

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT MEETING
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

May 6, 2019
8:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Representative Harriet Drummond, Co-Chair
Representative Andi Story, Co-Chair
Representative Grier Hopkins
Representative Tiffany Zulkosky
Representative Josh Revak
Representative DeLena Johnson

SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator Shelley Hughes, Vice Chair
Senator Mia Costello

MEMBERS ABSENT

HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Representative Chris Tuck

SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

Senator Chris Birch
Senator Tom Begich

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: ALASKA'S UNIVERSITY FOR ALASKA'S SCHOOLS - TEACHER PREPARATION~ RETENTION~ AND RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA.

HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

STEVE ATWATER, Ph.D., Executive Dean
Alaska College of Education
University of Alaska Southeast
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered the presentation on Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools - Teacher Preparation, Retention, and Recruitment Initiatives at the University of Alaska (as per AS 14.40.190(b))

ACTION NARRATIVE

8:30:26 AM

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the joint meeting of the House and Senate Education Standing Committees to order at 8:30 a.m. Present at the call to order from the House Education Standing Committee were Representatives Hopkins, Johnson, Story, Zulkosky, Revak and Drummond. Present from the Senate Education Standing Committee were Senator Hughes, Costello and Stevens.

Presentation: Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools - Teacher Preparation, Retention, and Recruitment Initiatives at the University of Alaska.

8:32:03 AM

DR. STEVE ATWATER, Executive Dean, Alaska College of Education, University of Alaska Southeast, Juneau, Alaska, introduced the topics of discussion relating to the presentation.

- The teaching preparation programs offered at the University of Alaska (UA)
- The Alaska College of Education (AKCOE)
- The new recruitment efforts in place at the university
- The ongoing improvement of training teachers to teach reading
- The impacts of the University of Anchorage discontinuing its education program.

DR. ATWATER stated that the pathway to become a teacher in Alaska is well established. The state is the licensing agency

for becoming a teacher. All pathways require an internship. He noted one pathway called the post baccalaureate program is where a student has already earned a bachelor's degree and goes directly into the workforce before they complete the university program. The state allows an initial license to be issued when someone has a bachelor's degree as well as 5 years of experience in the content area they will be teaching. This pathway helps fill the vacancies across Alaska's school districts.

[8:34:37 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked how teachers from other states begin teaching in Alaska.

DR. ATWATER responded that Alaska accepts teaching certifications from other states. Out of state teachers must apply and take two courses to qualify for a teaching certificate in Alaska.

DR. ATWATER continued to explain that there are 19 different teacher certification pathways available to students at all three campuses. He reported that the average number of UA students graduating with a teaching certificate is about 244. The overall numbers are holding steady. He mentioned that he would later discuss what was being implemented to improve this. He pointed out that the number of prepared teachers did not always equate to the number of teachers entering the workforce.

[8:36:44 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked how many students go through the certification process but do not go into the workforce.

DR. ATWATER replied that the number varies, ranging as high as 30 percent to as low as 10 percent. He noted there were varying reasons for a newly prepared teacher to not enter the workforce. Students might wait a year or two before going to work or they may choose to teach out of state.

DR. ATWATER stated that most of Alaska's teachers were certified out of state, making Alaska dependent upon these teachers. He said around 42 percent of the teachers in Alaska were prepared by UA and the goal is to see this number increase. He emphasized that teachers prepared by UA remain teaching in Alaska longer than those prepared out of state.

[8:38:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY noted that many other programs aid students in finding a job in the workforce upon graduating. Even though it was not the university's role to place students in a job, she asked why recent graduates were not placed in the many vacant jobs within Alaska's school districts.

DR. ATWATER answered that through the program, Alaska Teacher Placement, the university plays a significant role in placing graduates into the workforce. When a student does their internship, the relationships they forge with the principals and school districts can often lead to immediate employment. He noted an intern who completes their student teaching in one district but wants a job in another district, has an easier time in Alaska because school districts have stronger relationships with each other, compared to other states.

[8:40:52 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked how interns were assigned to communities.

DR. ATWATER replied that he would discuss the distribution of interns later in the presentation.

DR. ATWATER referenced a graph that shows the number of unduplicated jobs compared to the number of UA teacher graduates for 2013 to 2017. He explained that an unduplicated job is a single position, whereas a duplicated job is two positions (such as health and P.E.) being taught by one person. The chart shows that in 2017 there were 500 people hired in unduplicated jobs and the number of UA teacher graduates hired was about 240. He said the key is to increase the number of UA graduates to meet the number of unduplicated jobs.

DR. ATWATER mentioned that the state performs a vacancy rate survey at the beginning of every year. The vacancy rate in Alaska is the highest it has ever been and continues to be a challenge across school districts. He noted that a recent study shows a tension exists between the number of employed teachers across the country and the number of newly prepared teachers. The study found about 16 percent of teachers were leaving the profession while only 10 percent were entering the profession. He said this tension is felt greatly in Alaska because Alaska is dependent upon teachers prepared out of state. Therefore, Alaskan schools are struggling to fill the vacancies, especially in rural Alaska.

DR. ATWATER pointed out that UA has responded to the vacancy issue in four major ways.

- The creation of the Alaska College of Education a year ago
- An emphasis on recruitment efforts due to a higher need within the profession
- A focus on adequately preparing teachers to enter the workforce
- Supporting teacher retention

DR. ATWATER said the Board of Regents voted in 2018 to create the Alaska College of Education to act as a single point of contact. This was done to enhance collaboration and coordination between the separate units of Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Southeast. The level of coordination was never what it could have been when operating as three separate units. He mentioned that the college produces a tighter alignment between the university and the K-12 system because it creates a single connection for the entire state. He stated that as the Executive Dean, he would help build and strengthen the college's relationship with all the K-12 school districts.

[8:48:30 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER noted that there are still three separate units within the university. He mentioned that he has traditional oversight of the University of Southeast in Juneau, but he also oversees the coordination of the system level activity to assess and make improvements.

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CHAIR STEVENS mentioned that he misunderstood the new reorganization. He said he thought all the units would be under the traditional oversight of Dr. Atwater. He asked why this changed and if the university would move back to a more traditional oversight system.

DR. ATWATER clarified that the Board of Regents intended for the College of Education to move to a single system like the UAA nursing program but once the decision was made, the board looked at accreditation from the university's standpoint and found that each university needs to have its own accreditation. The accrediting body, the Northwest Commission of Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), determined that the model presented would be doable but would take years to put into place. NWCCU

recommended taking the time to reorganize or risk jeopardizing accreditation by trying to place all education students at UAS. He noted that Senator Stevens was correct because the intent of the Board of Regents was to have a single unit, with all faculty employed by that unit and all students graduating from that unit. Dr. Atwater said he was unsure if the board still had plans to move in that direction in the future. He noted the discontinuation of the education program at UAA this year leaves only the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) and the University of Fairbanks (UAF). He said this was a complicated conversation that he would not expand on.

[8:51:21 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked if he was having conversations with the Board of Regents regarding going to one accreditation model over the next few years and if he supported it.

DR. ATWATER stated that he was unsure of what the Board of Regents had planned. He offered his belief that greater collaboration of the system would be beneficial. However, he would defer the question to President Johnson.

SENATOR HUGHES asked Chair Stevens if it was possible to hear from the president of university on this subject, especially since there has been loss of accreditation at UAA.

[8:52:52 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS answered that Dr. Atwater was hired under the assumption that he would provide the traditional oversight for the entire system. However, current circumstances seem to have made things less organized. He stated that the university would be contacted to hold a future discussion concerning the university's accreditation model.

[8:53:14 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER explained the main roles of the Alaska College of Education:

- Provides traditional teacher preparation programs
- Coordinates the budget of the three separate units
- Performs the statewide function of managing and analyzing the education data
- Leads in the recruitment process

DR. ATWATER stated that the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) was now using the college as the single point of contact. He said he was engaged with K-12 on a new level to help maintain and build a stronger relationship. He mentioned that the system may not look the way the board intended, but changes have been made to create a more efficient system regarding external relationships.

DR. ATWATER expanded on the teacher recruitment and placement issues, noting that the national program called Educators Rising is in half of the school districts in Alaska. The university established a four-course career pathway that was designed to steer high school students towards the teaching profession. He noted Educators Rising is funded by the university.

[8:55:44 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS mentioned that Senator Hoffman put \$850,000 in the budget for Educators Rising. He asked Dr. Atwater to expand on how the organization works, how many schools were involved, and how the money would be used.

[8:56:15 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER answered that the money would be used to create curriculum for middle schools to establish a 6-12 pathway, not just a 9-12 pathway. It would also be used to support districts in offering career technical events that bring students together to compete with one another on a variety of issues. He said some students go on to compete at the national level. Currently, 26 school districts participate in Educators Rising across Alaska. He stated that his hope was for this program to nurture students to want to enter the teaching profession.

[8:58:04 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if Future Teachers of America was a similar organization to Educators Rising.

DR. ATWATER replied that a program called Future Educators of Alaska existed for years but had poor returns in creating new teachers. It was primarily an after-school activity that lacked depth. He noted that Educators Rising was structured so the students make the decision to take the career pathway courses in teaching. The difference is that students and teachers are more invested in the program, he said.

8:59:30 AM

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked how long Educators Rising had been in existence and if any data supported its effectiveness. He asked how many of the students in the program go into the UA School of Education.

DR. ATWATER replied that Educators Rising was implemented just two years ago, so the data is not significant enough to draw a complete conclusion. The program is being monitored closely. He said he hoped that within a few years, a substantial number of student teachers would be former students who completed Educators Rising courses.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked how the College of Education coordinates with the K-12 outreach office regarding Educators Rising.

DR. ATWATER responded that there has been frequent contact and collaboration between the K-12 outreach office and the university. He noted that the money that comes from the university to support the Educators Rising program comes with his blessing.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked if the K-12 outreach office was under the College of Education or if it was a statewide function.

DR. ATWATER replied that the K-12 outreach office belongs to the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The employees there are employed by UAF, but they perform a state-level function.

9:01:53 AM

CO-CHAIR STORY asked if the Educators Rising curriculum was a dual credit class or an elective offered as cohesive courses building upon one another.

DR. ATWATER responded Educators Rising was not a dual credit class; however, there was interest in making it dual credit. He offered his belief that the most important dual credit classes a student can take are GERS in math and English. He noted that the Educator Rising courses can be taken out of sequence, but they are designed to be taken in sequence.

CO-CHAIR STORY asked if Educators Rising was a two-year program.

DR. ATWATER responded yes; each course lasts a semester.

[9:03:26 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER continued to discuss how the university works with school districts to help paraprofessionals become teachers. He said paraprofessionals are in the schools so they understand the community and can be one of the most constant pieces within a school district. UAF and UAS work with paraprofessionals to help them earn their teaching certificates. He described it as a slow process. UAF has just two to three paraprofessionals graduate as a certified teacher each year because they are only able to take one or two courses per semester. He noted it was beneficial to have local communities invest in local people who will go directly into the workforce.

[9:04:31 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS commented that the problem for many paraprofessionals is the time commitment to become a teacher. He asked how the process could be expedited for paraprofessionals.

DR. ATWATER replied that lower Kuskokwim's model was the way to do it. Their model recognizes paraprofessionals who are far enough along in acquiring their teaching credentials and pays them a full salary during their internship. However, this would be a difficult model to emulate in all districts due to funding, he said.

[9:05:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY commented that she met with a paraprofessional educator in lower Kuskokwim who was currently moving through the certification process. She said she agrees that the process does not produce a high volume of teachers, but it is absolutely a worthwhile investment. These paraprofessionals are highly invested, knowledgeable and compassionate and they are an inspiration to see.

[9:06:55 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY said she imagines that long-standing paraprofessionals have developed expertise in behavior management, which is an important skill to be an effective teacher. She said she wonders if the university has considered a competency test for academic knowledge and behavior management,

so students who display a certain level of knowledge can move through the program faster.

DR. ATWATER responded that there is a constant push to use prior knowledge or proficiency, so students don't need to take a course if they are already qualified. The university allows up to 25 percent of a degree to be earned this way. He said he was unaware if this was being done within the education classes, but there is no reason it couldn't be done that way if a student were to petition.

[9:08:20 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked how paraprofessionals in the Lower Kuskokwim School District take college courses without leaving their home communities.

DR. ATWATER responded that most paraprofessionals take distance courses. Every May UAF brings a group of students to Bethel to complete one or two courses in an intensive two-week period. Also, some travel to the Fairbanks campus to attend classes in the summertime.

[9:09:06 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS mentioned that it would be beneficial to hear from the Lower Kuskokwim School District next year regarding their progress in helping paraprofessionals become certified teachers. He said this could help lawmakers understand how to emulate this model in other districts.

DR. ATWATER responded that the university is seeking paraprofessionals because they are local people, taking local jobs which aids in teacher retention.

DR. ATWATER stated that his last point related to recruitment is the statewide issue of raising the social esteem of the teaching profession. He highlighted that the social esteem of a teacher in Finland is much higher than in Alaska. The university is calling on everyone to help make the teaching profession more attractive socially, so more young people are drawn to it, he said.

[9:10:26 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY pointed out that this was the beginning of national teacher appreciation week. She offered her belief that

teachers are unsung heroes. As policy makers, it is important to ensure education is adequately funded, she said.

9:11:28 AM

DR. ATWATER explained that Alaska-prepared teachers are more likely to stay in the state and teach longer than someone from an outside university. A key piece emphasized to new Alaska-prepared teachers is the implementation of local/place-based curricula. He noted that place-based education resonates with students on a level a textbook cannot. He gave an example of how to teach density to students in a local context. He said UA works alongside K-12 to ensure teachers are prepared to work in the K-12 environment. The internship experience is better preparing teachers due to improvements in supervision and evaluating interns. He also noted that Alaska-prepared teachers are learning how to work in multi-grade classrooms.

9:14:15 AM

CO-CHAIR STORY mentioned how critical the improved relationship is between K-12 and the university to help drive improvement efforts. She asked if teachers were trained in the assessment tools districts use and if the university was familiarizing its students with curricula used most throughout the state.

DR. ATWATER replied it would be a difficult task for the university to expose and train teachers in specific programs because they vary significantly across the state. The university prepares students to use programs and then they are exposed to specific programs during their internship. He continued to say that the university provides courses to prepare teachers to use MAP assessments in their classrooms. (Measures of Academic Progress for student growth in math and reading) He said K-12 tends to have an unfair expectation that new teachers should know exactly what a specific school district teaches. This is difficult when there is such a large variation in curricula in districts across the state.

CO-CHAIR STORY asked if the development of a closer relationship between K-12 and the university was helping to ensure teachers are better equipped to teach the widespread curricula across Alaska.

DR. ATWATER responded that teachers are being trained to understand and apply the larger concepts. He said a certain

reading program needs to be sufficiently broad or it would be wrong for the university to embrace it.

DR. ATWATER discussed the accreditation process the university is required to go through. He explained that the new process bases accreditation on quality assurance that is comprehensive across the entire Education unit. He emphasized that the university has been in a constant state of improvement driven by quality assurance systems. An example was the recognition that graduates were struggling to teach students who do not speak English as their first language. In response, UA faculty has started to consider whether to make English Language Learner (ELL) courses a part of the education program or to offer them separately. He said that this level of full unit coordination has been positive in facilitating improvement.

[9:20:15 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER stated that the university offers a Rural Practicum which gives students who are doing their internships in urban districts the opportunity to teach/work for two weeks in rural Alaska.

DR. ATWATER explained that improvement was monitored by the university through regular feedback from K-12. He said principals receive surveys to assess a new teacher. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) asked the university to perform the difficult task of determining the impact new teachers have on their student's ability to learn.

DR. ATWATER discussed the issue of retention and the number of nontenured teachers within Alaska school districts. He said that tenure is earned on the first day of a teacher's fourth year working in a school district. The data shows that teacher turnover is high, so recruitment is an ongoing issue.

[9:24:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY asked how the different teacher preparation programs correlate to the teacher retention rate in Alaska.

DR. ATWATER said he didn't know but he suspects that teachers in the post baccalaureate program would most likely have a higher retention rate because they are probably more invested in the career process.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY said that if/when the university performs an analysis of the rates by program, she would love to see the data.

[9:25:45 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND asked if an untenured teacher moves to another district would they have to start the tenure process all over again.

DR. ATWATER answered that is correct. He explained that if a tenured teacher transfers to a new district, then tenure would resume after one year of teaching in the new district.

[9:26:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS commented that teacher retention and tenure are not connected to a teacher's performance. The decision to tenure is made for many different reasons. He offered his belief that it has been a problem to have a performance-based evaluation of new teachers because sometimes it can take three years to become a skilled educator. He added that tenure does not prevent a teacher from being terminated. After tenure has been achieved, then an evaluation on the quality of the teacher's instruction should be based on performance, he said. He opined that providing more mentoring programs for new teachers during their first three years of teaching would offer them more stability.

[9:28:31 AM](#)

DR. ATWATER commented that supporting teachers in the field is a K-12 function; it is not a university function. However, the university does offer support through the Alaska Statewide Mentoring Project. He said the university currently works with 158 new teachers in 21 school districts. The university recognizes the importance of having consistent well-trained teachers for students. He noted that high turnover rates negatively impact student achievement.

DR. ATWATER discussed that students in the education program are taught to teach reading but not a specific reading program. Graduates are prepared to identify and assess a student's reading ability or learning disability. He noted that courses have been expanded to include the element of dyslexia to ensure teachers are equipped to recognize, respond, and restructure their instruction accordingly.

9:31:08 AM

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND commented that in taskforce meetings she learned that Alaska tends to hire new teachers from eight education schools in the country. However, only two of those schools teach their graduates the science of reading the way Alaska schools do to handle dyslexia and other reading disabilities. She stated she was happy to hear that Alaska teachers are learning the science of reading, not a specific curriculum.

9:32:14 AM

CO-CHAIR STORY asked how the University of Alaska would describe the science of reading.

DR. ATWATER responded that the required Foundation of Literacy courses teach graduates the five components of the science of reading. He noted that it is essential that new teachers are prepared to instruct reading in a variety of ways because children do not learn reading skills or progress in literacy in the same way. He said it is important to note that when a new teacher enters a specific school district, they are taught how to teach and implement the specific reading program in that district.

DR. ATWATER followed up on Representative Drummond's comment. He said the taskforce brought the university together as a unit to analyze how reading is being taught. He offered his belief that the outcome has been positive.

DR. ATWATER turned to the increasingly prevalent issue of preparing teachers to work with students who have experienced trauma. He said teachers on the External Advisory Committee report that three to four students in a classroom are exhibiting symptoms of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as opposed to one or two in the past. He said this is the new reality and it leads to the question of whether there is a need for more behavioral health support systems in schools. He opined that merging pathways of the College of Health and the College of Education at UA could help meet the needs of many students.

DR. ATWATER concluded that on April 8, 2019 the Board of Regents decided to discontinue the seven education licensure programs at UAA. On September 1, UAF and UAS assumed responsibility for those programs. He said this was a complicated transition and

the university has been making sure students have opportunities to cross the system, as they did before. He said there would be an education presence on the UAA campus to offer services to students during the reorganization.

[9:38:56 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if the UAA faculty would work for UAF or UAS, and he questioned how the students would be impacted.

DR. ATWATER replied that UAF and UAS would employ Anchorage-based faculty offering face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses. The goal is to replicate the experience students have now in Anchorage but with faculty who are employed by the other two universities. He said it would be comparable to the nursing program. Students would go through UAA but earn a degree through UAF or UAS.

CHAIR STEVENS inquired if the quality of the faculty led to the loss of accreditation in Anchorage or if it was based on other issues.

DR. ATWATER answered that the loss of accreditation was primarily due to the lack of a quality assurance system. The Anchorage unit was evaluated and rated on the overall system, not the quality of the faculty.

CHAIR STEVENS commented that this all came at a time when the legislature was considering the substantial decreases in the governor's budget. He said the accreditation process is expensive, but it seems problematic for the largest campus to not have accreditation. He asked if the Board of Regents plans to reaccredit UAA again in the future.

DR. ATWATER offered his belief that reaccreditation is not the current goal but rather to establish the other two units' programs in place. He said he was not prepared to comment further.

[9:41:47 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND said it was her understanding that the Anchorage unit was the only one that offered early childhood training. She asked if that training was still in place at UAA and if it was offered through the UAF and UAS systems.

DR. ATWATER answered that the Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood will no longer exist after September 1, 2019. To secure a license to teach in early childhood, a minor in Early Childhood and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education is required. This pathway exists through the Department of Education where a license to teach Early Childhood is issued. He mentioned that the university may consider reestablishing the Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood, but not next year. He noted that there was still a clear pathway through UAF for students to obtain the Early Childhood endorsement on top of a teaching license.

[9:43:26 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY referred to the appendix on pages 15-17, relating to the different programs. She asked if the charts have been updated since changes were made at UAA.

DR. ATWATER responded that the charts have not been updated so the current information regarding the changes made to the system is lacking.

DR. ATWATER thanked the committee for inviting him to speak. He mentioned, on behalf of the Regents, that the university has two workforce priorities, one in the area of health and the other in teacher education. He noted that even though there were budget challenges, the university would continue to support teacher education as a top priority. The goal is to decrease teacher turnover rates and raise the social esteem of the teaching profession.

[9:45:52 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR STORY mentioned that there was an excellent report from the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) that has suggestions for teacher retention outside of salaries and benefits. She referenced page 24 that shows the total number of interns is 197 and that 20 were placed in the spring. She asked if those interns were ready to enter the workforce.

DR. ATWATER replied yes; they were students that graduated yesterday.

CO-CHAIR STORY asked how many of those graduates were looking for jobs.

DR. ATWATER responded that those students are eligible to receive a license to teach, but whether they pursue a job varies based on the individual.

CO-CHAIR STORY asked if the university, through the Alaska Teacher Placement Program, was helping place students in the empty teaching positions across the state.

DR. ATWATER answered absolutely; the university supports students in finding a job which does help fill vacant positions. Alaska Teacher Placement is a service for K-12, allowing districts to post their vacancies and teachers to post their resumes.

CO-CHAIR STORY asked if Alaska Teacher Placement was doing surveys on why students are not going into the workforce after graduation. She offered her belief that this would be good information to have.

DR. ATWATER answered that doing the surveys is the university's function. He stated that there are complicated and varying reasons why students choose not to go into the workforce right away. Nevertheless, the university does everything it can to help new teachers obtain their first job.

[9:48:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS mentioned that before the budget was released this year, President Johnson mentioned the need for a \$1.3 million increase to recruit nurses and teachers. He asked how the increase in funding would have been used for programs at the College of Education and how it would have aided in teacher retention.

DR. ATWATER replied that he was unaware of the specificity of funding, but he knew some of the funding would have gone to Educators Rising, to recruit teachers in rural Alaska, and to help Native Alaskans become teachers in their local communities. He noted that the funding also would have gone to expand program activity overall.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS commented that the narrative was that the Alaska College of Education works with the Alaska Native Regional Corporations and nonprofits. He asked for an explanation of the relationship the college has with those corporations.

DR. ATWATER responded that all the Alaska Native corporations have a scholarship or education support component. Even though it was unclear if the corporations would dedicate more scholarship funds to support teachers, the university hopes the corporations recognize the value and importance of the teaching profession in their area and supports these scholarships.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked if his efforts had been successful.

DR. ATWATER answered that he has received good feedback, but he has not heard the outcome.

[9:52:01 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES mentioned that the Board of Regents adopted a goal that by 2025, 90 percent of the teachers in Alaska would be UA graduates. She asked if he was primarily in charge of that and if the goal has been adjusted due to the changes made at UAA.

DR. ATWATER replied that the goal is a stretch due to current circumstances and the fact that employing teachers is not a university function. The university's goal is to prepare teachers. He noted that a more accurate metric would be the number of teachers the university prepared. He said the 90 percent goal still exists and there is a lot of work to do to achieve it by 2025.

[9:53:29 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS commented that the committee would like to hear from the Board of Regents and the President of the University this interim to discuss the issues concerning the direction of the Alaska College of Education and the accreditation process of the University of Anchorage.

[9:54:21 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR DRUMMOND noted the House Education Standing Committee would meet on Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at 8:00 a.m.

[9:54:45 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committees, Chair Stevens adjourned the joint meeting of the Senate and House Education Standing Committees at 9:55 a.m.