

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 11, 2015

8:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Jim Colver
Representative Liz Vazquez

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA REPORT ON ATTRACTING~
TRAINING AND RETAINING QUALIFIED PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

MIKE POWERS, Vice-Chair Board of Regents
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the University of Alaska's Report on Attracting, Training, and Recruiting Qualified Public School Teachers.

STEVE ATWATER PhD, Associate Vice President
K-12 Outreach
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Participated in the University of Alaska report on attracting, training, and retaining qualified public school teachers.

DIANE HIRSHBERG, Director

Center for Alaska Education Policy Research
University of Alaska Anchorage
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions during the University of Alaska's presentation.

DEBORAH LO, Dean
School of Education
University of Alaska Southeast
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions during the University of Alaska's presentation.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:04:46 AM](#)

CHAIR WES KELLER called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Representatives Seaton, Drummond, Kreiss-Tomkins, Reinbold, and Keller were present at the call to order.

[8:05:22 AM](#)

PRESENTATION: UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA REPORT ON ATTRACTING, TRAINING AND RETAINING QUALIFIED PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

CHAIR KELLER announced that the only order of business would be a presentation from the University of Alaska (UA) on attracting, training, and retaining qualified public school teachers.

CHAIR KELLER advised the committee that the following presentation is required by statute, and the intent is to narrow the gap between teachers new to the state and turnover, and the quality of training teachers out of Alaska, thereby retaining more teachers. He opined that the intent was to require the legislature and University of Alaska to interact once a year personally.

[8:08:23 AM](#)

REGENT MIKE POWERS, Vice-Chair Board of Regents, University of Alaska, said the mission and strategy of the University of Alaska is quality of life, and that economic Alaska is able to depend upon an educated population so the link with the University of Alaska is vital. In 2011, under the leadership of President Pat Gamble, the Shaping Alaska's Future project

involved 80 listening sessions comprising of students, faculty, alumni, staff, business leaders, elected officials, and K-12 partners. A broad survey of state and national trends was conducted regarding the likelihood of budget constraints, and the choices available to students largely due to mobility and distance delivery. It was a two year effort with five themes, which included: enhancing student achievement; creating productive partnerships with Alaska schools; productive partnerships with public and private industry; research and development to enhance economic growth; and accountability to all Alaskans. He explained that relative to creating productive partnerships with Alaska schools the focus was upon three key outcomes: high school graduation requirements aligned and post-secondary pathways clearly communicated to high school students; teacher retention in rural Alaska to equal that of urban Alaska; partnership with Alaska schools as the college going rate in Alaska would be similar to its peer group in the Western states.

[8:13:07 AM](#)

STEVE ATWATER PhD, Associate Vice President, K-12 Outreach, University of Alaska, advised that a portion his responsibility is to attract, train and retain public school teachers. The report indicates that the UA universities prepare approximately 1/3 of Alaska teacher needed for Alaska and their intention is 50 percent. He drew the committee's attention to page 2, "Table 1. University of Alaska Education Program Graduates, 2006-07 to 2013-14" and noted that 2014 273 teacher graduates is the second highest in the eight years referenced. With regard to certificates such as, reading endorsement on page 2, "Chart 1. University of Alaska Teacher Preparation Program Graduates by Level of Endorsement, 2007-2014" the majority are elementary prepared teachers. "Chart 2. University of Alaska Special Education Graduates 2007-2014" indicates the number of graduates with special education endorsement and is fairly stable and, however he noted, those returning to school to seek an additional endorsement for special education is going down. He related the thought being that special education teachers have a larger and larger caseload, often dealing with challenging situations, the compliance side is increasing, and are often called in to take part in the remedial work performed at the lower elementary level with intervention. He pointed out that the following pages of the report include: Table 3, that shows 85 percent of Alaska's education graduates were working in Alaska and are in the field of education, and Table 4, shows the wages earned by teachers versus other licensure type professions who quickly earn more than teachers.

8:16:05 AM

DR. ATWATER turned to page 6, "Alaska Native Educators" and advised that research on student teachers reveals that one of the recurring findings is that students who like and trust their teachers will learn at a faster rate and teachers who understand the culture of their students may have more success than teachers that do not. Therefore, he pointed out, last year shows a positive trend for schools with Alaska Native students. He said their work to attract and train Native teachers include: a federal grant award to UAS that will help in the preparation and advancement of Native teachers; money from a foundation that is strengthening teacher preparation and knowledge in cultural based arts instruction; and a partnership with UAA in exploring Native teachers for rural Alaska. A pressing challenge, he remarked, is determining how well the investment in the system is bringing about the desired outcome by using feedback about Alaska teacher graduates to guide improvement efforts. He referred to page 7, "Table 5. Employer ratings of UA program graduates in the classroom," and advised it provided feedback from principals overseeing UA prepared teachers and that the vast majority are generally doing very well. More specifically the information on page 8, "Table 6. UA Program Graduates' Assessment of Skills," provides data on how teacher graduates view themselves which, he described as invaluable information. He turned to page 9, "Table 7. Teacher Turnover and Student Achievement," and explained that village schools fall under the federal classification of "remote." He then stressed that teachers trained in Alaska tend to stay for longer periods of time in the remote schools when compared to teachers recruited from the lower-48. He said refining longevity helps schools to experience better success and turned to page 9, "Table 7. Teacher Turnover and Student Achievement," and pointed out it demonstrates that teacher stability is an important variable to students and school districts. In response, the teacher preparation program is sending more pre-service students to rural Alaska to perform practicums in student teaching which is an expensive endeavor.

8:19:54 AM

DR. ATWATER said that page 10 refers to "Teacher Candidate Pipeline Issues," and noted that schools across the nation are experiencing a diminished supply of teachers. The diminishing supply makes it difficult to bring teachers to Alaska, but the University of Alaska has spent time on the lower-48 recruiting

trail and created a plan revitalizing teacher education in Alaska. The Alaska Teacher Placement (ATP), funded by the University of Alaska as part of its K-12 outreach office, has expanded its role from coordinating job fairs and housing applicant information to actively recruiting teachers to come to Alaska. Rural Alaska school districts are on the road from January through May, and sometimes year round, attempting to recruit teachers, he added. The University of Alaska is writing grants to recruit and train teachers starting with its outreach to 23 high schools with a Future Educators for Alaska program that primarily serves rural Alaska Native students.

[8:22:19 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER responded to Chair Keller that he was referring to the Future Educators of Alaska program on page 11, second paragraph.

[8:23:19 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER said that UA schools and College of Education have expanded their efforts by training teachers through a variety of ways such as the Alaska Rural Paraprofessional Program that trains classroom aids with in-school experience to become teachers. The move from a paraprofessional to a certified teaching position is a heavy lift and requires more effort than simply recruiting a student to the University of Alaska. The expectation is that while paraprofessionals are earning certificates they will maintain employment should lead to long term placement in village schools. The University of Alaska schools and College of Education plan to reach out to similar schools in the lower-48 to target free service juniors, he said. The proposed agreements include course work, clinical experience in Alaska, and mentoring and the outreach is dependent on funding which is a challenge today, he related. Critical support is offered to UA new teachers in the form of mentoring through the Alaska State Mentoring Program as those teachers stay in their jobs at a higher rate, he remarked. He explained that the plan is to prepare more teachers and revitalize teacher education in Alaska is designed to tightly align teacher preparation programs with the demands of K-12 with 4 goals, which include: improving the rigor and selectivity of UA teacher certification; graduate 50 percent more teachers who have certifications; partner with State of Alaska and Alaska School Districts to reduce turnover and collaborate to eliminate barriers to student completion and unnecessary duplication. Dr. Atwater acknowledged the criticism that courses taken at the

University of Alaska Anchorage, for example, do not easily transfer to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Currently over 95 percent of its courses statewide transfer and that education it is even better.

[8:25:53 AM](#)

REGENT POWERS offered that a challenge of any strategic plan is keeping it alive and the UA regents agreed to focus on each previously mentioned themes individually at meetings and most importantly the issue of productive partnerships with Alaska schools. He explained that Student Regent, Courtney Enright and Regent Powers took that issue and called a superintendent, principal, and teacher of a school district in 53 school districts to determine what is and is not working. He described the exercise as worthwhile, and relative to partnerships with Alaska schools is mentorship, and the Alaska Statewide Mentorship Program was mentioned time and again. Monitoring a student's progress is "absolutely crushing" as it requires documenting their progress, looping back when the student moves off course, and intervening in some manner, which is extremely burdensome as opposed to processes in the past, he remarked. He mentioned that classroom management was an issue in people moving forward such as, understanding cultural issues, differences of learning styles, et cetera. The reports were solid and pointed to the significance of schools knowing its geographic region well and able to intervene due to the nuances of remote areas particular to their geographic setting. He added that page 15 is a full circle graft with the message "How do we continue to improve:" build a pipeline by working with K-12 to ensure readiness; encourage education as a career; continue with teacher prep on campus and the community served; augment with mentorship; and continue to champion advanced degrees, professional development, and continued learning with educators.

[8:31:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked why regulatory reporting is burdensome.

DR. ATWATER responded that there is an increasing amount of compliance and record keeping required of teachers and that the monitoring of learning done now as compared to 15 years ago is more sophisticated, in-depth, and authentic. The parent is provided with more than just a grade effort, but rather a thoroughly informed spectrum report on the student which is

burdensome in terms of reporting. In terms of regulations and training coming down on teachers, they now need to address such things as suicide prevention training and with more of those types of regulations teachers are required to spend time. In the past teachers had 25 students and they would do their best to meet each student, but currently there is a progress monitoring of the students on a regular basis to determine where they are in the continuum of learning and when students are identified as "not really" needing it they are pulled into remediation rather than fall further behind.

[8:33:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked whether it is a state or federal regulation, or school district policy for this monitoring.

DR. ATWATER advised the monitoring of literacy progress is a 2001 regulation from the state requiring school districts to monitor literacy at the district level. In terms of reporting, school districts make the choice on their own as it is not required.

[8:34:41 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER advised that this issue is beyond the parameters of the University of Alaska's report. He then surmised that the number of students entering the Alaska workforce is stable and not improving.

DR. ATWATER responded there has not been a big bump in Alaskan educated teacher.

CHAIR KELLER returned to the chart on page 2, and asked for clarification.

DR. ATWATER explained that the dark blue represents trained teachers for elementary school, light blue represents trained teachers for secondary school, and green are teachers trained as generalist to teaching a K-12 endorsement.

[8:37:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to the chart on secondary and asked whether there is an explanation for the decrease in number of teachers preparing for secondary licensure in the university system.

DR. ATWATER offered to provide written information.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON opined there should be an explanation as to why a trend line is dipping for overall high school training.

[8:38:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS questioned whether he anticipates a positive trend in the total number of teachers graduating from UA programs in future years, Table 1. He referred to Table 3 regarding retention and asked how the data in Alaska compares to data of university educated school graduates in other states.

DR. ATWATER answered that he does not have that comparison, and noted that the challenge is in rural Alaska where the retention could be eight to nine percent. Alaska is unique and does not compare with other states as the variables are not similar, he pointed out. With regard to the second question, he does not expect Alaska to produce "tons and tons" of more teachers, but it can inch up. The Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) and Alaska Native Teacher Education Program (ANTEP) are being cultivated, but with the fiscal climate that may not happen, he said. He then advised their plan is to bring rural students together to expose them to the university setting and hold their hands in a manner they are not held currently and put them through the pipeline. External factors include, why choose teaching, and other factors UA cannot control, he highlighted.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS referred to Tables 2-3, and requested a combination of data indicating the number of students graduating from the UA education system, live in Alaska, and teach.

DR. ATWATER advised he would provide the information.

[8:43:03 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER referred to page 5, and said he found the comparison between teachers and other professions "hollow" in that teachers work nine months of the year. He asked whether the teacher salaries include adjusted annual salaries and benefits.

DR. ATWATER responded that it is annual salaries without benefits, and depending upon the district a teacher will sign a contract for 188-193 days. He pointed out that it is not a

9:00-5:00, 5 days a week position as teachers work all of the time and chaperone dances, work on Saturdays, take students on field trips, et cetera.

[8:44:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON pointed to page 3, and asked whether the trend for 2015 will remain in that there is a reduction in endorsements for special education graduates.

DR. ATWATER advised he would provide the information.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON commented that the state has to move up with special education and requested a breakdown between the effectiveness and retention of the three university programs.

DR. ATWATER responded that it would be determined by the metric used to determine effectiveness.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON advised that the metrics used here is retention.

DR. ATWATER replied he would provide the information and commented that teacher preparation, Masters of Arts of Teaching (MAT) are people with Bachelor Degrees and perhaps biology and intend to obtain a teaching endorsement as compared to a young person "doing education courses." In general, he related, the teacher preparation programs are much more intensive in terms of requirements to be in classrooms than in the past.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON maintained his interest.

[8:48:06 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER referred to page 4, Chart 3, and read "Not all of the work is as a classroom teacher in schools; however, data on occupations shows that about 85 percent of graduates who are working in Alaska are in some sort of education occupation," and opined that previous to that sentence, the number was 70 percent.

DR. ATWATER agreed, and advised it would be administrative or support staff such as, counselors, speech pathologist, et cetera.

[8:49:05 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER turned to page 7, and asked whether there was a control group when principals were contacted as to their rating of teachers or whether it was a general report response and not scientific.

DR. ATWATER answered that the comparison was not scientifically based.

[8:50:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to page 7, Table 5, and asked how the University of Alaska is responding to the 31 percent deficit regarding UA graduates modifying educational and instructional practice with students to be successful, and also to the 24 percent figure for teachers using technology effectively, creatively and wisely.

DR. ATWATER answered that more time and adjustments will be devoted to assessments and training teachers to use that information to drive instruction.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON requested a written summary as to how the goal is being accomplished.

[8:52:09 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER referred to page 9, regarding teacher turnover in the context of urban and rural and asked what factors were considered as the comparison is between the proficiency scores in schools.

DR. ATWATER responded that the proficiency scores include teacher turnover, homes where English may not be spoken, and poverty.

[8:54:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked whether the average teacher turnover includes retiring teachers or simply teachers moving on to another school.

DR. ATWATER replied that it represents 8.7 percent of the people to replace.

[8:54:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to page 11 regarding the second paragraph, and read "Courses will be offered through Alaska Learning Network (AKLN) ..." He opined that AKLN was not funded and asked whether there was another mechanism for how Future Educators for Alaska ...

DR. ATWATER interjected that the University of Alaska will have to adjust the distance education programs and will make it work.

[8:55:53 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER asked whether it is the intent of AKLN to offer general education classes in math and English, introductory teacher education classes, and test preparation for the SAT/ACT and PRAXIS test of basic skills.

DR. ATWATER replied he would not summarize AKLN as a test preparation program.

CHAIR KELLER asked for an explanation of how AKLN will assist with teacher turnover.

DR. ATWATER responded high school students thinking of becoming teachers are given the introduction to education classes through AKLN.

[8:56:53 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER referred to page 11, paragraph 1 and asked the start date of the Alaska Rural Paraprofessional Program and the success of that program.

DR. ATWATER advised he would provide that information and noted it takes several years to bring paraprofessionals to the point they can become teachers as it is usually a slow process of 1-2 classes per semester.

CHAIR KELLER opined the program started 11 years ago and there should be data depicting success. With regard to the mentoring program, he questioned, whether Dr. Atwater could offer an idea of the amount of money spent on the program, both the UA and EDM.

DR. ATWATER advised the entire principal and teacher monitoring budget was \$2.2 million. He explained that the bulk of the money is to secure contracts with mentors through the Department

of Education, and that the University of Alaska facilitates training and travel coordination for mentors.

CHAIR KELLER requested information as to whether there has been a positive result at the school and district level.

DR. ATWATER answered in the affirmative and will provide a graph depicting early career teachers and new to the profession that have mentoring will stay in the job at a 10 percent higher rate than those that do not.

[8:59:37 AM](#)

REGENT POWERS added that within the cold calls to rural districts each person mentioned mentoring.

REGENT POWERS responded to Chair Keller that 11 regents called 33 districts.

CHAIR KELLER surmised that a superintendent, principal, and teacher were called in each district and nothing to the community.

REGENT POWERS answered in the affirmative.

[9:00:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD referred to the page 5 and said that the teacher salaries appear low and asked whether this is across the state or whether it doesn't include some of the supplementary, and further asked whether there are discrepancies across the state.

DR. ATWATER answered there are many variances in that a teacher coming in cold with no experience and no extra college pieces the salary will vary from mid-\$30,000 to low-\$50,000 which is the most basic level.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD said it would be helpful to receive salaries on counselors, department heads, principals, administrators and all the way up to superintendents.

DR. ATWATER agreed.

[9:02:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD referred to a survey she reviewed many years ago regarding why teachers leave which was not due to salary and benefits and opined it would be a good supplement to this report because there were eye opening issues in the survey.

She expressed concern regarding recruitment and opined that it cost \$12,000 per recruit to fly down and recruit teachers and obtain housing. She asked why the University of Alaska is not getting more parents, locals, and Native Corporations involved to help solve some of these problems. She described it as a must more stable framework rather than flying an outsider to Alaska with a quick turnaround.

DR. ATWATER explained that their model is the model Representative Reinbold described and on August 27 the schools must have teachers and will recruit from out-of-state. There is a concerted effort for high school students in rural Alaska to enroll at the University of Alaska and go back as teachers, he explained.

[9:04:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked their plan to draw local parents and community into the process, which is a sustainable model and include local tutors and not mentors from the East Coast. She expressed concern regarding new evaluations linked to new assessments based on the common core, which is an untested system.

DR. ATWATER offered that the new evaluation system is more comprehensive as it looks at teachers and requires rigorous oversight of their student's performance in the classroom. It ties student performance to teacher performance and as a result requires more time. He commented that the challenge is, how to fully determine a student's and how closely can their learning be tied to teacher's instruction. There is clear connection, yet in terms of the teach evaluation, all of the variables affecting student learning may not be included. He opined it is helping the overall profession and causing conversations between a principal and teacher than didn't previously exist. The examination and reflection of what is good instruction has improved and, he said, that he recognizes the process is labor intensive but it is effective and has improved instruction for students. He surmised it is improving the teaching profession, yet on the other side it is more labor intensive and may cause a connection of student learning that may be overly emphasized due to the other variables.

9:07:30 AM

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD opined she does not believe this system is needed to encourage principals to reach out and that she is troubled with the nationalization of standards, curriculum, and teacher evaluations as she has heard there will be a mass exodus of teachers.

DR. ATWATER responded there is a social tension wherein teachers are blamed and it is not an esteemed profession. A book entitled "The Smartest Kids in the World" depicts some of the models in the world regarding teaching and how a teacher is valued in terms of society. In terms of recruiting people into a profession that is perhaps not as well received as it used to be is part of the challenge. He agreed that it is not strictly a monetary decision in determining whether a person becomes a teacher.

9:10:00 AM

CHAIR KELLER referred to the UA Statewide Office for K-12 Outreach on Future Educators for Alaska (FEA), and asked how long they've collaborated with UAA, UAF, UAS and K-12 teachers.

DR. ATWATER replied the Statewide Office has been in place since 2002 and, with the exception of Alaska Teacher Placement, is a grant funded office and dependent on soft money.

CHAIR KELLER explained to Dr. Atwater that Monday's presentation should include the prioritization of programs, costs, and how long they have been in existence. He explained that the Finance Committee asked committees to pay attention to the cost of the different programs.

DR. ATWATER remarked that the report could be tailored for the current committee as under Governor Sarah Palin the report was designed to address the gap in teacher preparation but it could be moved to a different way in terms of teachers and the University of Alaska.

CHAIR KELLER reminded the committee that assuming the legislature does not take the requirement away for the report there would not be another report until 2017.

DR. ATWATER agreed and commented that it is a bi-annual report and would be available March 2017.

[9:13:12 AM](#)

DIANE HIRSHBERG, Director, Center for Alaska Education Policy Research, University of Alaska Anchorage, in response to previous questions, said that creating a teacher and principal salary schedule under HB 278 will be provided. She advised there is salary data available regarding certificated and classified positions in the state and pointed out that the data on page 5, Table 4 comparing graduates is not the same as the other teacher data as this is all UA graduates in an education related field as defined by the Department of Labor. The figure looks low because it includes early childhood education employees earning less than K-12 certified educators and people performing education related services such as, working in a Native Corporation with an education related program, and private classrooms. She related that they will provide a report prepared specifically for UAA graduates that unpacks the salaries. When reviewing AA Degrees such as an AA Degree in Process Technologies are earning \$100,000 a year working on the North Slope, she pointed out, so it skews the data. She is in possession of approximately 1,500 pages of data as to why teachers leave but, unfortunately, does not have funding for that project and will use graduate student labor. She assessed that the data includes teacher perceptions of working conditions and why they are leaving. She pointed out that salary matters but it doesn't override many of the other issues. She informed the committee that strongly correlated with a teacher's decision to leave is their relationship with the community and their perception of support by their principals and district administrators. She will share a poster prepared after the first 300 surveys depicting teachers spoken with, analysis of the educators and relationships between different aspects of community support and community relationships, and their decisions to stay or go.

[9:18:41 AM](#)

MS. HIRSBERG, in response to a prior special education graduates question, said that previously teacher endorsements were paid by their district and is no longer available. She opined as a result there is a drop off of currently certificated and currently teachers choosing to obtain a special education endorsement, but has not directly asked the teachers.

[9:19:51 AM](#)

DEBORAH LO, Dean, School of Education, University of Alaska Southeast, interjected that for the two years the initial certifications have gone up. She explained that an endorsement is a teacher from a general education classroom trained and go into a special education classroom, and when speaking of new certifications it is a brand new teacher going in. She remarked it is hopeful that the trend of initial certifications in special education continues to go up.

[9:20:38 AM](#)

MS. HIRSHBERG stated that recent research has shown a 50 percent drop in the number of teacher candidates going into universities in California. She said that Alaska has not seen the national trend but does have declining numbers of students in the age group that would go to a university with a modest decline in the number of students entering the UA system. That, she commented, combined with convincing students teaching is a good career, and the continuing issue of more graduates in general in that a demographic dip will further challenge increasing the number of students going through teacher education programs.

[9:22:17 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER asked whether there is a population drop in the State of Alaska in the broadest sense of the term as the projection is a drop in the 14-17 year olds, and yet the population is going up.

MS. HIRSHBERG clarified it is a drop in projection of 18-22 year olds and the Department of Labor indicates that students are choosing to leave the state following high school graduation. She pointed out that recent demographic state projections reveals a decline for probably a decade in the number of college age students leaving the state.

[9:23:23 AM](#)

MS. LO offered that teacher bashing is prevalent in the nation and will have long term effects.

CHAIR KELLER asked Ms. Lo to speculate why teacher bashing is occurring.

MS. LO replied that the National Consortium for Product Quality (NCPQ) group has evaluated teacher education program on

variables that are unclear to anyone except themselves that has received a lot of press.

CHAIR KELLER surmised that part of the teacher assessment is tied to the student proficiency and a part of Alaska's compliance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), now waived.

MS. LO agreed to some extent as their analysis is based on syllabi and catalogs from the university and they believe they can project quality based upon one dimensional documents.

CHAIR KELLER asked whether a mechanism is in place to determine how Alaska's graduates are performing in other states because there is an indication that Alaska principals agree with what UA is producing. He further asked whether there is data as to why students are leaving to teach out-of-state and how prepared they are to function in another state.

MS. LO responded that it is difficult to follow graduates out-of-state as often they are military transferring with a spouse.

[9:26:33 AM](#)

MS. HIRSHBERG noted that the survey of principals and teachers is not a scientific survey as it was a questionnaire sent to every employing principal of a graduate, and there was a lack in response. She described the survey as expensive but important as it provides a benchmark. On an annual basis students about to graduate are surveyed, and graduates one, two, and three years out to cultivate data for analysis on program effectiveness, she related.

[9:28:49 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER said that to pass casual survey information off as a study is difficult in that a telephone call response will be biased and the quality of the survey will not hold up to a peer review type study.

MS. LO explained that it is not a research study but rather an evaluation providing valuable information to program designers.

CHAIR KELLER agreed it is helpful although from a legislator's perspective the study does not offer much information as to where to put the money.

MS. HIRSHBERG clarified that study data was included within the report because with the statewide survey they know response rates and know who responded. She said that research can be expensive and they turn to external funding in that their challenge is obtaining data with declining resources.

[9:31:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD related that she has seen teacher bashing in Alaska and asked the Superintendent at "our" community council to not threaten to lay teachers off to make a statement. She remarked that the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) talk down approach, No Child Left Behind waivers, and mandates with control over Alaska's education is frustrating. The NCLB waiver created a top down approach mandate from the federal government and placed Alaska's education system into a box, she expressed. She further expressed her ongoing concern for the need to include all stakeholders within the education of Alaska's children.

[9:35:26 AM](#)

CHAIR KELLER asked whether the University of Alaska incorporates local village councils and other local organizations as partners in the process.

MS. LO answered that she attends the school board's conference which is made up of school board members who are the community and speaks with them.

CHAIR KELLER asked whether there have been useful results.

MS. LO responded that the principals have a ground level understanding of what their students and schools need, and have a slightly different perspective than the professionally trained principal.

[9:37:07 AM](#)

MS. HIRSHBERG cautioned that reporting program cost data is difficult in extrapolate the cost in producing a graduate or the cost of a program as they are struggling with how best to obtain the data. She pointed out that the system is designed to facilitate certain aspects and in order to have a full understanding of the cost data is difficult and flawed.

CHAIR KELLER noted that in understanding where the general funds are being directed and the ability to quantify is necessary.

MS. HIRSHBERG said they can quantify but it takes an enormous amount of work to get the cost data to a place where a prioritization report can be written. She expressed concern that regarding Chair Keller's request for prioritization of programs by next Monday is a challenge.

CHAIR KELLER pointed out that cost breakdowns for the various programs will be necessary in the state budget process and requested that the breakdowns, priority list, and general cost for the programs be provided.

[9:42:20 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:42 a.m.