficient funding, subject to appropriation, to make the payment to the school district, then the school district would not be held responsible.

[8:51:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked where the certified teachers were currently employed throughout the state, and if there were demonstrated advances in these schools.

MR. RICHMOND, directing attention to the handout titled "America's partner in growing great schools - 2011 Statistics for Alaska," [Included in members' packets] said that there was

also a report from the NBPTS (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) regarding the effect of the certification for teachers in the schools. He reported that with certification teachers became better leaders in the school, and were more effective with the students.

8:53:37 AM

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked for the duration of the term to the interest free loan.

MR. RICHMOND replied that it was three years.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE offered his belief that teachers did not remain in the rural school districts, as the environment was "fairly adversarial," and the area was often a stepping stone at the beginning of a teaching career. He asked what would keep a teacher from receiving the certification and leaving the rural school district.

SENATOR THOMAS expressed his agreement that there were issues in the rural school districts, and that there was not anything that could force teachers to remain in the rural districts. He clarified that the teachers still had to repay the loan, and would only receive the financial benefit while teaching in the rural district.

MR. RICHMOND reported that the aforementioned study reflected that the board certified teachers had the same retention rates as other teachers.

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA offered her belief that professionals stayed in a community when they were well received and had the opportunity to raise a family.

8:58:20 AM

DOUG WALRATH, Director, Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC), described the process in attaining his certification, and the role it had played in his career. He attested to the rigor and the relevance of the national board certification process. He said that the certification was an opportunity to better oneself, and was not about the financial reward. He noted that he was unaware of national board certification until a state initiative brought it to his attention. He declared that the financial support to complete the program was also an incentive. He lauded the leadership

training from the cross training in the program. He declared his support for SB 83.

9:01:27 AM

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked what incentives were offered by the State of Idaho.

DR. WALRATH said that the biggest incentive was for the payment of the initial enrollment.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked for the cost of the certification process.

DR. WALRATH replied that the program fee was about \$2,500, but that there were other associated costs, such as travel.

9:03:50 AM

MICHELLE ACCARDI, Director of State Policy, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, stated her support for SB 83, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I am a National Board Certified Teacher. I certified in Exceptional Needs in 2005 while I was teaching in New Mexico. I am currently serving as the Director of State Policy for the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on Senate Bill 83, sponsored by Senator Joe Thomas. This bill supports Alaska's National Board program by providing a no-interest loan for teachers seeking National Board Certification and a salary supplement for National Board Certified Teachers. My comments today will focus on the efficacy of the National Board Certification process and why supporting this bill makes sense for Alaska.

For 25 years, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has been at the forefront in establishing the highest measure of teaching excellence. It is the highest recognition of excellence in professional educational practice in the United States. Yet, National Board Certification is not simply about rewarding high quality teaching. As in other professions, such as medicine and law, National Board Certification assures the public that

the people who educate their children are *experts* in their fields and have the skills to help *all* students learn.

The National Board Certification process is sound—but does it work? The answer is an unqualified yes. In the 25 years since the National Board was founded, National Board Certification has become one of the most heavily researched areas in the teaching field.

On June 11, 2008, the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies completed an extensive, multi-year study of National Board Certification. In the most rigorous and comprehensive study to date, the highly respected NRC formally affirmed the National Board's positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention, and professional development. The findings from the NRC study:

Showed that students taught by NBCTs make higher gains on achievement tests than those taught by teachers who have not applied and those who did not achieve certification

Substantiated previous research showing that National Board Certification has a positive impact on teacher retention and that NBCTs are more likely to stay in teaching longer than other teachers

Observed that the National Board Certification process is an effective professional development experience that positively affects teaching practices

Acknowledged that NBPTS Standards and National Board Certification have taken the culture of teaching to a higher level

Several independent studies indicate that students of NBCTs do better on standardized tests than students of non-National Board Certified Teachers.

A study by L. Vandervoort of Arizona State University demonstrated that students of National Board Certified Teachers also showed learning gains equivalent to spending an extra month in school.

Other studies, demonstrate that students of NBCTs exhibit great comprehension of classroom instruction

and better writing abilities and are able to apply knowledge more successfully than students of non-NBCTs.

We have evidence that NBCTs create more challenging curricula, present subject matter in greater depth and provide better feedback. They are also better able to adapt their teaching strategies to reach diverse student learning styles within their classrooms.

The Board Certification process is also a key strategy for helping save and create jobs for effective teachers. A recent report found that the nationwide cost of replacing public school teachers who have dropped out of the profession is \$7.3 billion annually. However, research has shown that up to 90 percent of Board Certified Teachers stay in the classroom. The rigorous standards and assessments of the Board are also being used as a recruitment tool to evaluate the effectiveness of incoming teachers in school districts across the country.

As a recognized leader in defining educator effectiveness, National Board is strengthening its role as a force in school transformation at the national, state and local levels. NBPTS is working in a number of ways to leverage the best practices of National Board into successful school-wide reform, including the following examples:

Implementing a \$27 million Teacher Incentive Fund federal grant that NBPTS received in fall 2010 to reform teacher and principal evaluation and compensation systems in 23 high-need urban and rural schools in Richmond, Virginia and Maine. The key to this school transformation model is its unrelenting focus on infusing National Board best practices into all facets of building teacher and principal excellence - recruitment, development, evaluation, advancement and compensation.

Collaborating with states and districts to implement current and future School Improvement Grants and Race to the Top grants using NBPTS whole school job-embedded professional development.

Teaming up with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help define effective teaching.

Launching an NBPTS Principal Certification program in 2013 to identify effective principals and inform the development of state and district principal evaluation systems.

Developing a new NBPTS teacher evaluation framework to help states and districts improve their educator development and evaluation systems.

Partnering with a number of business and philanthropic organizations, including Amgen, GlaxoSmithKline and Oracle, to specifically focus on enhancing the skills of math and science teachers.

Let me talk a little bit about the National Board program in Alaska. There are currently 135 National Board Certified Teachers in Alaska, with over 40 percent of the state's NBCTs teaching in Anchorage and about 20 percent teaching in Fairbanks. This number represents about 1.5 percent of the Alaska K-12 teaching force, compared to three percent of teachers nationwide. However, Alaska's growth rate last year was 11.6 percent, compared to the national growth rate of 6.9 percent. This is reflected in the new total numbers of NBCTs. In December 2011, fourteen new Alaska teachers earned National Board Certification, tying 2004 for the highest number recorded.

There are several reasons that account for this increase. Especially in a very rural state like Alaska, it is critical to provide high quality candidate support. The process is most impactful when cadres of teachers can pursue the process together. NEA-Alaska has imitated the very successful Jump Start program in Washington state that supports candidates for National Board Certification. Jump Start is a four-day course designed to familiarize participants with the National Board to better prepare them to be successful in the certification process. NEA-Alaska has invested almost \$60,000 in 50 Jump Start attendees over the past three years.

The State Department of Education and Early Development recognizes the value of National Board

Certification as one method of attaining an Alaska Master teaching certificate, and NBCTs are considered highly-qualified. So, Alaska has the foundation from which a strong National Board program can grow and flourish. Senate Bill 83 would put in place the policy to support that growth and to help sustain it.

National Board Certification is one of the most powerful tools to grow and sustain educational excellence in Alaska, but its full potential is far from realized. NBCTs can serve as a means for effective change. For all these reasons—effective teaching, improved learning, teacher retention—I ask you to support Senate Bill 83.

In closing, I want to underscore the *transformative nature* of the National Board Certification process. When asked what's so special about the National Board process, an NBCT I know replies that it is the professional equivalent of becoming a parent. Once you have a child you look at the world differently. In a similar fashion, when a teacher experiences the National Board Certification process, he or she looks at teaching with new eyes.

[9:09:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked what the failure rate was for the certification process.

MS. ACCARDI indicated that the one to three year process had about a 70 percent completion rate, with a slightly lower rate for the exceptional needs area.

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked if there were other national professional boards that would be competitive with this program.

MS. ACCARDI replied that NBPTS was the only organization providing this certification.

[9:11:34 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK noted that, even as a long time teacher, he was not aware of this program until it was brought forward by this proposed legislation.

[9:11:59 AM](#)

DEENA PARAMO, Superintendent, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, stated her support for SB 83, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I am testifying today in support of SB83.

Please know that I strongly believe:

1. The National Board Certification assists teachers in becoming more effective.
2. The National Board Certification improves student learning and engagement.

The National Board Certification is a rigorous process for which teachers engage to improve their instruction. A main focus of the National Board Certification process is on teacher reflection---specifically, reflection on a teacher's own skills and knowledge in teaching and his/her effectiveness.

In addition to the writing and research necessary for the certification, throughout the process, teachers must video tape classroom lessons to submit as entries to be scored. The National Board then analyzes various components of the lesson including lesson goals, evidence of student learning, and evidence of engagement to assist the teacher in seeing his/her teaching more objectively. The instructor him or herself, then learns to analyze his/her lesson with a critical eye.

Watching students' actions and reactions in various lessons also helps identify effective teaching strategies that increase critical thinking and engagement and those practices that diminish student achievement. This process of observing, identifying, and practicing helps continue to improve teaching approaches in the classroom to influence positive changes and increase success for students.

Overall, National Board is all about building & enduring, reflective practices that ultimately improve instruction and learning. MSBSD sees that SB83 is about honoring and placing value on effective teaching practices, not strictly tenure or experience.

MSBSD has 10 teachers (out of 1200) who currently hold certification through the National Board. MSBSD does award stipends for National Board Certification as well. I can attest that the MSBSD teachers who hold the certification get results in student achievement.

9:14:54 AM

PETE LEWIS, Superintendent, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, stated his support for SB 83, and noted that the previous testimony had covered the key elements of the NBPTS process. He declared that "having solid staff development and training does make a difference." He touted the NBPTS process as rigorous, and led to better instruction and improved student achievement. He expressed his agreement to recognize this with a financial stipend and the loan program.

9:16:02 AM

STEVE ATWATER, Superintendent, Kenai Peninsula School District, stated support for SB 83, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I am calling in to testify in support of CS SB 83. I encourage you to pass this bill out of committee. One of the expectations that I have for all the employees of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is that they will work to improve their job performance. On the Kenai we recognize the importance of professional development and have spent a lot of time refining our professional development processes. I am pleased to note that our teachers report that our work in this area is helping them better meet the learning needs of our 9,000 students. Representative Seaton's remarks this morning are evidence of this. But as you know, much of a teacher's professional development is pursued independently of the home school district. And while teachers' PD work away from the districts is well intentioned, it does not always lead to the desired increase in student learning. I believe however, that our teachers who receive their national board certification consistently have excellent evaluations and good student results.

The five core propositions for national board certification include teachers working as a part of learning communities. It is well established that teachers who collaborate with one another are more effective than those who do not. I mention this because increasing the level of Teacher collaboration is one of our district goals. Adding board certified teachers will thus allow a district to reap benefits beyond the immediate teacher's classroom, it will lead to other teachers learning from the board certified teacher. It is fair then to assume, that the addition of board certified teachers to a district will help several other teachers improve their craft.

As you know, there is a lot of conversation about raising standards as a way to improve education. And while this is a necessary part of the school improvement equation, in itself, it is not enough. We must also improve our teachers' pedagogical skills. I believe that the rigorous national board certification process is an excellent way to do this. I know that it will help our teachers meet our student's learning needs.

In closing, I am convinced that increasing the number of board certified teachers in Alaska will lead to a higher level of achievement for our state's students, I encourage you to pass this bill.

Finally, I want to end my testimony with a comment from one of our board certified teachers. The certification process is what makes a person a better teacher, not the certificate. Teachers that start the certification process are good teachers, but the process helps them analyze and articulate their teaching. To name a few things: I found myself having to articulate how I knew a student was engaged during a classroom lecture, I had to analyze how I assessed all students, how I accounted for diversity, I had to show that I was an active member in my profession, I had to video tape several lessons, analyze them and speak to the lessons. All this reflection and analyzing made me look at what it was about my teaching that made me a good teacher. Many times teachers work at a level of unconscious competence, where they do things very well but maybe don't even have to think about what it is they do. This process

requires a teacher to be conscious of this and reflect on what it is that they do well and not so well. This process also made me very aware of areas I am weak in and had to improve upon. The time required to complete this process is immense but the benefits are tremendous.

[9:19:22 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK closed public testimony.

[9:19:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA stated her support for SB 83.

[9:19:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE moved to report CSSB 83(EDC) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSSB 83(EDC) was reported from the House Education Standing Committee.

[9:21:29 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:21 a.m.