

ALASKA LEGISLATURE SPECIAL COMMITTEE / SUBJECT FILE 8672
1774.11 SCOMM 71: SEN. SPEC. COMM. / JNT. COMM. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, 1988-90

The PIBS Program of the Montgomery County Public Schools used a process for the development and dissemination of curriculum-related material for parents that can be used in other school districts with other curriculums. Experience in this school system has shown that parents can be informed and involved in their children's school learning very easily and that doing so has a significant positive impact on teachers, parents, and, most importantly, on students.

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Dear Parents,

We are learning about folktales. Folktales include tales of wishes and magic, fairy tales, and fanciful answers to "why" questions. We are talking about what is real and what is make-believe in the stories. You can help your child by doing some of the activities below.



FOLKTALES

Story Time

When you read or tell stories to your child, talk about the things that might really happen and the things that are fun, but not real. You might ask:

"Do bears really talk?"

"Where do real bears live?"

A Visit to the Zoo

Compare the animals in the stories that your child knows with the animals he or she has seen around your home, on farms, or on visits to the zoo. Could real animals do what the animals in the stories do? Zoos in the area you might visit are:

Cabin John Regional Park's Childrens' Zoo

Wheaton Regional Park's Childrens' Zoo

The National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C.

The Insect Zoo in the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.



Television Cartoons

Watch television with your child. The Muppets, Bugs Bunny, Woody Woodpecker, and Porky Pig are like many of the of the characters in folktales.

Ask, "Could real animals do what the animals do on TV?"



FOLKTALES

A Special Treat

Many Walt Disney films are taken from folktales. If you have a chance to see one, they are a special treat. Before you go, read the book or story to your child. After watching the film, talk about the differences between it and the book. Which one does your child like better?

A Real Book and a Make-Believe Book

Help your child find pictures of real and make-believe animals and people. Old magazines, wrapping paper, and comic strips are good places to look. Cut out the pictures and have your child separate them into groups of real things and make-believe things.

Paste each group of pictures onto pieces of paper to make the pages of the books. Put the pages together to make a Real Book and a Make-Believe Book.



Gingerbread Friends

Help your child make gingerbread people. Use the recipe below. Read The Gingerbread Man while the cookies bake. The school library or the public library may have a copy. Your cookies may not run away when they are finished, but they will be tasty.



1/3 cup shortening	2 tsp. soda
1 cup packed	1 tsp. salt
brown sugar	1 tsp. allspice
1 1/2 cups dark	1 tsp. ginger
molasses	1 tsp. cloves
2/3 cup cold water	1 tsp. cinnamon
6 cups flour	



Mix shortening, sugar, and molasses thoroughly. Stir in water. Blend all dry ingredients and stir into shortening mixture. Chill. Heat oven to 350°. Roll dough 1/4 inch thick on lightly floured board. Cut with gingerbread cutter. Place far apart on lightly greased baking sheet. Bake about 15 minutes or until no imprint remains when touched lightly.

Form Unit - Folktale - Level K
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 Board of Education of Montgomery County
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Sports Times

The recorded times for sporting events are often written in tenths and hundredths of a second. Suggest your son or daughter look for these records. Have them read these decimal fractions to you.

Examples:

Swimming times
Track times
Olympic events



Decimal Fractions

Two health care items that use decimal fractions are thermometers and vitamins.

"Normal" body temperature for most people is about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Talk with your child about the use of tenths of a degree in temperature as an accurate measure for diagnosis.

Look at a bottle of multiple vitamins (at home or in a store). Show your son or daughter the RDA listing for each vitamin and the amount of it in the tablet. The numbers are usually written in decimal fractions.

Example: B₁ Thiamine 1.5 mg



Dear Parents,

In math, we are reading and writing decimal fractions in tenths and hundredths.

6.1 is read as six and one tenth,

3.06 as three and six hundredths,

0.04 as four hundredths.

The following suggestions show the meaning and use of decimal fractions in everyday life.

Raindrops Keep Falling . . .

Check the weather page in the newspaper for information about precipitation.

For example, on July 21, 1982, the Washington Post listed

Excess of precipitation since	
January 1, 1982	2.16 inches
Deficiency of precipitation	
since July 1, 1982	1.37 inches
The 1982 precipitation to date	23.12 inches

Ask your child to read the amounts of precipitation to you. Listen to the weather report after a summer rain or winter snow to see how much precipitation fell.

Weighing Ways

Labels on products sometimes give the weight as part of a pound or ounce, such as

Hamburger	4.49 lbs.
Cheese	.75 lb.

Check on food in the grocery store as you shop and have your child read the weight for you.



Get Down !

Ask your child to find a favorite FM radio station, listen for its call numbers, write them down, and then say them in tenths or hundredths.

Example: WKYS 93.9 on your FM dial would be 93 and nine tenths.



Walk, Run, Ride

Odometers and pedometers record distance in tenths of miles.

If a pedometer is available, take a family walk and record the miles including the tenths. If a family member runs for exercise, note the miles and tenths run.

If your family takes a bike ride, note the distance covered in tenths of a mile.

If you want to calculate the miles per gallon for your car, have your youngster record the mileage from the odometer in tenths for this calculation.



INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY MODEL PROJECT HANDBOOK

**Project funded by Texas Education Agency,
Adult and Community Education Program**

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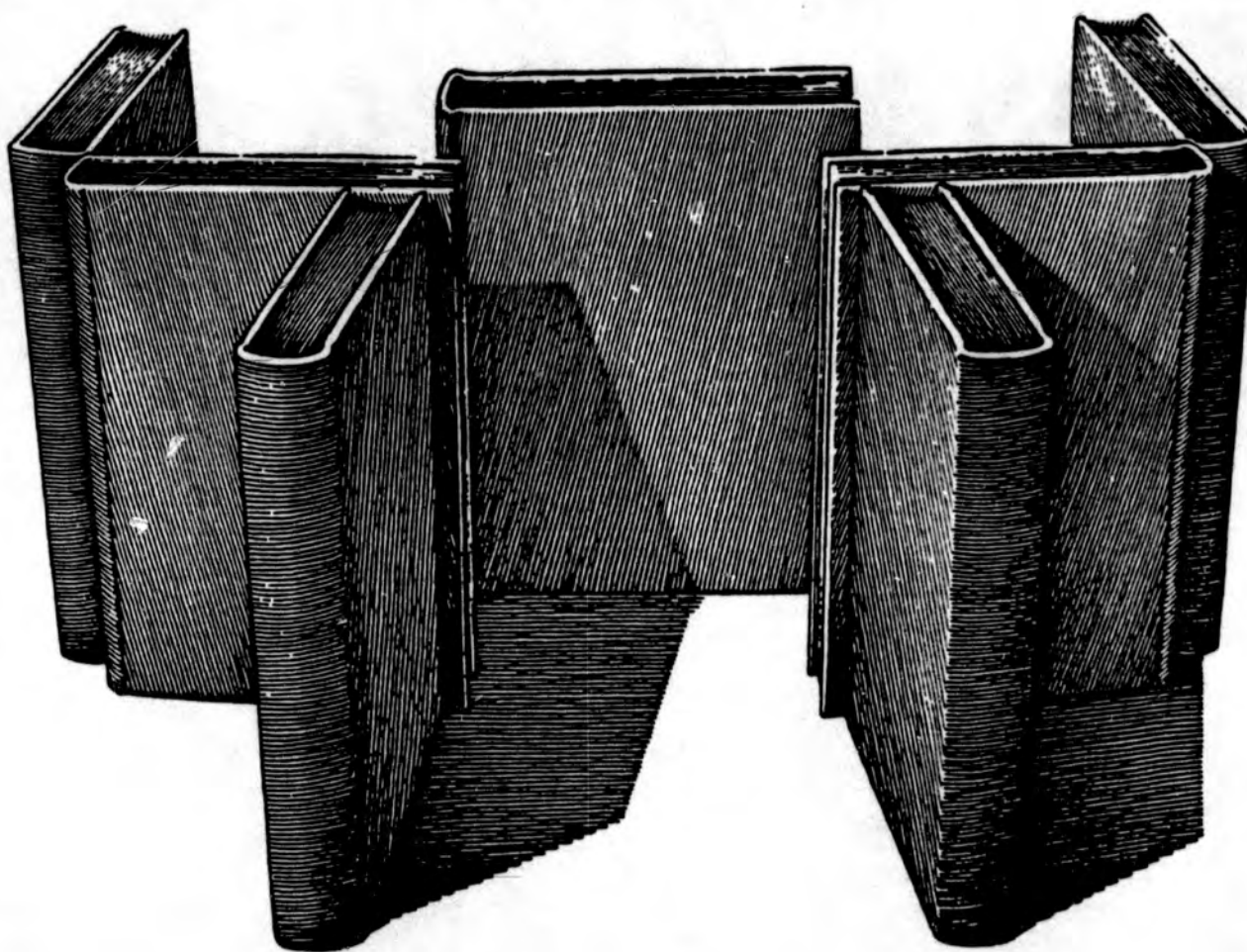
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Intergenerational Literacy Model Project



Overview

INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACY MODEL PROJECT

Introduction

In September, 1986, an Intergenerational Literacy Model Project was funded by Texas Education Agency and implemented at El Paso Community College. The project was designed for the following purposes:

- 1. To provide literacy instruction for parents of preschool and primary school aged children in a setting where the parents are taught to help their children while at the same time they are assisted in improving their own literacy skills.**
- 2. To provide suggestions of consistent, on-going activities for parents to do with their children at home to help develop, on a family-level, literacy behaviors which lead to successful literacy development.**
- 3. To encourage the parents of young children to seek literacy instruction on an individual basis at least once a week.**

Literacy Education Action

The Literacy Education Action program was established in the fall of 1985, as a program directly under the Vice-President of Instruction, with funding from the college to support its activities. The chairperson of the Literacy Task Force, Sandra Tate, an English faculty member, was released from full-time teaching responsibilities to coordinate the program and implement the plan of action. In addition, faculty members from the reading, sociology, and ESL disciplines, were given a portion of release time from teaching, to assist in the implementation of specific activities.

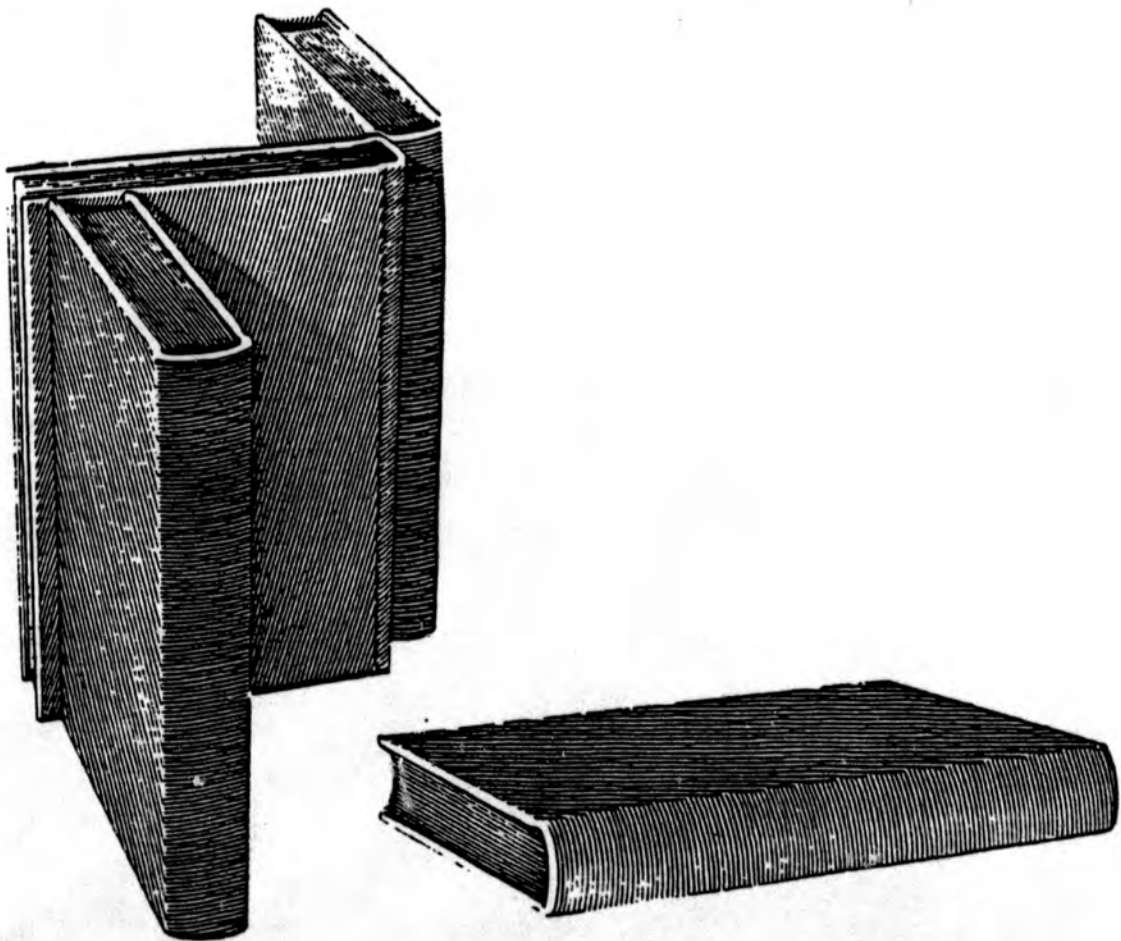
During its first year of operation the LEA program concentrated on developing its own literacy tutoring program, including recruiting and training volunteer tutors and recruiting community members with reading skills below the sixth grade. Since its inception the program has trained over 300 volunteer tutors. In addition, the program has tutored 300 community members, including English speakers, Spanish speakers, and bilinguals, all with reading levels below sixth grade. Most of this tutoring has been done by volunteer tutors in one-to-one situations.

The LEA program also concentrated on developing a network of community literacy groups, and providing support to other groups involved in literacy activities. The college publishes a clearinghouse directory listing all literacy-related classes in El Paso, and serves as a clearinghouse number for volunteers and students. The college has also worked closely with the El Paso Herald-Post in its Year of the Printed Word activities and the local PBS and ABC stations in Project Plus activities.

The LEA program currently has 148 students placed in one-to-one or small group tutoring sessions. It has also begun classes for parents of low literacy levels and their pre-primary and primary school children to help build family literacy. In the fall of 1986 the LEA program opened its Literacy Center at the Rio Grande campus (downtown) and this Center is being established as a drop-in tutoring site as well as a support service for all community literacy programs. The LEA program continues to receive its

primary funding from the community college, but the program has also received grants from the Private Industry Council and the Texas Education Agency.

The El Paso Community College Literacy Education Action program is proud of its accomplishments during the past year. The program has received not only local but national recognition. In a recent monograph commissioned by the Cox Publishing Company titled Where Stands the Republic? Illiteracy: A Warning and Challenge to the Nation's Press, Jonathan Kozol writes of the program as an "exemplary collaboration of strong academic leaders." The college's commitment to the literacy effort remains strong, and the LEA program hopes to become an even more effective resource in the future in America's and El Paso's fight against illiteracy.



Intergenerational Literacy Model Project Design

This project was designed to use an intergenerational approach to literacy instruction. Initially four special tutoring groups consisted of:

- 1. Five English-dominant parents with preschool children**
- 2. Five Spanish-dominant parents with preschool children**
- 3. Five English-dominant parents with primary school children**
- 4. Five Spanish-dominant parents with primary school children**

According to this design, the parents and children attend classes which are small groups of ten to twelve participants. Yet, because the instruction is based upon the Language Experience Approach to teaching reading and writing, after an introductory activity each class is naturally divided up into parent-child teams. Consequently, each parent-child team receives small group and individualized instruction at appropriate ability levels.

The Participants

THE PARENTS

Parent 1: *I want to read. I want to help my kids so they don't have to go through what I did. It's a hard world out there, and if you can't read, it's awful.*

Parent 2: *Are you sure this will help my daughter? If you're sure, we'll do it. I don't know, really, if anything will help me.*

Parent 3: *This not-reading is handed down. My mother couldn't read, and her mother couldn't read and well . . . it's going to stop with me.*

These parents' comments reveal the feelings and the situations of many participants in the Intergenerational Literacy Model Project. All the parents have identified their main motivation for wanting to improve their reading skills as the desire to help their children. They are conscientious and caring adults who lack basic survival skills, but now want to catch-up with and surpass their children in literacy skills. They want to help their children with the tough challenges that come later in school and later in life.

THE CHILDREN

Child 1: *I like to draw. I tell my baby sister stories about my pictures.*

Child 2: *I do puzzles good.*

Child 3: *My Mom doesn't have to read that. I'll do it for you, Mom.*

Child 4: *I like to talk.*

The children, ranging from 2 to 11 years of age, from English-speaking families and from Spanish-speaking families, have given us all the hope to keep trying. Almost instinctively, certainly intuitively, the children thrive on what the experts call the "roots of literacy." The children love to communicate with gestures, by talking, by singing, by drawing, and by playing. They are active learners, and they enjoy "working" with their parents. Some even try to protect and compensate for the lack of skills on their parents' part.



THE INSTRUCTORS

Instructor 1: *I need to get her to understand that she doesn't have to drill the alphabet into her son . . . she needs to know that the oral language she uses with him, the conversations, the interest in his interests -- that's what leads to good reading.*

Instructor 2: *It's so-o-o hard. I've never done anything so hard because I never know what's going to work. But I've never had the freedom to do exactly what I believe is appropriate for my learners, and I've never had learners so motivated.*

The model instructors come from different teaching backgrounds, and somewhat differing philosophies regarding literacy development. Yet, both have years of valuable teaching experience and flexibility of methodology. They have used the skeleton curriculum as a guide and gone on from there. They have adapted instructional activities to their own teaching styles, and most importantly, to the interests and needs of the learners.

THE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer Participant 1: *The environmental print trip was very interesting. Some things I had never noticed. Today I had the opportunity to really see them.*

Volunteer Participant 2: *The children liked the experience; they were happy walking and learning the signs and the names of the streets.*

Volunteer Participant 3: *I think this program is very important not only for children, but for parents too.*

Volunteer Participant 4: *This program is necessary for the students of child development because we get good practice working with parents and children.*

The volunteers helping with the project were from both the community at large and the community college student population. They helped in many areas of the project development, including:

1. Participating in the class sessions in a teaching assistant capacity.
2. Making materials to be used in the class lessons.
3. Assisting in the ethnographic evaluation process by completing various types of observation forms.

Comments were often made by these volunteers that indicated appreciation for the opportunity to work in a field setting with parents and children together.

SCOMM

71:13

8/4/89

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
August 4, 1989

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rep. Eileen P. MacLean, Co-Chair
Sen. Al Adams
Rep. Johnny Ellis (Ex officio)

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sen. Lloyd Jones, Co-Chair
Sen. Jack Coghill
Sen. John Binkley (Ex officio)
Rep. Cheri Davis
Rep. Niilo Koponen

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ACTION NARRATIVE

SENATOR AL ADAMS, District L, recognized Rep. MacLean as Chairperson for the meeting of the Joint Committee on School Performance.

DON GRAY, member of the State Board of Education, addressed the committee in the place of President Barney Gottstein. He distributed (Attachment A), How Can The State of Alaska Improve School Performance?, and (Attachment B), a draft of the current State Board Subcommittee on Education Outcomes.

This attachment includes the goals that the State Board of Education is working on for this coming year. The six major items that the Board is concerned with are:

- * Early childhood, parenting and language programs;
- * Community based child services as a multi-agency responsibility;
- * At risk incentive program alternatives;
- * Reevaluation of schooling options;
- * Improving teaching practices and providing support for teachers in rural Alaska;
- * Building on the strengths of Native languages and cultures.

Mr. Gray stated that the Board plans to establish several committees comprised of Alaskan educators, parents, and community members, that would be able to come up with specific recommendations for the next session regarding the major concerns of the State Board of Education. He added that the schools in Alaska, for the first time this year, will be giving one achievement test in all the districts. He noted that the disadvantage of this test is that it is not geared toward what Alaskan communities have expressed they wish taught in their schools. He felt that the advantage would be to raise skill levels and provide information to teachers in Alaska. He thought that this would raise student performance on future tests.

Mr. Gray observed that Alaska has varying levels of performance in schools within certain districts. He added that because of a budget cut, the Alaska Specific Achievement Test project (grades 4 through 8) was terminated.

Mr. Gray explained that the board had asked for recommendations and guidelines to address the functions of certain school districts that were falling below the percentage of the Achievement Test.

Mr. Gray commented that the board had not developed one particular recommendation. However, the question was raised as to how to treat the basic inequity within different parts of the state. He noted that many states are aware of the economic imbalance created by the redistribution of the education dollar. Alaska has established the Education Foundation Program, which tries to distribute the education dollar equally among the school districts within the state.

Mr. Gray declared that the effectiveness of the Education Foundation Program will be more clear after the same test is given throughout the state for the first time in April 1990. This test will show which school districts and children are below the national level of the basic skill

level. Mr. Gray further stated that the management of education should be at the local level, with both the professional educators and the parents working together. "The purpose of the school system is to educate the children, not to provide employment for the teachers. The more that the community level involvement is encouraged, the better the education system will become."

Mr. Gray expressed the opinion that the consolidation and "boroughization" of the school districts would lead to the diminishment of districts. He speculated that by requiring local contribution, local residents would take a greater interest in how the money was being spent and how the programs are implemented. He thought this would lead to more effective programs.

Chairperson MacLean asked what is the percentage and age level of the "at-risk" kids.

Mr. Gray referenced Attachment A, noting that the percentage among Native Alaskans is much higher than that of caucasian students within the state and definitely higher in the high school age group. He noted that, although the high school drop out level is the most obvious, the "at risk" child can often be identified as early as second or third grade. He expressed that the emphasis of solving the drop out problem needs to be placed on the early childhood and primary grade levels.

Chairperson MacLean asked if the concentration of middle school drop outs is an area that needs to be addressed and if it is due to the transition from an elementary to a high school type curriculum?

Mr. Gray responded that the transition was a concern but he stated that the problem is more obvious at the high school level. He felt they needed to look at this to determine if it is a social issue or an educational issue and to try to get all the related agencies working together on the solution. Some of the social issues which directly affect educational issues are: the number of Alaskans under 18 who have families living below the poverty level; the teenage pregnancy rate in Alaska which is one of the highest in the nation; and drug and alcohol abuse, which is also substantial.

Chairperson MacLean asked if the School Board has considered the amount of suicides within the school system as one of the priorities that should be addressed?

Mr. Gray answered that it is a problem. Presently, neither he nor the Board is certain on how to prevent these deaths, or deal with this problem and he added that issues of self-worth are the kinds of questions that need to be addressed.

Chairperson MacLean asked what the goals and priorities are of the State Board for this fiscal year.

Mr. Gray answered with reference to Attachment B, the State Board of Education, through collaborative efforts, will develop an action agenda to increase support for public education. Implementing this is ultimately a local decision.

Chairperson MacLean noted that the question of time frame was raised by the Joint Committee on School Performance. She expressed the desire of the committee to work with the State Board and not duplicate its work.

Mr. Gray suggested that the Committee work directly with the Commissioner's Office and with Rosemary Hagevig, Executive Assistant.

Chairperson MacLean reiterated that these goals were planned to be implemented this fiscal year. Then she asked if each school district had its own competency test base for their students.

Mr. Gray answered that some school districts do and some do not. The State Board is requiring that each district administer the same test throughout the State at the same grade levels. If the district also wants to give their own test it would be in addition to the ITBS that all students would take.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNNY ELLIS suggested that the State Board of Education meet in Bethel with the House Hess Committee to coordinate the needs of these two groups. He stated that the HESS Committee will be looking at health facilities in various villages and school sites.

Chairperson MacLean reminded everyone that this meeting is planned for the first week in September. Rep. MacLean restated that the Committee on School Performance really did want to work closely with the State Board of Education on the issues that are affecting our school drop out rate and suicide rates.

Chairperson MacLean asked what the State Department of Education accomplished to date regarding goals and objectives with assistance from the prior year's School Performance Committee.

WILLIAM G. DEMMERT, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, responded to Rep. MacLean by distributing Attachment-C, concerning the work done jointly between the Alaska Department of Education and the Joint Committee on School Performance. He also submitted Attachment-D, the last basic skills performance report of Alaska students.

Regarding the definition of "at risk," he stated that the department was working on one and that they are looking at some of the national definitions and using that which the other states have developed.

Chairperson MacLean questioned the definition of "at risk" where schools have adopted the no-fail system, and where students are promoted without acquiring that knowledge for that level and grade.

Commissioner Demmert stated that he thought there were certain things that needed to happen for a student to succeed and if they do not happen the chances for that student to succeed will be severely limited.

Chairperson MacLean stated that one of the first goals the State Board of Education listed was creating a model outcome for competency. She asked if this ties directly into the concept of the no-fail system. She added that the student who moves from one grade to the next needs to be at a certain competency level.

Commissioner Demmert stated that the focus has been on the students who are expected to have difficulty completing high school. He referenced Attachment-C. The number of school districts have been reduced to 54 in the past year, of which there are 463 public schools within the state. The enrollment for the 1989-1990 school year is estimated at 102,000 students for grades K-12. School students represent about 1/5 of the state's total population. There are 7,735 certified staff and 6,511 classroom teachers. He added that 90% of the teachers are white, 3% black, 3.2% Alaska Natives and 2.8% represent other ethnic groups. The average pupil-teacher ratio is 16:1. City-boroughs spend on the average of \$5800 per pupil while REAAs spend an average per pupil of \$11,790. Twenty-two of Alaska's fifty-four school districts have enrollments that exceed 75% Native Alaskans. Thirty-one districts have at least 50% Native enrollments in the class room. There are 21,654 Alaska Native students and 170 Alaska Native teachers. Alaska Native students represent about 20.8% of the total student population and Native teachers represent about 3.2%. This is a major disparity. There are 172 different languages spoken in Alaska, with the five basic Native Alaskan languages comprising the largest group. Yupik speakers have the largest number of students entering school, other than the English language base. The Alaskan Native population has risen from 16% to 21%. Student achievement in the State of Alaska is at or above the national average in the Standardized Test for children K-12 as well as in the college entrance examinations (S.A.T. and A.C.T.).

Dr. Demmert briefly reviewed some of the social issues concerning the Alaska educational system. There are 72,000 functionally illiterate persons in the State of Alaska. He added that 6.5% of persons under 18 years of age live in families with income below the poverty level and that they know that children living in this situation are one third less likely to graduate from high school. At this point, Mr. Demmert made reference to Attachment C, page 12, concerning partnerships that have been developed over the past two years.

Commissioner Demmert proceeded with the recommendations of the State Board of Education (Attachment C-page 16).

Chairperson MacLean asked about the "restructuring" concept of grades K-4.

Commissioner Demmert responded that "restructuring" would be the major emphasis of the Department of Education and that they would be identifying seven schools within the State which would be interested in working with the Department in this effort. Language development is probably the key to academic achievement. In restructuring K-4, the curriculum focus will be changed by integration in order to identify the best way to teach language, and then train teachers. Commissioner Demmert added that another aspect of this restructuring will be to bring together teachers, parents, school administrators and community leaders to discuss the content of the restructuring. The Alaska Department of Education spent about \$14,000 to help develop the Summer Focus program in Anchorage. Seven schools participated with representatives including teachers, parents, school board members and some of the school administration. These people met and consolidated ideas about the meaning of "restructuring," the development of a plan and its implementation over the next three year period. The Board would like to duplicate this over the next three or four summers, and add more schools each year.

Rep. MacLean asked if the topic was centered around language.

Commissioner Demmert responded that the topic was centered around language development, specifically relating to rural schools where the primary language spoken is not English. He noted that the school experience needs to begin with the home language as the language of instruction. Evidence finds that those youngsters that start with the language that is the home language and then move on to the language at school do much better academically than those children that are forced to switch to another language upon entering school. The focus is to identify a language base from which students can learn, and use that as a base from which the student can learn other languages including the language of the school.

Commissioner Demmert explained that the Alaska Department of Education has decided to put together a major paper on language development because there is very little available regarding this. The department, in agreement with the Ministers of Education from Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Northwest Territories in Canada and Whitehorse, hopes to pull together five or six papers from each country that focus on language development to use as a base to find a way to teach languages more effectively. Edna MacLean, Rural and Native Education Administrator, will be doing the paper for the Northwest. The Northwest Regional Lab is willing to help research information that is available on this. Once again, Commissioner Demmert identified language development as the top priority for this next year.

Commissioner Demmert was asked a question concerning the "restructuring" of K-4 and the legislation which was passed two years ago and submitted by Rep. Cotten, to change the date of entrance for kindergarten. Commissioner Demmert was questioned if he thought this change has helped or deterred education of our smaller children in this age group.

Commissioner Demmert commented that children develop at different intellectual and physical rates. This fact reinforces the idea that chronological age often is not the best tool to determine a child's readiness for school. The Department hopes to address this in the "restructuring" of K-4. He noted that an equally important issue to address is the preschool factor which can stimulate intellectual development and prepare the youngster for those grades. Children who attend Early Childhood Education Programs before kindergarten end up doing much better throughout their school experience. The National Association of Early Childhood Education believes that most testing is not good for preschool and K-2. He suggested that this raises questions concerning the tests used in Alaska for kindergarten, and expressed the concern that they might not be the most appropriate. He noted that there have been some changes in the past three years with this test.

Commissioner Demmert reiterated the focus of language development stating that it is essential to build upon a child's language base. "From this point forward, we are building upon this base and if we are to talk about improved academics we have to keep this in mind. First, a person's language ability is significantly determined by the time they are three years of age. Second, language development is the key to academic achievement. Third, whatever we do after age three is basically building on that base. The younger the child is when this is introduced, the easier it will be for them to make this adjustment."

Chairperson MacLean asked about the basic skills needed to be taught in school in the primary years and how they fit in the system based around primary language.

Commissioner Demmert stated that language is the academic focus. Cultural and developmentally appropriate activity must also be focused on the following abilities: intrapersonal; interpersonal; spatial; music and other fine arts; athletic; mathematical; and social and cultural.

Senator Adams observed that an item that needs addressing by the Department is whether or not the State is funding bilingual education to move students from English to their Native tongue, and if so, this tactic is reversed in the urban centers, such as Anchorage, where students are taught from their Native based tongue to English. He noted that this information needs to be made available to the urban legislators, so that they will understand that bilingual is meant to move in both directions.

Commissioner Demmert acknowledged Sen. Adams' point to take a look at the bilingual statutes in the State of Alaska and the rules and regulations under which that program is operated. He noted that currently there is discrimination against those rural Native Alaskan students who have moved away from a Native language as a base into English as a base, but have not been able to develop either language sufficiently to do well in school. The State needs to provide opportunities for the Native dominant language student to the bilingual program and also needs to provide increased opportunities for those students who are moving from one language to another and are still in the process of developing the second language. Currently, this is not being handled well and he noted this is an area of high interest for the Board.

Commissioner Demmert continued to address the second critical priority for improving academic achievements among those students that currently fail. This is to provide a support base that allows intervention of social barriers that limit a student's opportunity to succeed in school. This means the development of partnerships between schools and social service agencies and between schools and community groups. He gave the examples of churches, and school counselors that serve as coordinators between social service agencies and schools. He noted that this could also mean safe houses in communities where there are drug and alcohol dependencies and in which the child's safety might be an issue. Alaska needs to expand and develop new programs that deal with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Commissioner Demmert stated that the third priority is the promoting, developing, and expansion of partnerships between schools, business/industry, Native organizations,

government and other employers. "Partnerships that provide students with a sense of relationship between what one learns in school and what is required in the real world, giving the student a sense of responsibility, of contributing to society, a sense of accomplishment and an opportunity to understand what it is to earn an income."

Commissioner Demmert continued with the fourth priority essential to improvement of schooling as the need to improve teaching and teachers. He noted that there is a need to build partnerships between schools and the University to train teachers specifically for our schools, particularly for rural schools with large numbers of Native students. The Native teaching force in Alaska should be about 20%. This is a very difficult idea to implement. "The information that we have from other communities around Native tribes in the lower United States and Canada points out the social problems of the students has decreased, the academic achievement level of those students has increased and the attitude toward education in those communities is very positive in those communities where there is a larger percentage of Native teachers or teacher aides."

Commissioner Demmert ended by stating that the fifth and equally important recommendation for improving schools and student performance is to build a strong Alaskan education and research base. "This research can tell us if what we are doing is working, research that gives us evidence for new direction, research that can help improve what we now do." Commissioner Demmert suggested an Alaskan research base and an opportunity to build research capacity.

EDNA MACLEAN, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, RURAL AND NATIVE EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR, remarked that bilingual programs do enhance academic achievement in English, at the same time they enhance the language heritage of a child. She suggested that there is no detrimental effect in a bilingual program. She also responded to the research that the Board of Education is looking into, reiterating that it will enhance the students' academic achievement for minority students. She stated that there are six parameters that have been established by the International Research Project, which stems from a base out of France, under the Office of Educational Research Innovations:

1. Incorporation of a child's heritage language and culture in a school.
2. Encouraging community involvement.
3. Developing different ways of teaching that meet the needs of different learning styles.
4. Assessment - determining where the student is and preparing a program to meet those needs.
5. The use of computer-assisted instruction.
6. An early childhood education information base.

Sen. Al Adams commented that one of the things missing in the recommendations is alternative education facilities. "It is under the Constitution that we have provided education to all Alaskans, consequently, we need to address the option of the alternative facility such as boarding schools for those students that live in the village areas and would like to come to Anchorage or Fairbanks for their education." He asked what is the position of this Department surrounding these options.

Commissioner Demmert replied that this is a priority for the State Board and department to look at. He added that there is an interest in developing some new regional attendance areas or boarding schools. He stated that the Job Core Center which they were able to obtain for Alaska would help the department to look at this issue. Karen Ryals, administrator of Adult and Vocational Education, initiated the development of this proposal through the Department of Community and Regional Affairs and in cooperation with the Mat-su School District. Three million dollars have been secured for the program per year, for up to a ten year period. This budget will cover construction of a dormitory for between 200-250 beds.

Commissioner Demmert added that he is concerned that recent high school graduates be able to incorporate more skill development for job preparation. This should possibly include an extension to grades 13 & 14.

Sen. Al Adams suggested that he would like to see a joint-partnership between the University system and K-12. He recommended that the academic achievement in various school districts is insufficient to meet the standards of colleges and he would like to see something occur between the school districts and the University to consolidate this information.

Commissioner Demmert stated that there are four points that need to occur and he noted that there was a meeting between the State Board of Education and the University of Alaska Regents concerning this. Their discussion was about the new college entrance examination and the exit requirements of the high school and the need to coordinate these. "In working with the colleges and universities, we are attempting to develop new and better ways to train teachers so that they will be more effective in the classrooms." The idea of internships in the classroom is a concept that instigates debate. The third point the commissioner raised, is the possibility of improving quality education through having master-teachers work with new teachers for a prolonged basis. He noted that there has been discussion on the need to improve the performance of university students in math, science and language arts and suggests

that some teachers of these subject areas need to improve their teaching skills. This is a difficult cooperative effort to work out.

Sen. Al Adams spoke about the appropriation of funding for education and suggested that perhaps an education endowment could be addressed in the Legislature this year. Sen. Adams questioned the Board's position on this.

Commissioner Demmert commented that the Board has four priorities:

1. The endowment - which the Education Board supports.
2. To provide order to school construction and debt retirement.
3. New legislation on high-risk children which the Board has developed some recommendations for.
4. The Foundation Program will need some changes to meet the equity tests.

Dr. Demmert restated that the Department of Education wants to be able to coordinate with the Committee on School Performance. He pointed to Edna MacLean as the person within the Department to provide education and technical assistance toward this.

Rep. MacLean recommended that the State Department of Education submit their schedule of upcoming meetings in education and conferences that may be planned this year to the committee so that they could coordinate meetings.

Rep. MacLean suggested that there needs to be a review of the committee goals and objectives. She suggested that the committee choose Co-Chairs.

Sen. Al Adams suggested Senator Jones as Co-Chair.

Rep. MacLean cited the need to hire a Research Assistant and to outline the project scope and the expenses for the Committee on School Performance. Frank Darnell was recommended for the position of Research Assistant.

She noted that a committee hearing could be coordinated with the International Education Conference in Barrow in September 19th - 21st to obtain further comment from school districts in that area and the public. Sen. Adams agreed and a meeting was tentatively scheduled.

Chairperson MacLean adjourned the meeting.

A

HOW CAN THE STATE OF ALASKA IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE?

ALASKA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Strategic Planning Meeting

Anchorage, Alaska

June 6 and 7, 1989

Barney Gottstein, President

Don Gray, Vice-President

Janie Leask, Second Vice-President

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Lt. Colonel Matthew Kenney, Military Advisory Member

Raychelle Daniel, Student Advisory Member

FOREWORD

In May 1989, the Alaska Legislature requested the State Board of Education to charge the Department of Education to develop recommendations to improve schools whose students score low on national achievement tests. The measure known as House Concurrent Resolution Number 33, asks the State Board of Education to submit its recommendations to the Legislature no later than February 1, 1990.

On June 6 and 7, 1989 the State Board of Education and the Department convened a meeting to plan the strategy to address this resolution. The critical question addressed by the Board and those attending the meeting was: WHAT SHOULD THE STATE OF ALASKA BE DOING TO HELP LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IMPROVE THE LEVEL OF SCHOOL AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Barney Gottstein, President of the State Board of Education, invited the group of school superintendents, teachers, parents, university officials, school board members, and early childhood and Head Start program managers to address the following issues:

- *The education system clearly is not working for large numbers of Alaskan youth.
- *At least 25 percent of our young people are not graduating from high school.
- *Large numbers of children from minority and poverty backgrounds score among the lowest in the nation on national achievement tests.
- *Far too many youth commit suicide, have unwanted pregnancies, struggle with drug and alcohol abuse, and experience psychological and physical abuse from their families.
- *These children are not prepared to learn in the public school classroom, and the public schools are unprepared to deal effectively with these children.

Mr. Gottstein asked those participating in the meeting to assist the Board in identifying deficiencies in the current educational delivery system. He noted that other states with far fewer resources than Alaska are tackling these issues.

"They are developing programs and adapting models for early childhood education, for enhanced parenting skills, for more counselors and more effective teaching structures. It's about time Alaska did the same. Our at-risk children need not be doomed, but they will be unless we begin to address the problem now."

President Gottstein emphasized that the Department of Education is seeking a broad cooperative effort among parents, legislators, educators, community organizations, employers, the university and others to bring about needed fundamental changes to enable the public school system to become effective at educating a much greater percentage of young Alaskans. We cannot afford to allow students to drop out or slide out of school before developing basic skills they need to become useful, responsible citizens and productive members of Alaska's work force.

The following pages summarize six major topics that participants at the m identified as important areas that need improvement. They are not meant all inclusive, but should be viewed only as an initial beginning point. areas are:

- * Early Childhood, Parenting and Language Programs
- * Community Based Child Services as a Multi-agency Respons
- * At Risk Incentive Program Alternatives
- * Re-evaluation of Schooling Options
- * Improving Teaching Practices and Providing Support for T in Rural Alaska
- * Building on the Strengths of Native Languages and Cultur

The State Board of Education and Department of Education plan to invite educators, parents and other citizens to develop proposals for addressing of the six areas. In considering each of the topical areas, work groups be asked to consider recommendations to the Board based upon local district needs, statewide needs, and models that have been proven successful in and other locations in the country. The State Board will examine each for appropriate methods of implementation, including submission as legislation. Committee proposals will be submitted to the State Board November 1989, to allow sufficient time for the State Board to prepare legislative proposal prior to the beginning of the January 1990 session.

In summary, three questions will be used as a preliminary framework with which the working groups will focus their efforts:

1. What are the "at-risk" issues in Alaska?
2. What have we learned from the experiences of other states and local districts as they have dealt with this problem?
3. What should the State of Alaska be doing to assist local school districts improve the level of school and student performance?

Early Childhood, Parenting and Language Programs

1. Organization and development of pre-school options for Alaska
 - * What funding alternatives should be considered to support quality programs?
 - * What is the best process for insuring maximum community involvement?
2. Identify alternatives which enhance language skills for young children that will lead to increased academic proficiency
 - * What model programs that are culturally and developmentally appropriate for pre-school and early elementary populations have been identified which could be replicated in a variety of Alaskan situations?
 - * Identify the complexities associated with increasing the level of understanding regarding the need for such programs in each community and the necessity for building strong local support prior to program implementation
3. Determine criteria under which pre-elementary children will be identified as eligible for participation in state funded preschool programs
 - * What are the characteristics of "at-risk" pre-schoolers both in rural and urban settings?
 - * How much flexibility should there be for additional children to have access to these programs?
4. Discuss process for assuring maximum level of interagency coordination and cooperation in implementation and delivery of programs (Head Start, private providers, local school district programs)
 - * What is the best procedure for encouraging all preschool providers to work in a non-competitive environment to assure a maximum level of program quality for all children?
 - * What are the most practical options for coordinating pre-school programs with local elementary school K-4 programs?

Community Based Child Services as a Multi-agency Responsibility

1. Explore alternatives for coordinating education and health/human services funded and delivered by the State and other agencies
 - * What alternatives should be explored to encourage better cooperation between schools and Health and Social Services, ANHS, and local non-profit social services corporations which which would provide the maximum level of service to students?
 - * How can the system which identifies services that children need be improved in all areas of the State? What services now exist? How should such services be funded? Who is responsible for different levels of service?
2. Make recommendations for a statewide policy which would create a delivery system that carefully identifies the appropriate role of the various agencies as they work together in a collaborative effort to provide for educational and the health and social services needs of at-risk students
 - * What models are being used in Alaska and other states that could be replicated?
 - * Identify options for a village based model which could be piloted in rural communities with most urgent needs and minimum resources
 - * Consider alternatives that urban school districts and health/social services providers could implement to support interagency coordination of education and health and social services for at-risk youth (eg. shared use of facilities)
3. What can the State do to better prepare education professionals to deal with the health and social concerns of students that affect the education process? Conversely, how can the State improve the expertise of health and social services professionals in dealing with mental and physical problems of children and youth that affect personal and social development, and school performance?
 - * Should the Health and Social Services confidentiality regulations be reviewed to provide for two way transmittal of information between teachers and social services providers when specific students are experiencing traumatic situations? Should the education regulations include requirements for teachers to adhere to certain standards of confidentiality when involved in these kinds of cases?
 - * Are there techniques that educators could use to provide a better educational experience for children who continue to live in "at-risk" environments?
 - * What is the best way to help teachers cope with student health and social problems that are a detriment to learning, and become skilled in making appropriate referrals for students under their supervision?
4. What can be done to help children and youth relate to health issues as being personally applicable?
 - * What are effective ways to help young people work toward personal responsibility for their own well being?
 - * What are effective methods for helping children and youth understand the role of helping agencies, and to accept their assistance when appropriate?

At Risk Incentive Program Alternatives

1. What is the definition of "at-risk" for Alaska applications? =

- * What are the characteristics of "at-risk" elementary and secondary students both in rural and urban situations?
 - Income level?
 - Base language skills?
 - Academic proficiency?
 - Health and social impediments to school success?
 - Potential high school drop out?
 - Ability to make a positive transition to postsecondary education or the world of work?
- * Are all students "at-risk" at some time or another?

2. What alternative programs could local communities and school districts consider to meet the specific needs of particular populations of at-risk students?

- * Evaluate some suggestions offered at the June meeting:
 - Extended learning time?
 - Work experience opportunities for students that utilize educational concepts?
 - Expose students to various career options?
 - Consideration of various alternatives for delivery of academic programs?
 - Establish JTPA rural programs?
 - Remedial summer school programs?
 - Structured mentoring/tutoring activities?
 - Expansion of high school ROTC programs to rural school districts?
 - Improving counseling programs?
- * Identify possible funding sources, including reallocation of existing funds, incentive grants, and categorical funding
- * What programs that have been successfully implemented in other states could be adapted for use in Alaska?
- * Consider viability of programs which would ease the transition from rural high school to postsecondary activity

3. What can school districts do to build more positive relationships between small communities and their schools, based upon trust and mutual understanding?

- * How can the State help establish a commonality of purpose among school administrators, local school board members, parents, teachers and students which will lead to increased school performance and student achievement?

Re-evaluation of Schooling Options

1. Consider recommendations for developing a structured process in which schools would work closely with local community members, parents, teachers and students to develop a plan of service within the guidelines of the district vision/philosophy and state requirements
2. Should the State and local school districts consider different options for delivering quality secondary education programs to rural students?
 - * Should local districts consider consolidating high school programs in a centralized area within the school district?
 - * Should the State re-visit the regional boarding school concept?
 - * What are the pros and cons of funding such programs?
3. What alternatives should the committee consider for assisting school districts in providing extended learning time for all students in the State, with particular emphasis on students who are not performing at an acceptable academic level?
 - * How can school districts educate parents and students regarding the critical importance of attendance?
 - * What opportunities could be provided for extended learning time?

Improving Teaching Practices and Providing Support for Teachers in Rural Alaska

1. Explore ideas to assist local districts in providing a more structured support system for new teachers in rural areas, including provision of intensive and comprehensive introduction programs in which local residents participate.

- * How can a systematic ongoing support program for new teachers—particularly those in more isolated communities—be developed and institutionalized?

2. What strategies will best assist local school districts as they pursue active minority teacher recruitment?

- * Should career ladder models in some Alaskan school districts be replicated?

3. Consider strategies and incentives for increasing expectations with respect to teacher performance and corresponding student performance

- * How can a better understanding of the multicultural classroom and school be facilitated?

4. Evaluate and make recommendations regarding teacher pre and in-service training and practical suggestions for selection of teachers employed for service in isolated rural settings

Building on the Strengths of Native Languages and Cultures

1. Explore ways to build on strengths of language and culture within the school system

- * What is the most appropriate way to teach Native language and culture in school? Should it be integrated into the curriculum or taught in a community schools type program format? Should it be a combination of both?
- * Should adoption of this kind of educational program be a matter of state policy or a local decision?
- * Should funding for such programs be included in foundation or should alternative sources be identified?
- * Should the framework for these programs be the existing bilingual programs which are designed to reconnect children in a positive way with their culture and language?
- * In urban school districts should the "school within a school" concept and other effective models be explored as a way of delivering these programs to Native students?

2. What research and promising strategies could be utilized for Native language instruction?

- * How could communication between Native speaking parents, students and English speaking students/teachers be improved?
- * Would the integration of Native language and culture into existing curriculum be significant in improving students' academic performance? What are the implications for rural and urban schools?

3. What can the State do to assist school districts to use the students' first language as a foundation for successful academic experience?

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Judith Kleinfeld, University of Alaska Fairbanks

The State Board of Education would do a great service by reopening the dialog regarding placement of rural students in large central high schools or very small high school settings. In addition, many small schools and their communities have turned into battle grounds between the community's cultural values and an education system based upon another culture; there's no trust between the school and community. Communities need to reestablish a commonality of values define responsibilities of the school and parents and between teachers and students and establish a sense of common purpose.

Dave Hagstrom, University of Alaska Fairbanks and Principal of Denali Elementary School

All students are at risk at one time or another. It is the responsibility of the school to create a climate to excite and stimulate each child. Each child needs an advocate in addition to parents and teachers. High self esteem is important for students, parents and teachers. School change needs to occur from "the inside out" at the local school level. State Board of Education should encourage grass roots efforts to experiment with restructuring schools.

Darlene Heckler, Teacher, Selawik

Small rural high schools are not good enough. The problems have been identified. It's now time for someone to do something about them.

Claudia Douglas, Junior High Counselor, Fairbanks

It's the responsibility of the education system to find the genius in each child.

Lucy Brown, Counselor, Anchorage

Anchorage needs a Native student residential "safe house." More funds need to be allocated for after school career classes and need to think about tailoring school hours to the needs of students.

Bob Waters, School Psychologist, McLaughlin Correctional Center

Job skills and community service are important for high school students. Personal contact needs to be made to get drop out back in school. A seventh and eighth period needs to be established as part of the school day as a safety net for high risk youth.

Marilyn Rosene, Teacher, Dillingham

Rural children are not well grounded in either their Native language or English. Alcohol, drugs, violence and domestic assault are severe problems for students. Village students need school experiences in larger communities. Village schools needs to place a value on training students for subsistence lifestyle.

Don Oberg, Teacher, Kenai

Schools need to hire more counselors for children of all ages.

Steve McPhetres, Executive Director, Alaska Council of School
Administrators

Schools need to build upon their current successes. While recognizing the importance for local control, the State Board of Education should require local school districts to develop a plan of action to increase the achievement levels of more students. The Legislature should increase funding to the Department of Education to provide technical assistance to school districts to develop innovative strategies for addressing programs aimed at high risk youth.

Brad Raphael, Superintendent, Yupiik School District

Schools need to experiment with innovative tactics to increase achievement. It's okay to make a mistake and learn from that mistake, but it's a greater mistake to never have tried.

Liz Borio, Assistant Superintendent, Yukon Koyukuk School District

Longitudinal data is important in school improvement. A key element for developing school is hiring the best teachers possible, even at the expense of making EEO hires.

Shirley Holloway, Superintendent, North Slope Borough School District

The Department of Education needs to beef up its technical assistance staff; monitoring without providing technical assistance is useless. Early childhood education is important. Barrow's 10 year history of early childhood programs is starting to show results. Even though educators must be aware of social problems and deal with them realistically, they must remember that their primary mission is schooling.

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF ALASKA'S SCHOOLS

Dr. William G. Demmert
Alaska Commissioner of Education

School District Information:

- *There are 463 public schools in 55 school districts in the state.
- *The enrollment for the 1988-89 school year is estimated at 104,000 students in grades kindergarten - grade twelve.
- *There are 7,735 certificated staff, with 6,511 classroom teachers. 91% of the certificated staff are White, 3% are Black, 3.2% are Alaska Native and 2.8% are representatives for other ethnic groups.
- *The average pupil-teacher ratio's are about 16 to one (with 17-1 in city & Borough Districts and 12 - 1 in REAAs).
- *Cities and Boroughs spent an average of \$5,346 per pupil in average daily membership with REAA schools spending an average of \$11,790 in FY88.
- *Twenty-two of Alaska's 55 school districts have enrollments that exceed 75% Native Alaskans.
- *Thirty-one districts have at least 50% Native enrollments in their classrooms.

Student Information:

- 69% of Alaska's students are White, 21% are Alaska Native and 10% are representatives from other ethnic groups.
- *The average Scholastic Achievement Scores (SAT) for Alaskan students was 475 in mathematics, 441 in verbal tests with 45.7% of Alaska's high school graduates taking the test in 1987.
- *The national averages were 476 in mathematics, 428 in verbal scores with 45% taking the test.
- *The American College Test (ACT) scores for Alaskan students averaged 18.4 with 36.6% taking the tests.
- *The National average score was 18.8 with 31% of the nation's high school seniors taking the test in 1987.
- *Alaskan students in 1988 basic skills performance scored consistently higher than the national averages, and information is consistent for the past four years.
- *Fifteen of the fifty-five school districts had at least one average score below the 30th percentile, showing a major problem among students in those schools in certain basic skills, such as mathematics, language arts, mathematics computation, and reading comprehension.

*In many districts the basic skills performance was higher in grades K-3 than any other grade groupings. Performance in grades 4-8 was relatively lower.

*The drop-out rate for Alaska is projected at 30% with the Native Alaskan student population significantly higher in urban areas (Juneau -60%; Fairbanks 70% over four years of high school).

*There are 172 different languages spoken in Alaska with the Native Alaskans five basic languages comprising the largest group (Yupic speakers having the largest numbers of students entering school with other than an English language base).

*In recent years the percent of Alaska Native student population has increased from 16% to 21% (even with the high urban drop out rates).

Social Issues:

*Based on the last Census, approximately one in seven Alaskans is functionally illiterate (approximately 72,000 in English).

*It is estimated that adult basic education and literacy volunteer programs in Alaska are able to serve only 5% of those who are in need of services.

*Language and cultural deterioration among Native Alaskan groups is a growing social, cultural, and educational issue.

*Growing numbers of high school graduates that are not ready for entering the work force because they lack basic reading, computation, language, and social skills.

*Estimate that 1 in 6.5 Alaskans under 18 live in families whose income is below the poverty level.

*Children in poverty are one-third less likely to graduate from high school.

*Alaska's teenage pregnancy rate is 13% higher than the national average, ninth highest in the nation.

*For every completed suicide an additional 110 attempts are serious enough to require medical attention.

*Alaska's suicide rate is among the highest in the Nation, with the Alaska Native male, ages 20-24, 13 times the Alaskan average.

*The Alaska Native Health Board, in 1985, suggested a link between suicidal behavior and community stress, specifically citing stress caused by rapid social change as key.

*One in four children in Alaska has an alcoholic parent.

*The alcohol (and other substance abuse) problems in Alaska, resulting in family violence, high rates of criminal activity, and social deterioration, are significant. Student populations are not exempt from this problem.

*Alaska divorce rate is 70% compared to national average of 50% (Alaska second highest in the nation).

*Factors influencing students:

- Breakdown in family composition
- Rising poverty among the young
- Rising teenage births
- Increasing child abuse and sexual assault
- Substance abuse
- Suicide

RESOURCES:

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Maclean, Edna Ahgeak. Summary of Recent Studies on the Alaska Native Community, Alaska Department of Education, March 30, 1989.

The AFN Report on the Status of Alaska Natives: A Call for Action, Alaska Federation of Natives, 411 West 4th Avenue, Suite 301, Anchorage, Alaska, January 1989.

The New Student Profile: Building a Workforce for the 21st Century, Governor's Council on Vocational Education, Rosie Peterson, Executive Director, 1988.

Literacy Audioconference Information, Barbara Thompson, Adult Basic Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education.

Our Greatest Natural Resource: Investing in the Future of Alaska's Children, a report of the Governor's Interim Commission on Children and Youth, January 1988.

Testimony Before the State Board of Education
Jo Kuykendahl
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Early childhood education is occurring in Alaska, as nationwide, through many diverse services from birth onward: licensed day care homes; certified preschools; licensed day care centers, Head Start, Military, Johnson O'Malley, other Federally certified programs, and unlicensed exempt centers and homes (not receiving any federal or state money and not serving infants and toddlers). Churches are the largest financial contributor/housers of programs in the nation; hospitals provide the greatest amount of employer support.

According to Department of Community and Regional Affairs Child Care Program, Alaska has 14,457 licensed and military federal certified spaces for children as of May 1989, occurring in 678 homes and 207 centers--up from 13, 019 one year ago.

While this is over a 10% increase in these services, future predictions relative to poverty, children at risk, child care and increasing maternal employment suggest a continued increase in the decade ahead. Certainly one of the significant factors impacting this expansion is the societal recognition of the importance of the early years. We know learning is occurring after birth, and will continue--good or bad. The medium long range benefits to disadvantaged children of high quality early childhood programs is well documented by research. The Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, headed by Irving Lazar of Cornell, (published in As The Twig is Bent) provides a collaboration of individual researchers concerned about the overall effectiveness of early childhood education programs of the 60's. When evaluated over a 15 year period, early education had significant impact in 5 areas:

- 1) Developed abilities in early to mid childhood
- 2) School competence in mid-childhood and adolescence
- 3) Educational attainment in late adolescence
- 4) Attitudes toward achievement in adolescence
- 5) Occupational attitudes in early adulthood and,
- 6) Occupational attainment in early adulthood, indirect preschool effects were found

Additionally, the well known High Scope/Perry Preschool work found that for every dollar invested in quality early childhood education for disadvantaged three and four year old children, citizens expect to reap six dollars in savings in the form of reduction in the following:

- 1) high school dropouts
- 2) Retention in grade
- 3) Special education placements
- 4) Delinquency (1986)

In addressing QUALITY, the National Day Care Study, and National Day Care Home Study (NDCH) both found the two most important factors are:

- 1) Group size (including teacher/parent ratio)
- 2) Early childhood/child development education of the LEAD teacher (not short term workshops - but comprehensive study of theory and research with inclusion of appropriate practice).

Why are group size and child development education so important?

Interesting to those of us who studied early childhood in the 60's is the renewed interest in play, components of quality play, analysis of play, and importance of play experiences. The literature of the 80's is punctuated with strategies for appropriately "guiding" play that has the overriding characteristic of VOLUNTARY PARTICIPANT CHOICE. It is child centered (versus adult-directed), unstructured (versus highly structured), divergent in thinking (versus convergent thinking), intrinsic in motivation (versus extrinsic motivation using rewards and operant conditioning), has teacher as facilitator (versus teacher as behavior modifier) and is process oriented (versus product oriented). Play, which is not so simple as we may have thought, is seen by many as the most practical way to develop imagination, initiative and self esteem.

"During free play children develop unique mental images of their experience in the environment. The child then incorporates these images and concepts into existing cognitive and effective neuronal structures thereby enhancing left and right brain modes of thinking. Free play allows fantasizing in any direction; imagining wildly, acting out roles that we fear, admire or to which we would like to temporarily retreat. Free play is needed to allow daydreaming, trying out roles that help us understand ourselves and the viewpoints of others." (Ester Hovey, Cal. State U. Long Beach, NATCSE SP 1989).

Implementing play experiences with these quality components with groups of young children - say 20 four year olds (the nationally recommended group size LIMIT), with the assistance of an aide - is not as easy as one would suspect. Try it. It is quite a lot simpler for the adult to step out of the role of the "facilitator" and become highly teacher-directive: as "I'd like you to do this...". It requires a clear understanding of child growth and development and select techniques that expand on the teacher's observation, classroom organization, and LISTENING skills, PLUS an assortment of appropriate mathematical, dramatic, art, science, reading, gross motor, and fine motor materials for hands on experimentation, exploration and work, APPROPRIATELY STRUCTURED indoor and outdoor SPACE, and teamwork from the staff.

Another important component of quality is parent involvement. When a member of a child's family takes part in his school life in a positive manner, even briefly and infrequently the child's self-esteem appears to soar. Such positive participation sends a signal to the child: the family endorses this OTHER world. Teachers often find that children whose families are involved in various roles at school over the years have higher aspiration levels and more motivation than the children whose families teachers never see. There is little evidence, however, that the amount of parent involvement in their children's schools is a critical variable; a very SMALL amount may do the trick. It seems to be the amount of respect given to the parent that is relevant to children's attitudes. Reaching out for and showing respect for all of our children's families is part of enhancing the children's self respect (self-esteem), which in turn leads to greater learning.

Implementing quality parent involvement programs, again, is no easy trick. It requires understanding parenting and parents, and understanding how to effectively utilize their knowledge, skills, and interests. It also requires regulatory support. For 16 years I have implemented an active parent involvement component at Discovery Center, an early childhood program in Fairbanks.

This service component builds on the former parent cooperative model, more popular before the need for two working parents was as acute. Recently, a former parent volunteer stopped me to explain how impressed she was that the parents who volunteered at Discovery during the years she was there are the same ones active in PTA's and volunteering in classrooms across the community where they are welcome.

During the last 4 years, regulations have made it increasingly difficult to use parent volunteers and I am one, if not the only program in Fairbanks, still struggling to keep active parental involvement alive. I have requested the Tri Department - now a team of 6 agency leaders - to address the potential of a Volunteer Certificate with some incremental training requirements, based on a Head Start Volunteer Certificate model already being used in the state. Thus, parents possessing this certificate could legally volunteer in their child's programs for a specified number of years.

Problems, such as this one with parent volunteers, in early childhood programs often go unresolved. Alaska exists without an office of child advocacy, office of children or other early childhood and family policy and procedure communication hub. Thus, programs must investigate and lobby individually, (or collectively, if they have the time and money to put that all together) to arrive at fair solutions. Without this kind of communication, coordination among and between service entities is fragmented, duplication of efforts exist, and extremely valuable expertise doing valuable kinds of delivery remains unknown to others. I have long supported addressing communication needs as a top priority within Alaska.

While early childhood programs in Fairbanks are a financial nightmare, the reality is that care and education cost, no matter who is providing it. Cost of care for a four year old is running \$4,080 per year, plus an additional \$264 or so paid by the state through the Child Care Grant program, for total revenue per year per child running under \$4,400 for 10 hours of care per day, 5 days per week, 12 months of the year. Budgets are tight running \$11.27- \$16.19 for one hour's revenue for one teacher of 7-10, share of administration, 245-350 sq. feet of space, heat, lights, garbage, insurance, toys, maintenance, books, staff training, etc. for that hour. To increase the level of preschool program quality, I have urged the Department of Education to address the voluntary levels of quality discussed several years ago, move forward with voluntary quality standards, and tie increased funding incentives to high quality programs undergoing increased costs through the lower group size and higher educated staff. Additionally, identification of these quality program models could facilitate increased in-state sharing of resources, trainers, and educational ideas.

The public schools are playing a larger role in providing prekindergarten programs or before-and after-school child care. A recently released state study in Kentucky of over 600 parents found that about 50% favored preschool programs for 3 or 4 year olds in the public schools, with lower income parents showing higher levels of support, and younger parents having more interest than older.

Before implementation of such programs, however, a community needs assessment is important to determine:

parents' work patterns, parental preferences, parental ability to pay, site preferences, what currently exists, transportation needs and desires, parental attitudes towards providing or locating volunteer help

Each community is unique; planning should be done by a team of community agencies and resources. School district planning must assess "existing space, teaching and support personnel, supervisory capacity, public resources benefits for new employees, transportation funds and avenues and good parenting-community reactions." (NAECTE SP. 89 p. 5) Programs for preschool children can work within public school facilities, but they require careful planning, grassroot support, and careful attention to ensuring the two quality components: group size (pupil/teacher ratio), and child development education of the lead teacher. In a state without a four year baccalaureate degree in child development and family studies and where a graduate in early childhood cannot be found this factor is of grave concern.

Jeffery Burkhart from Concordia College has recently addressed kindergarten screening and he states that there exists within the literature evidence that it doesn't work to hold kids back. There is little justification for retention or for programs that add a year to a pupil's career in school. The evidence is quite clear and nearly unequivocal that the achievement and adjustment of retained children are no better - and in some instances worse - than those of comparable children who are promoted. Retention (including 2 years in varied kindergarten of developmentally or behaviorally delayed kindergarten - eligible children) is one part of the current reform package that doesn't work. School districts should reevaluate their academic expectations of kindergarten students relative to admittance to first grade as we may be putting undue pressure on kindergarten academic achievement expectations. (National Association of Early Childhood) (Teacher Educators "Developmental Kindergarten - in the Child's Best Interest? Jeffery Burkart, Concordia College, St. Paul.)

When looking at length at kindergarten days, a recent study of Chicago kindergarten programs showed that class size is a better predictor of school achievement than length of the school day. When kindergarten classes contain more than 16 students, according to that study, reducing class size should be the primary concern of school officials. Only when kindergarten classes are smaller than 16 will lengthening the school day pay off in later school achievement. (3/87 Phi Delta Kappan p. 526)

Lastly of increasing concern is the need for a four year degree programs in early childhood, child development and family studies in the State of Alaska. This is because Alaska needs to move forward on preschool/kindergarten teaching certificate and requirements for an early childhood endorsement credential to teach kindergarten. Early childhood directors, head teachers, and lead teachers need to meet the National Association for Education Training recommendations, and our state system for higher education needs to move forward to ensure that this level of education is available. Concurrently, regulations must be increased, for ensuring the highest possible level of quality standards for educating our youngest citizens.

According to the consortium for Longitudinal Studies, the search for the perfect curriculum is probably futile. What is important is that there's a curriculum with specific goals and a real assurance that the teachers are carrying out the curriculum. "All of the programs were effective and none were more or less effective than the others as measured by the school outcome indicators. Independence of separate studies makes findings highly reliable. Several other recent studies have associated negative behavior (such as aggression and juvenile delinquency rates) in children with cognitively oriented early childhood programs.

A growing body of research has emerged recently affirming that children learn most effectively through a concrete, play oriented approach to early childhood education. The trend toward early academics is antithetical to what we know about how young children learn. Programs should be tailored to meet the needs of children rather than expecting children to adjust to the demands of a specific program. A major determinant of program quality is the extent to which knowledge of child development is applied in program practices - the degree to which the program is developmentally appropriate, and that look at a child's functioning in the context of its surrounding community.

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

2

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 33

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

Relating to improving school perfor-

6

mance.

7

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8

WHEREAS the state has a constitutional obligation to maintain a system
9 of public education in the state under art. VII, sec. 1, Constitution of
10 the State of Alaska; and

11

WHEREAS the state should be striving to provide the highest quality
12 education for each student, for the long-term benefit of each student, and
13 for the state as a whole; and

14

WHEREAS student achievement test scores show great disparity between
15 school districts in the state; and

16

WHEREAS the state has the responsibility to ensure that educational
17 opportunities are equitably available throughout the state;

18

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the State Board of
19 Education is respectfully requested to direct the Department of Education
20 to develop a plan to help those districts where education performance is
21 suffering the most; and be it

22

FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education is requested to
23 work with the appropriate legislative committees to develop a plan for
24 improving education in the state and to suggest legislative remedies; and
25 be it

26

FURTHER RESOLVED that the State Board of Education is requested to
27 report back to the legislature by February 1, 1990, concerning efforts to
28 improve school performance in the state.

AGENDA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
JUNE 6-7, 1989

TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 1989

STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION FOR ADDRESSING THE CHARGE TO THE STATE BOARD
IN HCR 33 WITH RESPECT TO SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
AND ALASKAN EDUCATION COMMUNITY

9:00 AM SBE PRESIDENT BARNEY GOTTSTEIN: Statement of purpose of the
meeting and the challenge before the Alaskan Education Community

- * Determination of the role and responsibility of the State in meeting
the needs of school districts which have demonstrated consistent
substandard student academic performance.
- * Identification of components of a plan or plans which the State Board
of Education should consider to meet these needs as mandated by
legislative directive in HCR 33.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAM DEMMERT: Overview of major Alaskan "at-risk" issues

I. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL TRENDS AND DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC ALTERNATIVES
ADOPTED IN OTHER STATES

GENE WILHOIT: Executive Director National Assn. of State Boards of
Education -- Meeting Facilitator

ROBERT RATH: Northwest Regional Education Laboratory

II. Initial presentations from invited experts/practitioners/school
district superintendents/University research experts -- problem
definition; recommendations for alternative options; identification of
specific strategies which might be considered for replication

- * University of Alaska Research Panel: Judy Kleinfeld/Secondary
Education; Dave Hagstrom/Elementary Education; Jo Kuykendahl/
Preschool-Early Childhood Education

- * Teachers/counselors/NEAlaska: Bob Waters - McLaughlin Youth
Center; Lucy Brown - Counselor East High School; Darlene Heckler -
Selawik; Marilyn Rosene - Dillingham; Claudia Douglas - Fairbanks(Jr.
High and Alternative High School

- * Superintendents/Alaska Council of School Administrators

III. Opportunity for all other interested persons to share
observations/opinions/hands-on experiences with State Board of Education
and education community

Structured dialogue/interaction between State Board and education
community -- problem identification/analysis of status quo by local
school districts/SBE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 1989

IV. Summary of Tuesday discussion/ clarification/determination of the role of the State in addressing the identified problems

V. Consideration of various alternatives for short and long range implementation

VI. Discussion of process for continuing work on the identified alternatives

- * Identify "doable" initiatives
- * Identify committed individuals and organizations to work on specific initiatives
- * Identify leaders responsible for each unit of work
- * Set specific "firm" timelines (June-December)
- * Interaction with various legislative committees engaged in similar activities
- * Coordination of all of the above

PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
John Anttonen	South West Region School District/Department of Education/Juneau
Gary Baldwin	Lower Kuskokwim School District/Bethel
Liz Borrero	Yukon-Koyukuk School District/Nenana
Lucy Brown	ASD Indian Education Counselor/Anchorage
Jean Buchanan	Anchorage School Board
Jack Chenoweth	Alaska State Board of Education/Juneau
Susan Cocklin	Kids Corporation Head Start/Anchorage
Cheryl Cole	DCRA/Anchorage
Chris Converse	Mat-Su Indian Education Program/Palmer
Rick Cross	Fairbanks School District
Rachelle Daniel	Alaska State Board of Education/Tuntutuliak
Claudia Douglas	NEA Alaska/Fairbanks
Carol Evertt	Alaska Congress of Parents and Teachers/Anchorage
Harry Gamble	Department of Education/Juneau
Don Gray	Alaska State Board of Education/Fairbanks
Rosemary Hagevig	Alaska Department of Education/Juneau
David Hagstrom	University of Alaska Fairbanks
Sandi Haynes	Kids Corporation Head Start/Anchorage
Darlene Heckler	NEA Alaska/Selawik
Cathy Herrnsteen	Alaska State Board of Education/Kodiak
Shirley Holloway	North Slope Borough School District/Barrow
Toni Jones	Department of Education/Juneau
Matthew Kenny	Alaska State Board of Education/Juneau
Sam Kito	Alaska Federations of Natives
Judy Kleinfeld	Fairbanks Rural College
Carlton Kuhns	Bethel High School - Lower Kuskowim School District
Jo Kuykendahl	University of Alaska Fairbanks
Rob Lapham	Josten Learning - Alaska/Anchorage
Janie Leask	Alaska State Board of Education/Alaska Federation of Natives/Anchorage
Dori Luht	Alaska State Board of Education/Fairbanks
Danille Madigan	Kids Corporation Head Start/Elmendorf AFB
Ann McCoy	Alaska Congress of Parents and Teachers/Anchorage
Nicki McCury	Yukon Koyukuk School District/Nenana
Edna McLean	Department of Education/Juneau
Stephen McPheters	Alaska Council of School Administration/Juneau
Sally Mead	Health and Social Services/Anchorage
Charlie Mae Moore	Department of Education/Juneau
Patricia Newan	Kids Corporation Head Start
Eileen Norbert	Nome Public Schools
Leona Okakok	North Slope Borough/Barrow
Pat Pourchot	Alaska State Senate/Juneau
Bradley Raphael	Yupit School District
Marilyn Rosene	NEA Alaska/Dillingham
Lynda Sather	Fairbanks School District
Ginny Stocker	Kids Corporation Head Start/Chugiak

Dortny Mae Thomas
Sam Towarak
Carol Waters
Sue Wilken
Mary Wolcuff
Sharon Young

Rural Cap Incorporated
Bering Strait School District/Unakaleet
Anchorage School District
Alaska State Board of Education/Fairbanks
Department of Community and Regional Affairs
Association of Alaska School Boards/Juneau

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MEMORANDUM

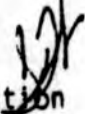
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State of Alaska
Department of Education

TO: All Superintendents

DATE: July 24, 1989

FILE NO: sbe

TELEPHONE NO: 465-2800

FROM: Sue Wilken, Chair 
State Board of Education
Education Outcomes Subcommittee

SUBJECT: Education Outcomes

In its ongoing effort to improve the status of education in Alaska, the State Board of Education identified goals and initiatives as a framework within which to achieve this end. The Board organized itself into a number of subcommittees, which would be responsible for working closely with the education community and Department of Education staff to define a systematic process for implementation of the goals. A copy of the goals and the subcommittee structure is included in your packet.

Primary responsibility for GOAL I: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, was given to the subcommittees on education outcomes and accountability. These subcommittees have been working for the past year and one-half to determine the best method for meeting this important statewide goal. The State Board, in its frequent interaction with the Legislature, has identified the need for a single comprehensive statement of education outcomes for Alaskan children, and for a method of evaluating the effectiveness of those outcomes. The Board realizes that the majority of school districts in the State have already been involved in this kind of activity, however the need exists to pull this information together in a succinct format which can then be shared with policy makers and among local districts. This information will also assist the Department in making a more realistic assessment of district progress during the mandatory monitoring cycle. The University of Alaska is also interested in acquiring this information to tailor its programs to be more responsive to district expectations.

We are introducing the first public draft of the proposed education outcomes to you at the Summer Superintendents' Conference. We are anticipating that members of your organization will be able to provide valuable suggestions in response to this draft. We welcome your recommendations and comments based upon your personal experiences at the local level. How can the State Board of Education assist local school districts in implementing a common set of educational outcomes for all Alaskan children?

OUTCOMES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Alaska State Board of Education believes that the purpose of public education in this State is to ensure that each student possesses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for responsible citizenship, economic productivity and personal fulfillment.

The State Board of Education expects that each student in Alaska will:

1. Communicate effectively.

1. Develop oral language skills through listening and speaking in order to effectively express his or her feelings, ideas and concepts.
2. Develop reading comprehension skills to respond to the written information he or she faces in daily activities. The student will also develop positive attitudes toward reading as a lifelong activity.
3. Develop awareness and appreciation of languages other than English to promote understanding and communication among people of different cultures.
4. Learn to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

2. Think logically and critically.

1. Develop thoughtful responses to new information and ideas.
2. Solve problems using different modes of inquiry and analysis.
3. Be curious about the world and himself or herself, and be open to new ideas.
4. Develop decision-making skills.

3. Discover and nurture his or her own creative talents.

1. Develop an aesthetic appreciation for the world around us.
2. Participate in multi-media, interdisciplinary thematic projects and activities.
3. Use divergent thinking and a variety of media to understand and express the rich complexity of our world - yesterday, today and tomorrow.
4. Discover and nurture creative talents of individuals and groups.

4. Master essential technological skills.

1. Communicate effectively in a global society, including use of computers, video, and audio technologies.
2. Learn information retrieval skills to gather, analyze and evaluate new information and opinions.
3. Critically evaluate information presented by the mass media.

5. Demonstrate responsible citizenship.

1. Develop the values needed to be a responsible citizen and to actively participate in a democratic society.
2. Acquire basic knowledge, skills and the self concept needed to be a global citizen who accepts diversity and respects people of other cultures.
3. Participate in extracurricular activities and/or community service projects, developing social skills in leadership, cooperation and communication.
4. Develop an understanding of his or her relationship to the environment and a commitment to the wise use of resources.

6. Develop a commitment to health and fitness.

1. Demonstrate a commitment to his or her physical and mental well-being.
2. Incorporate healthy practices as a lifelong response to social, environmental and physical changes.

7. Develop personal responsibility to sustain oneself economically.

1. Become familiar with the expectations and be prepared for the traditional and nontraditional opportunities of the local, national and international work place.
2. Develop the desire to continue to learn.
3. Acquire a healthy, realistic work ethic.
4. Develop economic and consumer skills necessary for making informed choices that enhance the quality of life.

8. Acquire a positive self-image.

1. Learn about himself or herself and develop a positive and realistic self-image.
2. Experience success in activities that develop his or her talents and skills and build his or her self-esteem.
3. Learn to form satisfying relationships with others based on respect, trust, cooperation and caring.

990ARC

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska
Department of Education

TO: Members, State Board of Education

July 25, 1989

FILE NO: SBE

TELEPHONE NO: 465-2800

FROM: Rosemary Hagevig

SUBJECT: SBE Subcommittees

The following is the list of SBE subcommittee assignments as revised to include new Board membership.

TEACHERS AND TEACHING

Don Gray, Chair
Sue Wilken
Janie Leask
Dori Luht

NON K-12 ISSUES

Cathy Herrnsteen, Chair
Jack Chenoweth

DEFINING EDUCATION OUTCOMES

Sue Wilken, Chair
Don Gray
Janie Leask
Lt. Col. Matt Kenny
Dori Luht

MT. EDGE CUMBE

Cora Sakeagak, Chair
Jack Chenoweth
Janie Leask

EDUCATION COALITION

Janie Leask, Chair
Sue Wilken
Don Gray
Cathy Herrnsteen

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Janie Leask, Chair
Jack Chenoweth
Sue Wilken
Cathy Herrnsteen

REGULATIONS

Jack Chenoweth, Chair
Cathy Herrnsteen

SBE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSION

Jack Chenoweth

AT RISK STUDENTS

SBE Committee of the Whole

ACCOUNTABILITY

Cathy Herrnsteen, Chair
Jack Chenoweth
Cora Sakeagak

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

GOAL I STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The State Board of Education will act to improve the educational experiences of students in order to assure that each student may reach his or her full potential.

Initiatives related to Goal I

- * Require all school districts to develop and define minimum outcomes and competencies of local public education efforts
- * Develop a "model" set of outcomes and competencies for use by local school districts to be used as a framework by school districts
- * Provide State leadership in identifying and disseminating successful instructional characteristics and model programs
- * Advocate a balance between classroom performance and extra-curricular activities that promote academic, athletic, social and cultural skills
- * Provide a climate for innovation and improvement of local practices including such activities as:
 - considering alternatives for the organization and structure of schools;
 - providing incentives for excellence;
 - exploring ways to raise expectations for students;
 - facilitating networking activities between school districts;
 - establishing recognition programs which reward improvement
- * In conjunction with the school districts, develop a statewide student assessment program that is designed to meet the needs of students, teachers, administrators, parents, policy makers and legislators
- * Recommend changes in resource allocation and instructional methods based on ongoing evaluation of assessment program outcomes
- * Advocate the integration of Native Alaska and other minority language and culture programs and perspectives, and the development and incorporation of relevant Pacific Rim-related course objectives, materials, and activities into the curriculum of elementary and secondary schools
- * Identify and develop innovative practices for distance learning; advocate funding for such practices

GOAL II "AT-RISK" STUDENTS

The State Board of Education will define and identify "at-risk" students and develop and support preventive and remedial strategies to assist those students to overcome the factors and circumstances that place them "at-risk".

Initiatives related to Goal II

- * Examine factors that contribute to student drop-out, compile data, and develop appropriate and effective remediation
- * Search for solutions to existing problems associated with substance abuse, teen pregnancy, adolescent suicide, and other social and health problems
- * Form collaborative relations to inform and galvanize public support, coordinate efforts, develop comprehensive programs and assure adequate funding for early childhood education
- * Work with education coalition to develop strategy for increasing the number of counselors in schools and level of service to students
- * Establish collaborative relations to enhance parenting skills as a strategy to assist in meeting needs of students
- * Promote the development of a primary language base for young children
- * Explore structural alternatives for increased learning time and improved instructional practices

GOAL III PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The State Board of Education will strive to improve the skills of teachers, school administrators, and education support personnel in their professional growth and development.

Initiatives related to Goal III

- * Restate what teachers, school administrators, and certificated support staff are expected to know and be able to do when they enter into their professional duties, and devising means by which to measure accountability
- * Examine professional certification and endorsement: consider standards to require that teachers be placed in teaching situations consistent with their areas of endorsement or preparation; consider teacher competency testing
- * Recognize excellence in professional performance
- * Recommend strategies to improve the proportion of minorities employed in professional positions in education
- * Work with the University of Alaska and other state postsecondary institutions to strengthen teacher education programs, and to include support for professional development schools
- * Examine the teacher/administrator evaluation system and recommend improvements, including parent and student evaluations
- * Examine teacher tenure as it affects quality of education and district program management
- * Provide support and resources to support continuing professional development opportunities for certificated personnel; including, especially, professional training initiatives applicable to Pacific Rim-related course objectives, materials and activities.

GOAL IV DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

The State Board of Education will encourage incentives and alternatives to promote greater efficiency in the administration of school districts.

Initiatives related to Goal IV

- * Initiate discussions with school district board members, through the Association of Alaska School Boards, to identify areas of mutual concern regarding school district administration
- * Examine the costs, in both dollars and time commitments, and benefits to be derived by certain school districts should administrative functions be consolidated
- * Identify incentives that would accomodate a change in administrative operations by school districts that would protect district identity, and make funds which are spent on district administration available for instructional programs

GOAL V SUPPORT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The State Board of Education, through collaborative efforts, will develop an action agenda to increase support for public education.

Initiatives related to Goal V

- * Continue to participate in the Alaska Coalition for Education
- * Initiate efforts to provide a greater degree of stability and predictability for allocation of state aid for education in order to improve financial planning by school districts
- * Identify effective methods for garnering public support for implementation of remedies for these concerns, and develop a plan to marshal forces to achieve political solutions to the identified concerns
- * Decide on a method to determine what the actual cost of education in the state should be; consider involvement in the area cost differential study being conducted by the Legislature when appropriate
- * Support efforts to assure equity of state aid distribution among school districts.
- * Develop cooperative programs with the University of Alaska to provide research and technical assistance for school districts

GOAL VI DEPARTMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Recognizing that many of the programs of the Department of Education can be valuable supplements to classroom initiatives, the State Board of Education will define, develop and support these programs so as to better assure that each contributes to public educational opportunities.

Initiatives related to Goals VI

- * Review, evaluate, initiate and support policy and program changes in programs assigned by law to the Department, that meet the State's commitment to public education, including:
 - expanded opportunity for placement of vocational rehabilitation clients in state and school district employment;
 - adult and postsecondary literacy efforts;
 - revised support for library operations in smaller communities;
 - revision of mission statement of the state museum, and adoption of regulations to support community-based museums and a traditional Native arts grant program
- * Align division activities with State Board of Education goals

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Testimony of the
~~Alaska~~ Department of Education
to the
Alaska State Legislature
Joint Committee on School Performance

Submitted by:

William G. Demmert, Ed.D.
Commissioner
August 4, 1989

Testimony of the
Alaska Department of Education
to the
Alaska State Legislature
Joint Committee on School Performance
August 4, 1989

I would like to thank the Joint Committee on School Performance for the opportunity to present information about the Department's work in school performance and student achievement, with a focus on ways to improve learning opportunities for Alaskan students. Especially those students that are not currently doing well, or those that are expected to have difficulty completing high school because of a variety of barriers. We know there are social, economic, cultural and physical barriers that must be overcome if they are to succeed in the formal school setting prepared to participate as successful adults in our free enterprise system, and as effective citizens in our democratic society.

I will organize this presentation into six parts. First will be a quick review of some important educational demographics; second will be a summary of student achievement in the state; third will be an overview of social problems that serve as social barriers to academic achievement; fourth will be an identification of partnerships that the Department of Education has built with other groups; fifth, a summary of Department activities; and finally a listing of recommendations that we believe are important for the State of Alaska to respond to meet the immediate and long range needs of students in need of special help.

School District Information:

- There are 463 public schools in 54 school districts in the state.
- The enrollment for the 1989-90 school year is estimated at 101,809 students in grades kindergarten through grade twelve. Public school students represent about one-fifth of the total state population.
- There are 7,735 certificated staff, with 6,511 classroom teachers. 91% of the certificated staff are White, 3% are Black, 3.2% are Alaska Native and 2.3% are representatives for other ethnic groups.
- The average pupil-teacher ratios are about 16 to one (with 17 to one in city and borough districts and 12 to one in REAAs).
- Cities and boroughs spent an average of \$5,846 per pupil in average daily membership with REAA schools spending an average of \$11,790 in FY88.
- Twenty-two of Alaska's 54 school districts have enrollments that exceed 75% Native Alaskans.
- Thirty-one districts have at least 50% Native enrollments in their classrooms.
- There are 21,654 Alaska Native students and 170 Alaska Native teachers. Alaska Native students represent 20.8% of the total student population and Alaska Native teachers represent 3.2% of the total teacher population.

Student Information:

- 69% of Alaska's students are White, 21% are Alaska Native and 10% are students from other ethnic groups.
- The drop-out rate for Alaska is projected at 30% with the Native Alaskan student population significantly higher in urban areas (Juneau at 60% and Fairbanks at 70%, over four years of high school).
- Several studies on dropout rates in Alaska's urban schools show that a majority of Alaska Native students are not faring well. A recent study of student dropout rates for Juneau-Douglas High School indicates that in a single class of entering freshmen approximately 63% of Alaska Native students would leave before graduation. A 1987 study of Alaska Native students in the North Star Borough School District centered in Fairbanks shows that 72% of entering Alaska Native freshmen dropped out or withdrew before graduation. In the Anchorage School District for 1986-87 the dropout rate of Alaska Natives over their high school careers was 29% according to the 1987 publication Profile of Student Performance, 1986-87.
- There are 172 different languages spoken in Alaska with the Native Alaskans' five basic languages comprising the largest group (Yupik speakers having the largest numbers of students entering school with other than an English language base).
- In recent years the percent of Alaska Native student population has increased from 16% to 21% (even with the high urban drop out rates).

Student Achievement:

College Bound Students

- The average Scholastic Achievement Scores (SAT) for Alaskan students was 475 in mathematics and 441 in verbal tests, with 45.7% of Alaska's high school graduates taking the test in 1987. The national averages were 476 in mathematics and 428 in verbal scores, with 45% taking the test.
- The American College Test (ACT) scores for Alaskan students averaged 18.4 with 36.6% taking the tests. The national average score was 18.8 with 31% of the nation's high school seniors taking the test in 1987.

Kindergarten Through Twelfth Grade

The Alaska Department of Education has published two annual reports entitled Basic Skills Performance of Alaska's Students. The publications reported the latest scores from national achievement tests in reading and math for each school district. The first reported the most recent three years, the second reported the most recent four years. In addition the reports included a written narrative that described each district's students, classrooms, graduation requirements and testing programs. The major conclusions of the most recent report are:

- During the past four years Alaska's students on nationally standardized basic skills tests scored consistently higher than the national averages.

- Within districts, the trends in student performance has varied. Some districts scored consistently high over the four year period, while others scored consistently low.
- Districts scored consistently low over the four year period where there were high concentrations of students whose families are poor and who live in homes where English is a second language.
- Fifteen of the fifty-five school districts had at least one average score below the 30th percentile, showing a major problem among students in those schools in certain basic skills, such as mathematics, language arts, mathematics computation and reading comprehension.
- In many districts the basic skills performance was higher in grades K-3 than any other grade groupings. Performance in grades 4-8 was relatively lower.

Social Issues:

- Based on the last U.S. census, approximately one in seven Alaskans is functionally illiterate (approximately 72,000 in English).
- It is estimated that adult basic education and literacy volunteer programs in Alaska are able to serve only 5% of those who are in need of services.

- Language and cultural deterioration among Native Alaskan groups is a growing social, cultural and educational issue.
- Growing numbers of high school graduates are not ready for entering the work force because they lack basic reading, computation, language and social skills.
- Estimate that one in 6.5 Alaskans under 18 live in families whose income is below the poverty level.
- Children in poverty are one-third less likely to graduate from high school.
- Alaska's teenage pregnancy rate is 13% higher than the national average and ninth highest in the nation.
- For every completed suicide an additional 110 attempts are serious enough to require medical attention.
- Alaska's suicide rate is among the highest in the nation, with the Alaska Native male, ages 20-24, 13 times the Alaskan average.
- In 1985, the Alaska Native Health Board suggested a link between suicidal behavior and community stress, specifically citing stress caused by rapid social change as the key.
- One in four children in Alaska has an alcoholic parent.

- The alcohol (and other substance abuse) problems in Alaska, resulting in family violence, high rates of criminal activity and social deterioration, are significant. Student populations are not exempt from this problem.
- Alaska's divorce rate is 70% compared to national average of 50% (Alaska is second highest in the nation).
- Factors influencing the educational motivation and academic achievement of students include:

breakdown in family composition,
 rising poverty among the young,
 rising teenage births,
 increasing child abuse and sexual assault,
 substance abuse, and
 suicide.

Alaska Native Information and Issues:

- The low numbers or lack of Alaska Natives as professionals such as teachers, counselors, service providers, lawyers and judges in Alaskan schools, human service agencies and courts, respectively present a challenge to educational institutions in the state.
- During the 1988-89 school year approximately 86 Alaska Native students were enrolled in teacher education programs at the University of Alaska.

- Presently the Alaska Native community numbers approximately 75,000 out of a total state population of 540,000. The largest groups are the Yupiks of southwestern Alaska and the Inupiaqs of northwestern and northern Alaska. There are eleven Athabaskan linguistic groups, four Eskimo linguistic groups, and Aleuts, Tlingits, Haidas and Tsimpshians.
- The Interim Report of the Senate Special Committee on Suicide Prevention by Senators Hensley, Binkley, Eliason, Rodey and Fahrenkamp states that during the years of 1978-1984 Alaska's suicide rate was among the four highest in the United States in every year except 1979. The rate for Alaska Natives of 43 per 100,000 was twice the overall Alaskan rate. The report cited a study which concluded that the highest rate of suicide was among Alaska Native males, aged 20-24 years, 257 per 100,000, 13 times the Alaskan average.
- In 1985, the Alaska Native Health Board, issued a study that suggested a link between suicidal behavior and community stress, citing specifically the stress caused by rapid social change.
- The Senate Special Committee on Suicide Prevention received testimonies that reinforced the tentative findings of the Alaska Native Health Board. Many Alaskans shared the view that "personal, social and cultural pressures contribute to the feelings of helplessness and despair that lead to suicide." Hensley's report also stated that different studies that speculate on the causes of suicide list rapid culture change, disfunctional families, personal and interpersonal instability caused by alcohol abuse, and the overwhelming sense of helplessness and grief that frequent and violent deaths generated.

- The Governor's Interim Commission on Children and Youth received testimony from Alaska Native youth that feelings of discrimination and the inability to identify fully with their heritage cultures play an important role in their emotional, spiritual and physical health. The report further states that testimony from Alaska Native youth "emphasized the role of cultural discrimination in the low self-esteem of many Native youth." The Commission recommended that more multicultural experiences should be provided for in schools "so students can begin to appreciate and understand their own and other cultures." The Commission hopes that incorporation of educational programs that promote awareness and appreciation of other cultures will "counter discrimination and help to curb the dropout rates of Alaska Native students in the urban schools." The report states that "Native children are a large proportion of students or social service clients, but few if any Native teachers, counselors or staff are hired to provide role and cultural models. Many Natives do not possess the degrees or certification requirements these positions require, but they offer the cultural understanding vital for Native young people to succeed in school and for non-Natives to understand Native cultures." The recommendation to alleviate this situation calls upon schools and other agencies serving Alaska Natives to hire qualified Natives as service providers. The recommendation identifies that "elders and paraprofessionals recognized by the Native community are qualified by their life experiences and should be employed where appropriate." The recommendation further calls upon the "Native corporations and the University of Alaska to work together to broaden the availability of programs that prepare Native youth for these jobs, actively encourage Native youth to participate and offer sufficient assistance to ensure that students complete these programs."

Activities that the Department of Education has engaged in include:

Early Childhood and Parenting

- **White Paper on Early Childhood and Parenting**

The Department circulated to all schools in the state a paper entitled "An Early Childhood/Parenting Strategy for Alaska" in October 1988. The paper describes the Department's vision of how early childhood and parenting training should be conducted in the state.

- **Education for Parenting**

- Two pilot projects are underway, in Dillingham and Manokotak, to teach caring and parenting skills to children in K-8 with community involvement activities in the classroom.

- **Kindergarten Network**

The Department launched the Alaska Kindergarten Network, composed of 250 primary teachers, to promote improved teaching strategies for young children. A statewide executive board has been appointed.

- **Migrant Education**

The Department of Education's migrant education program is able to provide increased support in early childhood education for schools because new federal regulations for 1989 have extended the age of

migrant children to be served from 5-17 years old to 3-21 years old. in the Southwest Region School District, for example, FY90 migrant education funding will be used to supplement services to preschool migrant students. Last year the District used an \$18,000 migrant education discretionary grant through the Department to upgrade preschool instructor training, revise early childhood curriculum to assure that it is culturally appropriate, and increase parental involvement in early childhood development.

- Vocational Education Parenting Kit
- The Office of Adult and Basic Education developed and is piloting a series of four traveling parenting kits to teach high school students and adults about child development and good parenting. Each kit is a self-contained instructional unit that schools and communities can borrow to teach about "Choosing Parenting," "Pregnancy and Child Birth," "Caring for Infants," and related special topics. Each kit contains charts and posters, teacher guides, posters, video and audio tapes and other teaching materials. Teachers who worked with the kits in Metlakatla, Quinhagak, Sheldon Point and Shishmaref are helping to revise them in light of how well they worked in classrooms and literacy programs.

Restructuring Primary Schools, K-4:

White Paper on Restructuring Primary Schools, K-4

- The Department of Education is in the process of writing a white paper setting forth the Department's position about why primary schools need to

restructure and how they can go about it. The paper should be done later this fall.

Summer Academy on Restructuring Primary Schools

- Seven schools sent teams (each consisting of a superintendent or designee, principal, two teachers, a parent and a board member) to the Department of Education's Anchorage Instructional Improvement Academy for a week of planning how to restructure their elementary schools. Well known early childhood educators and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory assisted the Department in this week long event.

Partnerships that have been developed over the past two years include:

Alaska Education Consortium

- The State Board of Education has made considerable progress with its consortium of education organizations in an attempt to influence Legislators on important education issues.

Skagway Student-Operated Salmon Hatchery

- Through federal Carl Perkins Vocational Education funds, the Office of Adult and Vocational Education supported 15 hatchery and marine technology programs in Alaska schools. The Pullen Creek Hatchery operated by the Skagway School was named 1989 Alaska State Vocational Education Program of

the Year. The year-round facility is a fully-functioning hatchery licensed by the Department of Fish and Game and developed in close cooperation with the community.

Juneau Youth Employment Project

- The Department and City and Borough of Juneau will cooperate to put students to work at jobs this summer clearing out fish spawning streams in the Juneau area.

The Alaska Resource Kit

- The minerals project continued in association with the industry-supported and funded Alaska Mineral and Energy Resource and Education Fund (AMEREF). A veteran Alaska geology teacher was hired through AMEREF funds to organize training for teachers statewide in using the kits and developing activities that take advantage of local resources and resource people in the community.

Special Education Parent Training

- The Department sponsored a training session for parents of children with handicaps. This innovative conference attracted over 450 parents and educators.

BLM-Native Forest Service

- The Department has been working with the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska to promote the Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS). The federal program allows high achieving rural high school students to

work for 8 to 10 weeks in the summer, earning school credit and job experience with federal resource management agencies. The Department acts as a liaison between the federal agency and the schools and is working to increase ways in which schools can make use of the technical expertise available through these agencies for curriculum development and use of human resources.

Library's Reading to Children Program

- The State Library administered public library assistance grants to more than 90 libraries in the state. The grants helped to fund such activities as a year-long reading program in Haines, literacy projects in several villages, continuing education for rural library aides, and a Celebrity Story Time in Juneau in which public figures read stories to young children in celebration of the Year of the Young Reader and the opening of the new library facility.

International Circumpolar Ministers Group

- Last year the Ministers of Education and Commissioners of Education from across the Circumpolar North met in Juneau to continue activities aimed at improving education for indigenous peoples. The group met in Whitehorse this year.

Alaska-Hokkaido Partnership

- The Department of Education participated in the State of Alaska's meeting with officials from Hokkaido, Japan, the island where all but two of

Alaska's 79 sister schools are located, to advance educational and economic cooperative efforts with communities located on Hokkaido.

QEM/MIT Project

- The Quality of Education for Minorities task force held public hearings jointly with the Senate Special Committee on School Performance. This will be instrumental in influencing final recommendations by the national commission.

Department of Education/University Cooperation:

Commissioner/University Deans Committee

- A Commissioner of Education/University School of Education Deans Committee has been meeting regularly to improve the quality of teacher education programs in public and private universities. The deans have committed to increasing their commitment to education research projects. The group is exploring a joint grant to the federal government, through the Fund for the Improvement of Schools and Teaching, to improve training for teachers of at-risk students and to encourage greater numbers of minorities to enter the teaching profession and other projects.

Summer Teacher Academies

- The Department and University of Alaska have cooperated for a number of years on conducting the very popular summer teaching institutes, now expanded to all University of Alaska campuses and Sheldon Jackson College.

Native Language Policy

- The Department of Education, with assistance from the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, have developed a recommendation for state policy on the role of the school in the promotion, use and enrichment of Alaska Native culture, literature and languages in the schools.

Recommendations:

The Sixteenth Alaska Legislature created the Joint Committee on School Performance to explore steps that could be taken to bring about higher levels of student achievement in basic skills and other areas, with the specific task of identifying recommendations for priority legislative action during the second session of that legislature.

I believe the challenge of providing young children with a learning base and the motivation from which to develop the skills important to success as adults is one of the most important responsibilities of parents, the schools, the state and the nation.

I commend the Sixteenth Alaska Legislature and the members of the Joint Committee on School Performance for their interest in and commitment to improving schools in Alaska to ensure greater numbers of students completing their education and being better prepared for their adult roles.

The Department of Education has spent considerable time reviewing the professional research literature and talking with educators, parents, school board members, legislators and business leaders to discover the best ways to improve academic achievement among students, especially those students not currently succeeding in schools. In the lexicon of educators, these students are commonly referred to as high risk or at-risk students: at risk of not completing high school and at risk of not developing the skills and attitudes necessary to succeed in today's increasingly technological world.

The Department has come to the conclusion that language development is the key to academic achievement. Without a strong language base, a student lacks the ingredient essential to develop analytic and conceptual skills. Without analytic and conceptual skills a youngster is destined to academic failure. This is true for all students. Furthermore, the Department believes the root cause of school failure for many of Alaska's Native young, as well as other indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world, is that school language arts programs do not adequately meet the needs of students whose primary language is other than standard English.

A youngster's language ability is totally or largely determined by the age of three. For this reason, it has been proven that parents and family members, early childhood experiences, and early environment play an important role in developing a youngster's language ability. Youngsters from single teenage parent homes; youngsters that have alcoholic parents; youngsters that do not have direct access to stimulating learning environments; youngsters that are not exposed to a challenging language environment will not stand as good a chance of developing the language skills necessary for success in school as those students that have the advantages of a home or program that provides a stimulating learning environment.

The two highest priorities for language development must include parenting and early childhood educational opportunities for youngsters that will not have opportunities to develop language early; and primary school programs (kindergarten through grade four) that focus on developing the language base that has been established. These programs must be culturally and developmentally appropriate.

A second and critical priority for improving academic achievement among those students that currently fail is to provide a support base that allows intervention of social barriers that limit a student's opportunity to succeed in school. This means partnerships between schools and social service agencies, community groups (i.e., churches, Native organizations, other social organizations). It may mean school counselors that serve as coordinators between social service agencies and schools; it may mean safe houses for young children and youth; it may mean new programs that deal with one of the worst epidemics in Alaska, fetal alcohol syndrome.

A third priority is promoting the development and expansion of partnerships between schools, business and industry, Native organizations, government, and other employers. Partnerships that provide students with a sense of relationship between what one learns in school and what is required in the real world; a sense of responsibility, a sense of contributing to society, a sense of accomplishment, an opportunity to understand what it is to earn an income.

A fourth priority, important to success of schools and schooling, is an improvement in teachers and teaching. Teacher training institutions must be provided opportunities to develop teacher training programs that attract, place and hold the good teachers. Some retraining has to be done, especially

for those programs that focus on language development, early childhood education, and partnerships between schools and employers. Business and industry spend a significant amount of money to upgrade its work force and keep up with innovations. Education, as a major employer spends very little, and it is mostly through individual and personal interest pursuits (masters and doctoral programs or summer school to meet recency requirements).

Closely tied to teachers and teaching is the need to increase the numbers of Alaska Native teachers and school administrators in the state.

A fifth and equally important recommendation for improving schools and student performance is to build a strong Alaska educational research. Research tells us whether what we are doing is working; research gives us evidence for new direction; research helps improve what we now do. We need Alaska based research and an opportunity to build a research capacity and base in Alaska.

Legislation that allows development in each of the above mentioned recommendations could provide incentives within the educational institutions to develop programs that meet particular needs and priorities important to specific communities.

Thank you!

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