

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 19, 2014

8:11 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Lynn Gattis, Chair
Representative Lora Reinbold, Vice Chair
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Sam Kito III (Alternate)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Harriet Drummond

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Maureen van Wagner, Appointee
David Piazza, Appointee

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

State Board of Education and Early Development

Kathleen Yarr, Appointee
Kenneth Gallahorn, Appointee
Barbara Thompson, Appointee

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 341

"An Act relating to school construction and major maintenance funding; relating to school design standards."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 9

Urging the commissioner of education and early development and the state Board of Education and Early Development to delay implementation of statewide education standards.

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 341

SHORT TITLE: SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN & FUNDING

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) MILLETT

02/26/14	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/26/14	(H)	EDC, FIN
03/19/14	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HR 9

SHORT TITLE: DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF ED STANDARDS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) T.WILSON

01/21/14	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/14	(H)	EDC
03/19/14	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

MAUREEN VAN WAGNER, Appointee

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Department of Education and Early Development (EED)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee during the confirmation hearing.

DAVID PIAZZA, Superintendent

Southwest Region School District; Appointee

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Department of Education and Early Development (EED)

Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the confirmation hearing.

KATHLEEN YARR, Appointee

State Board of Education and Early Development

Department of Education and Early Development (EED)

Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and answered questions as an appointee to the State Board of Education and Early Development.

KENNETH GALLAHORN, Appointee

State Board of Education and Early Development
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)
Kotzebue, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the State Board of Education and Early Development.

BARBARA THOMPSON, Appointee
State Board of Education and Early Development
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)
Douglas, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the State Board of Education.

VASILIOS GIALOPSOS, Staff
Representative Charisse Millett
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of the prime sponsor, Representative Charisse Millet, to introduce HB 341.

STACY SCHUBERT, Director
Governmental Affairs & Public Relations
Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)
Department of Revenue (DOR)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of HB 341.

JOHN ANDERSON, Program Officer
Weatherization
Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)
Department of Revenue
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of HB 341.

RYAN COLGAN, Chief Programs Officer
Cold Climate Housing Research Center
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a PowerPoint on the Cold Climate Housing Research Center during the discussion of HB 341.

REPRESENTATIVE TAMMIE WILSON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as prime sponsor of HR 9.

STEWART MCDONALD, Superintendent

Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD)
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HR 9.

PEGGY COWAN, Superintendent
North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD)
Barrow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified, during the hearing on HR 9.

SUNNY HILTS, President
Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)
Seldovia, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of HR 9.

MIKE COONS
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HR 9.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:11:37 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN GATTIS called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 10:11 a.m. Representatives Reinbold, Kito III, P. Wilson, Saddler, Seaton, and Gattis were present at the call to order.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

[8:11:54 AM](#)

CHAIR GATTIS announced that the first order of business would be confirmation hearings.

[8:12:50 AM](#)

MAUREEN VAN WAGNER, Appointee, Professional Teaching Practices Commission, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), as appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, stated that she was born and raised in New Jersey. She spent nine years teaching in New Jersey and has just finished teaching special education for nine years at East High School. She relayed that her students are emotionally and behaviorally disturbed.

MS. VAN WAGNER explained the number one reason she wishes to serve is that first, she is honored that the NEAAK nominated

her, and second, she believes she can give a fair and unbiased point of view to all the cases brought before the commission. Additionally, it will give her a better understanding of the process. She views this service as a major responsibility and anticipated she will be able to perform well.

8:14:20 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked for her experience and view on applied behavior analysis (ABA).

MS. VAN WAGNER answered that applied behavior analysis (ABA) isn't something she teaches, but she has worked with teachers who have used ABA with autistic students, and it can be helpful for understanding social skills. She indicated that it is a good program and an opportunity for students with severe behavior problems or those on the autistic spectrum to understand how things work, to participate in discrete trials, and be taught social skills and pragmatic language as well as chances to practice. Many of her students don't have the opportunity to practice and understand what is accepted and socially acceptable. She said it isn't something she uses at East High School, although if she was teaching at the behavior school, applied behavior analysis would be used.

8:15:37 AM

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked for further clarification on her sentiment with respect to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative.

MS. VAN WAGNER replied that the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has been a little nebulous since it can be a little confusing, depending on the media information source, as to what it really means. She views them as standards, and standards are important; however, the way the standards are implemented can vary. For example, a special education teacher will implement the CCSS differently than a general education advanced placement teacher would. Thus far, she hasn't heard anything negative but discussions about the best way to implement them.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD commented that budgets are tight. She asked for further clarification on what efficiencies she can offer.

MS. VAN WAGNER agreed that resources need to be conserved. She acknowledged some money is spent that shouldn't but more money

should be spent on some items. She felt comfortable reviewing options.

[8:18:21 AM](#)

DAVID PIAZZA, Superintendent, Southwest Region School District; Appointee, Professional Teaching Practices Commission, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), stated that he is the superintendent for the Southwest Region School District. He looked forward to bringing his experience of 29 years of service in Alaska public education. He was raised in Washington State and traveled to Unalakleet right after college and worked in the Bering Strait School District. He has spent the past 17 years at Southwest Region School District. He related that as role models, providing instruction and guidance to the next generation, it is imperative that teachers and administrators adhere to the code of ethics. He acknowledged the importance of PTPC since it provides educators with training to help prevent violations as well as to serve as an avenue for accused individuals to receive a fair and impartial review before any career-impacting sanctions are imposed. He offered his belief that he could listen to and consider the facts presented and work with the commission members to ensure the integrity of the teaching profession remains at the highest level. He thanked the governor for the appointment and looks forward to the chance to serve in this capacity.

CHAIR GATTIS thanked him for his work.

[8:20:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked him to identify anything that should be changed and for his goals.

MR. PIAZZA answered that funding and the proper use of funding in the schools to make the maximum use of the allocated educational dollars at the district is important, with a focus on ensuring the dollars are spent in the classroom.

[8:21:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked for his recommendations for bringing more resources to the classroom.

MR. PIAZZA responded that the superintendent works with the administrative staff and shares leadership responsibility to

find efficiencies and use programs that show promise or have previously worked.

8:22:52 AM

KATHLEEN YARR, Appointee, State Board of Education and Early Development, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), said she lives in Ketchikan, and first came to Alaska in 1984 to teach high school in Metlakatla. She taught for two years and returned to school to earn her Master's degree. She has been working as the Director, Social Services, for the Ketchikan Indian community. She has also worked for the University of Alaska as the coordinator of student services. She has performed academic and personal counseling with students, and served as an adjunct faculty. In addition she has taught school in Ketchikan. She has developed a broad background in working with at-risk students and to draw them back to the school system to help them graduate with a GED [General Education Development], an alternative school, or on the right path. KIC has the vocational technical center and encourages at-risk kids to participate as undergraduates and young adults. Her family is Alaska Native and emphasized the importance of students feeling a sense of belonging, a sense of ownership, and to feel appreciated.

8:25:40 AM

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked what her positions are in terms of the implementation and effect the academic standards, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will have on students. She further asked for her positions on the budget issues. She has been looking for ways to streamline the system without adversely impacting morale and teacher resources.

MS. YARR answered that she would suggested having more well-trained aides holding a para-professional certificate with two years of experience in the classroom, perhaps in an apprenticeship program. She favored an apprenticeship-type program for teachers, perhaps spending half their time in the classroom, so fulltime teachers know what to do. She also encouraged more work with students that have reading disorders, such as dyslexia to develop and improve literacy skills. She suggested children who can't read by the third grade should have specialized plans to bring up their skill levels.

CHAIR GATTIS said the committee members were nodding in agreement on the importance of children being able to read.

MS. YARR suggested changes need to happen at the university level. She offered that technology is fine, including smart boards, an iPad, or a computer as kids will quickly develop proficiency and surpass adults. One of the measures President Obama has undertaken has been verbal communication and encouraging parents to talk to their children. She described variations in colors to illustrate how children can learn to differentiate. She has been focused on the "Parents as Teachers Program" and bringing the parents to work with their children to develop vocabulary at an early age.

[8:30:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON acknowledged her experience with at-risk students. She asked her to identify any key aspects for success for students.

MS. YARR answered sports is a double-edged sword since it can keep students in school; however, steps need to be taken to ensure these students are eligible to play, perhaps employing highly-qualified aides to assist. She supported teaching respect since bullying and exclusion can be harmful. Thus, inclusion is important and looking for opportunities to help students be the best they can be and discouraging them from trying to be someone else.

[8:32:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KITO III recognized that she spent time recruiting students for university programs. He asked for some of the challenges in recruiting Alaska Native students for the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program.

MS. YARR responded that when she was recruiting students for Preparing Indigenous Teachers & Administrators for Alaska Schools (PITAS), one barrier is higher math in smaller schools. She spoke to her own limitations in teaching math. In the past, many students have been limited from qualifying for programs, but digital teaching with highly qualified teachers can help. She recognized the difficulty Native youth have in visualizing the future beyond village life. She advocated support and highlighted alternatives to help youth discover and develop their interests. She reminded members of the suicide rate and substance abuse for Alaska Natives in the villages. She favored exposing students to opportunities, which is why the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) is such an

important program. It offers exposure to different careers and encourages math skills.

CHAIR GATTIS said she appreciated Ms. Yarr's passion.

[8:36:27 AM](#)

KENNETH GALLAHORN, Appointee, State Board of Education and Early Development, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), stated he is a life-long Alaskan from Kotzebue and served on a regional school board for a term and a half in the 1990s. He feels passionately about education and has two daughters, one is a college graduate, and the other is a junior at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

[8:37:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked for the perspective that he will bring to his duties at the State Board of Education.

MR. GALLAHORN answered that he did not have any specific training for the board. He emphasized his desire to help all children succeed.

CHAIR GATTIS remarked he can bring his experience of being in the Kotzebue area to the board.

[8:38:57 AM](#)

BARBARA THOMPSON, Appointee, State Board of Education and Early Development, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), provided a brief biography, focusing on her work as a teacher for over 31 years. She first came to Alaska in 1977, moving from San Diego to Bethel. She has served in other parts of Alaska and Washington State. She has focused on adult education and moved to Juneau in 1981. She retired from the state EED in 2008. She worked with the Denver Education Commission of the States, examining national and international educational policies. She has been an instructor, has implemented programs, and has a familiarity with all state and federal education programs. She understands how good policy gets implemented in states and in other countries.

CHAIR GATTIS commented she has attended some Education Commission of the States' seminars.

[8:41:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD surmised she has been following the "pushback" on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). She asked for clarification on whether she would be open to alternatives for these standards.

MS. THOMPSON replied she was familiar with the initiation of the development of the current Common Core State Standards (CCSS), noting 46 states signed onto them. They are in various stages of implementation or not. Alaska did not adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) but has undergone a comprehensive process to develop state academic standards.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked if she has compared the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to Alaska's academic standards.

MS. THOMPSON answered no; but she related her understanding that the Alaska standards are of equal or greater rigor. She supported the state taking control of its assessments and standards and has not relied on other assessment consortia.

[8:42:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KITO III noted he has previously worked with Ms. Thompson. He asked whether she had a vision for the board.

MS. THOMPSON answered that her initial thoughts on policies include following through with school choice, which could prove to be effective and also cost effective for the state. She emphasized her focus on teacher preparation, teacher education, and teacher certification. She would like to ensure the university system makes sense and that the university uses the best practices. She hoped the board would also scrutinize other states and countries that possess higher retention rates and better success in the classroom attributed to teacher effectiveness.

[8:44:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON also recalled when Ms. Thompson was Acting Interim Commissioner [of EED]. She asked for further clarification on the global application. She agreed the university needs to use best practices and the importance of updating teaching methods for training educators. She asked for further clarification on anything she thinks would be useful in this area.

MS. THOMPSON stated that from an international perspective, teacher education programs are sometimes more restrictive in screening, longer in length, and provide a deeper understanding of what to bring to the classroom. She has found when these teachers are finished with their programs, they are better prepared to deal with students and the individual needs of all students in the classroom. She acknowledged that Alaska has some great teachers, but she's looking forward to the new crop of teachers and using an approach of teacher preparedness so teachers can help every student in every classroom. She has observed this approach in other countries, she said.

[8:46:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD related her understanding that the Common Core State Standards are very similar to Alaska's standards. She asked whether these standards have been internationally benchmarked or implemented in another country.

MS. THOMPSON was not aware that they have been internationally benchmarked or implemented in any other country.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked whether that causes concern. She asked whether the U.S. is embarking on an expensive experiment and would like assurances that she is open to alternatives.

MS. THOMPSON answered that other countries have created their own standards, which is why she isn't surprised that our standards are not adopted by other countries. She offered her belief that everyone is re-examining the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and how they will be implemented or if states will implement them. The assessments being created for the CCSS are not yet completed. Thus, a great deal is unknown about the CCSS.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD expressed concern about the potential cost of the tests. She emphasized the importance of disclosure and using innovative solutions. She said the most important thing is to empower teachers to ignite the spark in the classroom and not box teachers in. Finally, she hoped the board would help find solutions to reduce education costs in Alaska.

[8:49:44 AM](#)

MS. THOMPSON related she has attended one board meeting and felt comfortable that the board members will voice concerns and cost effectiveness is a concern for everyone on the board at this

time. She concluded by saying that the board is interested in effective education that reaches all children while "living within our means."

[8:50:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD moved to advance the confirmation of Maureen van Wagner and David Piazza, appointees to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission; and Kathleen Yarr, Barbara Thompson and Kenneth Gallahorn, appointees to the Board of Education and Early Development, to a joint session of the House and Senate for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmations were advanced.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD reminded members that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflect individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and that the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

HB 341-SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN & FUNDING

[8:51:16 AM](#)

CHAIR GATTIS announced that the final order of business would be HB 341, "An Act relating to school construction and major maintenance funding; relating to school design standards."

[8:51:26 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:51 a.m. to 8:56 a.m.

[8:56:08 AM](#)

VASILIOS GIALOPSOS, Staff, Representative Charisse Millett, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of the prime sponsor, stated that HB 341 is an outcome of the sponsor's participation in the House Education Sustainable Task Force and her interest in obtaining efficiencies in construction, major renovations, and rehabilitation of school buildings. This stems from the basic philosophy that budget reduction means considering whether funds will fund programs or facility construction. There needs to be a real conversation about the source of construction. In 2012, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) took advantage of funds received from the American Reinvestment Recovery Act (ARRA) as well as AHFC's own funds to conduct the most comprehensive audit of public schools and facilities in general

in the state. He characterized some of their findings as extraordinary. He acknowledged that this bill needs serious revision, but the legislative intent is not to use a "cookie cutter" approach since the geographical and climactic diversity of Alaska could never yield the types of desired outcomes. One goal is to ensure that buildings being built do not need serious upgrades five years later. The AHFC and the Cold Climate Housing Research Center can help provide objective and measurable criteria and outcomes.

[8:59:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KITO III asked whether Alaska Housing Finance Corporation will offer the presentation.

[9:00:00 AM](#)

STACY SCHUBERT, Director, Governmental Affairs & Public Relations, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), Department of Revenue (DOR), described the work that AHFC has been recognized for with energy rebate, weatherization, and energy efficiency in homes. In 2010, AHFC received federal funds through the ARRA, which were used to consider energy efficiency in public facilities and schools throughout the state. The AHFC examined 1,200 buildings and performed investment grade audits on 327 buildings. This effort resulted in a white paper on energy use in Alaska's public facilities [included in members' packets]. She provided a brief overview of today's presentation.

[9:01:28 AM](#)

JOHN ANDERSON, Program Officer, Weatherization, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), Department of Revenue, presented a PowerPoint on HB 341. He stated that in 2010 Senate Bill 220 established this process for AHFC by establishing a \$250 million revolving loan fund for energy efficiency improvements on public facilities [slide 2]. The AHFC used ARRA funds, which fit well with the AHFC's efforts. Ms. Schubert mentioned the AHFC reviewed 1,200 buildings using a benchmarking process, the initial review of a building, as well as seeking two years of energy data when available. That effort identified high energy use buildings and AHFC conducted American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) level two audits on 327 buildings. The AHFC developed the Alaska Retrofit Information System (ARIS) database, a clearinghouse for information on Alaska buildings to track energy use in buildings

throughout the state [slide 3]. Many organizations, such as the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and some schools are using ARIS to track energy use.

9:04:00 AM

MR. ANDERSON stated that the Building Energy Efficiency Standard (BEES) is at the core of AHFC. All of the projects that AHFC funds must meet certain standards, including the energy and structural codes. Tied to the Building Energy Efficiency Standard (BEES) is the Home Energy Rating System (HERS), noting the AHFC has invested considerable funds to develop its software program.

9:04:53 AM

MR. ANDERSON described the assessment process [slide 5]. The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) process or the benchmarking process provides standardized audit processes. He reported 327 of 1,200 buildings examined were identified as the highest energy use buildings and investment grade audits were done to gather and analyze data and report the findings. The AHFC spent \$7.2 million over a two-year period. The AHFC provided the University of Alaska a \$1 million grant to audit its facilities. Additionally, another \$10 million was passed on to DOT&PF for audits on its facilities. Over 5,000 facilities exist resulting in energy use costs totaling \$641 million annually. The 32 audits resulted in significant savings of \$14.7 million just from changing windows, control modifications, and adding insulation. One discovery was that the age of the building had little correlation to energy use so new doesn't always mean efficient [slide 6]. Additional analysis is still being completed to provide information for a comprehensive commercial outcomes report, he said.

MR. ANDERSON related the AHFC headquarters building was purchased in 2011, following a 14-year lease. The AHFC completed a heating and ventilation retrofit, roofing upgrades, and exterior lighting and control systems. Currently, the AHFC has realized a 40 percent savings on gas and 30 percent in electrical use [slide 7].

MR. ANDERSON reviewed the overall energy audit recommendations, including appropriately sized new buildings, establish a level of accountability, meter and track energy use data, and

consolidate facility use where possible. One challenge was to obtain accurate costs for components of facilities since some buildings did not have individual meters to provide the specific information.

[9:11:08 AM](#)

MR. ANDERSON indicated the recommendations for building design, that a design should take certain aspects into consideration, including: life-cycle cost of building components and equipment, especially in areas with high energy costs; building use, system sizes, controlled ventilation, and lighting to maximize efficiency, and reduction of excessive glass and maximize daylight harvesting. He reported the average age of the buildings audited was 30 years.

MS. SCHUBERT estimated the savings for the 5,000 buildings across the state could be in excess of \$125 million each year. She directed attention to Senate Bill 220, which passed the legislature in 2010, which required AHFC create a revolving loan fund for energy efficiency improvements for public facilities. This program is available for municipalities and school districts, she said.

[9:14:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KITO III directed attention to slide 4, to the HERS and BEES standards. He related his understanding that the Department of Education and Early Development (EED) has not adopted the BEES standards, but the department has adopted ASHRAE 90.1.

MR. ANDERSON answered that is correct. The BEES standards are stringent, but the AHFC also accepts the ASHRAE 90.1 standard, which has also been adopted by the DOT&PF and some other agencies. In further response to a question, he agreed the amendments to the BEES standards are Alaska specific.

[9:15:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KITO III referred to slide [8] entitled "Overall Energy Audit Recommendations." Referring to the recommendation that the department appropriately size new buildings, he commented that the EED's control over school construction is based on the square footage allowed for the number of students. The district doesn't have control over the student increases or decreases, and fluctuating student population creates challenges

for districts. He suggested that the party paying the utility bill is not in the school, which disconnects school personnel from the costs since the administrator might not know the lights were on all night in the facility. He suggested one way to connect costs could be to include energy monitoring equipment in the schools' common areas so the school principal, teachers, students, and parents can view energy use, identify costs, and try to reduce them. He asked for further clarification on the applicability for the Leadership and Energy Efficiency Design (LEED) standards outside of the urban centers and whether the LEED standard could be a tool in Alaska to increase energy efficiency.

MR. ANDERSON answered that LEED is a good process but it is restricted to site and materials and there is a benefit to allow that analysis; however, modeling is probably a better way to obtain energy costs. He agreed using LEED as an up-front process would be beneficial and something he supports.

[9:19:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON noted energy standards are important but all of the LEED standards may not make sense. He related a scenario that illustrated the LEED process could still result in inefficient energy when built in Alaska since the LEEDS process balances other aspects, not just energy use.

CHAIR GATTIS commented that LEED has merits. She expressed frustration over the system, primarily, noting that the state spends hundreds of millions, that the intentions are often good; however, efficiencies need to happen. She appreciated the sponsor bringing this bill forward and she sees it as the next step in saving money for schools.

[9:22:06 AM](#)

MS. SCHUBERT said HB 341 would make AHFC a consultant in the process for developing schools. The AHFC understood that when the revolving loan fund was created that it would take time to implement. She acknowledged that AHFC has held good discussions with the DOT&PF, in particular, as well as with other agencies.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON directed attention to the white paper, entitled "A White Paper on Energy Use in Alaska's Public Facilities. She highlighted that pages 7-22 provide targeted recommendations. She said she will be certain to distribute them to her district superintendents and city managers.

[9:23:35 AM](#)

MS. SCHUBERT encouraged members to visit the AHFC's website [ahfc.us] that includes all of the audits performed in Alaska to gain a better understanding of the potential in communities and in schools.

MR. ANDERSON, regarding building monitoring, interjected that the AHFC is currently working on its own facility and will develop a software program that will be available to public entities as an online resource that will assist agencies in monitoring their own facilities.

[9:25:58 AM](#)

RYAN COLGAN, Chief Programs Officer, Cold Climate Housing Research Center, first said Mr. Hebert apologizes for not being present since he very much wanted to participate. He said that tremendous potential to reduce energy costs in Alaska exists. He explained the Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization formed by the Alaska State Homebuilding Association (ASHBA) in 1999 to address the challenges of building in Alaska's extreme environment through applied research, policy research, design consulting and other means. Alaskans tend to take on the challenges themselves and not wait for others. The CCHRC does this through advanced modeling, applied research, product testing, policy research, and performs design and consulting and provides construction mentoring services throughout the state. He characterized his organization as being "problem solvers" who solve problems through collaboration with stakeholders.

MR. COLGAN referred to a familiar image of a map of Alaska superimposed on the Lower 48 [slide 1]. This image illustrates how remote and diverse the communities of Alaska are, which is important in terms of standards. He characterized the necessary approach as being not focused on the "cookie cutter" but on the cookie recipe. Another factor to consider in Alaska is the logistics since it is difficult to get to construction sites in many places [slide 2]. Additionally, the work itself can be difficult due to the environmental conditions [slide 3].

[9:30:46 AM](#)

MR. COLGAN said one of Alaska's assets is that the state consists of problem solvers, which is inherent in its people

[slide 4]. In fact, it is necessary to problem solve in order to survive in parts of Alaska [slides 5-6]. Not only do animals need to have problem solving skills, but people do, too, and this slide illustrates the collaborative nature of problem solving.

MR. COLGAN turned to slide 6, entitled "How does CCHRC Solve Problems?" The CCHRC first seeks to understand the problem, gathers information, and identifies solutions; basically this is the research process. He showed some slides that illustrate the types of problems encountered, including snow drifting, heat loss, and mold and rot due to an aging building [slides 6-8].

MR. COLGAN said that CCHRC gathers information through peers, those who have researched and found solutions, and through advanced modeling, applied research, and demonstration or applying what is known and observing it in the real world [slides 9-11]. The CCHRC identifies solutions, such as developing a number of wall systems to address the challenges of constructing building envelopes to meet the environmental challenges, logistical design or construction, and dealing with water or wastewater [slides 12-13].

MR. COLGAN reported that CCHRC communicates with end users and has about 50,000 hits per year on its website, 20,000 hits per year on its blog for homeowners, and 200,000 views on the website podcasts [slides 14-16]. He described the CCHRC's facility as a 22,000 square foot building that represents the farthest north platinum LEED building in the world [slide 18]. It represents what is possible and achievable with research and smart application. He reviewed the problem solving approach used by the CCHRC in the context of where the state is at [slide 19]. In terms of understanding the problem, the state understands the challenges: high energy costs in some public facilities and budget deficits create a long-term burden on the state's budget. The state has gathered information through benchmark information, investment grade audits, and a white paper on public facilities. He recommended members read the white paper, which he characterized as a very good document. The state has identified solutions, through the AHFC's revolving loan fund, holding conversations on standards, and many of its stakeholders are already collaborating in various ways.

CHAIR GATTIS stated that public testimony would be kept open.

[HB 341 was held over.]

HR 9-DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF ED STANDARDS

[9:37:26 AM](#)

CHAIR GATTIS announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 9, Urging the commissioner of education and early development and the state Board of Education and Early Development to delay implementation of statewide education standards.

[9:37:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HR 9, labeled 28-LS1224\U, Mischel, 3/18/14, as the working document.

[9:38:15 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

CHAIR GATTIS asked to have the motion restated, including the version.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HR 9, Version U, labeled 28-LS1224\U, Mischel, 3/18/14 as the working document. There being no objection, Version U was before the committee.

[9:39:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TAMMIE WILSON, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HR 9, said this resolution came about as a result of frustration. The state considers the cost to the state when considering policy changes but it doesn't consider the cost to local municipalities or schools. She pointed out the significant changes ranging from teacher evaluations, standardized testing, and implementing new standards. These changes may adversely affect school districts depending on the curriculum the districts are currently using and how the new standards differ. The original version of HR 9 reflected her interest in just delaying or halting the process to allow districts time to evaluate costs. She reported that the task force contacted districts and initially found frustration mounting, but since then some adapting has occurred. Still, some districts expressed concern that they may not have enough time to get everything in place quickly enough. Thus, the proposed committee substitute, Version U, requests a cost

analysis for implementing educational standards, noting that the costs will vary between districts. Secondly, Version U requests that the department and the State Board of Education help districts transition to the new requirements. This will help to assess whether districts can implement new curriculum and new methods of teaching so districts can accurately assess student levels rather than student scores reflecting that the districts didn't have enough time to change teaching methods, which were extensively revised.

CHAIR GATTIS suggested the standards imposed may represent unfunded mandates.

[9:43:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON said a major aspect is that teachers are being asked to teach at a higher standard and to have them do so means the department and districts must provide massive in-service teacher training. She expressed concern that teachers will not be sufficiently ready. Teacher training represents a high cost for the state and the department does not currently have the funding for this training. Further, she emphasized the importance of having the university provides training so new teachers will be using best practices. She suggested it might be good to have some delay in implementing the new standards.

[9:45:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON added that it isn't just the more rigorous standards, but the student testing has also changed and is more in-depth testing so the analysis is different, too. She characterized it as being similar to changing from multiple choice tests to in-depth essays. In addition, techniques for teaching styles have also changed. She has received positive feedback on the changes, especially for teacher evaluation, but the time required for implementation is an issue. She suggested that perhaps delaying implementing new testing to allow for a transition year. She said, "We are teaching to the test." In a sense, the training in most professions leads to passing the test. She would like to ensure that the teachers and students have adequate time to make the changes. Finally, the state formula allows changes to occur every six years. She asked whether the districts have budgeted costs to change their curriculum. She maintained her concern on whether administrators have time to go through the process to make the changes.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON maintained interest in ensuring appropriate training for the teachers.

[9:49:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD offered her belief that changes should be suspended pending broad community feedback. She suggested that the legislature should have a 10-year cost evaluation period, including costs for the waiver, implementation, aligning the curriculum to the CCSS, teacher training, assessment costs, and individual district impacts. In addition, she expressed interest in the classroom time necessary to implement the standards. She maintained her interest in delaying the changes for stated reasons and to obtain feedback on a national level.

[9:51:37 AM](#)

CHAIR GATTIS opened public testimony on HR 9.

[9:51:49 AM](#)

STEWART MCDONALD, Superintendent, Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD), recalled a paper in which he has written an article about the changes being implemented today in schools and the effects that are experienced. He said patience is important, especially when student scores drop, due to transition. The drop is a necessary part of the forward movement. As teachers practice the new standards it can be sloppy and tough; however, delaying the progress will be hurtful, he said. Further, attaching performance to funding is a mistake. It is important to continue to move forward, he said.

[9:55:19 AM](#)

PEGGY COWAN, Superintendent, North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD), said the district embraces the new national standards. The NSBSD has been committed to the rigor reflected in the new state standards. She acknowledged the intent is for students to be capable as students in other states so uniformity is important. She clarified that the NSBSD is not in favor of standardization. She emphasized that implementation will be applied in a relevant manner and context to North Slope students. She expressed concern about the costs, but stated the standards represent the foundation of reform. If the standards are delayed the teacher evaluations also will need to be

delayed. Moving back would be demoralizing to the teachers who have spent years being trained and significant time developing units. Thus, it's important to continue the momentum in implementing the standards. She urged members to stay the course to ensure that Alaska's students are competitive in the state and in the nation.

[9:59:13 AM](#)

SUNNY HILTS, President, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), expressed similar concerns, but said the district has been working for two years to realign the curriculum to meet the standards. Currently, districts face morale challenges due to the uncertainty of funding. She offered her belief that changing course right now on the standards would be further discouragement. Although shift was difficult, the teachers and the district were physically tested, and the process was costly, the district made it. Everyone made this effort to provide the best education for students. She emphasized that delay will not give them that best education, will mean returning to inferior standards, and create confusion. She hoped the committee will encourage districts across the state to move forward with the program and implement the new standards. She requested the state provide assistance to districts during this process. She concluded by saying that the [Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's] teachers are ready and they have been looking forward to this for several years.

[10:01:03 AM](#)

MIKE COONS offered his belief that if students can't meet today's standards that there aren't assurances they have the ability to pass the new [statewide education performance standards, described as college and career readiness standards adopted by the State Board of Education]. He expressed concern about how this may affect children's self-esteem and ego, and said that teaching to the test is not a good practice. He considered the new standards to be another federal unfunded mandate. He stated that he fully endorses HR 9.

CHAIR GATTIS closed public testimony on HR 9.

[10:02:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON responded to comments by first pointing out the committee substitute [Version U] is before the committee. Initially, the intent of HR 9 was to delay

implementation, but the committee substitute, Version U, calls for costs to districts to implement the changes and to ensure a smooth transition to allow all districts to implement the changes. Some smaller districts have more difficulty adopting the new performance standards due to limited resources and this will provide for transition time to ensure that students are tested on their knowledge, she said.

[10:03:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked for further clarification on the length of the transition time.

[HR 9 was held over.]

[10:04:03 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.