

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 9, 2015

8:01 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Wes Keller, Chair
Representative Lora Reinbold, Vice Chair
Representative Jim Colver
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Liz Vazquez
Representative Harriet Drummond
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 80

"An Act repealing the requirement for secondary students to take college and career readiness assessments."

- MOVED HB 80 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION: RESEARCH ON EDUCATOR QUALITY AND QUANTIFY: A PROJECT OF CITIZENS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT OF ALASKA'S CHILDREN

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: SUPERINTENDENT LAKE AND PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT ON INNOVATIVE TEACHER TRAINING/RECRUITING PROGRAM

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 80

SHORT TITLE: REPEAL COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS ASSESS.

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) GATTIS

01/26/15	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/26/15	(H)	EDC
03/04/15	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

03/04/15 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
03/09/15 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN GATTIS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 80, as prime sponsor.

JAMES HARVEY, Director
Employment Security Division
Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the hearing on HB 80, answered questions.

BARBARA HANEY
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the hearing on HB 80, testified in support.

LORIE KOPPENBERG
Matanuska-Susitna Valley, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the hearing on HB 80, testified in support.

PEGGY COWAN, Superintendent
North Slope Borough School District
Barrow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified that the North Slope Borough School District has no official position on HB 80.

CONNIE NEWMAN, Superintendent
Pribilof Island School District
St. Paul, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the hearing on HB 80, testified in support.

JACK WALSH, Superintendent
Craig School District
Craig, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the hearing on HB 80, testified in support.

DEENA PARAMO, Superintendent
Matanuska-Susitna School District

Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the hearing on HB 80, testified in support.

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner

Commissioner's Office

Department of Education and Early Development (EED)

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: During the hearing on HB 80, answered questions.

JERRY COVEY, Private Education Consultant

JSC Consulting

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented Educator Quality and Quantity.

BARBARA ADAMS, PhD Analyst

Adams Analytic Solutions

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented Educator Quality and Quantity.

TY MASE, Superintendent

Lake and Peninsula School District

King Salmon, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented growth in academic achievement in Southwest Alaska.

BILL HILL, Superintendent

Bristol Bay Borough School District

Naknek, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information regarding tutors and academic achievement.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:01:19 AM](#)

CHAIR WES KELLER called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Representatives Seaton, Vazquez, Colver, Drummond, Kreiss-Tomkins, Reinbold, and Keller were present at the call to order.

HB 80-REPEAL COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS ASSESS.

[8:02:25 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 80, "An Act repealing the requirement for secondary students to take college and career readiness assessments."

[8:02:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN GATTIS, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 80, paraphrasing from the sponsor statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Repeal of College and Career Readiness Assessment Requirement

With the passage of HB278 in 2014, all secondary students must take the ACT, SAT or WorkKeys Assessment exam to receive a high school diploma, at the States expense. The change in the States fiscal situation provides an opportunity to take a second look at this funding, without impacting the classroom.

Students that wish to be eligible for the Performance Scholarship or college admissions can still do so, but must pay for the testing themselves.

HB80 removes the mandate for student college and career readiness assessment, and in turn allows State spending for education to be targeted toward the classroom where the greatest return on investment can be realized. It also takes an unfunded mandate away from the local districts.

[8:04:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON recalled that previous to [HB] 278 the WorkKeys Assessment exam was a requirement for 11th grade students with the score listed on the transcript. He acknowledged that the curriculum was established to support students not choosing to attend college, which represents approximately 70 percent of Alaska's students. He inquired how removing the WorkKeys Assessment exam helps in the classroom as it removes the high score obtained by a student that assists employers in the competitive work force.

[8:05:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS responded that the curriculum is not necessarily aligned with the WorkKeys Assessment exam as different school districts have different curriculum. She opined that the Department of Labor was primarily served by administering the unfunded mandate test as a high school exit exam and a certain score was not required in order to exit. She argued that the test scores are not on the transcripts and businesses are not using it at this time.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked how eliminating the comparative assessment will gain an employer the ability to evaluate a prospective employee.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS suggested that an employer speak with the Department of Labor should it require the information, and reiterated that reports do not indicate any usage.

[8:08:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD reminded the committee that the ACT/SAT assessments are common core aligned, which she opined is an "expensive experiment." Ten percent of Alaskan youth graduate with a four year college degree and, she opined, it is not necessary for all students to take this test. She stated that ACT/SAT should be privately funded and the parents or students be responsible for taking these tests as in the past. She pointed out this is an approximate \$600,000 fiscal note, and described the time for preparation and tests taken during school hours as a burden to the schools.

[8:09:51 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER asked whether the districts would have option to make the ACT/SAT and WorkKeys Assessment exam available should this bill pass.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS replied that with the state's budgetary constraints she would be surprised school districts would offer the tests and would instead revert back to how tests have been offered in the past. It costs [the state] money and the test is being given through the Department of Labor, and time would be used wisely in classroom instruction, she noted.

[8:10:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER asked the date the WorkKeys Assessment exam program was introduced into schools.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS deferred to Representative Seaton.

CHAIR KELLER opened public testimony.

[8:11:15 AM](#)

JAMES HARVEY, Director, Employment Security Division, Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD), [Available to answer questions questions.]

[8:11:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to WorkKeys Assessment exams and levels recorded, asked whether it is being utilized in the workforce.

MR. HARVEY responded that the Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DLWD) has a listing of employers recognizing the WorkKeys Assessment Certificate or the National Career Readiness Certificate that the [assessment exam] produces. He pointed out that the certificate is used for entrance into employment and into the several apprentice programs throughout the state as this particular assessment identifies the "work ready skill set" the applicants require to be successful in employment.

MR. HARVEY, in response to Representative Seaton, stated he will forward the list of employers recognizing the WorkKeys Assessment Certificate across Alaska momentarily.

[8:13:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ quiered whether the Department of Labor & Workforce (DLWD) offers a student the test.

MR. HARVEY answered in the affirmative, and pointed out that the Department of Education and Early Development (EED) operates in urban and rural environments throughout school districts. Whereas, DLWD operates a job center presence within urban or sub-urban areas and, therefore, the rural areas become difficult to impossible for DLWD to accomplish, he explained.

[8:14:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked [technical difficulties] that individuals can take at the DLWD.

MR. HARVEY advised this is the only work readiness assessment in terms of the broad base of employers and the uses it is meant for through ACT. He commented that job centers offer assessments for the Transportation Security Administration and other governmental entities.

[8:14:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked the cost of taking exams at DLWD.

MR. HARVEY answered that the Workkeys Assessment exams were approximately \$235,000 for FY2014.

MR. HARVEY, in response to Representative Vazquez, advised that assessments were provided to 4,837 individuals, and 1,275 National Career Readiness Certificates were issued in FY2014.

[8:16:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ requested the purpose of the certificates.

MR. HARVEY responded that the certificates assist in creating a qualified resident workforce and offers career and technical education opportunities to students necessary for them to move forward in the workforce in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ restated her question and asked how future employers used the National Career Readiness Certificates in FY2014.

MR. HARVEY replied that the three key areas of the applicant's assessment are: reading for information, applied mathematics, and locating information. He pointed out that employers can use the scores within its hiring pool for placement into employment.

[8:18:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ inquired as to the distribution of individuals, geographically, taking the WorkKeys Assessment exam.

MR. HARVEY advised he will provide the data which is tied to geographic job centers across the state.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked the cost of taking the WorkKeys Assessment exam at DLWD.

MR. HARVEY answered that the cost of the exam for the participant is zero as DLWD is utilizing federal funds to connect and provide individuals assistance in applying for work.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ requested the amount of federal funds for FY2014.

MR. HARVEY advised that in FY2014 DLWD utilized approximately \$235,560 for the application of this particular assessment.

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked whether it was all federal money.

MR. HARVEY answered in the affirmative, and stated it is for this purpose and connecting individuals for specific training opportunities to overcome training as a barrier to direct employment.

[8:20:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked the date the WorkKeys Assessment exam was put in place by the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development.

[8:21:34 AM](#)

BARBARA HANEY, testified in support of HB 80, and knows the test of adult basic education is distributed throughout the state which is comparable to the WorkKeys Assessment exam. She opined there is no need for college career ready assessment to be offered by the Alaska school districts in that DLWD offers testing to 16-year olds thereby allowing two years for corrective action if continuing in the education setting as opposed to a GED or work career track. She described this as an expense for the [school] system and individuals can take the WorkKeys Assessment exam through DLWD where an employer can request a referral. She stated she did not envision the ACT/SAT replacing the exit exam.

[8:24:18 AM](#)

LORIE KOPPENBERG, testified in support of HB 80, and urged committee support as parents should provide for the ACT/SAT.

CHAIR KELLER closed public testimony.

[8:25:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS inquired of Mr. Harvey whether the \$235,000 in federal funds is available to be repurposed to other DLWD programs.

MR. HARVEY responded that the funding is the Department's Federal Wagner-Peyser Act funding that is utilized for the base operation of the majority of the job centers throughout the state. The repurposing of these funds could be performed if the DLWD chose to discontinue the WorkKeys Assessment itself.

[8:27:09 AM](#)

PEGGY COWAN, Superintendent, North Slope Borough School District, testified she is personally in favor of HB 80, but that the North Slope Borough School District has no official position as it has not met regarding HB 80. Conceptually, she pointed out, providing tests at schools is an excellent opportunity for those not close to job centers where they can take the tests. She suggested that taking college and career ready tests plus the requirement of an additional test for graduation is another burden and perhaps a barrier for students to get a diploma.

[8:28:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked when the district began administering WorkKeys Assessment to all 11th graders.

MS. COWAN estimated seven years.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON questioned why the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development implemented the mandate that the WorkKeys Assessment exam be given in the 11th grade.

MS. COWAN opined it was to provide a measure and an entrance so students would have [the score] on their record with a ticket to assist in obtaining jobs.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to the program in place to determine whether the 70 percent of youth not going to college were adequately trained, and inquired how eliminating that program would be helpful in training and offering rural residents access to the workforce in Alaska.

MS. COWAN opined that this bill eliminates the requirement of a student to take one of the tests in order to receive a diploma

in that the requirement was on the district and not on the student to graduate. She opined the bill is a better approach than requiring an individual accountability approach by the student and pulling back on that issue would remove a burden on the student. She indicated the school could continue to audit the test and she would appreciate the state's support in offering the WorkKeys Assessment exam.

[8:30:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON surmised that the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development could continue to require that the WorkKeys Assessment exam is given to every 11th grader and have the money come out of the school district 's own budget instead of one of the assessments being taken [for graduation].

MS. COWAN replied that if the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development is going to require it, she expects that without adding on further band aids it will support it. Her understanding, she expressed, is that HB 80 removes the requirement for ACT/SAT and Workkeys Assessment for the diploma and suggested the WorkKeys Assessment exam could be given as it was many years prior to the 2014 House Bill 278, without the diploma requirement.

[8:32:39 AM](#)

CONNIE NEWMAN, Superintendent, Pribilof Island School District, testified in support of HB 80 as the information collected from WorkKeys Assessment is not used to the best advantage for her small and remote village. In that regard, she and her staff decided to not implement the ACT and WorkKeys Assessment option for the piece required for a student's assessment.

[Technical difficulties between 8:33:40 and 8:33:52.]

[8:33:52 AM](#)

JACK WALSH, Superintendent, Craig School District, testified his school district supports of HB 80, and expressed concerns as a former special education teacher [technical difficulties] of the residents and students. [Technical difficulties] estimates that approximately seven years ago people debated whether the graduation exam accomplished its goals and how prepared students were at graduation. He described the exams as important tools, yet at times the right test was not used for its intended purpose and great errors were made in judgement. For example,

he remarked, Alaska does not require an ACT/SAT to attend college yet requires that every youth graduating from high school take the exams. He expressed surprise with the five pages of employers interested in Workkeys Assessment scores and noted that his opposition to the tests [technical difficulties] as the opposition to continuing the tests has more to do with unintended consequences.

[8:37:41 AM](#)

DEENA PARAMO, Superintendent, Matanuska-Susitna School District, testified in support of HB 80, and echoed Ms. Cowan in that it is a need versus a want. She pointed out that she personally has a high school student and did not have to pay for an SAT exam this year which was a gift from the state, but the state is in a difficult time of revenue. Unfortunately, she commented, youth did not take the test seriously unless they saw the outcome as necessary. However, in Matanuska-Susitna assistance will be offered to students that require assistance in paying the \$82.00 ACT/SAT or Workkeys Assessment tests, she said.

[8:39:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ praised the low income support and asked how that will occur should this bill pass.

MS. PARAMO replied that prior to this year it was a choice if the student was going to college. She offered that within her school district counselors know the students and there are avenues and waivers to cover fees privately with no equity for students, which includes sports fees and lunches.

CHAIR KELLER closed public testimony after ascertaining no one further wished to testify.

[8:41:02 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER commented "this was not a set up" as the sponsor was not aware the superintendents would be in town [technical difficulties].

CHAIR KELLER re-opened public testimony.

[8:41:48 AM](#)

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Commissioner's Office, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), clarified

that HB 80 removes funding and it depends upon the amount dollars left in the budget at the end of session whether testing in schools could continue. The Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development seeks funding for initiatives from the legislature and the WorkKeys Assessment program started as a statewide requirement in FY2009. Last year 49 high schools were considered national test sites to offer the SAT, however, a statewide contract offering the SAT to students across the state opened up the ability for more high schools to test. Therefore, this year the state is testing at 93 high schools. Last year 40 high schools served as national test sites for ACT and the in-school testing program increased that amount to 255 schools. He pointed out that in-school testing would go away because it is only available with a statewide contract. He commented that 89 high schools offer both, in that a district has a choice of offering the SAT, ACT, or both, and students are able to choose either test.

[8:45:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER pointed out that the fiscal note indicates a cost of \$52.50 per student, for a savings \$525,000, yet individually the cost is \$82.00. He asked whether testing companies could provide the bundled cost rate versus the higher direct individual rate.

MR. MORSE opined that the cost of the SAT is \$52.50 regardless of a state contract. In the event that is not the case the EED would advocate to the vendor for those costs.

[8:47:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD recalled that her amendment to House Bill 278 removed the ACT/SAT due to the common core alignment and the costs. Further, she commented, that when the Alaska Performance Scholarship are evaluated privately funded scores are received, and asked whether the state would continue to receive those scores.

MR. MORSE advised that EED has been receiving those scores for APS verification and would continue to receive those scores to determine the student's qualifications for the scholarship.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD opined that that students should give their permission for the scores. She quiered as to whether there is any impact to the No Child Left Behind waiver in repealing the ACT/SAT or WorkKeys Assessment.

MR. MORSE responded that this legislation would have no impact on the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) at this point. The number of students participating in the assessment is used in the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI). In the event this was removed, EED would have to make a change as it is used as a college career readiness indicator that the students are thinking about college and careers. However, no dollars are attached to it as it is part of the school rating system. The Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development would have look at the rating system and remove that particular indicator for college career readiness.

[8:50:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON questioned whether passage of HB 80 negates the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development requirement that 11th grade students take the WorkKeys Assessment.

MR. MORSE answered that it would depend upon the agency budget at the end of the legislative session. He added that this bill does remove the associated funding and he does not know whether money would be available to support the test.

[8:51:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ asked for clarification as to whether the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development could proceed with the requirement through passage of HB 80.

MR. MORSE replied in the negative as it is not the same requirement in that the bill repeals the mandate that a student must take the test in order to graduate. Prior to the legislation last year, the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development required all 11th graders to take the WorkKeys Assessment exam with funding attached, but it wasn't a requirement for graduation. His understanding of Rep Seaton's question was whether the board reinstate that requirement, which has been removed, and the answer is they could "it could be a high stakes in terms of requiring students to participate to graduate and the other question would be a funding question."

[8:52:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ inquired what provisions are made for students of low economic means should a student voluntarily choose to take the exam.

MR. MORSE answered there is nothing on a statewide level. Although, there are some provision EED helps administer through vendors for certain students to receive a fee waiver. He does not know the number of students as it is primarily performed through the vendor offering fee waivers. It is important to understand, he explained, that the bill removes the school testing requirement from 205 schools and, thereby, students have no access for assessments.

CHAIR KELLER closed public testimony after ascertaining no one further wished to testify.

[8:54:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COLVER offered support for HB 80 and noted this is the time to access these mandates as far as cost and effectiveness. To get results, classroom time should be supported, and removal of this assessment will provide that opportunity, he opined.

[8:55:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON reminded the committee this is not the House Finance Committee and to approach this bill from the educational aspect. He remarked that 70 percent of Alaskan students do not attend college and enter the workforce but their needs of an education was not being addressed. He pointed to today's testimony wherein a speaker stated they are not offering the WorkKeys Assessment and instead are going to the ACT/SAT which are not career readiness exams. He is not opposed to removing the focus from college bound students but he objects to the bill removing the WorkKeys Assessment portion which the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development determined would assist the 70 percent of workforce bound students and, he opined, the prior system targeted educating everyone. Passage of this bill causes the state to lose the initiative for employable students at graduation and, he pointed out, the state is stepping backwards in education without a WorkKeys Assessment track. He said he is not against eliminating the idea of ACT/SAT funding, but previously there was a better target on the majority of Alaskan students, and he is not voting for this bill.

[8:59:46 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER pointed out that the Finance Committee specifically requested that standing committees consider the fiscal consequences of policy decisions. He opined that a vote for HB 80 does not equate to a vote against WorkKeys Assessment, and will be voting in favor of the bill.

[9:01:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS testified in support of HB 80, acknowledging Representative Seaton's concerns. Downstream effects do need to be considered, and further hopes that considerations will be brought regarding regulations and the 70/30 rule, waivers, and mandating training the legislature instituted over the years on streamlining school maintenance requirements.

[9:02:37 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD moved to report HB 80, labeled 29-LS0184\H, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON objected.

[9:02:59 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Reinbold, Vasquez, Colver, Kreiss-Tomkins and Keller voted in favor of passing HB 80 out of committee. Representatives Seaton and Drummond voted against it. Therefore, HB 80 was reported out of the House Education Standing Committee by a vote of 5-2.

[9:03:40 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[9:04:07 AM](#)

**PRESENTATION: RESEARCH ON EDUCATOR QUALITY AND QUANTITY: A
PROJECT OF CITIZENS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT OF
ALASKA'S CHILDREN**

CHAIR KELLER announced that the next order of business would be the presentation of Research on Educator Quality and Quantity: A Project of Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children.

9:05:26 AM

JERRY COVEY, Private Education Consultant, JSC Consulting, [Available to provide testimony.]

9:05:27 AM

BARBARA ADAMS, PhD Analyst, Adams Analytic Solutions, [Available to provide testimony.]

9:05:35 AM

MR. COVEY advised that he and Barbara Adams were hired by Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children to prepare a report addressing the issue of educator quality and quantity for the State of Alaska. Alaska has had a long-standing challenge meeting the internal demands for the number of educator annually hired, and that the quality of educators graduating from Alaskan colleges are adequately trained to meet the diverse needs within the state. [Technical difficulties] something the University of Alaska and the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development has a role in teacher certification is involved in. Since May, Alaska fiscal budget changed and their recommendations with a fiscal not may not be readily accepted today which does not negate the need that important recommendations are considered moving forward. He noted that their goal was to expand the Alaska growing workforce to 60 percent by 2025; and retain and develop the education workforce so that 90 percent achieve a high professional standard for Alaska service, measured by the tools then in place, by 2015.

9:09:36 AM

DR. ADAMS advised that approximately 40 percent of high school graduates attend post-secondary institutions, and over half of first-time UA freshman require non-credit bearing remedial courses and their years in post-secondary education are extended. She point out that within the approximate 1,000 new teachers hired annually, roughly 36 percent come from Alaska.

9:10:19 AM

MR. COVEY noted the economic incentive for Alaska is that in-state teachers remain in the state and teach on a 2:1 ratio and referred to page 6, [Section 2: Issues facing Alaska's education

workforce] depicting the shortcomings of Alaska's education workforce. He then directed attention to page [13], a Systemic Approach which was lacking in the past but they are currently working with organizations, the University of Alaska, and school districts. Measurable Outcomes are the foundation Alaska has to build upon, and Cultural Relevance is listed due to Alaska's 50 percent minority students with 95 percent of educators Caucasian and, he explained, the 60 percent out-of-state workforce complicates the issues as they have little or no understanding of the state and its education system. The purpose is to strengthen the K-12 certificated workforce by expanding Alaska grown, he said.

[9:14:28 AM](#)

DR. ADAMS pointed out that the model on page 13 was designed to build the population of Alaska grown teachers to consist of born and raised Alaska students deciding to stay and work, or outside students working on their teacher preparation in Alaska and their Alaska experience is their internships, or Alaska grown could be Alaska students deciding to become teachers outside and then come back. Thereby, the workforce would consist of Alaskan experiences and know what they are getting into, she related.

[9:15:37 AM](#)

MR. COVEY noted a 50 percent annual turnover of rural areas versus urban areas at 10 percent annually, thereby, professional development and retention of Alaska's workforce is critical to improving the quality of the education delivered to students.

He directed attention to page [16] and the bullet points to discuss preparation programs being addressed in a number of ways, which include: Raising standards for entry into and exit from educator preparation program in the state (CAEP); increase and strengthen bridge programs to attract minority groups into education careers; increase university capacity for educator preparation to reach the goal of 60 percent Alaska grown; increase and strengthen pre-service field experience which will require an increase in transportation and lodging in rural locales; establish laboratory schools in urban and rural hub communities; and provide a systemic process for improving teacher preparation using stakeholder and outcome feedback. Interestingly, this fiscal crisis can be a tool to increase communication and cooperation, he noted.

[9:21:31 AM](#)

DR. ADAMS pointed out that together with preparation development comes recruitment in expanding the workforce to 60 percent Alaska grown. She explained that programs targeted toward rural districts and statewide recruitment that could expand interest in the field include: FEA programs in every school district, with an aim for 5 percent of the high school student population for a total of 2,000 students; revisit salary and benefits package; incentivize hard to fill jobs; alternative certification programs; and loan forgiveness.

[9:23:36 AM](#)

MR. COVEY addressed professional development strategies that indicate a means for significant gains, include: add 10 quality professional development days; add 6 days to school year and 4 days to quality in-service allocation; statewide voluntary curriculum: select two curricular programs for major content areas - if districts voluntarily choose to use them, state will purchase them and EED will provide on-going quality staff development; and increase and expand the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project; and develop UA curricula to address unique Alaska needs.

[9:27:47 AM](#)

DR. ADAMS advised that retention would include: continuing teacher retention grants to districts; establish laboratory schools in urban and rural hub communities; revisit salary and benefits package; incentivize hard to fill jobs; loan forgiveness; and increase and expand the Alaska Statewide Mentor Project. It should be noted, she said, that the mentoring program with first and second year students carried over to impact student achievement data in the classrooms. Based upon that information, she opined that the [University of Alaska] is close to ending an Investments and Innovations Grant and the information regarding teacher retention and student achievement should be available soon.

[9:29:00 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER questioned whether 36 percent of University of Alaska teacher certification students graduate.

DR. ADAMS explained that the 36 percent number referenced the number of new hires from in-state.

CHAIR KELLER asked whether the University of Alaska plans to promote its teacher certification program.

MR. COVEY opined that the University of Alaska is placing a high priority on that issue.

CHAIR KELLER advised the committee that the Board of Regents will be testifying as to its list of priorities.

[9:30:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD noted Mr. Covey's previous educational experience in Alaska. She established he is working on contract for the Citizens for the Educational Advancement of Alaska's Children (CEAAC), is familiar with the Moore v. State, Sup. Ct. 3AN-04-9756 (civil), to his knowledge CEAAC is not engaged in litigation with the state currently including Ketchikan, and CEAAC was involved with the Moore lawsuit.

MR. COVEY responded to Representative Reinbold that he does not know whether CEAAC is aligned with a Ketchikan decision.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD offered that CEAAC is involved and a star witness in the Moore case was Linda Darling-Hammond, who is also the senior advisor of Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium, an advisor to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and Alliance for Excellence in Education.

MR. COVEY stated he is familiar with Linda Darling-Hammond.

[9:32:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked whether he supports her positions as to no excellence without equity, and that equity is a pre-condition for excellence.

MR. COVEY responded that he is not familiar with the theories mentioned, but that his presentation and work is based solely upon information collected within Alaska, and the report specifies documents researched of which none have any information from Linda Darling-Hammond.

MR. COVEY, in response to Representative Reinbold, said he is not familiar with the Moore witness theories, or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility waiver.

[9:34:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD described the school districts as "broke" and the costs of common core as a tremendous amount of money. She asked where Mr. Covey expects the money to come when there is a state shortfall in the budget.

MR. COVEY reiterated that the state was in a different fiscal situation when the study began. He conceded it may not be possible for the state to respond fiscally, however, it is important the state has an understanding of helpful activities. Many of the points are either low or no costs, depending upon collaboration and there is room within the report to make some progress, he opined.

[9:36:24 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER referred to [page 22], "10. Increase alternative certification opportunities," and asked whether that is a cost savings.

DR. ADAMS replied that she does not know whether alternative certification programs may be cost savings.

CHAIR KELLER pointed out that when more information is available the committee would be interested as Dr. Adams mentioned that crisis creates opportunity.

MR. COVEY added that through alternative certification some alternatives exist that could be cultivated, "Type M". There is benefit both fiscally and long-term support for students in bringing local people into the workforce and retaining them.

[9:39:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ directed attention to pages 29-30, which indicates recommendations for the specific agencies involved, and requested a streamlined version identifying low cost prioritization and describing legislative committee actions required.

**PRESENTATION: SUPERINTENDENT LAKE AND PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT
ON INNOVATIVE TEACHER TRAINING/RECRUITING PROGRAM**

[9:40:50 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER announced that the final order of business would be a presentation of the Lake and Peninsula School District on Innovative Teacher Training/Recruiting Program.

[9:41:31 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[9:41:41 AM](#)

TY MASE, Superintendent, Lake and Peninsula School District, advised he and Mr. Bill Hill work closely together in their endeavors to enhance their school districts and boards. He remarked that six to seven years ago they identified certain children for intervention and realized they required extra assistance in the classrooms, hired a tutor for a low performing school with "spectacular" results, and since that time has increased to nine tutors for the low performing schools that is funded through a federal AME grant. They also developed an online tutoring component which, he described, as cheaper yet much more labor intensive and it is all accomplished through university collaboration as they work with numerous universities.

[9:46:24 AM](#)

MR. MASEE introduced a video presentation.

[9:50:26 AM](#)

MR. MASE noted that the majority of tutors are offered incentives, recruited in the fall, arrive for the spring semester, and understand they may have to substitute teach for a semester before finding employment. Incentives, he noted, include travel, orientation, shopping assistance, no-cost housing, approximately \$20 per hour, and an experience of a lifetime and estimates that over one-third of the teaching staff is composed of former tutors.

[9:51:11 AM](#)

BILL HILL, Superintendent, Bristol Bay Borough School District, said that academic achievement has increased significantly as new staff becomes immersed in local culture. The tutors are better prepared for life in rural Alaska versus arriving after a remote hire and, therefore, many tutors want to stay which decreases the cost of recruiting, he explained.

MR. MASE noted that 54 students in Lake and Peninsula School District and 10 students in Bristol Bay Borough School District are receiving individualized distance-delivered tutoring from university students at the University of Anchorage Alaska, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, Centenary College in New Jersey, and Western Oregon University. He explained that students are identified for intervention or enhancement using AIMSweb, are tutored in thirty minutes sessions one to three times per week, university students are enrolled in a teacher education program, Blackboard Collaborate is utilized for delivery, and university professors train the tutors to analyze and interpret the AIMSweb and create effective lessons.

[9:53:36 AM](#)

MR. HILL pointed out that through the program academic achievement has increased, the program provides a "live learning lab" for university partners, it adds Big Brother/Big Sister qualities, online tutors are starting to student teach and perform onsite tutoring via LPSA, it works well with advanced students, and brings new energy into small schools.

[9:54:55 AM](#)

MR. MASE related that some university students use their junior and senior years to tutor on-line and then become hired as onsite tutors which is three year relationship prior to going into the classroom.

[9:55:13 AM](#)

MR. MASE opined that the program is beneficial to bush Alaska and its challenges. He remarked that onsite tutors cost approximately \$10,000 each when the incentives are factored in, but a ratio of nine onsite tutors to one certified benefited educator exists. He reiterated that the online cost is cheaper but labor intensive.

[9:56:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to the online program and asked whether that is compensated tutoring or volunteer.

MS. MASE responded that with some universities it is based on credit as a piece of the student's methodology course such as Kutztown University of Pennsylvania where students volunteer to

perform tutoring, but must go through an interview process to be accepted into the program.

[9:57:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON surmised that the online cost is the half-time FD maintaining the technology, but the tutors are basically volunteering to interact with the students.

MR. MASE answered in the affirmative.

[9:57:52 AM](#)

MR. MASE responded to Representative Vazquez that the Lake and Peninsula School District has approximately 310 students enrolled in 13 school sites and the Bristol Bay Borough School District enrolled approximately 115 students.

[9:58:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VAZQUEZ requested the number of certified full time teachers in each school district.

MR. MASE replied that Lake and Peninsula School District employs approximately 55-65 certified staff except a portion are support staff and itinerants. He explained that 8 out of the 13 school sites are 2 teacher sites, an elementary and secondary generalist, and several larger sites. He estimated the district employs 50 certified staff in classrooms.

MR. HILL offered that the Bristol Bay Borough School District employs 12 certified staff with 1 being a special education instructor.

[9:59:36 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.