

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 16, 2013  
8:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair  
Senator Mike Dunleavy, Vice Chair  
Senator Bert Stedman  
Senator Charlie Huggins  
Senator Berta Gardner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

REGULATIONS LINKING TEACHER EVALUATIONS AND STUDENT TESTING

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record.

**WITNESS REGISTER**

MIKE HANLEY, Commissioner  
Department of Education & Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Addressed the new regulation that pertained to linking teacher evaluations and student testing.

JIM MERRINER, Chair  
Alaska State Board Of Education & Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation.

BRUCE JOHNSON, PhD, Executive Director  
Alaska Council of School Administrators  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation.

ROB THOMASON, President  
Alaska Council of School Administrators

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation.

CARL ROSE, Executive Director  
Association of Alaska School Boards  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Addressed the potential implications from the new evaluation regulation.

JOHN PILE, Executive Director  
Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals  
North Pole, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Did not provide testimony.

JOHN POTHAST, President  
Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation and provided options to consider.

ANDRE' LAYRAL, Executive Director  
Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation and provided options to consider.

ADAM MOKELKE, President  
Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation and provided options to consider.

ROD MORRISON, President-elect  
Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation and provided options to consider.

JOHN ALCANTRA, Director  
Government Relations  
National Education Association-Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Updated the committee on NEAA activities.

LADAWN DRUCE, Vice President  
National Education Association-Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Addressed concerns regarding the new evaluation regulation.

TODD POAGE, Superintendent  
Alaska Gateway School District  
Tok, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation and provided options to consider.

CHRIS REITAN, Superintendent  
Galena City School District  
Galena, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported the new evaluation regulation and provided options to consider.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:00:32 AM](#)

**CHAIR GARY STEVENS** called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dunleavy, Huggins, Gardner, Stedman, and Chair Stevens. He welcomed the new members of the Senate Education Committee and noted the individual Senators' varied backgrounds in education.

#### **REGULATIONS LINKING TEACHER EVALUATIONS AND STUDENT TESTING**

[8:00:56 AM](#)

**CHAIR STEVENS** introduced Commissioner Mike Hanley and presented a brief summary of the new teacher evaluation regulation. He noted a newspaper article regarding a study from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and noted that involving students in the teacher evaluation process was the main point. He said there were ways to attain the desired results by motivating children to learn and identifying the best teachers that deserved reward.

[8:02:10 AM](#)

**MIKE HANLEY**, Commissioner, Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), said he would discuss the new teacher evaluation regulation and affirmed that the new regulation would strengthen the Alaska education process. He noted that public comment made it clear that there was a lot of misunderstanding around the new regulation. He stated that continued effort would be made to clarify the regulation's parameters.

[8:03:12 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER HANLEY said the current policy was recognized in state statute as a responsibility to ensure all students were successful in their education and subsequent careers. He said the DEED mission statement set the target of improved academic achievement for all students. He addressed a 1996 statute that designated local school boards with the responsibility to implement an evaluation process based on eight content performance standards for teachers and ten content performance standards for administrators. He referenced a list for the Teacher Content/Performance Standards and noted changes. He explained that the standard: "A teacher can describe their philosophy of education," was deleted. He said the standard: "A teacher helps students grow academically as measured by learning data," was added. He noted that the new standard had caught the most attention. He explained that the reason for adding the new standard was due to the fact that the other seven standards focused on positive performance attributes and did not specifically address student learning for next level preparation. He stated that an affective teacher was provided enhancement and the opportunity for student learning. He affirmed that the public and parents expected students to be prepared for the next step. He said the student-learning addition would be a part of a teacher's evaluation.

8:05:30 AM

COMMISSIONER HANLEY stated that there were three basic regulation changes. He explained that the first change would address cultural standards consideration during an evaluation. He noted that the cultural standards were not specific and did not mandate a teacher be scored. He detailed the regulations for cultural standards would include a culturally responsive teacher who incorporated the local ways of knowing and teaching. He added that the relevancy to education occurred when teachers used the local environment and community resources. He said a culturally responsive teacher worked closely with parents to achieve common expectations between home and school. He said the teacher should recognize the full educational potential of each student and challenge them to meet that potential. He noted that the cultural standards consideration would not be assigned a particular percentage or points like the other content standards.

He said the second change would provide training for evaluators to ensure inter-rater reliability. He explained that principals would be considered as the evaluators for teachers. He noted that teachers would not know what to expect from an evaluation if principals were not compared to other principals. He

explained that it was critical that there be a common expectation for good teaching, best practices, and comparability between principals.

8:07:15 AM

CHAIR STEVENS asked for Mr. Hanley to address the issue of evaluation and to verify that the evaluation process occurred in a classroom setting.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered correct. He explained that the current evaluation process required observation along with parent and student input.

SENATOR GARDNER asked the Commissioner for the definition of cultural standards in writing.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered that he would comply. He said the previous definition of cultural standards was adopted by reference and were relatively extensive. He explained that the new regulation would clarify the cultural standards. He noted that a statewide cultural standards model did not translate well in urban and rural settings.

He said the last significant change was that student learning would be tied to a teacher's evaluation. He explained that the change had received the most attention. He noted that student learning data was defined as measurements of a student's growth during the time a student was taught by the teacher. He said student learning referred to improvement and not proficiency. He explained that goals remained for proficiency and success for all students. He noted in the evaluation that every student would not have to jump over a particular bar to be considered proficient. He specified that the focus would be on the ability to make gains towards the next level with each student. He said one of the concerns DEED heard in comments pertained to special education teachers being compared at the same level as teachers who instructed high-level students. He explained that a special education measurement would be used to compare student performance when they walked-in and when they walked-out of a classroom's session.

8:10:05 AM

He explained that the measurement components required multiple measures of the student learning. He noted that another concern was voiced regarding the strict use of the Statewide Test for measurement. He explained that a single test was essentially a snap-shot in time and two to four measures would be used to

measure a student's growth while in the classroom. He disclosed that the measures would not have to be formalized assessments. He said measurements could be curriculum based where a pre-test was administered at the beginning of the year, a mid-test at the middle of the year, and a post-test at the end of the year. He explained that curriculum tests should be based on state standards. He noted an example of possible testing for elementary schools that were theme based education and relevant education. He explained that a project could be used with a proper rubric that measured reading components, writing components, or presentation components. He said a district would have to ensure that a certain grade would perform the same test at all schools. He disclosed that another important part was that the measurements were in the aggregate. He explained that a teacher's proficiency would be class based and not based solely on an individual student's performance. He said there was a requirement to utilize a statewide assessment and explained that the current assessment was the Standards Based Assessment (SBA). He said a statewide assessment test would have to adequately measure valid growth from year-to-year. He noted that the current SBA did not measure valid year-to-year growth and would not be used. He said DEED was in the process of developing a new SBA for adoption in 2014-15 or 2015-16. He said the new SBA would have the ability to adequately measure growth from year-to-year. He explained that a district would use the SBA at the same percentage and weight as the other measures being used.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY addressed the flexibility in the standards' language and noted concerns that pertained to what a teacher could not control. He said an example was the inability to teach a student who does not go to school. He explained that the objective was to attribute the measureable growth to a teacher when it was appropriate while recognizing those things that were outside of a teacher's control. He said districts would develop procedures based on criteria to accurately reflect student growth based on educator performance. He noted that the flexible language would allow a district to address student attendance and issues outside of a teacher's control during the state evaluation process.

[8:14:55 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY asked if student inter-district movement would be taken into consideration.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered yes. He noted that the state had a significant transitory rate for students and it should be considered in the evaluation. He noted that several principals

had remarked that the flexibility in the standards' language did allow consideration for outside influences.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY summarized that teachers would continue to be evaluated on each of the standards and noted the inclusion of the student learning standard. He explained that teachers would be evaluated on each standard as to whether they were rated as: Exemplary, Proficient, Basic, or Unsatisfactory. He noted that a district would not give a teacher a Proficient rating if there was a Basic evaluation rating in one or more of the eight standards. He stated there was no job issue or punishment that required a step-in to fix a teacher. He explained that the end result was a teacher would not have an overall Proficient rating. He remarked that the Alaska State Board reviewed each standard and was deliberate in their decision on a Basic evaluation for an overall proficiency rating. He noted that new teachers were recognized separately and were not expected to be proficient in every aspect of teaching. He explained it could take three or more years for a teacher to become proficient. He commented that a Basic evaluation was strictly recognized as Basic and no punishment was involved. He noted that a district would be required to step-in and offer support if a teacher was evaluated as Basic in two or more of the standards. He explained that district support was not specified, but a district had an obligation to support their teachers and help them to become better. He noted that districts would be provided with the flexibility to offer a specific plan of growth and support to Basic evaluated teachers.

[8:18:38 AM](#)

He addressed the implementation timeline. He said 2015-16 would be the first year that student learning would be incorporated in the evaluation. He noted that there was a lot of work in implementing the regulation for the state and the districts. He explained that the districts would have to identify the tools and enact the proper evaluation system. He said in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, 20 percent of a teacher's evaluation would be tied to student learning. He noted that the percentages would increase in 2017-2018 to 35 percent and in 2018-2019 to 50 percent.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if the teacher performance ratings would ever be public information and available to parents.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered no. He noted that the question came up several times during public comment. He explained that it was very clear in statute that teacher performance ratings were not

subject to public information requests and were considered private documents.

[8:20:27 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked if there were pre-discussion evaluations with prospective candidates that were measured against a teaching performance rating baseline.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY responded not specifically. He said a pre-discussion was appropriate and noted that districts were allowed to determine what was appropriate.

SENATOR HUGGINS addressed the importance of providing teachers with cohort performance feedback.

[8:22:38 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered that he agreed. He said the current system was subjective and lacked specific data to measure. He noted that there may be inherent disincentives when using subjective standards that do not drive teachers to take a next-step. He explained that teachers had a lot of internal drive and they continue to move forward, but the evaluation system does not incentivize the process. He remarked that there was also a disincentive for teachers who were doing a great job in moving students towards the next level in addition to carrying the students who required additional steps. He stated that he hoped the new system would also recognize the great teachers and the work they were doing.

SENATOR HUGGINS stated the importance of mentors for teachers.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY responded that DEED worked very closely with their teacher and principal mentor program. He said mentoring was a key component to help teachers grow.

[8:24:39 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS commented that he liked the idea and presentation from Commissioner Hanley. He declared that it would only work if teachers and principals buy-in. He addressed the big step involved with student learning data accounting for 50 percent of a teacher's overall performance rating in 2018-1019. He asked Commissioner Hanley if he felt comfortable that 50 percent was a reasonable expectation.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered that he was both comfortable and nervous about going to the higher level. He explained that the higher level would create additional intensity and was

appropriate. He noted that the decision to go to the higher level was done prior to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Study. He explained that the MET Study spoke to less volatility and more accuracy when a teacher's evaluation from student test scores was increased to the 30 to 50 percentage range.

SENATOR DUNLEAVY asked if DEED had developing a tracking system to correlate student data with teacher evaluations.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered no. He noted that DEED's intention was to establish a tracking program from pre-kindergarten through the university system to create a common identification. He explained that the goal would be to track both students and affective teachers. He said the tracking program was on DEED's table, but the proposition was not easy.

SENATOR DUNLEAVY asked how the evaluation process would work when teachers move throughout the state during their careers.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY responded that training principals would be important in supporting the evaluation model at all schools. He emphasized that the increased student data percentages would be determined by timeline and not location.

[8:27:53 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY asked if an estimated fiscal note would be presented. He inquired if DEED would ask for additional funds for training and tracking systems.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY responded that DEED recognized that time and money would be required for implementation. He noted that the Governor also recognized that same requirement. He explained that there were three basic levels to consider: some districts would move forward with grant funding to develop a template for other districts, supporting principals, and supporting districts to implement the program. He said DEED did not have a fiscal note tied to the performance standards change. He expressed the belief that DEED had the grant monies to get the program rolling on template and internal work.

[8:29:11 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER asserted that teachers, administrators and families had opinions in every school as to which teachers were the best. She explained that she did not know how accurate the perceptions were and asked if DEED's current evaluation system tracked well with popular evaluation systems.

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered that the current evaluation system provided students and parents with the opportunity to weigh in. He noted his time as a principal that he did not use student and parental input as a specific criterion, but as a confirmation to what he already knew. He noted that the MET Study acknowledged the value of student and parent input. He explained that the added input was part of a larger picture that included observation and student data in order to create a good evaluation system.

[8:31:45 AM](#)

JIM MERRINER, State Board Chair, Alaska State Board Of Education & Early Development, affirmed Commissioner Hanley's presentation and the importance of addressing the details involved with the new performance standards.

CHAIR STEVENS asked Mr. Merriner to address the timeline for implementing the higher percentage inclusion of student learning data for evaluations.

MR. MERRINER replied that he liked the proposed timeline and the built-in time to allow for reevaluation prior to implementing the higher percentages. He noted that Commissioner Hanley addressed the availability of a state assessment for specific grades and subject matters. He said the number of measures used by a district would dictate the impact of the state assessment for a teacher's overall rating.

CHAIR STEVENS asked Mr. Merriner's to provide the committee with information on his background.

[8:34:57 AM](#)

MR. MERRINER answered that he was elected as the State Board Chair in June, 2012. He said he had been on the Alaska State Board Of Education & Early Development for close to three years.

CHAIR STEVENS commended Mr. Merriner for his contribution to education in Alaska.

[8:35:44 AM](#)

BRUCE JOHNSON, PhD, Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA), explained that he also served as the Executive Director for School Superintendents. He noted that ACSA represented principals, business officials, and superintendents.

DR. JOHNSON said ACSA felt somewhat left out of the process during the early stages of the performance standards changes. He noted that ACSA has become more involved in the process and thanked the Commissioner for his assistance. He said ACSA was not afraid of accountability and noted the change across the country regarding accountability. He affirmed the demands from Alaskans to be increasingly accountable for the dollars spent and the service provided. He explained that ACSA would be partners in moving forward with accountability. He disclosed that he had attended a national meeting with administrative cohorts that addressed the issue of implementing complex teacher and principal evaluations with a focus on student growth. He summarized data from the meeting and noted that the process was costly, time consuming, and complicated. He noted that results were mixed and the process would not be a magic-bullet. He explained that a lot of work was required in order to implement the program. He expressed his gratitude to Commissioner Hanley for his willingness to meet with superintendents and address what would be required to make the program a reality. He stated that ACSA would feel much better when there was a full understanding of things. He remarked that academic performance may only be part of a district's evaluation process and noted that student attendance as another means of measuring student growth. He said the challenge for evaluating all staff on student growth may not appear to be as difficult as it first appeared. He explained that ACSA believed that using student growth for evaluating was the fairest approach and fully supported the program.

8:40:07 AM

CHAIR STEVENS recounted his experiences as a school board president in the 1980's and noted a reoccurring administrative issue regarding teacher evaluations. He explained an issue where unsatisfactory teachers were retained due to the fact that do one had time to evaluate. He stated that the key was finding a way to properly evaluate teachers. He noted that it was a big-step to go from the current evaluation process to the one that DEED desired.

DR. JOHNSON answered that it was a big-step. He said he acknowledged the importance of teachers in the classroom and noted teachers as the most important ingredient. He explained that Alaska's uniqueness had been used as an excuse to settle for mediocrity and that was not acceptable. He stated that ACSA was committed to work with legislators and department heads to make the program work. He remarked that ACSA would probably be

back in the future to review the program and recommend incremental changes.

SENATOR HUGGINS said the proposed system was one of many that had been implemented over time. He noted the highlighted attribute of the program was on teacher quality. He asked how a new teacher and the quality of a person be evaluated prior to entering a classroom.

8:43:06 AM

DR. JOHNSON answered that Senator Huggins' question was a puzzle that had to be figured out. He explained that university committees were attempting to work with kindergarten through grade 12 to try and build a transition that made sense so that graduates were ready for the job that they were trained to do. He noted that graduates would be counted on to possess basic universal skills or they would not receive their credentials. He said the question on the other end was how to assist families in sending the very best child to school. He asserted that there were so many things that determined a child's opportunity for success in later life and noted the impact started at conception.

CHAIR STEVENS announced that the committee would be meeting with university officials to address their development of teachers.

SENATOR GARDNER addressed words Dr. Johnson used such as: costly, time consuming, complicated, and mixed results. She asked if Dr. Johnson was referring specifically to using student growth as an element of teacher evaluations.

DR. JOHNSON answered that he was referring specifically to the new system that was being proposed. He noted that evaluations in the past may have been a have-to requirement that no one placed a lot of value on.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if the current system was effective and served everyone well.

DR. JOHNSON responded that changes were in order. He noted that many of his members believed student growth was a worthy element of teacher evaluations that should be explored and improved upon.

8:45:51 AM

ROB THOMASON, President, Alaska Council of School Administrators, stated his appreciation to Commissioner Hanley

to involve superintendents in the process and the council strongly supported inter-rater reliability. He explained that inter-rater reliability addressed Senator Dunleavy's question regarding competency tracking for teachers and administrators who moved to different districts. He noted that mastering inter-rater reliability would be a huge step forward. He said the council was committed to the evaluation process and its implementation. He noted that constructive feedback designed to help educators and students was strongly supported. He remarked that the ACSA was looking forward to the guidance and technical support from DEED. He noted that the council welcomed consortia and template development by larger districts to support smaller districts. He agreed with Commissioner Hanley that it was difficult to move forward with the present assessment system. He explained that the council looked forward to a vertically aligned assessment and a clear understanding of the standards. He noted that courage was required and the superintendents were committed to move forward. He cited one caveat that superintendents strongly recommended that the end product be technology based and mobile. He advised that the program not be paper and pencil based. He noted that available technology should be used to make the assessment system user-friendly across multiple platforms.

8:48:35 AM

SENATOR GARDNER asked what the current system's flaws were.

MR. THOMASON answered that the emphasis on accountability would be a good thing. He noted that the current system made it difficult and costly to help a teacher improve or find alternative employment. He explained that the process was cumbersome and a lot of work.

8:50:20 AM

CARL ROSE, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (ASSB), explained that it was important for school boards to adopt sound public policy that could be implemented with the least amount of friction. He stated that living in a litigious society presented legal action possibilities when questionable job action decisions were made.

MR. ROSE said he attended the 2012 Labor-Management Collaboration Conference and noted that the meeting was hosted by U.S. Secretary of Education. He explained that teacher evaluation was not a major issue of contention at the conference. He asserted that people understood that student achievement and evaluation was not a bad idea. He stated that

the question was how much weight would be given to teacher evaluations. He referred to the eight content standards presented by Commissioner Hanley; seven where directional inputs and the eighth standard measured student growth. He noted that the final standard was the only one that would be measured and would account for 20 to 50 percent of the evaluation.

[8:53:24 AM](#)

MR. ROSE declared that the eighth standard would lessen the other standards if it moved to 50 percent of the evaluation in 2019. He said he agreed with Dr. Johnson that the performance standards program would be tweaked over time. He stated that using student performance data was appropriate. He explained that it was sound public policy to decide what degree of gravity would be given to the student achievement element and what effect would it have on the Alaska educational system. He asked if the state-directed decisions would ultimately have to be defended in court. He asserted that teachers and administrators did not see student achievement based assessments as a problem. He noted that the issue was placing a high priority on student achievement in regard to employment via an evaluation system. He stated that the AASB did not have a position on the program. He declared that local school boards would be put in harm's way if the state did not provide a clear direction.

CHAIR STEVENS responded that Mr. Rose brought up many interesting issues regarding the connection to employment. He asked if teacher evaluations would have an impact on salaries.

MR. ROSE replied that he had not previously considered the question. He noted his belief was that everything ultimately came down to salaries. He stated that an employee right was the issue and not salaries. He explained that an employer had better have a good reason as to why an employee would not be retained. He declared that unsound reasons would lead to placing instructional dollars into litigation.

[8:56:47 AM](#)

JOHN PILE, Executive Director, Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals, noted that he had been principal in Fairbanks for 30 years and was currently retired. He introduced John Pothast as the primary spokesman.

JOHN POTHAST, President, Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals, stated that moving towards multiple measures had been advisable since the No Child Left Behind Act was reliance based on one day of testing. He noted that moving to the student

growth model was a tremendous direction to go in. He asserted that principals understood and respected the fact that accountability was a part of our lives and they had no issues with that. He stated that teachers should be accountable for the huge task of educating children and accountability was required to show it was being accomplished. He said DEED had defined their "sandbox" and their job was to figure out how it would work. He addressed his concern that the multiple measures were not defined and noted that a lot of work was required to clarify the measures. He advised against prematurely presenting undefined measures that could lead to negative repercussions. He announced that he was a proponent for inter-rater reliability and the importance to consistently evaluate teachers throughout the state. He said a potential problem could occur if districts used unstandardized assessments that were challenging to compare with other districts.

[9:02:07 AM](#)

MR. POTHAST stated that he was an advocate of using the growth-model, but expressed his concern that there was no definition for growth. He explained how the Kenai School District used Pearson's AIMSweb® as a universal screening of student's performance and growth. He asked what the appropriate level of growth was and stated his concern for a potential problem if individual districts were left to decide. He expressed his hope that a district would come forward and announce their findings for appropriate student growth levels.

He said he was concerned that 50 percent of the student learning data would be used for evaluations in overall performance ratings. He noted that the Kenai School District used four domains for teacher evaluations and student learning data would become the fifth domain. He stated that using 50 percent of the student learning data would overemphasize the domain. He addressed the proficiency regulation regarding an allowance for a single Basic rating and asked what would happen if the Basic rating occurred in the area of student learning data. He asserted that half of a teacher's proficiency evaluation could be rated as Basic.

CHAIR STEVENS commended Mr. Pothast's for raising important issues on districts evaluating differently, teachers moving to other districts, and student growth monitoring.

[9:05:52 AM](#)

ANDRE' LAYRAL, Executive Director, Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals, asked that Adam Mokolke and Rod Morrison to testify first.

[9:06:29 AM](#)

ADAM MOKELKE, President, Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals (AASSP), said he agreed with Dr. Johnson's and Mr. Pothast's statements on not being afraid of accountability for student achievement. He addressed Commission Hanley's statement on training and cited training as a critical point for AASSP. He commented that Senator Dunleavy's question on funding would play a role in supporting proper training for effectively implementing the new evaluations. He said he agreed with Mr. Pothast in the use of multiple measures rather than using one measure and the focus on student growth rather than meeting an arbitrary test score. He said AASSP would ask that multiple measures of student learning be defined and identified. He explained the importance of having consistent measures throughout the state. He asked if the measures would be identified on a state level and how much local control would be allowed. He voiced AASSP's concern on how the new evaluation system would affect low performing schools and specifically the impact on rural schools. He noted his concern for the effect on recruitment and training for rural schools. He asserted that teaching candidates might prefer to work in school districts that have more resources, access, and educators to work with students.

CHAIR STEVENS replied that he was also concerned on the possible impact on small villages. He addressed the possibility of teachers choosing some schools over another and the impact on school staffing.

[9:10:34 AM](#)

ROD MORRISON, President-elect, Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals, said implementation and training had to be consistent throughout the state. He asserted that the current evaluation system was inconsistent and communication between districts was imperative. He noted that accountability was very important.

[9:12:16 AM](#)

MR. LAYRAL said AASSP's national association identified six important domains for principal evaluation. He stated that any affective evaluation system for principals would have to recognize a variety of roles and the regional district's effect on administrative roles. He said AASSP believed that it was

important that the responsibility, authority, and autonomy be taken into consideration when linking student performance to administrative evaluations. He noted that AASSP's national association recognized professional growth and learning, school planning and progress, school culture, professional qualities and instructional leadership, stakeholder support and engagement, and student growth and achievement. He stated that focusing 50 percent of the evaluation on student achievement was going to be something that would take a lot of work. He affirmed that no one would shirk their responsibility and accountability. He noted that the emphasis on one domain would have an impact on administrators having time in shaping a school's culture, developing their own professional growth and learning, being responsible for the professional growth and learning of teachers, and planning and implementing programs.

MR. LAYRAL said there were a lot of nontraditional subjects beyond reading, writing, and math. He questioned how teachers for nontraditional subjects would be measured and held accountable. He stated that flexibility in evaluations should be considered for schools that had a high turnover rate for teachers and administrators.

[9:16:22 AM](#)

JOHN ALCANTRA, Director, Government Relations, National Education Association-Alaska (NEAA), announced that 400 NEAA delegates were meeting in Anchorage during the upcoming weekend to set education policy for 2013. He noted that LaDawn Druce from NEAA would address the committee. He explained that Ms. Druce also served as the President of the Kenai Peninsula Education Association.

[9:18:28 AM](#)

LADAWN DRUCE, Vice President, National Education Association-Alaska (NEAA), said she had testified before the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development regarding the new evaluation regulation. She explained her involvement with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District's process of improving their teacher evaluation model over three years ago. She announced that NEAA had a vested interest in leading their profession. She said NEAA welcomed a candid and honest conversation to improve teacher effectiveness and student success. She noted that the upcoming NEAA delegate meeting would address the issues with teacher evaluation. She stated that one of NEAA's main concerns with the regulation pertained to the statute:

4 AAC 19.010 PURPOSES AND SCOPE OF EVALUATIONS, subsection (g), A teacher, administrator, or special service provider who receives a performance evaluation rating of unsatisfactory on one or more of the content standards or other criteria for which evaluation is required under this section has not met the district performance standards. By statute a teacher would thereby be placed on a plan of improvement.

9:21:07 AM

MS. DRUCE explained that NEAA's concern was aligned with Mr. Rose's prior statement on the issue of placing a higher emphasis on one standard. She stated that when the student learning data standard becomes 20 percent of a teacher's or administrator's overall performance rating, in actuality it could become 100 percent due to the statute definition from 4 AAC 19.010(g). She explained that any standard that was deemed unsatisfactory would result in a plan of improvement and the possibly of termination. She affirmed Mr. Rose's concern for employment type issues and how the verbiage was written in the regulation.

She said there were many factors which contributed to student success that were beyond the control of the classroom teacher. She said she appreciated Commissioner Hanley's opening comments and noted that many of her previous concerns were addressed. She explained that factors outside of a teacher's control weighed heavily on the success of a student in a classroom. She detailed outside factors as: poverty, lack of supervision at homes, neglect, abuse, and the potentially of parents not valuing education. She said the regulations stated that a district evaluation of a teacher shall provide information and analysis that helps a teacher grow professionally. She asserted that NEAA supported a professional growth model for its educators. She stated that the lack of recognition that a new to the profession teacher or a teacher with a major change of assignment, may be considered Basic in many or potentially all of the standards. She noted that the lack of recognition did not value the aspect of a growing professional. She explained that the Kenai Peninsula School District used the Danielson Group's model as a foundation for teacher evaluations and noted how new teachers were classified as Basic due to their stage of learning the craft. She advised that the way a Basic rating was given may have an unintended consequence of putting everyone in a Proficient or Distinguished category when not deserved. She stated that the hope was DEED would continue to involve NEAA in the discussions. She affirmed NEAA's desire to support a positive change to a system that definitely could be better.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if Ms. Duce was saying that because of the potential consequences of Basic ratings, there would be some sort of ratings inflation to avoid those consequences.

MS. DRUCE answered yes.

[9:25:41 AM](#)

TODD POAGE, Superintendent, Alaska Gateway School District, said it was important to have funding, training, and consistency across the state.

[9:26:29 AM](#)

CHRIS REITAN, Superintendent, Galena City School District, said it was important for the committee to be aware of what was behind the push for the new evaluation regulations. He stated that the real push behind the regulations was the flexibility waiver from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) guidelines. He explained that DEED had submitted a waiver from the current NCLB guidelines and noted that teacher and administrative evaluations were a key component in the application. He explained that if the state had not applied for a NCLB waiver, every school would have been considered to be a failing-school. He noted that NCLB would have required that every student would have to be rated as Proficient in all areas of testing by the end of 2014. He commented that the state in doing an outstanding job in developing the new standards and noted that developing accountability in student growth was outstanding. He stated that the topic that was discussed in the committee meeting was a little nebulous in regards to how everything would be built into an evaluation tool for principals and teachers. He said he was nervous that the state had not fully moved into the new standards, assessments were not established to be aligned with the new standards, and some of the student achievement dialog bordered in the grey-area because the meaning of the standards would not be known until an assessment item was attached. He advised that everyone involved in the process be cautious and prudent. He expressed the importance of building flexibility into the system to allow for changes.

CHAIR STEVENS stated that the issue addressed during the meeting was an important topic. He noted that he would talk to individual committee members to find out what direction to go.

SENATOR GARDNER asked the Commissioner Hanley if the state had invented the new regulations or if a template had been followed from other states.

[9:30:57 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER HANLEY answered that over 40 states had implemented some version of tying teacher evaluations to student learning. He said DEED had gleaned the best from other states and developed one that worked for Alaska.

CHAIR STEVENS stated that Senator Gardner's question was important. He said there were issues that the committee should cover further on the entire subject.

[9:31:21 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the Senate Education Committee, Chair Stevens adjourned the meeting at 9:31 a.m.