

**HB**

**99**

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Ford  
4/2/01

**CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 99( )**

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**

**TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

**BY**

**Offered:  
Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES MCGUIRE, Dyson**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing for an effective  
2 date."

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 \* **Section 1.** AS 14.33.120(a) is amended to read:

5 (a) Each governing body shall adopt a written school disciplinary and safety  
6 program. The program required under this subsection must include written

7 (1) standards for student behavior and safety that reflect community  
8 standards and that include, at a minimum, basic requirements for respect and honesty;  
9 standards required under this paragraph must be developed and periodically reviewed  
10 with the collaboration of members of each school, parents, teachers, and other persons  
11 responsible for the students at a school; a governing body may require that standards  
12 developed under this paragraph be consistent for all schools in an attendance area or  
13 the district;

14 (2) standards relating to when a teacher is authorized to remove a

1 student from the classroom for

2 (A) failure to follow student behavior and safety standards; or

3 (B) behavior described under AS 14.30.045(1) or (2);

4 (3) procedures for notifying teachers of dangerous students consistent  
5 with AS 47.12.310(b);

6 (4) standards relating to when a teacher, teacher's assistant, or other  
7 person responsible for students is authorized to use reasonable and appropriate force to  
8 maintain classroom safety and discipline as described under AS 11.81.430(a)(2);

9 (5) policies necessary to comply with provisions of state and federal  
10 law, including 20 U.S.C. 1400 - 1485 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act);

11 (6) standards to address needs of students for whom mental health or  
12 substance abuse may be a contributing factor to noncompliance with the school  
13 disciplinary and safety program;

14 (7) policies for implementing a student conflict resolution strategy,  
15 including the nonviolent resolution or mediation of conflicts and procedures for  
16 reporting and resolving conflicts;

17 (8) procedures for periodic review and revision of the school  
18 disciplinary and safety program.

19 \* Sec. 2. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to  
20 read:

21 TRANSITION. A governing body of a school district shall amend the district's school  
22 disciplinary and safety program as required by sec. 1 of this Act by January 1, 2002.

23 \* Sec. 3. This Act takes effect July 1, 2001.

# Alaska State Legislature

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on Economic Development, Trade  
and Tourism

Chair, Joint House and Senate  
Administrative Regulation and  
Review Committee

Member  
Resources Committee  
Rules Committee

## Representative Lesil McGuire *House District 17*

### SPONSOR STATEMENT

#### **HB 99**

#### **School Discipline and Safety**

HB 99, "An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing for an effective date," seeks to address ways to mitigate violence in Alaska's schools.

Violence in Alaska's schools has recently been brought into the community spotlight as a result of serious physical altercations between students. These particular fights have been extremely violent resulting in severe bodily harm and even leaving one student comatose. These cannot be considered isolated incidents from those that are never reported. Education requires our children to learn how to live in society through the acceptance of rules and community values. Those values need to be taught by parents, teachers and peers. But somewhere we lost that process in our schools.

HB 99 will be another tool available to schools to help confront both violent and non-violent conflicts. It amends Title 14 of Alaska Statutes to include policies that will seek to initiate a student conflict-resolution curriculum that will provide methods of nonviolent resolution and mediations of conflicts to students, teachers and associated persons. HB 99 seeks to recognize and enforce existing behavior standards by giving students alternatives for solving problems besides the use of violence. Students will learn valuable lessons that will hopefully result in a safer education environment for all of our children. By integrating this way of learning into schools' core curriculum, these policies are targeted at helping students resolve problems before they escalate.

THE  
FOLLOWING  
DOCUMENT(S)  
ARE  
POOR  
ORIGINAL  
COPIES

Policy Manual Update 2001 –

## School Disciplinary and Safety Program

Obtain your Policy Update, developed in November 2000, by calling Anita Johnson at 907-586-1083 or email: [ajohnson@asb.org](mailto:ajohnson@asb.org).

HB 253 became effective July 1, 2000 and required all school districts to have a school disciplinary and safety program in place by January 2, 2001. The purpose is to implement community standards of school behavior that are developed with the collaboration of students, parents, guardians, teachers, school administrators, and advisory school boards in each community; and to protect and support teachers who enforce standards of student behavior and safety in the classroom.

In the Policy Manual Update, AASB has paid close attention to bringing its existing policies into compliance with HB 253, and adopting new policies as necessary. Many of the existing policies met the requirements and goals of a school disciplinary and safety program and required little or no change.

Subscriber school boards who adopt the policies as discussed below will meet their obligation to have this program in place. One requirement of the program, however, which cannot be met with policy adoption is the mandate that the disciplinary program be based on community standards. These standards must reflect, at a minimum, basic requirements for respect and honesty. Districts should meet with students, parents, guardians, teachers, school administrators, and advisory school boards in each community to review existing policies and determine if changes, additions, or deletions are required in order that the District's program reflect standards of the community.

AASB Policy Manual Update includes policies and/or administrative regulations about the following:

- ❖ General policy implementing school discipline and safety program
- ❖ Policies related to general community standards
- ❖ Policies specific to student behavior and discipline
- ❖ Policy outlining procedures for notifying teachers of dangerous students
- ❖ Policies regarding standards for when a teacher may use reasonable and appropriate force to maintain classroom safety and discipline
- ❖ Policies necessary to comply with state and federal laws, including IDEA (special education)
- ❖ Policies regarding standards to address needs of students for whom mental health or substance abuse are impacting on discipline
- ❖ Procedures for periodic review and revision of the discipline and safety program
- ❖ Policies prohibiting termination or formal discipline of employees lawfully enforcing the discipline program
- ❖ Requirement that teachers report information obtained about a crime
- ❖ Requirement that teachers who see a crime report it

*AASB Policy Manual Update, developed in November 2000, may be purchased for the price of \$500 annually. Or you may purchase the entire up-to-date AASB Policy Reference Manual for only \$600. For more information contact Sharon Young or Anita Johnson at (907) 586-1083 or email: [syoung@asb.org](mailto:syoung@asb.org) or [ajohnson@asb.org](mailto:ajohnson@asb.org).*

## AASB Policy Services

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*For more information contact: Sharon Young*

316 West 11th Street, Juneau, AK 99801-1510

Tel: (907) 586-1083



## It's The Law

### Chapter 78, SLA 99 School Crisis Response Plan

Requires districts to ensure that each "school in a city or borough school district or regional educational attendance area shall complete the initial school specific crisis response plan required by AS 14.33.100, added by sec. 1 of this Act, on or before December 31, 2000." These school specific plans should be kept on file at the school site and the district office.

### Chapter 114, SLA 00 School Disciplinary and Safety Program

Requires districts work with their communities to develop school disciplinary and safety standards and related policies. Requires "a governing body shall adopt the initial school disciplinary and safety program required by AS 14.33.120, enacted in Sec. 2 of this Act, by January 1, 2001." These plans and related policies should also be kept on file at the district level.



### Membership Directory

*Please notify the Association of  
Alaska School Boards Office  
with any changes your district  
or board have incurred since  
publication.*

*Email your new information to  
[asb@asb.org](mailto:asb@asb.org)  
call at (907) 586-1083*

<b>Intervention Strategies used by Districts under the Alaska Quality Schools Initiative</b>		
Intervention Strategy	Number of Participating Districts	
	Reported/FY2000	Proposed/FY2001
Tutoring	10	26
Summer School	24	24
Extended Day	12	22
Focus on Reading	34	22
Improve Instructional Strategies	5	12
Training	16	12
Additional Staff - Aides	8	11
Focus on Math	15	11
District-wide Inservices	9	11
Personalized Education Plans for more students	3	10
Use of Technology	5	9
Small Group Instruction	3	8
Special Remedial Classes	4	8
Community/Parent Involvement	4	7
New Course Development in Math		7
New Course Development in Reading		7
Additional Staff - Teachers	3	6
Improved Home-School Communication		6
Early Elementary Reading and Writing	4	5
Personal Skills for Students	7	5
Smaller Class Size		5
Focus on Writing	8	4
Saturday School		4
Study Skills		4
Alternative Programs	5	3
Focus on Special Education	2	3
School to Work Program	1	3
Aligning Curriculum to Standards	6	2
Course Modification		2
Develop Database for Student Accountability		2
New Course Development in Writing		2
School Readiness Program		2
Writing Assessments	6	2
Improved Bilingual Program	2	1
Math Assessments	4	1
Reading Assessments	7	1
Teacher Collaboration	2	1
Transition Program		1
Developing Standards-Based Lessons	4	
District Goal Setting	4	

HE'S FOCUSED

Filmmaker explores Tibet

Thursday, C-1



CALL TO CIVILITY

Native leaders ask Knowles' help

Metro, B-1



IRON DOGS

Storm slows race leaders

Sports, D-4

# Anchorage Daily News

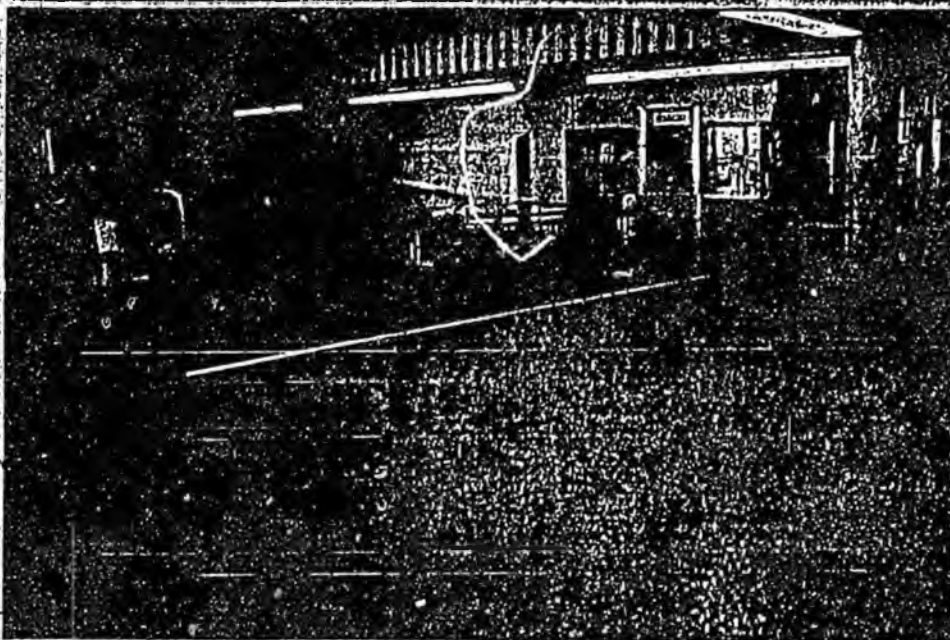
60 CENTS

VOL. 11, NO. 61

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1997

FINAL EDITION

## Student kills 2 in Bethel



Shotgun shells litter the floor of the high school commons area where police believe Evan Ramsey opened fire Wednesday.

### Frightened teens flee high school

By TOM BELL and ROSEMARY SHINOHARA  
Daily News reporters

BETHEL — A seething high school student walked into school Wednesday morning with a shotgun and opened fire, wounding three students, one fatally, before he stalked and killed the Bethel high school principal.

Students and officials identified the killer as Evan Ramsey, 16, son of Donald Ramsey of Anchorage. Only a month ago, the elder Ramsey was released from prison after serving 10 years for taking a rifle into the Anchorage Times office and attacking publisher Bob Atwood and his daughter, Elaine Atwood. The Atwoods wrestled Ramsey to the ground.

The principal, Ronald D. Edwards, 50, was a veteran Bush educator whose daughter and son attend Bethel Regional High School.

Sophomore Joshua Palacios, 16, a rising local basketball player, was critically injured with multiple shot-



Ronald D. Edwards



Joshua Palacios

INSIDE: Sixteen-year-old Joshua Palacios was a star basketball player for Bethel Regional High School. Story and more photos, Page A7.

Please see Page A-6, SHOOTING

### 'The mellowest kid'

Father says shooting hard to believe

By DON HUNTER  
Daily News reporter

Don Ramsey hasn't had a lot of contact with his middle son, Evan, lately. On Wednesday, he was stunned to learn that police in Bethel were saying the boy had walked into the local high school and shot four people, killing the principal and a student and wounding two others. "I can't believe that," Ramsey said. "He's the mellowest kid.

My Evan shot somebody? He's not but 16 years old."

Ramsey, a former Anchorage cab driver now staying in a residential program for homeless veterans, was paroled last month after serving more than 10 years for his own 1986 early morning assault on the offices of Anchorage Times publisher Bob Atwood. Ramsey, angered

Please see Page A-7, RAMSEY



Sixteen-year-old Evan Ramsey is suspected in the killings of two

### A committed educator

Slain principal warned of changes occurring in school

By LISA DEMER  
Daily News reporter

During almost a decade as a teacher and principal in rural Alaska, Ronald Dale Edwards and his family traveled to some of the state's most remote communities, making friends all along the way.

Edwards hauled firewood for elders in the tiny village

of Nikolaki on the Aleutian Islands and gave children in Bethel the chance to play in a basketball league. By all accounts, his wife, three children and his students were his life.

On Tuesday evening, the night before he was gunned down in the commons area of Bethel Regional High School, Edwards had warned an ad-

sory group that drugs were creeping into the school, where he had served as principal since 1993, and parents noted violence was increasing, too.

Over Christmas break, a student brought a gun into a basketball tournament at the school. Just last week, ac-

Please see Page A-7, PRINCIPAL



Dong Xiaoping

## Deng dies; China's course not apt to change

By DOB DEANS  
Cox News Service

WASHINGTON — China's paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, died Wednesday of complications from Parkinson's disease and a lung infection at age 92. His death opens the way for bureaucratic infighting that could confuse or even paralyze important policy decisions affecting 1.2 billion Chinese and all who deal with them, analysts said Wednesday

DENG XIAOPING: A man of opposing legacies. A-4

Deng's death is not expected to alter China's basic trajectory as the world's fastest-growing economic powerhouse whose mounting commercial might is mirrored in its rising political and military clout.

Together, those trends have been shifting the bal-

ance of global power steadily toward Beijing for a decade, a movement analysts believe will stay more or less on track after Deng's death.

"They're going to be a major power — economically, politically and militarily — into the next century," said Winston Lord, a former assistant secretary of state who served as President Clinton's point man on China for the past four years. "The question is whether they're going

to be a cooperative power or a disruptive one."

Deng's departure suggests no immediate change in existing U.S. policy, which aims to engage China across a broad slate of issues ranging from trade and human rights to drug trafficking and nuclear weapons controls.

China is expected to continue its blistering 9 percent annual economic growth rate. American corporations will keep betting their futures

heavily on China, where U.S. and other foreign companies have invested more than \$115 billion to try to tap China's vast consumer and labor markets.

"For many companies, China is now an integral part of their long-term perceptions of their global competitiveness," said Robert Kapp, executive director of the U.S.-China Business Council.

Please see Back Page, DENO

Daily News call-in night

TODAY

Court upholds speech rights

# SHOOTING: Student takes shotgun into school, 2 killed, 2 injured

Continued from Page A-1

gun wounds to the chest, Alaska State Troopers said, and was taken by plane to Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage.

Janet Asaro, Providence spokeswoman, said Palacios went directly to surgery after arriving by ambulance at 3 p.m. He was in the operating room for three hours but died as he was about to take him to the intensive care unit.

Two other high school students, freshmen Russell Lamont, 15, and Shane McIntyre, 14, were injured by shotgun pellets. They were treated by Bethel doctors and released.

According to eyewitness and official accounts, students were gathering in the main lounge area of the high school when, at 8:45 a.m., 10 minutes before classes were to begin, Ramsey walked in. By the time the tardy bell rang about 15 minutes later, four people were shot, the school was in panic, and Bethel police had Ramsey in custody.

Lamont was sitting with friends at a cafeteria-style table when he saw Ramsey arrive with a 12-gauge shotgun.

"He had it in his hand. He was looking around," Lamont said.

In Ramsey's other hand was a paper bag. It was filled with shells.

Palacios, Lamont's friend, was with another student near Ramsey. "They were just messing around," Lamont said. Palacios moved away, decided Ramsey wasn't going to do anything with the gun, and came back and sat down, Lamont said.

"I didn't see him enter," McIntyre said. "I just saw him come near our table."

Student Andy Angstman said it wasn't that unusual to see weapons around the school.

"The kid came in with the shotgun and everyone was, 'whoa,'" Angstman said. "But we have a ROTC program here, and a lot of kids thought it was probably from that, so there was a delayed reaction. Then Josh said, 'Hey, that's a shotgun.' He stood up and said, 'Hey, why do you have the gun here?'"

"He had the gun at his hip and basically aimed at Josh," McIntyre said. "When Josh saw him, (Josh) just said, 'I'm going to get out of here.' When he got up, he got shot."

Kathleen Cline, 14, said Ramsey fired from a distance of 12 to 15 feet. She saw him aim at Palacios, described by students as a popular sophomore who enjoyed making cutting jokes, sometimes at the expense of others, including Ramsey.

McIntyre said he was hit in the shoulder by one of the pellets from a round that hit Palacios.

"All I remember is a whole lot of people running and jumping out windows," he said. "I just found the nearest exit and went out that and tried to get help from someone at the diesel shop, and that's when I noticed I was shot."

Lamont said: "I dropped down and tried to crawl away. After that I don't remember."


Jeffrey Chon, 14, arriving late to school, was met by the sound of gunfire. He looked down the hall and




Russell Lamont, 15, shows the wound he received in Wednesday morning's shooting at Bethel Regional High School. The single shotgun pellet he was hit with is still in his arm.

### SHOOTING VICTIMS


**Ronald Orie Edwards, 50,** principal of Bethel Regional High School. His wife, Cindy, is a substitute teacher who was at the school when he was shot, as were his two older children, Trevor, 19, and Megan, 16. His youngest child, Ron, is a fourth-grader at Kilbuck School. An ex-Marine, Edwards and his family came to Alaska in 1988.



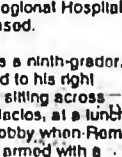
**Russell Lamont, 15,** freshman, junior varsity basketball player. His father, Russell Sr., is head of the local housing authority. He was sitting at a table with some friends in a lounge area of the school when he was shot. A shotgun pellet passed through his shoulder and lodged in a rib. He was treated at the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital emergency room and released.



**Joshua Palacios, 16,** sophomore, was sitting in the lobby area with friends when he was shot in the stomach. He was a varsity basketball player. He was flown to Anchorage and had just emerged from three hours of surgery when he died Wednesday evening. His mother is a health-care worker and his father works with prisoners in a halfway house. He has a younger brother.



**Shane McIntyre, 14,** is a ninth-grader. He was treated for a wound to his right arm. McIntyre said he was sitting across from his friend, Joshua Palacios, at a lunch table in the school's front lobby when Ramsey came into the building armed with a long-barreled shotgun. When Palacios was shot, a shotgun pellet struck McIntyre.



— Daily News staff reports

out of school. I was running for my life, and I was thinking, 'This can't happen here.'"

Erick Hodgins, 18, said Ramsey smiled and laughed as he fired. While other students fled, Hodgins was trapped in a corner, hiding behind a planter.

He thought about tackling Ramsey, he said, but decided against it. As Ramsey walked out of sight, Hodgins ran from the building, then turned to watch through the windows. He saw Ramsey stalking the hallways, firing again and again at the ceiling, the plaster raining down.

Teachers were yelling at him to put down the gun, Hodgins said. Ramsey just reloaded.

Hodgins heard another shot, then a scream. Through the window, he said, he saw Edwards fall face down. Hodgins didn't see the principal get hit, but it looked like he was shot in the back, he said.

ued, teachers began herding the students into the school cafeteria.

Four state troopers and five or six officers from the Bethel Police Department arrived at the school, said trooper Sgt. Paul Burke. He said many of the school's 450 students were still in the building at that time.

Ramsey fired on the officers and the officers shot back, but no one was hit, said trooper spokesman Steve Wilhelmi.

Despite the gunfire, Burke said, three Bethel officers entered the school and approached Ramsey, who then gave himself up.

"Those officers did pretty brave stuff in there," said Burke, whose daughter is a junior in the school. "That situation calls for ignoring your own safety because there are people who need your help."

Word of the shooting spread quickly through a Bethel, a city of 5,200 people

entrance, he said. "Dull and other parents ran across the tundra to the school, he said, and he could see the worry in their faces. He found his two boys among about 300 students who had been corralled in the cafeteria in a separate building from the school, he said.

"To see the parents going through the crowd of students looking for their children, it was sad," Dull said. "A lot of students had tears in their eyes."

"I found my two boys, but I didn't find their mother, and they were asking about her. I was just as frightened and scared as they were."

He spotted his wife through a school window. She mouthed to him that she couldn't leave, but he was just relieved to find she was OK, he said.



Shane McIntyre, 14, shows the wound he received in Wednesday morning's shooting at Bethel Regional High School. The single shotgun pellet he was hit with is still in his arm.

His 15-year-old son, Byron, told him several kids jumped out a window and fell about 10 feet to escape harm.

"I'm finally calming down," Dull said about three hours after the shooting. "Nothing this bad has ever happened in Bethel."

Wednesday afternoon, the school was deserted except for troopers, and yellow crime scene tape was draped around the entire lobby and office area.

Four shotgun shell casings lay scattered around the beige carpet in front of the office. Post-It notes near the casings pointed to pellets.

The office and front entrance are on a raised platform, about three feet above the lounge area. Yellow lockers and a trophy case line one wall of the lounge. Two more shell casings were visible near the lockers.

Counseling for students started immediately at the Yupik Cultural Center and will continue the rest of the week, said Bob Herron, president of the Lower Kuskokwim School District School Board.

"A lot of people were exposed to the incident — a lot of students, aides and teachers," Herron said.

All day Wednesday, students and teachers streamed through the center, where guidance counselors and mental health workers tried to help them deal with the tragedy. The counselors talked to people individually most of the day. As dusk approached, about 60 students and teachers gathered for a meeting, and people took turns describing what they had seen that morning.

"We went through a terribly confusing incident," school counselor Lola Mallette explained in an interview. "We need to let people

talk about the experience so they'll understand it better."

At the end of the meeting, the group formed a huge circle, and a woman sang a mournful Yupik "purification song" as some students quietly sang along. They then said the Lord's Prayer.

During the afternoon, many of the students had signed handmade get-well cards for their classmate, who was dying in an Anchorage hospital.

"Josh, we all care about you," one student wrote. "We all love you."

Herron said the Bethel high school has had only one incident involving guns in the school. That happened over Christmas break when a student brought a gun to a basketball tournament. Though the student didn't show the weapon, authorities found out and expelled the student for a year.

In an interview at his Anchorage home, Donald Ramsey said he last saw his son in 1991, but tried to stay in contact with telephone calls.

Evan and his two brothers were taken from their mother and placed in foster homes after Ramsey's arrest. Evan and one brother were staying with Sue Hare, superintendent of the Lower Kuskokwim School District and Edwards' boss.

The son that the elder Ramsey remembers was "a real gentle little boy."

"I have absolutely no clue as to why he did this," he said. "He's like me in one respect. He's slow to anger, but when he angers he blows up."

Donald Ramsey said he last phoned his son about 10 days ago.

"I wish I could just visit him and hold him right now," Donald Ramsey said.

Other students had a different picture of Evan Ramsey, a junior and a slim youth of medium height, had shaved his head and wore black T-shirts and blue jeans. Students described him as a quiet misfit who found it difficult to make friends and was often absent from school. They said he had a rebellious attitude that often got him in trouble with teachers and Edwards' boss.

A year ago, Hodgins said, Ramsey threatened to bring a gun to school and shoot people.

"But no one took him seriously," Hodgins said.

Myron Angstman, Andy's father and a Bethel lawyer, said: "All the kids say he's had a history of behavior problems in school, of the type that were disturbing. He'd get in fights. One time in the library, he threw the chairs around, actually picked them up and winged them around the room."

After getting home, Hodgins said, he talked to some of Ramsey's friends. They said Ramsey had told them Tuesday night that he planned to go to school to kill Edwards.

Ramsey is scheduled to be arraigned in Bethel Superior Court at 9:45 a.m. today.

□ Daily News reporters Daniela Bionton, Sheila Toom, Don Hunter and Lisa Dams contributed to this report.

14, were injured by shotgun pellets. They were treated by Bethel doctors and released.

According to eyewitnesses and official accounts, students were gathered in the main lounge area of the high school when, at 8:45 a.m., 30 minutes before classes were to begin, Ramsey walked in. By the time the tardy bell rang about 15 minutes later, four people were shot; the school was in panic, and Bethel police had Ramsey in custody.

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Palacios, Lamont's friend, was with another student near Ramsey. "They were just messing around," Lamont said. Palacios moved away, decided Ramsey wasn't going to do anything with the gun, and came back and sat down, Lamont said.

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Student Andy Angatman said it wasn't that unusual to see weapons around the school.

"The kid came in with the shotgun and everyone was, 'whoa,'" Angatman said. "But we have a ROTC program here, and a lot of kids thought it was probably from that, so there was a delayed reaction. Then Josh said, 'Hey, that's a shotgun.' He stood up and said, 'Hey, why do you have the gun here?'"

"He had the gun at his hip and basically aimed at Josh," McIntyre said. "When Josh saw him, (Josh) just said, 'I'm going to get out of here.' When he got up, he got shot."

Kathleen Cline, 14, said Ramsey fired from a distance of 12 to 15 feet. She saw him aim at Palacios, described by students as a popular sophomore who enjoyed making cutting jokes, sometimes at the expense of others, including Ramsey.

McIntyre said he was hit in the shoulder by one of the pellets from a round that hit Palacios.

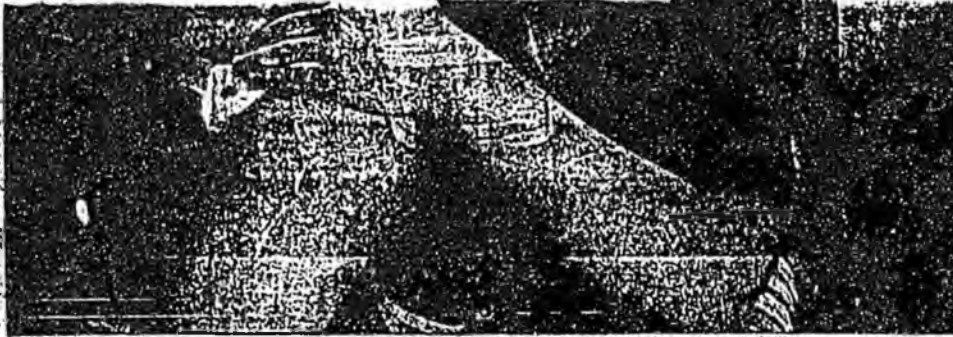
"All I remember is a whole lot of people running and jumping out windows," he said. "I just found the nearest exit and went out that, and tried to get help from someone at the diesel shop, and that's when I noticed I was shot."

Lamont said: "I dropped down and tried to crawl away. After that I don't remember."

Jeffrey Chon, 14, arriving late to school, was met by the sound of gunfire. He looked down the hall and saw one student lying on the ground and a couple of others crawling away, bleeding. Another student hid behind a phone booth.

"A lot of kids were like, 'Run, run,'" Chon said. "I just started running. The whole school was in tears."

"I was right there at the time when the three boys got shot," said Cline. "I was running away — running



Russell Lamont, 15, shows the wound he received in Wednesday morning's shooting at Bethel Regional High School. The single shotgun pellet he was hit with is still in his arm.

### SHOOTING VICTIMS

<p>■ Ronald Dalo Edwards, 50, principal of Bethel Regional High School. His wife, Cindy, is a substitute teacher who was at the school when he was shot, as were his two older children, Trevor, 19, and Meagan, 16. His youngest child, Ron, is a fourth-grader at Klituck School. An ex-Marine, Edwards and his family came to Alaska in 1988.</p>		<p>■ Russell Lamont, 15, freshman, junior varsity basketball player. His father, Russell Sr., is head of the local housing authority. He was sitting at a table with some friends in a lounge area of the school when he was shot. A shotgun pellet passed through his shoulder and lodged in a rib. He was treated at the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital emergency room and released.</p>	
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— Daily News Staff Reports

out of school. I was running for my life, and I was thinking, 'This can't happen here.'"

Erick Hodgins, 18, said Ramsey smiled and laughed as he fired. While other students fled, Hodgins was trapped in a corner, hiding behind a planter.

He thought about tackling Ramsey, he said, but decided against it. As Ramsey walked out of sight, Hodgins ran from the building, then turned to watch through the windows. He saw Ramsey stalking the hallways, firing again and again at the ceiling, the plaster raining down.

Teachers were yelling at him to put down the gun, Hodgins said. Ramsey just reloaded.

Hodgins heard another shot, then, a scream. Through the window, he said, he saw Edwards fall face down. Hodgins didn't see the principal get hit, but it looked like he was shot in the back, he said.

Edwards, an ex-Marine, had worked for the district since 1990 and has been at the high school since 1993. Besides the two children in the school, a younger son attends elementary school in Bethel. His wife, Cindy, is a substitute high school teacher. Witnesses later saw her comforting her dying husband.

As the shooting contin-

ued, teachers began herding the students into the school cafeteria.

Four state troopers and five or six officers from the Bethel Police Department arrived at the school, said trooper Sgt. Paul Burke. He said many of the school's 450 students were still in the building at that time.

Ramsey fired on the officers and the officers shot back, but no one was hit, said trooper spokesman Steve Wilhelm.

Despite the gunfire, Burke said, three Bethel officers entered the school and approached Ramsey, who then gave himself up.

"Those officers did pretty brave stuff in there," said Burke, whose daughter is a junior in the school. "That situation calls for ignoring your own safety because there are people who need your help."

Word of the shooting spread quickly through Bethel, a city of 5,200 people 400 miles west of Anchorage. Arvin Dull, manager of Bethel's First National Bank of Anchorage, raced to the school to search for his two children and his wife, who works in the office.

"All my eggs were in one basket, so just as soon as I found out, I had to go," he said.

The main road to the school was blocked and a trooper guarded the school's

entrance, he said.

Dull and other parents ran across the tundra to the school, he said, and he could see the worry in their faces. He found his two boys among about 300 students who had been corralled in the cafeteria in a separate building from the school, he said.

"To see the parents going through the crowd of students looking for their children, it was sad," Dull said. "A lot of students had tears in their eyes."

"I found my two boys, but I didn't find their mother, and they were asking about her. I was just as frightened and scared as they were."

He spotted his wife through a school window. She mouthed to him that she couldn't leave, but he was just relieved to find she was OK, he said.

His 15-year-old son, Byron, told him several kids jumped out a window and fell about 10 feet to escape harm.

"I'm finally calming down," Dull said about three hours after the shooting. "Nothing this bad has ever happened in Bethel."

Wednesday afternoon, the school was deserted except for troopers, and yellow crime scene tape was draped around the entire lobby and office area.

Four shotgun shell casings lay scattered around the beige carpet in front of the office. Post-it notes near the casings pointed to pellets.

The office and front entrance are on a raised platform, about three feet above the lounge area. Yellow lockers and a trophy case line one wall of the lounge. Two more shell casings were visible near the lockers.

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All day Wednesday, students and teachers streamed through the center, where guidance counselors and mental health workers tried to help them deal with the tragedy. The counselors talked to people individually most of the day.

As dusk approached, about 60 students and teachers gathered for a meeting, and people took turns describing what they had seen that morning.

"We went through a terrible, confusing incident," school counselor Lola Mallette explained in an interview. "We need to let people

Herron said the Bethel high school has had only one incident involving guns in the school. That happened over Christmas break when a student brought a gun to a basketball tournament. Though the student didn't show the weapon, authorities found out and expelled the student for a year.

In an interview at his Anchorage home, Donald Ramsey said he last saw his son in 1991, but tried to stay in contact with telephone calls.

Evan and his two brothers were taken from their mother and placed in foster homes after Ramsey's arrest. Evan and one brother were staying with Sue Hare, superintendent of the Lower Kuskokwim School District and Evan's boss.

The son and the elder Ramsey remembers was "a real little little boy."

"I have absolutely no clue as to why he did this," he said. "He's like me in one respect. He's slow to anger, but when he angers he blows up."

Donald Ramsey said he last phoned his son about 10 days ago.

"I wish I could just visit him and hold him right now," Donald Ramsey said.

Other students had a different picture of Evan Ramsey, a junior and a slim youth of medium height, had shaved his head and wore black T-shirts and blue jeans. Students described him as a quiet misfit who found it difficult to make friends and was often absent from school. They said he had a rebellious attitude that often got him in trouble with teachers and

one year ago, Hodgins said, Ramsey threatened to bring a gun to school and shoot people.

But no one took him seriously, Hodgins said. Myron Angatman, Andy's father and a Bethel lawyer, said: "All the kids say he's had a history of behavior

problems in school, but the type that were disturbing. He'd get in fights. One time in the library, he threw the chairs around and winged them around the room."

After getting home, Hodgins said, he talked to some of Ramsey's friends. They said Ramsey had told them Tuesday night that he planned to go to school to kill Edwards.

Ramsey is scheduled to be arraigned in Bethel Superior Court at 9:45 a.m. today.

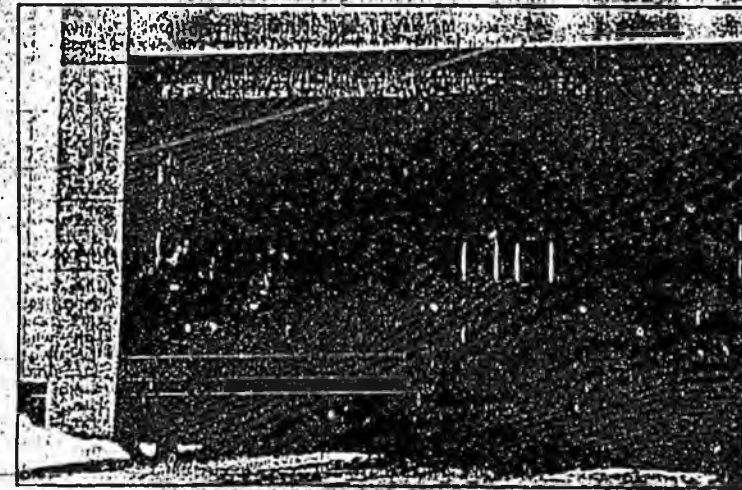
Daily News reporters Danielle Blanton, Shana Yeamer, Don Hunter and Lisa Damer contributed to this report.

*'He had the gun at his hip and basically aimed at Josh. When Josh saw him, (Josh) just said, 'I'm going to get out of here.' When he got up, he got shot.'*

— Shana McIntyre, 14

*'I was right there at the time when the three boys got shot. I was running away — running out of school. I was running for my life, and I was thinking, 'This can't happen here.'*

— Kathleen Cline, 14



Hospital security guards keep watch at the emergency room entrance at Providence Hospital in Anchorage as paramedics prepare to move shooting victim Joshua Palacios after a night from Bethel.

# PRINCIPAL: Family, school were Edwards' life

Continued from Page A-1

According to teacher Dexter Lemon, a group of girls scuffled in the hallway, pulling hair and banging into lockers.

Wednesday morning, the unimaginable happened. Alaska State Troopers say a student on a rampage fatally shot Edwards and student Joshua Palacios, and wounded two other students before being taken into custody by police.

Edwards was 50, the father of a 14-year-old and two teenagers. Left behind were Ron, a fourth-grader at Klubbuck School, Megan, 16, and a junior at Bethel Regional High; and Trevor, a 19-year-old senior. Cindy, his wife, was working as a substitute teacher at the high school when he was shot.

"I think Ron was just open to everybody. He would always listen to what they would have to say," said Lemon, a friend who spent much of Wednesday with Cindy Edwards.

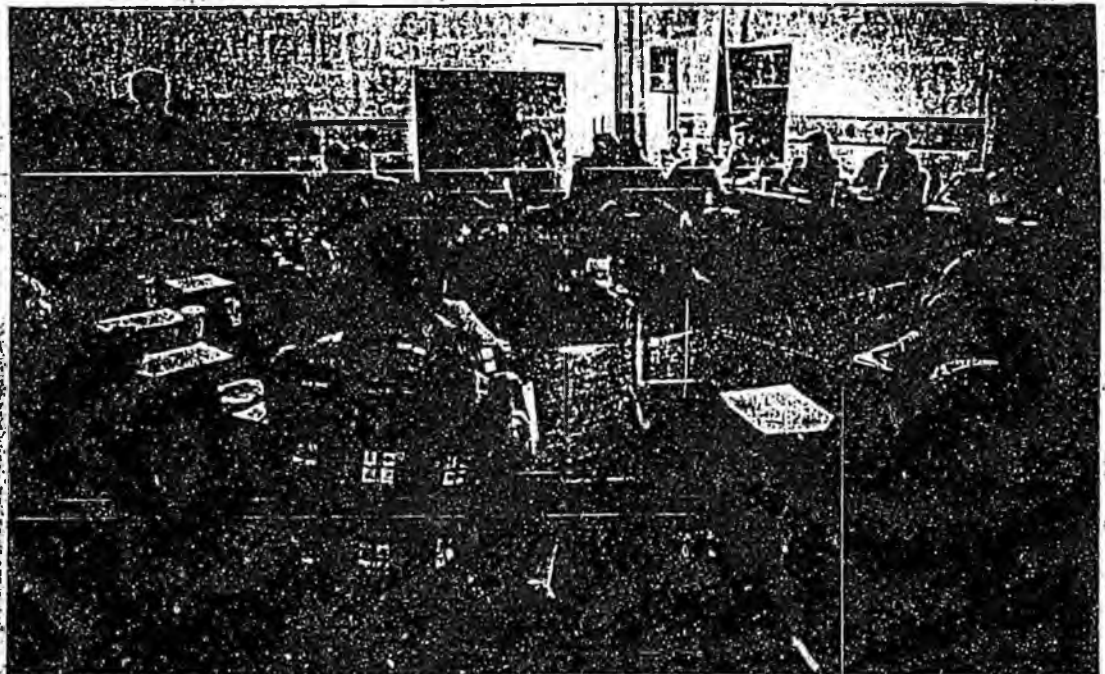
Edwards was a longtime teacher. He grew up in Southern California and went to college in Montana. He taught there for about eight years before moving to Alaska. The first stop, in 1988, was Nikolasi, population about 35. On a treeless island with an erupting volcano and Aleutian weather so stormy that days passed between mail planes, Edwards taught at the tiny school, hunted geese and had an open ear to villagers' concerns. When elders needed to heat their homes, he would haul driftwood from the beach on a four-wheeler, recalled a friend, Scott Kerr, who still lives there.

Elder Anna Krukoff is one of many who stayed in touch, exchanging Christmas cards and calling Edwards when her husband, the school custodian, died in 1995.

"Ron and Cindy were good friends," Krukoff said. "They liked it here. Nice and quiet, no traffic, clean air."

After three years, the Edwards family moved on to the Kuskokwim Delta, where he took a post as principal of the school in Kongiganak, serving fewer than 100 students in grades kindergarten through 12.

Then, in 1995, he was picked for one of the



Teachers and school staff members meet with the Bethel Advisory School Board on Wednesday afternoon to discuss future security measures the district should take.

bigger jobs in the Lower Kuskokwim School District, principal of Bethel Regional High, with more than 400 students.

An ex-Marine, Edwards served in Vietnam and was a member of the Alaska National Guard. He seemed to "walk tall" and had lots of fresh ideas, said Bob Herron, president of the district's school board. He started a Junior ROTC program at Bethel High and quickly earned the respect of teachers and students.

The military bent didn't mean he was a stern disciplinarian.

"He was approachable," Herron said. "If you were a student, he was easy to talk to. You

weren't afraid of him."

Lemon agreed. If someone got in trouble, the teacher said, Edwards would try to keep the kid in school instead of immediately looking to suspend or expel. The gun incident at the basketball tournament was unusual in that the student was kicked out.

"He would always try to give the student the benefit of the doubt," Lemon said.

Edwards encouraged sports and not only at the high school. He saw basketball as a healthy outlet for kids with little to do and helped create a program for elementary-age players, unlocking the high school himself on weekends for games.

"Ron Edwards wasn't just the principal out here," said Jim Pace, who coached in the basketball league. "He went the extra mile and did other things for the community."

His family got plenty of attention, too. Edwards watched his youngest, Ron, play basketball in the winter, and softball in the summer. They panned for gold together, hunted caribou together, hiked together. And Megan's good grades had him excited about the prospect of her becoming valedictorian next year.

Edwards, said Lemon, "did just about anything and everything" for his kids.



Donald Ramsey listens to his lawyer, Craig Howard, after his conviction in the attack on the Anchorage Times in 1986.

# RAMSEY: Father can't believe son did shooting

Continued from Page A-1

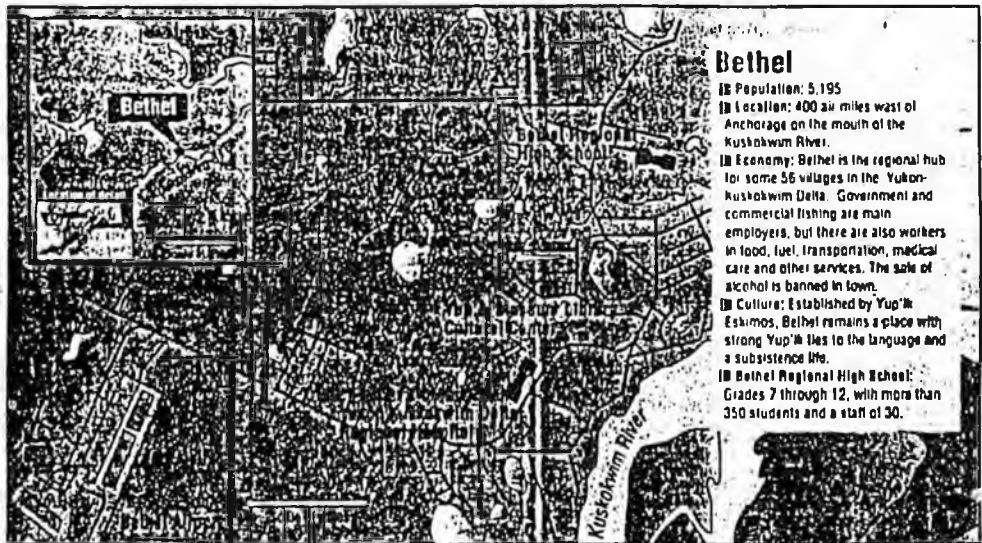
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Wheelchair-bound and 51, Ramsey spends his days going to counseling and working out on Nautilus equipment to strengthen his legs. He said he last talked to his

son's actions Wednesday. "I doubt seriously if it had any impact on him, but who can say? ... I don't think he's trying to emulate the old man, impress the old man, but who can say?" he said.

"People tell me they can't visualize me doing what I did. I can't visualize him doing this, either ... I think this boy's got my temper. He's slow to anger, but when I blow up, I blow up like a volcano. These people (at the veterans' program) have been trying to help me deal with that."

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## Bethel

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he's spent much of the last six months in "the hole" at Hilland Mountain Correctional Center.

Ramsey said he loves his three sons, but history and his own recollections make it clear that their upbringing was tumultuous. Ramsey's theories of a mid-

1980s political conspiracy against him grew out of the frustrations of having his family live in a freezing apartment, he said. When the place caught fire, Ramsey said, he was sure it had been set by people who wanted to silence him. Wednesday, tears came to his eyes as he

The three boys were split up about a year after Ramsey's arrest for the Times attack. Evan and a younger brother were placed in the foster care of Hare, now superintendent of the Lower Kuskokwim School District. The oldest was placed in a foster home in Anchorage. Their mother could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Ramsey said he thought Evan's placement with Hare was fortunate and said she had provided a better home for his boys than he or his wife would have been able to offer.

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"When he was a little boy, he liked to take his toys apart. He wasn't destroying things, he just wanted to see how they worked."

Ramsey said he had never discussed the crime that put him in jail with either of the younger boys. "You're talking about a 6-year-old whose father was a cab driver, who went past a point of controllable behavior," he said.

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Continued from Page A-1

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"I got no vibes from him

that he was having any problems or anything," Ramsey said. "We were just talking. He had just woke up; I could hear him crunching on a bowl of cereal ..."

"I just called to let him know I got out of prison. It took me a few days to get it together in here, and I called Sue (Hare, the boy's foster mother) to let her know where I was ..."

"I talked to Evan probably 20 minutes to a half-hour. He didn't give me any indication of not being happy."

Ramsey said he hasn't seen his son since a prison visit in 1991, but he has tried to stay in touch by phone. Prone to disagreements with prison staff, Ramsey said,

he's spent much of the last six months in "the hole" at Hilland Mountain Correctional Center.

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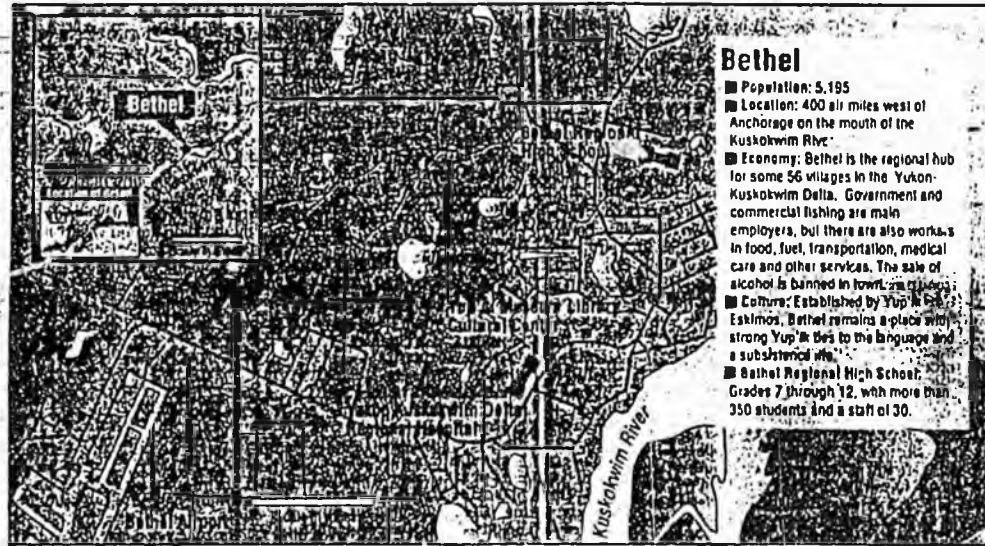
Ramsey was asked if he thinks some lingering residue from his assault on The Times influenced his

son's actions Wednesday.

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Ramsey leaned back in his wheelchair, eyes moist. "This comes as a total shock to me. This ain't no family tradition."



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- Bethel Regional High School, Grades 7 through 12, with more than 350 students and a staff of 30.

## Teen's friends prayed for miracle that never came

By SHEILA TOOMEY  
Daily News reporter

Friends of Joshua Palacios were gathered in a circle at the Assembly of God church in Bethel praying for his recovery Wednesday night when the 16-year-old high school athlete died in Anchorage.

Others waited by their telephones, hoping in vain for good news.

Palacios was flown to Anchorage and taken by ambulance to Providence Alaska Medical Center, where he went directly into surgery, said hospital spokeswoman Janet Asaro.

He was in surgery for three hours but didn't make it

*"He always smiled."*

— Andy Angstman

out of the operating area. Doctors were preparing to transport him to the Intensive Care Unit when he died, Asaro said. Palacios, 16, was the second to die Thursday after a Bethel Regional High School student turned a shotgun on his classmates and the school principal.

A friendly "typical" kid, Palacios's real passion was sports, said his friends and coach, with basketball topping the list of his favorite activities despite his 5-foot, 6-inch height. And sports was

what the people who knew him wanted to talk about. "He was a real gym rat," said coach Billy Strickland, who first took notice of the boy as a sixth-grader. "Since that time he's been probably the best player in his class."

The teenager worked as a volunteer at basketball camp with fourth- and fifth-graders, and "was very good with that age of kids," the coach said.

"It's just so unfortunate," said Andy Angstman, also a Bethel sophomore. "He al-

ways smiled."

Palacios and his family moved to Bethel when he was in grammar school. His father works at a halfway house for prisoners and his mother is a health care worker. He spent summers in Anchorage with a grandmother, the coach said.

"He plays aggressive, but he keeps his head," Angstman said early in the day, before the bad news reached town. "He's made several game-winning shots in his career."

"He loves sports. He loves basketball," Mikey Langille, one of his closest friends and a varsity team colleague, said after the shootings Wednesday.

"I've never seen him (ticked) off ..."

Not even when he and a couple of other players got in some trouble and ended up grounded during the state regional this year, Strickland would not talk about the incident except to say the teenager "took the consequences of it, I thought, very well."

Palacios would definitely have been back on the team next season, Strickland said.

Palacios rooted for the San Antonio Spurs and harbored hopes of becoming a professional player himself, despite his height. "You know how kids that age are," Strickland said.



Joshua Palacios

# PEACEABLE SCHOOL PILOT



CHUGIAK  
HIGH SCHOOL

# *Chugiak High School Roles and Functions of Key Peaceable School Partners*

## *Peaceable School Steering Committee*

- Oversight of annual review and planning process
- Coordination of specific activities that promote peaceable school goals
- Oversight and allocation of violence Prevention Funds from Safe & Drug Free Schools
- Communicates annual goals and activities to school staff, parents, and community
- Works with PAC, Student Forum, Peer Mediation groups and other community groups to organize programs and workshops to address issues of concern

## *Student Forum*

- Addresses issues of concern and makes recommendations for action
- Communication link to homerooms through student representatives
- Meets bi-monthly on school business meeting days
- Longer gatherings of forum at beginning of school year, change of semesters, and end of year

## *(PAC) Positive Action Committee*

- Link of communication between school administration, clubs, and student body
- Clearinghouse for sharing and passing on information related to rumors and incidents that impact the school community
- Quarterly gatherings to identify annual theme, clarify roles and responsibilities, and share how clubs are carrying out annual theme
- PAC can make recommendations Student Forum to address issues of concern

## *Peer Mediation*

- Offer peer mediation between students and students and staff to work out interpersonal conflicts and differences
- Provide annual training for students and staff

## ***Chugiak High School Peaceable School Pilot Goal for School Report Card***

**Goal:** Continue building a peaceable school and more personalized learning environment by:

- *Increasing student participation in clubs and activities by 10% this school year*
- *Increasing student voice and leadership through participation in the Student Forum, the Positive Action Committee, and representation on school committees*
- *Building capacity to institutionalize Peaceable School activities by establishing stipended positions to co-coordinate Peaceable School Pilot*
- *Broadening public awareness, student awareness, faculty awareness, and parent awareness of Peaceable School activities through tangible events, presentations, and written documents*
- *Deepening awareness and widening support for "best practices" that help all students at Chugiak to be academically successful and socially competent and responsible. This will be accomplished by documenting teaching practices that personalize learning and working with department chairs to identify the best ways to support these practices and activities in their departments*
- *Double the number of staff who participate in peer mediation trainings or observe mediations from last year (five participated last year)*
- *Securing participation from faculty in the Peaceable School Pilot by asking each faculty member to identify one way that they can support this effort during the year (Peaceable School Pilot Participation Options will be handed out at next all staff meeting or in-service day)*

***Chugiak High School  
Peaceable School Pilot Steering Committee  
Summary Notes and Agreements***

***Positive Action Committee Action Steps***

1. *Top has agreed to sponsor PAC and facilitate October 19 meeting. Vernon has agreed to help facilitate the meeting.*
2. *Prepare a flyer to be disseminated to clubs, school organizations, and sports teams on October 11. The flyer should include the following:*
  - *Purposes of Positive Action Committee*
  - *Announcement of PAC meeting on afternoon of October 19, 11 to 2 p.m.*
  - *Call for 1 to 3 representatives of each club, organization, and sports team to attend meeting*
  - *A form for writing name of club, organization, or sports team, names of students who will attend meeting, and adult sponsors who would be interested in attending meeting*
  - *Purpose of the meeting will include choosing the PAC theme for this year and deciding date of three other quarterly meetings*
3. *Prepare agenda for October 19 PAC meeting. Agenda to include:*
  - *Clarification of purposes of PAC, how often it will meet, follow-up check-in's to support club and sports involvement in theme*
  - *Trust building activities and discussion between students and administrators*
  - *Discuss vandalism and graffiti incidents as test cases for how PAC can intervene*
  - *Brainstorm and reach consensus for PAC theme for this year*
  - *Decide on other dates for quarterly meetings*
4. *Make arrangements for space, reminders to students, and food for October 19 meeting*
5. *Create paper passes that can be disseminated to PAC members when students need to be notified and gathered for a quick emergency meeting*

***Chugiak High School  
Peaceable School Pilot  
Announcement for Stipended Co-Coordinator Positions at  
Chugiak High School, 2000-2001***

As part of the Chugiak Peaceable School Pilot, ASD Safe & Drug Free Schools is able to award up to three \$700 (40 hour) stipends to each of two co-coordinators at Chugiak HS for the period from October 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001. Both of these positions will involve 2 to 3 hours a week to coordinate Peaceable School activities. It is agreed that two staff members can negotiate how they divide up roles and responsibilities described in the description below. Please submit the form below to the principal if you are interested in one of these positions.

***Roles and responsibilities for Peaceable School Pilot Co-Coordinators:***

1. Collate staff responses to Peaceable School Pilot Participation Options and support implementation of activities that promote faculty participation.
2. Serve as a liaison between Safe & Drug Free Schools and CHS.
3. Coordinate and help facilitate quarterly Steering Committee meetings.
4. Set up on-site schedule for consultant visits with Carol Lieber including focus groups, steering committee meetings, trainings, securing rooms, gathering people by personally inviting them, talking to principal about schedule and food, talking to administrative assistant about substitute needs.
5. Communicate to school leaders about status of Peaceable School activities during the year.
6. Communicate to school staff and community about Peaceable School activities.
7. Support the efforts of Positive Action Committee and attend the quarterly meetings.
8. Serve as the on-site instructor for one-credit class, "Strategies for Personalizing the Classroom", a class offered to staff designed to learn a strategy, try it out, discuss outcomes with colleagues, and explore how strategies for personalization can be used in different academic disciplines.

9. *Oversee coordination of national RCCP site visit to Chugiak in February. Educators from RCCP sites around the country will be participating in a national gathering here in Anchorage.*
10. *Connect with other teachers who have participated in Partners in Learning course to compile strategies, activities, and practices that help create more peaceable, collaborative, and respectful classrooms. These ideas will go on the national ESR web site.*
11. *Help recruit staff for High School course in February.*
12. *Organize and help facilitate Peaceable School Pilot assessment and planning meeting in late Spring, 2001.*
13. *Participate in meetings with other Peaceable School coordinators and Safe & Drug Free Schools staff.*
14. *Be an advocate for efforts to personalize the learning environment, especially related to developing structural and program options for new "houses" at Chugiak.*
15. *Help write and monitor mini-grants from Safe & Drug Free Schools.*

***Peaceable School Co-Coordinator Positions at CHS***

*(Please submit this form to Jan)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ext. \_\_\_\_\_

Present Position at Chugiak HS \_\_\_\_\_

*Three reasons why I would be a good candidate for this position:*

1.

2.

3.

***Chugiak High School  
Supporting the Peaceable School Pilot  
Participation Options***

***Name*** \_\_\_\_\_

***We would like to invite all staff to identify at least one way that each of us can contribute to making Chugiak a more peaceable, welcoming, and respectful community where every student can be successful by***

- ***Providing a Safe Environment***
- ***Personalizing Education***
- ***Meeting Developmental Needs of Diverse Adolescents***
- ***Building Students' Emotional Resilience and Social Competency***
- ***Promoting Collaboration among Colleagues***
- ***Improving Student Performance***

- I would like to participate on the Peaceable School Steering Committee that will have oversight of Year Three of the pilot. This group will probably meet or phone conference every two months.
- I would like to work with students from the Positive Action Committee and other faculty to brainstorm ways to support the Peaceable School theme that students have chosen for this year.
- As a club sponsor or coach I will support efforts of my club or team to promote the Positive Action Committee theme for this school year.
- I would like to help support the Positive Action Committee them by teaching a lesson in class that addresses the theme.
- I would like to attend at least one Student Forum meeting this year on business meeting days.
- I would like to participate in Faculty Forum and other discussions about the internal structures, scheduling, and program options for establishing positive, personalizes learning environments in the new "houses" at Chugiak.

- I would like to attend the peer mediation training on Friday, November 3. (Stipends will be available.)
- I would like to observe a peer mediation this year.
- I will encourage the use of mediation as an early intervention when I see students having a problem with each other.
- I would like to discuss with Judy and Sandy how I might take on a support role with the mediation program in the future to ensure that the program will continue for years to come.
- I would like to participate in a planning committee with upper class students to develop a more personalized orientation program for in-coming students next year.
- I would like to help support student participation in school governance, curriculum, and task force committees. We agreed to create a process where students will participate on all standing school committees. This will also include establishing a selection process for students and creating a brief orientation for students who are on committees.
- I would be willing to document at least one idea, strategy, or practice that supports a peaceable and personalized classroom. We will place these ideas on the ESR national web site.
- I would be willing to briefly describe Partners in Learning goals and practices with colleagues in my department.
- I would like to work with my department chair to identify opportunities to share practices and strategies that create a more peaceable and personalized classroom.
- I would like to help identify courses within my department that are the best fit for establishing practices and activities that promote social and emotional competencies and conflict resolution and develop greater appreciation for diversity.
- I would like to meet with staff from "feeder" middle schools to discuss the kinds of middle school expectations and skill mastery that make the transition to high school a smoother experience for in-coming 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

- I would like to discuss the 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition with other faculty who teach 9<sup>th</sup> grade (thinking about some common goals, expectations, activities, and experiences that can help 9<sup>th</sup> graders be more successful here at Chugiak).
- I would like to participate in a discussion with sophomores to get an idea of the kinds of support, skills, learning activities, and encouragement are most helpful to be successful in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- I would like to sponsor a new activity this year (could run for 4 or 5 sessions or longer) in an effort to increase participation of students in Wednesday activities.
- I would like to use release time or a prep period to observe another teacher or team teach a class that reinforces social and emotional learning/conflict/diversity in the classroom.
- I would like to work with art students to create a Peaceable School banner that can hang in a prominent place in the school.
- Here's another way I'd like to make a contribution to the Peaceable School pilot here at Chugiak.

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# Conflict Resolution and Intergroup Relations

## The Need

Conflict is a normal and essential part of life. The way we deal with differences and conflict, however, often divides us and inhibits our ability to confront common problems. Complex social issues and increasing global interdependence place new demands on our capacities to work together.

Many young people are not learning to deal constructively with differences that they face daily. They see few alternatives to either fleeing from conflict or fighting.

Violence has become a social problem of epidemic proportions that especially affects young people. The messages that society conveys about violence are at best confusing, and often encourage violence. Many young people do not believe that they can make a difference and improve the world in which they live.

## Key Concepts

ESR conflict resolution programs reflect the following principles and understandings about conflict:

1. Conflict is a part of life. When handled constructively, conflict presents opportunities for growth and progress. People of any age can acquire skills and understandings that will help them deal with conflict in constructive ways.
2. There are many conflict situations where "win-win" solutions—those that meet the underlying interests and needs of the parties to the dispute—can be achieved. Too often we assume that one person must win and the other must lose in a conflict, or that both must give up something, and thus neither get what they need or want.
3. While the win-win approach can be helpful in many situations, resolution of a conflict is not always possible. In some cases, the best outcome in a conflict-laden situation might stem from a strategy that prevents the outbreak of physical violence or the rupture of a relationship. Conflict can even be an important resource in the effort to bring about constructive change. The primary goal is to be creative and resourceful in the face of conflict.
4. Conflict resolution is best taught in the context of a caring community characterized by cooperation, effective communication, emotional strength, appreciation of differences, recognition of common purposes, and shared decision making.

A singular focus on conflict resolution knowledge and skills without attention to creating community may miss underlying causes of problems. Caring and empathy are as important as knowing how to negotiate.

5. The ability to enter others' perspectives, to see and feel problems as others do, and to identify their needs and interests is central to dealing constructively with differences.
6. Dialogue is an effective form for discussing controversial issues. Dialogue, as contrasted with debate, emphasizes seeking common ground rather than polarizing differences. It encourages empathy with other points of view and toleration for ambiguity and the uncertainty of knowledge. Debate is characterized by confrontation, a contest between right and wrong in which each side believes it is right. The typical goal of debate is to win the argument and end the discussion. Dialogue encourages people with differences to keep talking and increases the chances of creative responses to conflict.
7. While the interventions used in interpersonal conflicts are often quite different from those used in larger social conflicts, the study of each helps students begin to understand the underlying dynamics of conflict and further develop a positive attitude toward it. The development of interpersonal conflict skills, principles, experience, and concepts sets the foundation for effective responses to conflict in social and political spheres.
8. It is important to cultivate awareness of and appreciation for differences—individual, ethnic, cultural, and national. Commonly, the perception of difference leads to separation and distancing. However, given an emerging understanding of the world's interdependent character, differences must be understood in their interrelatedness, and in the opportunities they often present for creating new, more inclusive and adaptive relationships. Responding effectively to conflict necessitates learning to balance respect for differences with the ability to make informed judgments.
9. The roots of violence and social conflict often lie in inequality and injustice. It is important to help students understand and confront such deeply rooted problems as racism and sexism. In part, this takes place through examination and, where needed, transformation of existing power relationships in social conflicts.

Conflict has many dimensions. While physical violence is the most obvious, other forms of structural and institutional violence are also pernicious and equally demand our attention.

## **ESR/RCCP's Approach: Distinguishing Features**

ESR/RCCP's approach to conflict resolution and intergroup relations is based on the following principles which are rooted in beliefs about effective teaching and learning:

1. To see conflict as presenting opportunities for growth requires a significant shift in attitude and world view. Adults as well as students must examine and seek to change their own attitudes about conflict. This process requires time and patience. It also necessitates support for those teachers who are involved. Significant behavioral change in the classroom does not result from a "quick fix."
2. Effective teaching about conflict is student-centered—that is, it begins with students' experiences of conflict and their own questions. It addresses the conflict and violence in young people's lives. It helps young people make connections between their lives and the larger world and apply new understandings to conflicts outside of their immediate experience.
3. ESR/RCCP encourages young people to think about why there are different kinds of conflict, to explore a repertoire of effective responses to conflict, to pose problems and generate good questions, to recognize that society is created by people, and to believe that they can make a difference.
4. ESR encourages inquiry and exploration of complex issues that lead to the discovery of underlying assumptions, root causes, and internal contradictions. Thoughtful inquiry involves risk taking, for it may raise fundamental questions about the way we live and how our society is structured.
5. A comprehensive approach to conflict resolution education involves teachers in the application of understanding and skills at five levels: through core practices and routines that help create a peaceable classroom community; through modeling and teaching core conflict resolution skills; through the use of teaching strategies that promote cooperation, effective communication, and problem solving; through WIN-WIN approaches to classroom management and handling student problems; and through infusion of conflict resolution skills and concepts into academic subject areas such as literature, social studies, and science.
6. Many programs teach conflict resolution as a set of isolated skills. Although individual skills are useful, the practice of creative response to conflict entails more than a collection of isolated skills; it is an integrative process that happens when one is confronted with a real problem. It also involves a systematic way of thinking about how to handle differences.

7. ESR/RCCP helps teachers create structured learning environments characterized by: a willingness to embrace and use conflict for learning; a sense of being safe to express feelings and different opinions, and to change one's mind and behavior; a commitment to share power and control so that students are partners with teachers in creating knowledge and making decisions; reflection about self and others; and connection between adults and the formation of relationships.
8. Other programs focus on stopping-fighting and physical violence and on controlling behavior. ESR/RCCP believes that conflict resolution in education is not simply another form of discipline. ESR/RCCP's goal involves going deeper. It includes empowering young people by providing them with a repertoire of skills and nurturing new ways of thinking about dealing with differences and conflict.
9. Based on our experience working with schools across the United States, we recommend several components for the successful implementation of a conflict resolution education program: in-depth introductory staff training, use of exemplary curriculum, follow-up classroom visits by staff development specialists, periodic meetings of all involved staff, and leadership development programs for qualified participants. Training support is central—ESR/RCCP's approach is as much about process and practice as curriculum. ESR structures participatory learning experiences for adults that mirror the empowering methodology we recommend for young people.
10. Conflict resolution in the schools often takes the form of mediation programs. ESR/RCCP believes that school mediation programs are best implemented as part of a larger effort to train staff and students in conflict resolution. While mediation programs are valuable for many young people, they often are separate from the cultures of classrooms and the school at large, where prevailing norms among students and teachers do not support the goals of the mediation program. Also, while third party intervention (mediation) is an important form of dispute resolution, it does not necessarily help individuals develop abilities to manage and resolve differences on their own.
11. ESR/RCCP frames its conflict resolution and intergroup relations work as central to the process by which young people become responsible decision makers and active participants in our democracy. Students need skills, understanding, and opportunities to make a difference in the world. The ability to deal constructively with differences is a fundamental part of effective citizenship.

## Teaching For Social Responsibility

Conflict Resolution and intergroup relations are essential components integrated into a larger framework of social responsibility. ESR/RCCP is dedicated to deepening our own and our fellow educators' understanding of each of these activities cited below that we believe constitute important perspectives of social responsibility.

**Controversial Issues** - The significant issues of our times are controversial. Therefore, it is vital that these issues be considered in schools, so that students can practice learning how to decide what to do in complex, emotion-laden situations. Without such practice, they are left with the models they see around them, which tend to encourage polarizing and oversimplifying.

**Dialogue** - In dialogue the effort is to understand each other's position—not only the intellectual content, but also the history and emotions tied to the position. Done well, this approach leads to an increased understanding of a given situation that permits a partnership approach in critical thinking and an attempt to collaborate in devising a "win-win" solution to the conflict. In debate, by contrast, the emphasis is on attacking the intellectual content of an opponent's position to achieve a "win" at the opponent's expense.

**Multiple Perspectives** - There are typically more than "two sides to every story." One of the most important means of helping students reflect on their thinking is to help them reach beyond the limits of their own experience and to enter the experience of others.

**Interconnectedness** - Preparing young people for the twenty-first century means helping them to develop an understanding of how to live in an interdependent world. Students need to be encouraged to view situations holistically, examining the interconnections of parts of a system rather than focusing on one cause and one effect.

**Opportunities for Participation** - Learning is strengthened when it is embodied in action, so it is vital to give students opportunities to contribute to the lives of others and to improve the world around them. Depending on their maturity, students can be appropriately involved in taking action on classroom, school, community, national, or global problems. Providing such opportunities helps students to improve the quality of their thinking and to build self-esteem and a sense of connection with the world.

**Community** - Developing a sense of community—a consciousness of the group of which one is a part—means acknowledging our interconnectedness, having a sense of common purpose, respecting difference, sharing in decision making, and supporting each other's growth. To enable young people to acquire this perspective, we must be willing and able to create classrooms and schools that function as communities.

ESR/RCCP seeks to make social responsibility an integral part of education. It perceives social responsibility to be an integrating framework for a variety of activities that will help young people learn how to participate in shaping a better world.

These ideas were forged through years of ESR leaders' experience in helping educators introduce creative and effective ways of dealing with conflict into their classrooms and schools. ESR/RCCP's approach to conflict resolution has many roots. While it is not possible to trace all of these roots, certain key contributions and bench-marks are worth noting.

Early in the 1980s, our experience teaching the skills of critical analysis for examining the arms race led quickly to the realization that students needed to understand the process for peacemaking. The curriculum guide, *Perspectives: A Teaching Guide to Concepts of Peace*, compiled by over thirty educators, was published in 1983. It included a section designed to help students learn conflict resolution skills for helping to create a more peaceful world.

Also during the 1980s, a group of ESR leaders adapted Peter Elbow's technique for teaching writing, called methodological belief, to develop a process for more deeply understanding different perspectives on emotion-laden, controversial topics. This process helps people listen and talk about conflict in new ways.

During this period ESR reached teachers with its ideas in two ways. It developed a wealth of practical activities which it introduced to teachers through printed materials and workshops, and it enabled teachers to gain a deeper understanding of conflict resolution through weeklong institutes. Both activities enriched our own understanding of the varied dimensions of conflict resolution work.

Another major source of ESR's approach to conflict resolution began in 1985 when New York Metro ESR and the New York City Public Schools launched a project in one school district in Brooklyn to prepare elementary teachers in conflict resolution. This project, now a national demonstration project named the "Resolving Conflict Creatively Program," has grown to encompass over 300 schools and involve 120,000 students in New York City, other sites around the country including Anchorage (AK), Vista (CA), New Orleans, and South Orange-Maplewood (NJ). This comprehensive program involves school districts that make a long term commitment to integrate conflict resolution and intergroup relations into the heart of the school culture. To accomplish this, RCCP involves all staff, administrators, and parents in intensive training and leadership development, provides extensive staff development for participating teachers, and involves students in school wide projects and leadership programs.

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Chair, Joint House and Senate  
Administrative Regulation and  
Review Committee

Member  
Resources Committee  
Rules Committee

## Representative Lesil McGuire *House District 17*

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative Fred Dyson  
Chair, House Health, Education, and Social Services Committee

FROM: Representative Lesil McGuire

DATE: March 23, 2001

RE: HB 99  
"An Act relating to school discipline and safety programs; and providing  
for an effective date."

I respectfully request that HB 99 be scheduled for a hearing in the House Health, Education, and Social Services Committee.

Attached are the following documents:

1. Sponsor Statement
2. HB 99
3. Bill History
4. Backup Material

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me personally, or my staff Lou Caputo at ext. #4955.



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FAX #: 6595

DATE: 3-23-2001 No. of pages including cover 3

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Comments: *Re: After school activities in Prudal Alaska*

*Here at last is the information from Dept. of Educ & Early Development that I mentioned. Apparently the e-mail request to various school boards did not get posted until today, but Greg Giles says he'll ask for information to come in by next Wednesday (3-28).*

