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Rethinking and Restructuring  
Alaska's Primary Schools:  
Kindergarten through Fourth Grades

Final Draft

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Alaska Commissioner of Education

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# Rethinking and Restructuring Alaska's Primary Schools: Kindergarten through Fourth Grades

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A serious nationwide debate to determine how our youngest school children can best be taught is under way.

At stake is the very health of our country's economic and political future. Will America and Alaska enter the 21st Century economically competitive? Will emerging generations have the stuff it takes to carry them into the next century with the ability to maintain the affluence that most of their parents now take for granted? Will our society be able to offer opportunities to growing numbers and percentages of American minority populations so they can break an oppressive cycle of poverty to become meaningful contributors to society?

Since the 1983 report A Nation at Risk was published, a massive school improvement effort has been underway. Most state and local efforts have been aimed at increasing standards in our nation's secondary schools. Despite these efforts serious problems persist in our nation's schools. A recent survey sponsored by Allstate Insurance Company and Fortune Magazine found that 62 percent of executives polled believe they are now encumbered by public education (National School Public Relations Association, 1989). Nearly 70 percent of service-oriented companies feel hindered by schools. Forty-eight percent said it is difficult to hire new employees with good basic skills and 46 percent said that this lack of skills reduces productivity. Seventy-seven percent rated public schools as fair or poor. And over the next 10 years, 51 percent said they expect hiring qualified employees will become more difficult.

In Alaska, about 30 percent of entering high school freshmen do not graduate. The dropout rate is estimated to be double the rate in urban schools for Alaska Natives as it is in rural schools. (Hocker, 1988; Baker-Benally, 1987). Although the dropout rate is not as low in rural areas (Kleinfeld, 1985), scores on National achievement tests are very low, in some cases among the lowest in the nation. (Alaska Department of Education, 1988 and 1989).

What does all this have to do with Alaska's elementary schools, particularly the youngest children in kindergarten through grade four? There is a growing concern that it may be too late when we try to repair the fundamental problems that present barriers to learning while students are in high school or even in junior high school. So instead of intervention and remediation, why not try prevention? Anne Dillman, a member of the New Jersey State Board of Education, captured this concept in a recent cover article on how young children learn in Newsweek magazine: "When the product doesn't come out right, you try to fix it at the end. But we really have to start at the beginning."

Ernest Boyer of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, in the same article, said: "We've made remarkable breakthroughs in understanding the development of children, the development of learning and the climate that enhances that. What we know in theory and what we're doing in the classroom are very different."

The knowledge that Boyer was pointing to has been well summarized and promoted by a number of interest groups, most notably the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The theory that Boyer refers to is what NAEYC calls "developmentally appropriate" curriculum and instructional methods for children between 5 and 8 years old. What Boyer identifies as "very different" activities are what NAEYC and other organizations now term "inappropriate practices." (NAEYC; National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education, 1987).

The National Association of State Boards of Education calls for sweeping reform of the education of children ages 4 through 8. (Right from the Start, 1988). The NASBE report, developed by a task force of influential Americans, including Alaska's First Lady Michael Cowper, boldly recommended that early childhood units be established in elementary schools to provide a new methods of working with children ages 4-8 and a central point to improve services for preschool children and their parents. The "early childhood units" that NASBE recommends represent no less than a fundamental restructuring of the system by which our nation's schools deliver educational programs to our youngest students. Specifically, the report recommends:

- A curriculum and classroom environment that responds to learning patterns of children within a given age range, to individual differences among children, and to cultural and linguistic diversity among children.
- A program that actively involves and supports parents as partners in development of their children.
- A program that responds to the comprehensive needs of children for health, nutrition, child care, social and emotional support, and language development as well as cognitive development.
- A program that draws on the resources and expertise of all agencies and informal networks in the community to provide continuity for children in their daily schedules and as they grow and develop.

It is especially important that the restructured primary school build upon the many successes of proven early childhood and parenting programs in Alaska and around the country, particularly Head Start programs. It is equally important that the eventual successes revealed over time in the newly restructured primary schools be applied to the higher grades, i.e., fifth grade and beyond.

The design of the effective early childhood and parenting program was described in 1988 when the Alaska Department of Education called for a "broad based Alaska strategy to address early childhood and parenting issues in as comprehensive manner as possible." (Demmert, 1988).

It is hoped that this paper puts forth an argument supporting the urgent need to restructure Alaska's primary schools. A secondary purpose is to explain the elements that are part of the restructured primary school's learning program. A third purpose is to provide several examples or models of effective primary schools.

## Elements of a Strong Early Childhood Program

**LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**--The development of a solid language base at an early age is the single most important element for academic achievement and cognitive development. If children do not gain a suitable language base from which to learn a variety of skills and develop essential intelligences they will fail. They will fail in school, they will fail as workers, they will fail to reach their full potential socially, culturally, emotionally, and intellectually. A solid language base, so important in early life, is also the essential ingredient for a student's success in school, and during life after school, whether college, vocational-technical school or work.

Several recent findings support the development of a strong language base:

- Low scores of students taking nationally normed tests in English when it is not their first language and they have not developed the second language skills to demonstrate their knowledge or present an understanding of the subject. (Alaska Department of Education 1988 and 1989).
- Examples of success in circumpolar countries where schools use Native languages as a base for learning the dominant language of their country and for learning other languages. (Keskitalo, 1986; Hakuta, 1986).
- Recent research findings concerning the ease with which students are able to learn more than one language very early in life, and the extent to which they are able to keep the languages separate (Cummins, February 1986).
- A gradual recognition that an understanding of language and language usage is critical to learning and that a language base must be established early in life. (Cummins, 1986). In fact, research shows that there is a critical period between ages two and four when a child's special intelligence becomes active for the single purpose of learning language (Chomsky, 1966).

**HOME LANGUAGE**--The importance of using one's home language as the initial language of instruction is becoming more clearly understood. Bilingualism is no longer recognized as a valid cause of minority students' academic failures. It is, rather, the failure to provide students the opportunity to develop conceptual and analytic thought skills in the home language as a base for learning a second language that contributes to academic difficulties. (Cummins, 1986). Again, the complementing influences of the home and school on language and cultural transmission are recognized as very important to intellectual development. It is crucial, therefore, for the school to be very sensitive of the student's home situation. If the student's home language is other than English, then it is appropriate for the school to provide instruction in the home language, introduce English as a second language and continue to develop the student's abilities in both languages. (Cavazos, 1989). If English is not used in the home, it is better to use the first language in school than a poor quality English. Children who have neither a quality first or second language (English) have a language development deficit and may always be behind in school. (Saville-Troike, 1973).

An effectively restructured primary school, whose students are well grounded in the home language and the second language (English), will exhibit a school climate conducive to success in learning, largely due to the acceptance by teachers of the first language of the students and the culture. It must be noted that widespread school failure does not occur in minority groups that are positively oriented towards both their own and the dominant culture, that do not perceive themselves as inferior to the dominant group and that are not alienated from their own cultural values. (Fuererstein, 1979). More bluntly, Fuererstein (1979) attributes academic failure to the disruption of intergenerational transmission processes caused by the alienation of a group from its own culture.

**WHOLE LANGUAGE**--A "whole language" approach to learning language is based on the premise that children learn language by hearing it, using it, writing it, thinking it and reading it. There is no isolation of words when using language in a natural way. (Hayward, 1988). In addition, whole language integrates oral and written language, and it integrates development in both with learning across the curriculum. (Goodman, 1986).

Where a whole language approach attempts to integrate language instruction, the traditional way schools teach language is to focus on the separate parts of reading, a departure from the natural way children use language. A traditional approach will often present separate classes or lessons 'in reading, in writing, or in separation of skills from content where individual lessons in uses of comma or noun-verb agreement were taught in and for themselves.'" (Buckley, 1989). Continues Buckley:

Whole language learning also refers to the student as a whole, head and heart, feelings and thinking, personal experiences and public. The new curriculum centers on the learner whose prior experiences must be brought to bear on the new information. Only by connecting prior knowledge with the new knowledge can learning happen. The student as a whole human being learns developmentally, through process. If learning is considered a process, then the student begins with 'first draft' thinking and language. Usually a student 'first draft' is personal, ideographic, and emotional. Teachers build on this and advance the student to a more public, substantiated, reasoned thinking and language.

A key to whole language instruction is to build allies of parents to help in their children's attempts at becoming literate. (Fields, 1988). If teachers effectively work with parents to help them understand the whole language approach, "These informed parents will be able to teach children to read as well as they taught them to talk," says Fields.

Taking this strategy a step farther, parents who cannot read or read well also can be useful partners in helping their children learn to read. This can be accomplished though story telling. But the restructured primary school must establish literacy programs aimed at training parents to become more complete and more effective partners in helping their children read.

**DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS**--According to National Association for the Education of Young Children, the concept of developmental appropriateness has two dimensions, age and individuality.

**Age appropriateness.** Human development research indicates that there are universal, predictable milestones of growth and change that occur in children during the first nine years of life. These predictable changes occur in all domains of development--physical, emotional, social and cognitive. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by the program provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.

**Individual appropriateness.** Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style and family background. Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences. Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas and people. When these experiences match the child's developing abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding, learning will take place.

Many schools still do not offer a developmentally appropriate program for young children. Instead many schools continue to deliver education through a rigid lecture style, an educational setting more familiar to younger children's older siblings in junior high and high school (an approach with dubious value at any grade level). Young children are spending countless hours silently filling in notebook worksheets with information learned by rote. Their days are chopped up into 55-minute blocks with subjects taught in isolation from one another. Students' individual learning styles are ignored. So are their cultural and ethnic differences. Their teachers are being evaluated and rewarded if their young students score well on nationally standardized tests that measure an extremely limited base of knowledge and set of skills. In addition these tests are being used to reward administrators, affect the allocation of resources to school districts and result in changes to the curriculum. (Bredekamp & Shepard, 1989). (Meisels, S.J., in press).

Many of these same teachers have not been trained in the latest research-based theory and practice proven effective for teaching young children.

NAEYC, in a publication entitled Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8 (1988), describes appropriate practices for primary grade (K-4) children. Since these important practices represent the best and most widely accepted thinking on the subject today, it is tempting to quote the developmentally appropriate practices in their entirety. However, for the sake of brevity and flow, we will instead summarize the practices here and list all the practices as published by NAEYC in Appendix A of this paper. Appendix B will list what NAEYC believes are inappropriate practices.

NAEYC has developed appropriate practices for a number of major areas. A summary follows:

**CURRICULUM GOALS**--which are designed to develop children's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas, including physical, social, emotional and intellectual, and to help the child learn how to build a base for lifelong learning, improve self esteem, and develop a positive feelings toward learning. Further each child is viewed as a unique individual and as such educators need to develop curriculum and instruction practices that respond to individual differences. Different levels of ability, development and learning styles are expected, accepted and used to design curriculum.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES**--Curriculum is integrated so that children's learning in all traditional subject areas occurs primarily through projects and learning centers that teachers plan and that reflect children's interests and suggestions. The curriculum is integrated so that learning occurs primarily through projects, learning centers and playful activities that reflect the expressed interests of children. Teachers use planning time to prepare an environment to provide opportunities for children to learn through active involvement among themselves, with adults, older children serving as tutors and with materials. In addition, children should also learn in small groups working and playing cooperatively. Finally learning materials and activities need to be concrete, real and relevant to children's lives.

**INTEGRATED CURRICULUM**--Teachers provide generous amounts of time and a variety of interesting activities for children to develop language, writing, spelling and reading ability such as looking through, reading, or being read high quality children's literature. Goals are established in math, social studies, science, health and safety, art, music movement and dance with children's interests considered and learning occurring through group projects, spontaneous play, research, experimenting, exploring, and through other creative and meaningful activities and strategies.

**GUIDANCE OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**--Teachers promote prosocial behavior, perseverance, industry and independence, encourage individual choice, and provide many opportunities for developing social skills. Teachers at all times facilitate the development of social skills as part of the curriculum.

**PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONS**--Teachers not only view parents as partners in the educational process, but visit with parents at school and at the home of the parent. Teachers are respectful of cultural and family differences.

**EVALUATION**--Children's progress is assessed through observation and recording at regular intervals. Results are used to improve and individualize instruction. No letter or number grades are given during the primary years.

Other organizations, most recently the National Association of State Boards of Education, strongly endorse the NAEYC practices. "We agree with the developmentally appropriate curriculum approach defined by (NAEYC)," NASBE states in its book Eight from the Start (1988).

NASBE suggests the goals developed for primary schools should:

- provide children with a wide range of experiences
- attend to all key aspects of child development
- support effective and appropriate teaching and classroom environments. (Right from the Start, 1988).

**CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES**--Twenty-two of Alaska's 55 school districts each have enrollments that exceed 75 percent Alaska Natives. Nine additional districts have at least 50 percent Natives enrolled in their classrooms and seven more have at least one-quarter of their student body composed of Alaska Natives. It is, however, still difficult to find meaningful and effective culturally appropriate developmental activities for Native children. Only 3.2 percent of Alaska's 6,500 teachers are Natives, indicating a dearth of cultural role models. This is caused in part by a formal system of education that has rejected the need for:

- accommodating and incorporating traditional systems of minority communities and
- reflecting the traditional community's knowledge base and unique perspective on the world.

It is critical for the restructured primary school to encourage appropriate cultural role models, just as it is critical for such schools to learn about and integrate cultural differences into programs reflective of the community the school serves. Languages, learning styles peculiar to a given community and use of family and community members to impart content and skills in ways that have worked for centuries are hallmarks of the effectively restructured school. The school also must recognize and respect cultural (fixed customs), values and traditions. This can be accomplished, in part, in two ways: training and hiring more Native teachers and teacher aides in the classroom; and by teaching these skills to teachers and teacher aides so that they are knowledgeable about their students' cultural history, cultural arts (music, dance, visual arts, theater), and traditional ways of learning science, medicine, politics, and social organization and structure. For example, Natives on the North Slope can estimate the distance over a pack trail to open water by determining the distance from shore of dark clouds on the horizon. This important skill requires a sophisticated knowledge of vector triangles.

**COMMUNITY-BASED PRIMARY SCHOOLS**--Research has long shown the benefits of meaningful parent involvement. In fact it has become almost axiomatic that wherever there is a strong educational program there will be a correspondingly strong planned systematic program of parent involvement in the child's education, no matter the level of the child's schooling. (National School Public Relations Association, 1986). More recently, the National Association of State Boards of Education and the National Association for the Education of Young Children have reconfirmed this notion by recommending that primary schools develop parent partnerships. (Right from the Start, 1988). (NAEYC, 1988).

Stanford Research Institute published research in 1973 which showed the corresponding residual effects of involvement between parent and student in the educational process (Journal of Educational Public Relations, 1988). The chart in Appendix C shows how parent involvement, a parent's positive self-image about his or her own competence to participate in the child's education, and how the child's perception that the parent's education is important all lead to the student's improved performance in school and

In addition, The National Association of State Boards of Education also recommended that primary schools develop partnerships with other early childhood programs and community agencies to help improve the quality of parent involvement and to build and improve services for young children and their families. (Right from the Start, 1988)

It is important that these partnerships be cultivated. Universities can offer training to teachers and teacher aides; they can help provide research. Local businesses, agencies, and Native corporations can provide additional expertise.

**SMALLER CLASS SIZE**--Class size is an important consideration for effective primary programs. NASBE's Right from the Start recommends that local school officials:

Review the need for additional resources necessary to support developmentally appropriate early childhood programs, e.g., limiting the group size (for 3 and 4 year olds, no more than 20 children with 2 adults, for 5-8 year olds, no more than 25 children with 2 adults or 15-18 children with one teacher.)

The argument for smaller class size is born out in the research of Gene Glass and Mary Lee Smith (1979). Their meta-analysis of recent class size research shows that significant gains in student achievement are not achieved until a class size of 15 students to one teacher is reached. This 15:1 pupil to teacher ratio has been supported by the National Education Association since 1969. (Tomlinson, 1988).

It must be pointed out that by reducing class size in Alaska's kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms will bear a large financial increase, not only in the additional numbers of teachers needed to attain the lower class size, but also to build new school buildings to house the added classrooms. Knowing this, the Department of Education believes that attaining smaller class sizes is so important in the early grades that Alaska's policy makers need to seriously consider this issue.

## The First Partnership

The first partnership needed for primary schools that aim to restructure is a broad based coalition among the local community to develop a process and a plan for restructuring its primary school or schools based upon local desires. Public school officials should convene the forum. The superintendent, principal or school board president should invite teachers and other educators, school board members, parents, early childhood professionals, language professionals and community leaders. The topic of the forum is to develop a consensus on how to effectively restructure K-4 primary schools. The immediate goal of the forum is to develop a plan for doing so.

## Program Models

A number of models for restructuring primary schools are being developed across Alaska. Seven school districts sent teams to a week long K-4 restructuring conference in June 1989.

The teams consisted of the school's principal or superintendent, teachers, school board members, and community members, usually a member of the local Congress of Parents and Teachers (commonly known as the PTA). Nine nationally known experts with experience in restructuring primary schools led the teams over the five day period to build for each school in attendance an elementary school restructuring plan. These restructuring efforts should provide Alaska with a wealth of knowledge about restructuring schools in a variety of Alaska settings, from one of Alaska's largest urban school districts to schools in small remote, Native communities. Plans should be completed by the beginning of the 1989-90 school year, and will be available from the school and the Department of Education.

The two models outlined below offer basic components for Alaska's primary schools:

1. Qargi Model (or, translated from the Inupiaq, the Community Centered Model)

The key element of this model focuses on the cooperation of the community, the public school and the university:

- Elders, middle school and high school students from the community interact with kindergarten through fourth grade students to teach the Inupiaq language and culture.
- Adults learn effective parenting techniques by observing and participating in classroom activities for preschool children.
- The University of Alaska has observed and documented the interactions between parents and preschool to develop a research base on effective parenting skill training.

2. The School-Centered Learning Activity Model

Features of this model:

- In-school group activity
  - \* Organized and directed play activity
  - \* Storytelling; listening
  - \* Reading
  - \* Hands-on activity (like playing with geometric blocks)
  - \* Socialization (aimed at developing inter-personal and intrapersonal skills)
  - \* Field trips
- Individual and small group activity
  - \* Exploration opportunities
  - \* Computers
  - \* Team projects
  - \* Free play

- Family and Community Support Activity

- \* Interaction with elders
- \* Interaction with community adults
- \* Parent participation in extracurricular activities
- \* Planned family activity aimed at academic and physical development

## Next Steps

Earlier in this paper, the hope was expressed that this paper puts forth an argument supporting the urgent need to restructure Alaska's primary schools. It was also stated that a secondary purpose is to explain the elements that are part of the restructured primary school's program, as was a third purpose to provide several examples or models of effective primary schools. It is hoped that these purposes have been accomplished.

The Department of Education pledges itself to continue its efforts to expand the awareness for the urgent need to restructure Alaska's primary schools, and to spur on restructuring activities whenever the opportunities arise, whether at the state level, or, preferably, at the local school level.

**DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES**--The following is a list of activities at minimum that readers can expect from the Department of Education on an ongoing basis:

- Nurture the development of the seven or eight model primary school restructuring projects that will begin this summer.
- Attempt to develop and expand a school restructuring network to include Alaska educators who are involved in school restructuring efforts.
- Promote school restructuring in formal and informal public appearances before groups and conferences.
- Disseminate written materials about school restructuring projects.
- Invite schools undertaking restructuring projects to share their ideas with the Commissioner of Education and his staff.
- Recruit educators and parents as agents of change for the expressed purpose of expanding the school restructuring effort.

## Appendix A

### Appropriate Education in the Primary Grades The National Association for the Education of Young Children

#### Appropriate Practices for Curriculum Goals:

Curriculum is designed to develop children's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas--physical, social, emotional, and intellectual--and to help children learn how to learn, to establish a foundation for lifelong learning.

Curriculum and instruction are designed to develop children's self-esteem, sense of competence, and positive feelings toward learning.

Each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth. Curriculum and instruction are responsive to individual differences in ability and interests. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design curriculum. Children are allowed to move at their own pace in acquiring important skills including those of writing, reading, spelling, math, social studies, science, art, music, health, and physical activity. For example, it is accepted that not every child will learn how to read at age 6, most will learn to read by 7, and some will need intensive exposure to appropriate literacy experiences to learn to read by age 8 or 9.

#### Appropriate Practices for Teaching Strategies:

The curriculum is integrated so that children's learning in all traditional subject areas occurs primarily through projects and learning centers that teachers plan and that reflect children's interests and suggestions. Teachers guide children's involvement in projects and enrich the learning experience by extending children's ideas, responding to their questions, engaging them in conversation, and challenging their thinking.

The curriculum is integrated so that learning occurs primarily through projects, learning centers, and playful activities that reflect current interests of children. For example, a social studies project such as building and operating a store, or a science project such as furnishing and caring for an aquarium, provides focused opportunities for children to plan, dictate, and/or write their plans (using invented and teacher-taught spelling), to draw and write about their activity, to discuss what they are doing, to read nonfiction books for needed information, to work cooperatively with other children, to learn facts in a meaningful context, and to enjoy learning. Skills are taught as needed to accomplish projects.

Teachers use much of their planning time to prepare the environment so children can learn through active involvement with each other, with adults and older children serving as informal tutors, and with materials. Many learning centers are available for children to choose from. Many centers include opportunities for writing and reading: for example, a tempting library area for browsing through books, reading silently, or sharing a book with a friend; a listening station; and places to practice writing stories and play math or language games. Teachers encourage children to evaluate their own work and to determine where improvement is needed, and assist children in figuring out for themselves how to improve their work. Some work is corrected in small groups where children take turns giving feedback to one another and correcting their own papers. Errors are viewed as a natural and necessary part of learning. Teachers analyze children's errors and use the information obtained to plan curriculum and instruction.

Individual children or small groups are expected to work and play cooperatively or alone in learning centers and on projects they usually select themselves or are guided to by the teacher. Activity centers are changed frequently so children have new things to do. Teachers and children together select and develop projects. Frequent outings and visits from resource people are planned. Peer tutoring as well as learning from others through conversation while at work or play occurs daily.

Learning materials and activities are concrete, real, and relevant to children's lives. Objects children can manipulate and experiment with such as blocks, cards, games, and scientific equipment are readily accessible. Tables are used for children to work alone or in small groups. A variety of work places and spaces is provided and flexibly used.

#### Appropriate Practices for Integrated Curriculum:

The goals of the language and literacy program are for children to expand their ability to communicate verbally and through reading and writing, and to enjoy these activities. Technical skills or subskills are taught as needed to accomplish the larger goals, not as the goal itself. Teachers provide generous amounts of time and a variety of interesting activities for children to develop language, writing, spelling and reading ability such as looking through, reading, or being read high quality children's literature and nonfiction for pleasure and information; drawing, dictating, and writing about their activities or fantasies; planning and implementing projects that involve research at suitable levels of difficulty; creating teacher-made or child-written lists of steps to follow to accomplish a project; discussing what they read; preparing a weekly class newspaper; interviewing various people to obtain information for projects; making books of various kinds (riddle books, what-if books, books about pets); listening to recordings or viewing high quality films of children's books; being read at least one high quality book or part of a book each day by adults or older children; using the school library and the library area of the classroom regularly.

Some children read aloud daily to the teacher, another child, or a small group of children, while others do so weekly. Subskills such as learning letters, phonics, and word recognition are taught as needed to individual children and small groups through enjoyable games and activities. Teachers use the teacher's edition of the basal reader series as a guide to plan projects and hands-on activities relevant to what is read and to structure learning situations. Teachers accept children's invented spelling with minimal reliance on teacher-prescribed spelling lists. Teachers also teach literacy as the need arises when working on science, social studies, and other content areas.

The goal of the math program is to enable children to use math through exploration, discovery, and solving meaningful problems. Math activities are integrated with other relevant projects, such as science and social studies. Math skills are acquired through spontaneous play, projects, and situations of daily living. Teachers use the teacher's edition of the math textbook as a guide to structure learning situations and to stimulate ideas about interesting math projects. Many math manipulatives are provided and used. Interesting board and card games, paper-and-pencil and other kinds of games are used daily. Noncompetitive, impromptu oral "math stumper," and number games are played for practice.

Social studies themes are identified as the focus of work for extended periods of time. Social studies concepts are learned through a variety of projects and playful activities involving independent research in library books; excursions and interviewing visitors; discussions; relevant use of language, writing, spelling (invented and teacher-taught), and reading skills; and opportunities to develop social skills such as planning, sharing, taking turns, and working in committees. The classroom is treated as a laboratory of social relations, and children explore values, learn rules of social living, and respect for individual differences through experience. Relevant art, music, dance, and games are incorporated in social studies.

Discovery science is a major part of the curriculum, building on children's natural interest in the world. Science projects are experimental and exploratory and encourage active involvement of every child. The science program takes advantage of natural phenomena such as the outdoors, and the classroom includes many plants and pets for which children provide care daily. Through science projects and field trips, children learn to plan, dictate, and/or write their plans; to apply thinking skills such as hypothesizing, observing, experimenting, and verifying; and many science facts related to their own experience.

A variety of health and safety projects (such as nutrition, dental health, handwashing) are designed to help children learn many personalized facts about health and safety; to integrate their learning into their daily habits; to plan, dictate, and/or write their plans; to draw and write about these activities; to read silently and aloud; and to enjoy learning because it is related to their lives.

Art, music, movement, dance and opportunities for other physical activity are integrated throughout each day as relevant to the curriculum and as needed for children to express themselves aesthetically and physically, and to express ideas and feelings.

Specialists work with classroom teachers and children. Children explore and experiment with various art media and forms of music.

Multicultural and nonsexist activities and materials are provided to enhance individual children's self-esteem and to enrich the lives of all children with respectful acceptance and appreciation of differences and similarities.

Outdoor activity is planned daily so children can develop large muscle skills, learn about outdoor environments, and express themselves freely.

#### **Appropriate Practices for Guidance of Social-Emotional Development:**

Teachers promote prosocial behavior, perseverance, industry, and independence by providing many stimulating, motivating activities; encouraging individual choices; allowing as much time as needed for children to complete work; and ensuring moments of private time alone with the teacher or with a close friend.

Children have many opportunities daily to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking with the person involved to solve interpersonal problems. Teachers facilitate the development of social skills at all times, as part of the curriculum.

Teachers promote the development of children's consciences and self-control through positive guidance techniques, including setting clear limits in a positive manner; involving children in establishing rules for social living and in problem solving about misbehavior; redirecting children to an acceptable activity; conferencing with an individual child who is having problems or with children and their parents. Teachers maintain their perspective about misbehavior, recognizing that every infraction does not warrant attention and identifying those that can be used as learning opportunities.

#### **Appropriate Practices for Parent-Teacher Relations:**

Teachers view parents as partners in the educational process. Teachers have time for periodic conferences with each child's parents. Parents' visits to school are welcomed at all times, and home visits by teachers are encouraged. Teachers listen to parents, seek to understand their goals for their children, and are respectful of cultural and family differences.

#### **Appropriate Practices for Evaluation:**

No letter or number grades are given during the primary years. Grades are considered inadequate reflections of children's ongoing learning.

Each child's progress is assessed primarily through observation and recording at regular intervals. Results are used to improve and individualize instruction. No letter or number grades are given. Children are helped to understand and correct their errors.

## Appendix B

### Inappropriate Education in the Primary Grades The National Association for the Education of Young Children

#### Inappropriate Practices for Curriculum Goals

The curriculum is narrowly focused on the intellectual domain with intellectual development narrowly defined as acquisition of discrete, technical academic skills, without recognition that all areas of children's development are interrelated.

Children's worth is measured by how well they conform to group expectations, such as their ability to read at grade level, and their performance on standardized tests.

Children are evaluated against a standardized group norm. All are expected to achieve the same narrowly defined, easily measured academic skills by the same predetermined time schedule typically determined by chronological age and grade level expectations.

#### Inappropriate Practices for Teaching Strategies

Curriculum is divided into separate subjects and time is carefully allotted for each, with primary emphasis given each day to reading and secondarily to math. Other subjects such as social studies, science, and health are covered if time permits. Art, music, and physical education are taught only once a week and only by teachers who are specialists in those areas.

Instructional strategies revolve around teacher-directed reading groups that take up most of every morning: lecturing to the whole group, total class discussion, and paper-and-pencil practice exercises or worksheets to be completed silently by children working individually at desks. Projects, learning centers, play, and outdoor time are seen as embellishments and are offered only if time permits, or as a reward for good behavior.

Teachers use most of their planning time to prepare and correct worksheets and other seatwork. Little time is available to prepare enriching activities, such as those recommended in the teacher's edition of each textbook series. A few interest areas are available for children who finish their seatwork early, or children are assigned to a learning center to complete a prescribed sequence of teacher-directed activity within a controlled time period.

During most worktimes, children are expected to work silently and alone on worksheets or other seatwork. Children rarely are permitted to help each other at worktime. Penalties for talking are imposed.

Available materials are limited primarily to books, workbooks, and pencils. Children are assigned permanent desks, and desks are rarely moved. Children work in a large group most of the time, and no one can participate in a playful activity until all work is finished.

## **Inappropriate Practices for Integrated Curriculum**

The goal of the reading program is for each child to pass the standardized tests given throughout the year at or near grade level. Reading is taught as the acquisition of skills and subskills. Teachers teach reading only as a discrete subject. When teaching other subjects, they do not feel they are teaching reading. A sign of excellent teaching is considered to be silence in the classroom and so conversation is allowed infrequently during select times. Language, writing, and spelling instruction are focused on workbooks. Writing is taught as grammar and penmanship. The focus of the reading program is the basal reader, used only in reading groups and accompanying workbooks and worksheets. The teacher's role is to prepare and implement the reading lesson in the teacher's guidebook for each group each day and to see that other children have enough seatwork to keep them busy throughout the reading group time. Phonics instruction stresses learning rules rather than developing understanding of systematic relationships between letters and sounds. Children are required to complete worksheets or to complete the basal reader, although they are capable of reading at a higher level. Everyone knows which children are in the slowest reading group. Children's writing efforts are rejected if correct spelling and standard English are not used.

Math is taught as a separate subject at a scheduled time each day. A math textbook with accompanying workbooks, practice sheets, and board work is the focus of the math program. Teachers move sequentially through the lessons as outlined in the teacher's edition of the text. Seldom is time available for recommended hands-on activities. Only children who finish their math seatwork are permitted to use the few math manipulatives and games in the classroom. Timed tests on number facts are given and graded daily. Competition between children or groups of children (boys versus girls, Row 1 versus Row 2) is used to motivate children to learn math facts.

Social studies instruction is included occasionally after the reading and math programs are completed. Social studies projects are usually related to holidays, are brief activities from the social studies textbook, or a commercially developed weekly newspaper is read and the accompanying seatwork is done.

Science is taught mainly from a single textbook or not at all. Children complete related worksheets on science topics. Science consists of memorizing facts or watching teacher-demonstrated experiments. Field trips occur rarely or not at all. A science area may have a few plants, seashells, or pine cones that have been there many months and are essentially ignored by the children.

Health is taught with the aid of posters and a textbook. A health lesson is scheduled once a week or a unit on health is completed once a year.

Art, music, and physical education are taught as separate subjects only once a week. Specialists do not coordinate closely with classroom teachers.

Representational art evaluated for approximations to realism is emphasized. Children are expected to follow specific directions resulting in identical projects. Crafts substitute for artistic expression.

Cultural and other individual differences are ignored. Children are expected to adapt to the dominant culture. The lack of a multicultural component in the curriculum is justified by the homogeneity of the group, ignoring the fact that we live in a diverse society.

Outdoor time is limited because it is viewed as interfering with instructional time, or if provided, is viewed as recess (a way for children to use up excess energy).

#### **Inappropriate Practices for Guidance of Social-Emotional Development**

Teachers lecture about the importance of appropriate social behavior and use punishment or deprivations (such as no recess) when children who become restless and bored with seatwork whisper, talk, or wander around, or when children dawdle and do not finish their work in the allotted time. Teachers do not have time for private conversations with children, and only the most able students finish their work in time for special interests or interaction with other children.

Little time is available for children to practice social skills in the classroom because they are seated and doing silent, individual work or are involved in teacher-directed groups. The only opportunities for social interaction occur on the playground, but the teacher is not present unless it is his/her playground duty day, and therefore children don't have a consistent, familiar adult to help them with problems.

Teachers place themselves in an adversarial role with children, emphasizing their power to reward acceptable behavior and punish unacceptable behavior. Their primary goal is maintaining control of the classroom. Teachers spend considerable time enforcing rules, giving external rewards for good behavior, and punishing infractions. When social conflicts arise, the teacher intervenes, separating and quieting participants and avoiding the social issue. Whether intentional or not, the teacher's attitude often feels demeaning to the child.

#### **Inappropriate Practices for Parent-Teacher Relations**

Teachers are not given time for work with parents. Subtle messages convey that schools are for teachers and children, not parents. Teachers view parents' role as carrying out the school's agenda.

#### **Inappropriate Practices for Evaluation**

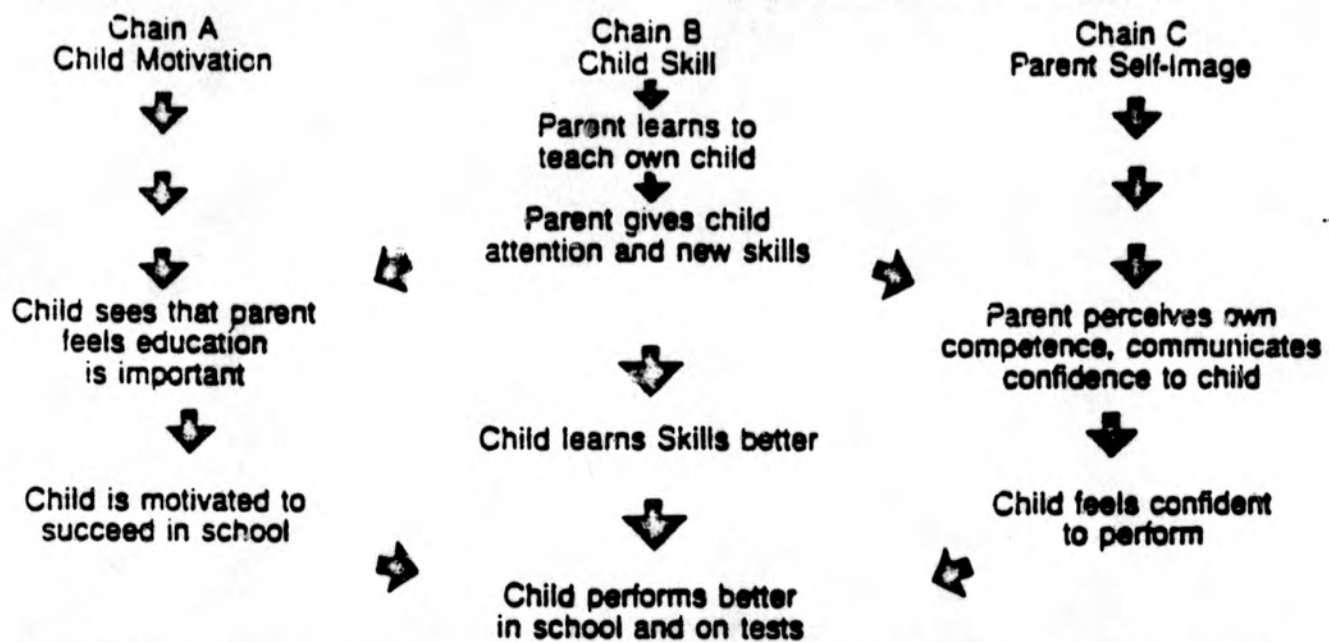
Grades are seen as important in motivating children to do their work.

Children are tested regularly on each subject. Graded tests are sent home or are filed after children see their grades. To ease children's stress caused by the emphasis placed on test scores, teachers "teach to the test."

## APPENDIX C

### COMMUNITY-BASED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### How Parent-Child Interaction Affects Student Achievement



SOURCE: Mariam Sherman Stearns and Susan Peterson, "Parent Involvement in Compensatory Education Programs: Definitions and Findings," Menlo Park Educational Policy Research Center, Stanford Research Institute.

Reprinted from the *Journal of Educational Public Relations*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1988.

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9/19/89

MINUTES  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE  
September 19, 1989  
Barrow, Alaska

Members Present:

Rep. Eileen P. Maclean, Co-Chair  
Sen. Lloyd Jones, Co-Chair  
Sen. Jack Coghill  
Rep. Cheri Davis  
Rep. Niilo Koponen

Members Absent:

Sen. Al Adams  
Sen. John Linkley (Ex officio)  
Rep. Johnny Ellis (Ex officio)

Staff:

Dr. Frank Darnell  
Consultant  
Joint Committee on School Performance  
Capitol Building  
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Juneau, Alaska 99811

Helen Pootoogooluk  
P. O. Box 667  
Kotzebue, Alaska 99811

Other Legislators:

Sen. Tim Kelly  
Sen. Jay Kerttula

Witnesses:

William G. Demmert  
Commissioner  
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Charles Edwardson  
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Cora Sakeagak  
State Board of Education  
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Barrow, Alaska 99723  
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CHAIRPERSON LLOYD JONES, DISTRICT-A, called the meeting to order for the Joint Committee on School Performance. Approval of the agenda and the minutes from the meeting on August 4, 1989, was submitted. The suggestion was made that the information packets for the meetings be given to the members of the committee prior to the commencing of the meeting.

SENATOR WILLY HENSLEY offered background information on the initial work of the special Committee on School Performance that the Senate created. The Department of Education had presented a document to the legislature concerning the performance of Alaska's students on standardized tests. The information exposed that a substantial number of students were doing poorly. At that point, Alaska was spending more per capita on education than the rest of the other states. The accomplishment of the goal of education within the state needed to be reanalyzed. A Senate committee was established to explore the quality of education. The findings showed that there was a great amount of interest within the public concerning education. The area with the most serious deficiency was math and reading. A quarter of the seniors were not prepared to enter a higher education system or the work field. Drop-out rates were being addressed in some districts. The committee also discovered the process and content of schooling had many ineffective practices. In many areas there were low expectations of the students and the course work was less demanding. The local advisory school boards were not being adequately trained; many had no idea what their powers and duties were. Many superintendents had little concern of student achievement. The committee realized the

complexity of the issues and began a process to initiate positive change. The legislature should adopt a purpose of schooling statement. The result was establishing the goal of school. The individual school districts should be asked to file a report to the legislature, which would reflect each area of need within that district. Material from the Senate's study should be used in the joint committee report.

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

SENATOR JACK COGHILL, DISTRICT-J, suggested the idea of establishing more sites for boarding schools. The consolidation of high schools and possibly junior high schools also need to be addressed by this committee.

SEN. LLOYD JONES, CO-CHAIRPERSON, DISTRICT -A, introduced Commissioner Demmert.

WILLIAM G. DEMMERT, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, suggested that everyone participate in the International Seminar held in Barrow the week of September 18th-22nd.

Commissioner Demmert offered a prepared statement for the Committee's information. This report is divided into six parts: educational demographics, summary of student achievement in the state, overview of some of the social problems which are barriers to academic achievement, identification of partnerships, summary of Department activities, and a listing of recommendations which are important for the State of Alaska in order to meet the long range needs of students who need special help. The cost of running schools has increased drastically. This has caused educational programs to be stretched often to the point of deterioration. Currently, there is an interest to increase the foundation unit to larger amount. The long range issue is how to continue to fund education as the oil revenues decrease. The position of the department supports moving forward on the proposed educational amendment which would establish a permanent fund for operating elementary and secondary schools in the future. It is necessary to look at the alternative education programs for rural Alaska.

Commissioner Demmert addressed concerns the State Board of Education has toward improvement of academic achievement. Language development is the key to academic achievement. Without a strong language base, the student lacks the ingredients essential to develop analytic and conceptual skills. Without these skills, a youngster is destined to academic failure. The root cause of school failure is that school language arts programs do not adequately meet the needs of the students whose primary language is other than standard english. Language ability is largely determined by the age of three. It has been proven that

early childhood experiences and environment play an important role in developing a youngsters language ability. A Program must be culturally and developmentally appropriate.

Commissioner Demmert summarized the priorities:

- \* Establish a learning base during a child's critical years, which is culturally and developmently appropriate.
- \* Improve the learning environment which young children are exposed to and to build on the learning base established in preschool years.
- \* Improve the in-service and pre-service programs for teachers and the recruitment and hiring of more native teachers for rural areas.
- \* Developing partnerships with social service agencies to address social barriers which interfere with a child's ability to learn.
- \* Building a research base to help direct Alaskan schools to better meet their responsibilities.

TAPE 2, SIDE 1

Sen. Coghill asked Commissioner Demmert if the board had given any consideration to meeting with the Alaska Mental Health Board for instituting a program for the under-achievers.

Commissioner Demmert stated that he has not personally met with then, but he has met with the Commissioners of Health and Social Services and Community and Regional Affaires to disucss social barriers which are encountered in schools. Also, within the Department of Education, the Division of Rehabilitation has meet with program people across the state. This department funds programs for the under-achievers with both state and federal money. In addition, there is the Special Education Division who works with groups across the state to build partnerships and provide services. Also, the federal government is currently requiring the state to take a careful look at welfare reform. The Department of Education is involved in this activity as well.

REP. NIILLO KOPONEN, DISTRICT-21, noted that at certain times in history the educational experience was more of an cooperative effort. There was a great deal of cooperation because there were not enough resources unless the school nurse, the well child clinic, the sports and community activities all took a part in the life of the school. With

the growth of professionalism, we developed concepts of professional turf, privacy and lack of informational exchange. With this came the division of the child as a whole person, and extended it to different agencies. Thus began the break down of our educational process.

REP. EILEEN MACLEAN, DISTRICT-22, and Sen. Jones thanked Sen. Willie Hensley and Commissioner Demmert for the information they presented and also Edna MacLean for translating Commissioner Demmert's presentation.

Sen. Jones introduced the topic of internal business for the committee. The first point on the agenda was the planning the dates for the next three meetings.

REP. CHERI DAVIS, DISTRICT-1-B, suggested that one of the school board meetings be held in Petersburg. Petersburg is one of the highest performing districts in the state. Rep. Davis informed the committee that Sharon Young, Associate Director for the School Board Association, who plans the conferences for the school board, has asked if any members for the Committee on School Board Performance would be willing to attend one of these meetings and participate in a panel discussion. The next conference is planned for November 12th-14th in Anchorage. Rep. Davis has volunteered to attend this meeting.

Rep. Eileen MacLean suggested the October meeting be held in Anchorage at the time of the forum on "Youth at Risk". This forum will be sponsored by the State Board of Education and the AFN. This is scheduled for October 17th & 18th. The Committee agreed to meet in Anchorage on these dates, with the joint committee meeting the afternoon of the 17th at the LIO and as participants at the "Youth At-Risk" forum on the 18th.

Senator Coghill introduced a discussion on the life of the committee and the reports it is to produce. He pointed out that the Committee has been authorized to meet during each session and each interim of the Sixteenth Legislature and is responsible for two reports, a preliminary report on the 15th day of the Second Session of the Sixteenth Legislature (January 23, 1990) and a final report on the first day of the First Regular Session of the Seventeenth Legislature.

Rep. Eileen MacLean recommended that the dates for the November meeting be finalized.

TAPE 2, SIDE 2

Sen. Jones suggested the November meeting be planned for Anchorage at the same time as the School Board Association Meeting and the Superintendents Association Meeting, which

are scheduled for November 10th - 11th. It was unanimously agreed to schedule the November committee meeting on these two dates.

The Chair noted that the December meeting would be held in Petersburg on Monday, December 4th and possibly extend into the 5th and summarized the meeting schedule between now and the end of the year:

1. October 17 (p.m.) at the LIO in Anchorage and October 18 as participants in the AFN-DOE Forum on Youth At Risk
2. November 10 and 11 in conjunction with the annual meetings of the Alaska Council of School Administrators and Association of Alaska School Boards in Anchorage.
3. December 4 and possibly 5th in Petersburg for both a committee work session and public hearing.

Rep. Cheri Davis suggested that the Co-Chairs send a letter to the school districts of Southeast, advising them of the scheduled meeting in Petersburg and encouraging testimony at that time.

Sen. Jones, Co-Chair, suggested that the committee's funds be divided 50% to the Senate side under the President and 50% to the House side under the Speaker, accountable to the respective co-chairs of the committee. Senator Coghill concurred in the need for this arrangement by pointing out that the resolution creating the committee provided for separate House and Senate identities.

Sen. Jones pointed out that the respective leaders of each body should be notified that joint expenditures, such as staff expenses, should be taken 50% from the House budget and 50% from the Senate's. (See below for a motion made on this subject.)

Sen. Coghill moved and Rep. Davis seconded that the committee delegate signatory responsibility for approval of committee business, including the contract with the committee's consultant, to the Co-Chairs. Hearing no objection the motion passed unanimously.

Sen. Coghill then moved that the full committee of both House and Senate members make the final evaluation of the contract with the committee's consultant upon its completion before final payment on the contract is authorized, seconded by Rep. Davis. Motion passed without objection.

Sen. Coghill moved and Rep. Davis seconded, that the Joint Committee on School Performance be funded jointly between the House and Senate leadership, through the Co-Chairs.

Rep. MacLean introduced the subject of Joint Committee travel expenses and asked what had been learned from the Legislative Affairs Office. Frank Darnell responded that when he contacted LEA regarding this topic, he learned that it was their opinion that the most satisfactory way for committee members to handle requests for travel requisitions and reimbursement of travel expenses was to go through their respective leadership offices in the regular way that they would for any standing committee work. Members of the Joint Committee agreed that this was the most satisfactory way to handle travel expenses.

Rep. MacLean opened a discussion on the subject of the contract for Dr. Darnell and pointed out that the contract is on a standard Legislative Affairs Agency form and fulfills the Agency's requirement that it shall not exceed \$25,000.

Sen. Coghill moved that the Committee approve the contract between Dr. Darnell and the Joint Committee on School Performance as submitted. Motion was seconded by Rep. Davis. It was passed and so ordered by the Chair, Sen. Jones.

Frank Darnell pointed out that he learned through discussions with the Legislative Affairs Agency that his travel in behalf of Committee should be handled and paid for in the same way as if he were a member of the Committee. That is, he will request travel authorization through the leadership and submit requests for payment of expense the same way on standard LAA forms.

He further explained that prior to learning of this procedure, travel that had been necessary to carry out work of the committee and had been approved by the leadership he had paid for personally with the understanding that he would be reimbursed. This also applied to relocation expenses, previously approved by the committee. LEA suggested that a letter explaining this accompany his request for reimbursement.

Rep. MacLean explained that previous correspondence speaks to that and the Committee has agreed to pay these expenses. It now only needs to be dealt with administratively.

Sen. Coghill pointed out that Clause 4a of the contract needed to be made consistent with the Committee's intent to pay Dr. Darnell's travel and other expenses and thus needed to be amended to fit that understanding.

Sen. Coghill moved that the Co-Chairs contact the Legislative Affairs Agency on Clause 4a as to the understanding of travel and other expenses of the consultant as discussed and to amend the contract to fit that understanding and memorandum of August 18. Seconded by Rep. Koponen. Hearing no objections, the Chair ruled the motion passed.

Co-Chairperson Eileen MacLean suggested addressing the goals and responsibilities of the school performance committee.

TAPE 3, SIDE 1

DR. FRANK DARNELL, CONSULTANT, reported that in the brief time since he learned that he would be working with the Committee, he had been dwelling on the larger questions of what such a report might contain and how it could be put together in such a brief period of time. First, after arriving in Juneau on August 28th, he immediately found that he was to join the HESS Committee and the State Board of Education's visit to Bethel. That turned out to be a fortunate turn of events, as Dr. Darnell was able to get a reasonable feel for the problems that the committee would want to address. A great deal of the testimony heard was material that applies to the operational side of school performance in comparison with the policy making side. It is important that the committee separates the operational and policy making elements. The policies which will be considered will have far greater ramifications than many of the other topics because of the diverse nature of the State of Alaska. The first goal is to distinguish between a policy and operational problem. After attending the State Board in Bethel and the State Board Meeting in Anchorage, Dr. Darnell understands the dilemma of creating the report which the the Legislature has required. This report asks for a plan to improve school performance. This would cover a broader base in that it will deal with operations as well as policy. Concern has been expressed at the State Board level and in Dr. Darnell's opinion a close coordination between the two groups needs to be developed in order to avoid duplication or overlap in areas of responsibility. The question was posed by Dr. Darnell pertaining to the Legislature as the ultimate policy makers and the issues they want to address. This consideration over the years has been lost by many school districts. Dr. Darnell has seen a pendulum affect within the Alaska school system, from very tightly controlled State operated schools to a slackening of control and delegation to local control. In the 1930's, there was local control similar to what we have today, which had to be tightened up again. Presently, we are seeing the need for a swing in the pendulum back to more involvement at the Legislative level. School districts as a whole have enjoyed a degree of freedom

seldom found in any other state, and not found in Alaska up until this time. "School districts are a creature of the State". This is an important concept to keep in mind. As a legislative body, the constitutional responsibility lays in those hands. School districts which are indifferent to or not interested in that relationship need to be brought back into focus. The need is to address the balance between what we call state mandated legislative responsibility and the tradition of local control that has generated over the years. Goals need to be derived from the authority that the committee has and the legislature has.

Rep. Koponen offered information backing up Dr. Darnell's point in reference to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Prince Georges' County Case stating that the states have the primary responsibility for education and they may delegate but not abrogate that responsibility.

Rep. Davis commented that the prevention of drop-outs needs to be addressed on the early end of the education experience.

Sen. Jones, Chairperson reiterated in order to see the larger picture, the committee needs to narrow the goals and funding appropriations. There is a need to introduce feedback and information circles which will enable the legislative body to be more effective. The most important issues are policy and operational functions. The legislature's responsibility is to focus in on the policy aspect.

Co-Chair MacLean remarked that legislature is isolated from what is actually happening on the operational level.

Rep. Niilo Kopen stated that the task of the legislators in regard to public education is to focus on the children and their educational development.

Rep. Eileen MacLean reminded the committee that the State Board of Education has established some goals which there will be hearings on.

- \* Early childhood
- \* Parenting
- \* Language programs
- \* Community based child services as a multi-agency responsibility
- \* At-risk incentive program alternative
- \* Re-evaluation of schooling options
- \* Improving teaching practices
- \* Providing support for teachers in rural Alaska
- \* Building on the strengths of native language

and culture

Rep MacLean continued to recommend ideas which legislators should analyze:

- \* Concept of regional high schools
- \* Alaska relevant curriculum development
- \* The tenure law and teacher certification process
- \* The relationship of social agencies with the school districts
- \* Standards for school districts

Sen. Coghill commented that the State of Alaska is light years ahead of the New Jersey Special Certified Teachers in that Alaska has teacher aides in the communities. Sen. Coghill suggested that all schools in Alaska should be required to teach a full year course in the junior high school and then again in the high school level on the Alaska culture, economy, geography, government and history. These aspects vary so much in the State between Barrow and Ketchikan. There should be a commission for creating a text book on Alaska, possibly through the University of Alaska or a culture center.

Frank Darnell addressed concerns of the committee regarding the training of Alaska specific subjects. Alaska teachers from the local university must have six hours of Alaska related subjects, three which deal with cultural issues and three which can be chosen from geography, history or anthropology. This must be done every five years. A new certification requires six to nine hours depending on the prior introduction to Alaskan history. There is not a program within the state which offers a degree in Alaskan studies.

Co-Chair Eileen MacLean introduced the members present from the state school board. Testimony from the members present was invited.

LEONA OKAKOK, NORTH SLOPE, BOARD OF EDUCATION, PRESIDENT, offered a welcome to all of the attending board members and appreciation for having the meeting in Barrow.

CORA SAKEAGAK, BARROW, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, commented that the state board is looking at the issues hoping to make recommendations to the state legislature for modifications concerning the certification issue for rural Alaska. Sakeagak commented, the committee needs to work collectively in order to meet the goals.

Rep. MacLean, Co-Chair, reminded everyone that the October 17th-18th meeting which is being sponsored by the State Board of Education in Anchorage, will be addressing YOUTH AT-RISK. The November 10th and 11th meeting has been

scheduled in Anchorage at the same time the Alaska Association of School Administrators and the Association of Alaska School Boards will be meeting.

Chairperson MacLean adjourned the meeting.

9/21/89

HEARING  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE  
September 21, 1989  
Barrow, Alaska

Members Present:

Rep. Eileen P. MacLean, Co-Chair  
Sen. Al Adams  
Rep. Niilo Koponen

Members Absent:

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

Other Legislatures:

Sen. Tim Kelly  
Sen. Jay Kerttula

Staff:

Dr. Frank Darnell  
Consultant  
Joint Committee on School Performance  
Capitol Building  
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Helen Pootoogooluk  
P. O. Box 667  
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

TAPE 1, SIDE 1

CO-CHAIRPERSON EILEEN MACLEAN, DISTRICT-22:

I would like to take this opportunity to open this meeting and to take this opportunity to recognize some guests that we have. Starting with the North Slope Borough School District, we have some school board members and also personnel from the school district, Brenda Itta and Patsy Aamodt. And at this time also, I would like to recognize Senator Kerttula who is the member of the Legislature and Dr. William Demmert, Commissioner of Education, Edna MacLean, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Ingmar Egede from Greenland, Joe Handley from Canada, Dean Mohatt

from Fairbanks, University of Alaska, and also Ann Spohnholz, from the Governor's office.

The work of the Joint Committee on School Performance is under way. An organizational meeting of the Committee was held in early August, in Anchorage at which times Senator Lloyd Jones and myself were named to be the Co-Chairs. Our second meeting was held here in this room two days ago, and I need to translate this portion in Inupiaq because these are going to be aired.

[REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN PROCEEDED TO TRANSLATE THE PREVIOUS TESTIMONY IN INUPIAQ.]

The initial goals of the Committee are specified in the Committee Substitute for House Concurrent Resolution #18. Taking the ideas embodied in these goals are broad guidelines. The Committee held discussions to focus their efforts on specific concepts related to the goals and is now in the process of refining them as means to eventually set forth proposals for legislation that may lead to improved school performance. This public hearing is one of the means to reach the ultimate goal of that committee.

[REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN PROCEEDED TO TRANSLATE THE PREVIOUS TESTIMONY IN INUPIAQ.]

Over the years, good ideas addressing the means to improve schooling have been expressed by community leaders, parents and teachers, but seldom have they reached policy implementation. It is the expectation of this committee that we can improve on this situation.

[REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN PROCEEDED TO TRANSLATE THE PREVIOUS TESTIMONY IN INUPIAQ.]

Your contributions to this process are sincerely sought and will be appreciated. If you do not wish to testify at this time, we would encourage letters, testimony in written form, to the Joint Committee for School Performance, Pouch V, Juneau, Alaska 99811. This report, the first of two, that we have been charged by the Legislature to produce is due January 14th of 1990.

[REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN PROCEEDED TO TRANSLATE THE PREVIOUS TESTIMONY IN INUPIAQ.]

Over the years, many shortcomings in certain aspects of schooling have been described by many people from all segments of Alaskan society. We are aware of the problems, the shortcomings have given rise to. We now want to address the means to overcome these shortcomings and problems and invite you comment.

[REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN PROCEEDED TO TRANSLATE THE PREVIOUS TESTIMONY IN INUPIAQ.]

We are going to open this meeting by hearing some welcoming comments from our colleague, Senator Adams.

SENATOR ALBERT ADAMS, DISTRICT-L:

Thank you. The only comment that I have is the Chairman Rep. MacLean had introduced House Committee Concurrent #18 and was be commended that recent legislation passed both bodies, but I am hoping that one of the thing that we do is that we don't study the studies that have been done in the past and that when we take public testimony tonight, that perhaps that we incorporate it in some form of legislation and action. One of the things that this particular committee needs to do also, is paralel some of your input also with the State Department of Education. And I am please to be here with my colleagues for the night to listen to the testimony. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, Senator Adams. And let me introduce Representative Niilo Koponen. Do you have any comments?

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN, DISTRICT-21:

Thank you. I appreciate being here. I have been working on various aspects of the educational system of this state for many years and I realize what we cannot in the legislature do for you for the community, but we can provide the frame work, where you, the parents and students themselves, teachers, the administrators, the Board members can better develop educational programs appropriate for your community and your students. We want to be able to provide you the tools so you can do your job better and that in many parts is our mission. Having worked on the Governor's Commission on Children and Youth, I realize that one of the things we need to do on a grass-roots level is have more interchange and cooperation between all the services, social services, health services, public safety and the like, whose actions affect the lives and growth of the children of each community. The extent that you can all work together in your community makes our job less necessary, and I hope that we can help in cooperation with the people of the State develop the changes we need to go forward and deal with the problems of the next decade, give you the tools to deal with those in your own community.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Okay, let me at this point in time introduce Senator Kerttula and ask him if he has any comments he would like to share with the public.

SENATOR JALMAR "JAY" KERTTUAL, DISTRICT-E-A:

Just a brief one and that is I am humbled to be sitting under the beautiful painting of Eban Hobson and to be here with Patsey Aamodt, whose father Johnny Nufiginya, I served with in the Legislature, and with Brenda Itta, and I want to say that both legislators MacLean and my good friend Al Adams, are serving that same tradition. If we are going to be able to pay for the education of our people, and it does cost money, we have to have enough income. We weren't just there then voting for expenditures, that is easy to do, but how do you pay for it, and they stood up, they stood up for the people who asked them, they stood up for you, passing the necessary vote and taking the leadership, in the tradition of Eban and Johnny. They stood up for you so that if there is enough funding so that we can do some of the work that this Committee anticipates. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you, Senator and I would also like to introduce Dr. Frank Darnell who is the researcher for our Committee and also he is sitting at this end and also my staff member, Helen Pootoogooluk from Shishmaref, and also Valerie Davidson, who is representing Senator Binkley. And Jim Nordlum, who should be coming here, I think he is kinda' waylaid somewhere, but he is representing Representative Johnny Ellis.

At this point in time, we would like to hear the testimonies from the people. When you do testify, please state your name and address so we can send you the reports, the transcripts from this meeting and if you are going to testify please sign up. We have a sign up sheet right at the end of the table. We would first like to hear from Leona Okakok. Thank you.

LEONA OKAKOK, NORTH SLOPE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Hello, I am Leona Okakok, currently serving as the President of the North Slope School District, Board of Education. I have written testimony that Patsey will be helping pass out. Before my testimony, I would like to preface this with something I want kept in mind when we are giving our testimony from the North Slope School District. For one hundred years now we have been using a foreign system of education and we have tried to work with it, we have tried to change it, manipulate it to fit so that it will work for us and we have yet to come up with an

adequate system that can do that. I think as I stated today at the meeting, I think we as a people have a right to a system that reflects and affirms our people and our way of life.

[TESTIMONY BY LEONA OKAKOK, PRESIDENT, BOARD OF EDUCATION]

CO-CHAIR EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you. Are there any questions?

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

Just one, Madam Chairman. One of the things you stated that you opposed the concept of the binding arbitration. You and other boards throughout the State of Alaska have your work cut out, as you know we had a close vote in the Senate with 19-1 and I was the only one opposing the passage of that. I also feel that you loose local control with passage of collective bargaining. But one of the things that you need to work on this year is work on the House side, as that piece of legislation is sitting in House finance.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you. Thank you, Leona. Okay, our next person to testify....

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

On the same bill, the bill that the Senate passed over no longer provides providing arbitration. It provides for the right to strike on the part of teachers. What is your position on that? Has the Board discussed that right to strike as opposed to binding arbitration, because we don't have an arbitration bill in the House.

LEONA OKAKOK:

Right. The right to strike bill, as it has been changed. I don't know how familiar you are with rural school districts, but with districts such as ours, it might be more to point since we do provide housing and things like that would make it very difficult for teachers to strike.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

You don't think they are going to get in legal trouble in use of that kind of a weapon. Equal protection of the law. I think you should check with your Borough attorney on that.

LEONA OKAKOK:

Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Okay, thank you Leona. The next person to testify is Cora Sakeagak.

CORA SAKEAGAK, CLERK, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION:

[TESTIMONY BY CORA SAKEAGAK, CLERK, NORTH SLOPE BOARD OF EDUCATION]

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you, Cora. Are there any other questions?

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN:

Just a comment that we are very grateful that the North Slope Borough recognizes its local responsibility and exercises it.

CORA SAKEAGAK:

Thank you, we do indeed.

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

One of the things, piece of legislation that we are working on, both in the House bill #37 and with the Senate bill that is on school construction and the grant program. What are your positions on this?

CORA SAKEAGAK:

I believe the board took no position on it, being like the urban centers we have the taxing ability and bonding authority and whether we bond or compete for grants, we would enjoy either, is the position we have taken.

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you. At this time I would like to recognize Barney Gottstein who is the President of the State Board of Education. [Applause]

Okay, Roy Nageak is the third person to testify.

ROY NAGEAK, MEMBER, BOARD OF EDUCATION:

[TESTIMONY BY ROY NAGEAK, MEMBER, BOARD OF EDUCATION]

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you. Representative Koponen.

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN:

I would like to congratulate the Board for sponsoring the Inupiaq Language Convention and I think the statement that you have included here is a fine definition of the responsibilities of the family and the school and who does what first. We will welcome any information that you can give us when your At-Risk Study is completed because that is one of the major reasons for the selection of this committee and we are looking forward to getting that kind of information from all the districts.

ROY NAGEAK:

We have that information currently, but as we stated we are looking at the contents and that will in a sense reflect what kind of correction we will take with our at-risk students. Maybe in the future it will be available 'cause there are a lot of students within the State that have the same problems as we do, so we recognize that. We had a survey done and a study and later on that might be available after the Board really looks at it.

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN:

In the conference discussion sections that we attended, there was testimony from one parent from one district that wanted to see local advisory board take the role of the regional school board, in other words have the power of the regional school boards in their district in their particular school. Do you have a position on that?

ROY NAGEAK:

Well, we are mandated by state law as a regional school board, but as our schools get familiar or as we get more familiar with the school advisory councils and as we learn more on how to deal with the local issues, we do have a lot of local issues other than regional, as schools within their own village know about. As we get more comfortable, there are some barriers, some corrections where we are limited in how much we are able to give to our advisory school councils because of mandated State laws. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you very much Roy. The next person to testify is Patsy Aamodt.

PATSY AAMODT, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR INSTRUCTION,  
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Thank you. I would like to share with you copies of our annual report....to the Committee. We are very proud of our Annual Report and also our emblem "Striving for Excellence". Thank you, Roy.

For your convenience also, I have copies of the effective schooling practices. The report presented to Honorable Jay Hammond, Governor of Alaska in 1981. I have copies of that for you.

[TESTIMONY BY PATSY AAMODT, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
FOR INSTRUCTION]

TAPE 1, SIDE 2

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you very much, Patsy. At this time, before we go any further, I would like to, it is my pleasure to introduce our Senate President Senator Tim Kelly.

Are there any questions?

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

I do have a question. One of the top four priorities of the Department of Education happens to be the definition of At-Risk. You have made a statement in here that you had just completed your study as of June. When would this particular committee get your position paper on that particular definition At-Risk and do you have a formula if in case the Legislature did fund the grant programs under this?

PATSY AAMODT:

Let me answer the first part of your question, which I believe was to ask when the report would be available. We have the report, our board had an opportunity to look at it but we have not had it up on the board agenda for discussion and once that has taken place and they have made recommendations, or additional recommendations for us, then have given us the direction that it is available for the general public, it will be available which most likely will be within the next couple months if not earlier.

One thing I would like to clarify is the definition of at-risk. What we did was use the definition that any child that is two or more years behind academically was a student at-risk. And according to the information that we have and the test results that we have, a high percentage still among our students would be considered high risk. We are doing well right now at the primary level and we see the trend improving as we go on but like a lot of the rural native schools, a lot of our intermediate and high school students would be considered at-risk because they are two or more years behind for the most part academically.

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

And my last question, did you have any type of form letter you have specified grants to school districts in this....

PATSY AAMODT:

Well, basically what we are requesting is that for those districts that are trying and are taking steps to address this issue and have programs that they are recommending that they be considered highly for getting the grants for the at-risk students. We don't have a formula per se, but we do know that there are somethings that we would like to continue to try in addressing that issue.

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you, Patsy. Representative Koponen.

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN:

Thank you. What you are doing in effective schools program is essentially a pilot program for the rest of the State and will you have a report of the different practices and there effectiveness available to us on the effect school program before we are through with our deliberations. I don't mean today, but....

PATSY AAMODT:

Yes, you have been given copies of the effective schooling practices and primarily our districts start from this, and our superintendent, Dr. Shirley Holloway also taught a course on effective schooling practices and forced, not really forced, all the administrators took the course, and I think we are pretty much updated on all the effective schooling research that's available in the nation.

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN:

This is the 1981....

PATSY AAMODT:

This is the 1981, but we do have a bibliography and all that if you are interested in getting copies, I would be more that happy....

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN:

We would also be interested in how it is working out here in 1989. Which one of the things worked out best. That would be very helpful. I am also very impressed by the high school, I know that the district was criticized

for the cost of the high school but certainly the respect that the students show for the high school is the very important indicator of how the students feel about their entire process of education and I think that you are to be commended on it. One further question, and that is we are also very impressed by the early childhood education program, and long has been a concern of mine, and the fact that it is showing results. I also know that the way we have written the state formula, you are not adequately compensated for the early childhood....

PATSY AAMODT:

Did everyone hear that?

REPRESENTATIVE NIILLO KOPONEN:

That is my own prejudice. That was not exactly a point to carry in the legislature. If you have any recommendations in regard to how the formula may be amended, only in that regard, we would like to get those too.

PATSY AAMODT:

We'll move on that. Thank you very much on behalf and our board, our parents and the administration, I thank you for your compliments.

CO-CHAIRPERSON EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you Patsy, and before we go any further, we are going to take a five minute break, and the next person to speak will be Roy Agloinga, from Nome.

ROY AGLOINGA:

Representative MacLean, I thank you for the opportunity to speak in front of you. I haven't been able to formulate detailed report as people before me, but I think I do have something important to say. I am from the Nome area, and but I am representing myself. Regarding school performance, Dr. Darnell, Rep. Koponen, Rep. MacLean, Sen. Adams and Sen. Kelly, I would like you all to take into consideration the cross cultural differences of Alaska with an approach which would uphold respect for the deep seated Native philosophies and values of Native people by maintaining policies forcing the present school systems to teach the children about local governments in our area, the city governments and the REAA's. I want to see more education on the advantages and disadvantages of ANCSA, Native literature, more education on Native literature, Native philosophy and Native languages. This leads into the importance of local control and the importance of local

input on education. This local control can be somewhat achieved by allowing us as recognizable, indigenous groups of people who create our own framework and our own tools for teaching. One example would be to place Native literature upon the same level as Shakespeare, Milton or Chaucer. We must place Inupiat values and philosophies on the same levels of other western values regarding etiquette, behavior modification and counseling strategies.

Education has always been and continues to be a priority amongst Native and Inupiat people. I would to suggest that State education systems assist and develop the frameworks and guidelines, rather than providing them for us.

I think one way to improve parental involvement, would be to suggest to the village government that they hold meetings to prioritize their concerns regarding education and submit these concerns to the Board of Education, whether or not the meetings have attendance of ten or two hundred and fifty. We must begin somewhere, and in order to break away from the feeling of helplessness amongst our parents, we must maintain the availability of vehicle of which to voice these concerns.

You might suggest that the villages have meetings to prioritize these concerns to present to the representative of the area boards. That might be one way to do it. There was one suggestion that I had gotten from a lady at one of the meetings tonight, that she wanted the advisory boards to have more power, more say on local education, because they know their children more than often times the regional boards do. I don't know if it is possible to give the advisory boards more power, but if we can give local people more power in education, I think that self esteem would be raised amongst the people and the children.

In many cases, our people are beginning to establish self determination and local control throughout the State. This is good for our people, the parents and children. Encourage these forms of self sufficiency rather than the dependence that now exists for creating frameworks and philosophies.

In doing research, we need any change based on local research done by local people. This is the only way we can improve the educational system to fit the way of life of our people. Native teachers should be hired, native people should be doing the hiring, native children must see that we as native adults are competent and successful as defined by our culture, our language and our philosophy.

It is good to see Inupiat people discussing Inupiat education. In so many cases, I have gone to meetings

regarding native education, and non-native people have dominated the discussion about our children. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, Roy. Are there any questions? Thank you, and the next person to testify is Dave Wilson. Before I forget, I would like to introduce our former Senator Willie Hensley, whose chaired the Special Senate Committee on School Performance, and this is a continuation of this, so I would like to acknowledge Senator Willie Hensley. [applause]

DAVE WILSON, PRESIDENT, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH TEACHER ASSOCIATION:

Madam Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity, and thank you for being in Barrow. Several items I would like to address. The first one in regard to teacher negotiations, we support the present bill that was passed out of the Senate and is now in the House, which does not provide for binding arbitration but does have right to strike. Our interest is not so much in right to strike, but that we are put in Public Employee Relations Act, which we feel is an appropriate place for us and we feel that there is a set of laws on the books which will guide us more carefully in the negotiation process, and hopefully in the end, we will enhance it and speed up the process which will benefit all sides. So we ask you for your support in the House for that bill.

Second item I would like to address is teacher tenure. I noticed in the Committee report there is a proposal to increase tenure from a two year wait to a five year wait. Just for a point of comparison, I believe for instance in the North Slope Borough, Borough employees have a six month probationary period at the end of which time if they pass they, in the future if they are to be dismissed the Borough needs to show just cause, and they have a right to a grievance. If teachers do not get tenure for five years, we do not have this basic right of due process for five years, because in fact, teacher could be dismissed at any point during the five year period for no reason. The only thing on the books, is basically that the teacher has to be told why they are being dismissed but the teacher really has no right to grieve or pursue it if they believe that it has been an unfair dismissal. We think that the thousands of teachers in the State deserve....

[unidentified person asked for an explanation of who Dave Wilson represents]

Okay. Excuse me. Thank you. I neglected to introduce myself as President of the North Slope Borough

Teacher Association, and I am speaking as their spokesperson. North Slope Borough Education Association, it is a professional association of the teachers in the North Slope Borough. Again, in regard to the tenure issue, we would like the Legislature to consider that the teachers in the State also have a right to fair process in regards to dismissal and we believe that extending tenure to five years is really unwarranted. Secondly, there may be a misconception that once a teacher has tenure, that the teachers job is chiselled in concrete and that a teacher may not be dismissed. This is not accurate. A teacher can be dismissed for improperly carrying out the duties of teaching, for instance. What is needed is for a vigorous evaluation process by the local administrator. The teacher can be put on a plan of improvement and asked to improve in the areas that are noted and I think that that is one of the purposes we want to see in the evaluation, that it bring about a teacher improvement. However if it doesn't, the teacher can be dismissed. Teachers can be dismissed after two years, even with tenure.

Another point that is important to remember about teacher tenure is that teachers are in a vulnerable situation. We are doing our job in the public side to a certain extent. Everyday, for instance an English teacher in the high school, there might be one hundred and fifty students that that teacher sees during the day. That is one hundred fifty people in the community talking about what that teacher did. Those students are interacting with their parents, conveying what went on in the class room that day. Unfortunately, at times things can be misconstrued as to what took place in the classroom; it could be misunderstandings. I have been involved in a situation when I was in high school, where a teacher gave an excellent instructional program on Communism and a couple of students thought that the teacher was promoting Communism and next thing the teacher's job was in question. It was completely inaccurate, what the public's perception was of what happened in the classroom.

Part of the concept of tenure, is that the teacher have the freedom to experiment and do different things. We hope it doesn't happen, but many of us might recall some of the best teachers we had had been the strictest. Being a strict teacher today, isn't exactly a real popular notion. And again, we are left vulnerable if a public or person has a misconception about what took place in the classroom, pressure could be brought to bear, that the teacher be dismissed without really any inquiry or due process. So part of the reason for tenure is to guarantee our right to have some academic freedom in the classroom. I think that is all I want to say on tenure.

I would like to move on to one other subject, and that's about school performance. The school board in the North Slope Borough has done so much to put excellent teachers in the classroom and to promote basic concepts and quality education and yet students do score below the national norms and in some cases, way below national norms. No one is more concerned and upset about this than the teachers. We constantly are always talking about anything we can do to increase the standards to increase the academic scores of our students and we are concerned and we are disappointed that we haven't had more success and I encourage the school boards and teachers across the State to get together, because I think the teachers are in the classrooms everyday and have a lot of ideas and see so much, I think they could, it would be really helpful if boards and teachers interacted to help solve the problem together. I don't think there is a magic wand we can wave and tomorrow everyone will be scoring at the fiftieth percentile. We have problems. We want to work on them together. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you. Are there any questions?

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

Anyway, rather than pointing our finger at the other thing, I realize that the task really falls on the administrator and it is not easy one to supervise properly but we have a number of other questions that have been raised. One of which is number of native teachers that we get into the school system.....students that apply. I noticed that you have a natural helper program in the school system and I am sure that there are teachers who use students to help other students get a sort of tutorial level. Do you have any sort of teachers teachers association or any club of students who may be interested in becoming teachers in the future so you can help in the recruitment of native teachers.

DAVE WILSON:

We don't have such a club and that is an excellent suggestion.

REPRESENTATIVE NIILLO KOPONEN:

The other point is, of course, is that teacher expectations have been spoken of as an important to student performance, and I also know that teacher status in a community has a lot to do with pupil expectations, so it is a two way process in the community. The teachers has to have some acceptance in the community, therefore the

students will accept the authority of the teacher. Among the minorities where the teachers are among the honored position, the academic achievement is higher than among those where other things decide the teaching that are honored.

What are the expectations of the Barrow teachers, by and large, regarding its pupil?

DAVE WILSON:

Well, the expectations are that every student will apply as best they can and work to their maximum ability. I would like to make a comment that I think one of our board members has written an article about going to school in the western concept, in the concept of western schools, being brought up here and that is something that is important to realize, that schools have been, it is a western concept, whatever it has been point down here in the middle of a rural native community, and I can tell my students that school is important. To be here, what we have got to say will benefit you for the rest of your life, and the school board can say that to students as well, but that is what we say, and I think that the students haven't all bought that heart and soul. They were still in a culture change transition. Many of the students don't see a reason for their education. They come, but they don't see a real reason, they really haven't bought into it. They see themselves as being in Barrow, as not needing an education to have a job, or they are comfortable, they can go to fish camp. Maybe we should move the schools to fish camp for some of the students. But, you know it is some thing for the teachers to say school is important, but it is going to be a process where by the communities have to buy in to the school system, too. We have to reach out to the kids that haven't bought into it yet.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

I remember from bible study and also history is that it is actually the status of the teacher, is actually an Eastern concept.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Okay. Are there any more questions or comments? Thank you Mr. Wilson.

The next person to testify is Judy Charles.

TAPE 2, SIDE 1

JUDY CHARLES, EMPLOYEE, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Good evening. I am Judy Charles and I live in Barrow. I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak tonight. I am representing myself, however, I am an employee of the North Slope Borough School District, and real proud to be one.

I have been very lucky, working for the North Slope Borough School District, and it has given me the chance to live in a rich community. In a community, where I could have many and varied experiences, and also many opportunities for professional growth.

I have lived in Alaska, in various places in Alaska, in my lifetime. As a young child, I lived on the Aleutian Chain and during elementary school, my family moved permanently to Petersburg. Later, I lived in Juneau, and I spent eight years in Anchorage before I moved up here. So as a second generation educator, I feel I am deeply rooted in the evolution of Alaskan education.

I am a teacher here. I am in my thirteenth year of teaching on the North Slope. I am an elementary teacher that has converted to middle school level, and I have been teaching in middle school, I think this is the seventh year. As you might imagine, being a teacher, my focus here tonight will be on instruction and on that particular unique age of students that we have in middle schools. My comments are brief and should be looked at as comments that apply generally to education and generally to Alaskan schools.

My focus is to look at improved school performance at a middle school level. And some things that I think are important include: Building a strong basis, having a specific program dealing with social skills for students of that age. I also think that a way to help build social skills is to do heterogeneous grouping, mixed level ability grouping, not grouping students by specific ability as much as you can, especially at that grade level. I think a lot of electives are important, but electives that are very short and exploratory in nature, so that the students have a chance to try out a lot of things, maybe for six weeks, nine weeks at the most, with many choices. Above all, I am a firm believer in focusing on basic skills. I think mastery learning is ultimately important. I think that middle school children have often reached a maturity level that they are able to start dealing with sequential skill building, and I think there is an accountability both on the students part and on the teachers part to provide that structure in the classroom.

There are many creative teaching methods that can be used, that give kids chances to make decisions and choices about their own education. For me, I think there is an

untapped resource in our schools very often. And I think that untapped resource is teacher leadership. I believe that there is an empowerment of teachers that needs to be emphasized. I think the support of teachers should not be a rhetorical concept, but real support, whereby, money, time, and a lot of symbolic chances for recognition are realized. I think that if we tap into expertise on our teaching staff, if we actually include teachers in our leadership structure in our schools, that we will be dealing with the real grass roots people that have daily contact with students. It think we can build a stronger school culture that way, I think we are all looking for educational excellence. Teachers are the perfect people to guide each other, to be trained and have the time to do coaching, to build collegiality in our schools, and to be a real part of decision making, planning and then implementing those plans. We want to have a say in how our curriculums are being developed, how programs are developed, what activities happen. But it is very important that we are part of implementing those things, so that they are not only a plan, but become a reality. And we know that they are really happening. I don't feel that simply saying that teachers have leadership roles is the same as really providing the opportunity for teachers to participate. You can't add more jobs, more training, more programs for teachers to try to share with other teachers, on top of the kind of responsibility and the full day that teachers already have, which includes constant student contact. So, above all, I think it is important that teachers that function as leaders have time to help share working together with other teachers to make instruction as more successful reality in our schools.

I have heard some people comment on the economics of running school districts these days, and I only have a couple of things to say. I think that problems with the budget can directly impact students, and it scares teachers. Somethings I feel we need to be aware of. That teachers should not be piled with more and more teaching responsibilities as a result from attrition retirement or from people leaving the district or increased enrollment. We get more students all the time. Possibly many schools could use more teachers along with those students. A cut in budget should not cut the assistance teachers get from aides, it should not stop the chance you have some maybe some clerical help, and above all when there is a budget it should not affect classroom supplies. We should not see our basic skills time minimized in order to free teachers up to teach other classes. And we don't want counseling programs to be diminished.

I think that in order to improve student achievement, one thing we can do is empower teachers. That real support of teachers will result in an even more professional group

that will in the end be more committed and will directly impact our students. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR MACLEAN:

Thank you, Judy. Are there any questions? Thank you.

The next person is Montie Slusher, and after that Charles Edwardsen, Jr.

MONTIE SLUSHER:

Madam Chairman, my name is Montie Slusher. I live here in Barrow. I have been living on the Arctic coast for twenty-two years now and have made my living as a social worker, as a school counselor, teacher, principal, and also as director of employment for IT&T for a few years up here. So I have had a wide range of work experiences up here, working with people.

Tonight I would like to bring a couple of items to your attention. Since I work very closely, even in my present job with the school district with private industry, with particularly organizations like BP Alaska and ARCO and many of those companies, I am constantly on the defensive when they ask about the quality of education that the public school is providing. And, like I say I'm on the defensive because I have to defend what we're attempting to do. But again and again, I hear the demands for standards to be set for graduation from high school, and I have to go along with that. And so one of my recommendations is that you look at scraping the present Carnigue credit unit for graduation of four credits in English, because in all truth what one of our high schools here calls four credits of English, the high school a hundred miles away disagrees with, and Anchorage may disagree with that. There is no measure or standard that is in existence in the state, and if you get four English teachers together, they can't agree. Math you can come to a little bit closer standard, but again the industry is saying they can not do basis math when the "graduate from high school". Therefore, they can not be trained in the high technology that is facing our world today. So I am suggesting, that you look at a competency base program, even as this school district is starting to look at competency base. And look at it as a state requirement. In some states, industry and the press and the public has pushed the legislatures to go into a competency base program. I don't know what the answers are, but for example, we have one form of competency that exists in the state and that is the GED exam. I would like to see the GED exam required for all graduates. Because we are saying it is good enough for the drop out to get back into the system, shouldn't it be the bench mark or atleast the minimal standard for graduation from Alaskan high

school. Or come up with another test to do it. The cheapest way would be to use something that already exists. If you want to spend more money, put a research project together to come up with the ideal test. Then we might have it in ten years.

The second thing I would like to talk to you briefly about is the concern I have for the small high schools. I was principle of a very small high school for five years in Point Lay. And the thing I finally came up to realize was that there is.....when we talk about equity, and I have heard that word used many times tonight, you have to separate dollar and cents equity from program equity. Just because one district gets x number of dollars and they have so many students does not mean that you can offer a program in a small community. The Molly Hooch case said that there would be vocational facilities and physical ed facilities as well as the academics. We have some beautiful facilities, with no one there to teach in the area, for example of trades or industry or business or something because we do not have program equity. We have facility equity, but we do not have program equity. So my suggestion is, is that if you are going to continue village high schools that you look at a funding base that is program equity based rather than just based on the population that is there. And include the areas that you need in math, science, literature and humanities, and the vocational areas. There are three vocational areas. We have talked about secondary generalist for years, but you are not going to find one or two teachers who can teach in those five or six areas. It is a near impossibility. The other possibility, which you discussed in your regional meetings, was to go to regional schools. I think that will be expensive also, because you have got to have some sort of boarding program or go back to what SOS schools had, where they had foster home families with social workers and some of those problems. You still have to have the facilities to do it, and leave the ninth and tenth graders home in the village, you still will have an educational program to run there along with the maintenance and utilities that the buildings are going to continue to have there. I don't know the answers, but I think that if we have some program equity concepts, it might be cheaper in the long run.

The last thing I wanted to mention was the concept of creating partnerships. I believe in creating partnerships. Part of my job the last five years has been to create those partnerships and I have heard our associate superintendent talking about partnerships with other government agencies in terms of social services and that sort of thing. And, we have been able, I say we, the school district has been able to enjoy the benefits of partnerships with ARCO and British Petroleum which actually furnish board, room and

transportation dollars for the education of our youth. I also am suppose to clarify this. I am speaking as an individual, based on my experience, and not for the North Slope Borough School District. They may disagree with me, but I wanted to get these things out and share my feeling. We have to have the ability to teach our youngsters so that they can succeed, so that they can compete, so they can be mobile in this new century, the twenty-first century. If they want to stay here and enjoy the native lifestyle, that is fine. But if they want to go on for further education, if they want to live someplace else, that is fine. I have raised five children up here. One is still here, one is in Florida, they others scattered all over. I can't control them. And I think that as parents, we have to realized we want the best for our children, we want them to have that ability to succeed wherever they want to go. But they are going to have to have that education to do it. And we have to set some standards for what education is. Thank you.

Do you have any questions?

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Are there any questions?

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

I just have a comment, the only persons that we assume are making an official statement as those that say so or the superintendent or the chairman of the board. We all automatically cover the assumption that everybody is speaking for themselves. After all you are all Alaskans.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, any other comments or questions? Okay, thank you Mr. Slusher.

CHARLES EDWARDSSEN, JR.:

I am Charles Edwardsen, Jr. I speak for myself. On July 2nd, 1972, we had an unusual rallying in the Alaska Supreme Court. It was the first time in the history of the court where the Supreme Court of Alaska had the unanimous opinion of one. And this left to the creation of the North Slope Borough. We have found that there was conflict of interest and told we went to court and disqualified the chief justice of the Alaska Supreme Court. This counts not to the creation of the North Slope Borough, we have twenty-one hundred law suits against us. Against the people ....And the history of the oil industry today has not changed significantly. And so the gains that have been gotten up here are not free. They were inspite of great resistance and in doing so the Inupiat people in the Arctic

in their class is commendable. [indisc.] The State of Alaska had a negative reaction. A negative reaction to a first class [indisc.] borough. And this was the first voluntary borough in all over Alaska with first class status. And the rest of the governments in Alaska, were mandatory governments, that came from someplace else. The North Slope Borough is a government by itself, by its own people, for its own. In 1973 then was a special session. The special session sat and work on tools for the rest of boroughs to have the same passing authority as the rest of the main borough governments in this State.

And so [indisc.]....Alaska....[indisc.]....citizens of the North Slope Borough....[indisc.]....And so, we have the members today, and we must also not forget, I went to Mt. Edgecumbe, and to go to school without living with your parents is hard. And a local disaster of the people living on the North Slope Borough....this petition, we have lost about twenty five or twenty three of our students [indisc.] for education. protection. Discriminations still occurs, although it is unconstitutional in our constitution. So this type of unequal participation irritates some of us, especially me. And the [indisc.]....unequal protection still exists today in Alaska. They are dwindling because they [indisc.]....enough oil to tax the oil industry. The [indisc.]....our resources, it is that they have no work.

....equal protection, let it be so in our taxing revenues. We have heard the progress that has been made up here, the people have not misplaced those \* .....were reinvested in the .....\*.....of the North Slope. And the cost of our facilities, the cost of \*.....were one hundred and fifty billion dollars. What happened to it? What happened to the state.....\*resources. And so we have an \*...opportunity to correct our fame. Our fame is not the people, it is those that have left ....of the people. I was happy to hear that the State of Alaska had created its own commission to review school governments. It is about time that we examine our historical past. And we may ...\*.... protect our future. And one of the most allocated forms that I have experienced, is different from ...\*.....misinformation. I want to submit for the record, a report that was misplaced, displaced, hidden during the negotiations of land claims. This report is very lengthy. It is about the progress of Alaska. And in the hour of education today, in the character of our schools, we have a mandatory educational program. And, so if Alaskan people were to study what actually had transformed during the the negotiations of the purchase of Alaska, maybe the hostility toward the native race would be diminished substantially. To view the natives as less than human beings is intolerable. It is intolerable today to foster this miseducation, misinformation from the true .....\*.....of the native people of Alaska. And so, I wish to mark this report as part of your record.....\*.....the State of

Alaska has been asked to participate in the .....\*.....status with the University's government on the status of the Alaska natives. And for the record I feel that history must not be rewritten to fill the needs of the oil industry. I think that a history must be stated as to what occurred, and what has happened to us today. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you. Are there any other questions or comments?

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

The report will be submitted to the committee, right?

CHARLES EDWARDSSEN, JR.:

Yes. This is the report, and I need it back. I have no Xerox machine.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you. Yes we do. We will make sure that we make a copy of it and return the copy to you. Thank you, Etuck.

The next person to testify is Ida Oleman, and after that Anne Armstrong.

IDA OLEMAN:

Hello, I am Ida Oleman, Box 6, Barrow. I welcome our Representative, our dear Representative Eileen MacLean, Senator Al Adams, Representative Koponen and everybody here.

I am speaking as a parent. Having raised five children, and they are all in school, and as a parent I've been involved with the school system for many years, since my son started school and right now my son is attending college, fortunately. But yet he didn't attain proper education up here. And I was totally hurt with that. See with my education, I had to leave my parents and I earned it. If I could have bought his education I could have, but you can't buy education, you have to earn it. After I read his report, I realized that he couldn't even make a proper sentence, he couldn't even make a proper paragraph. So that is a product that he has gained up here, and he is my eldest child. But I am very fortunate that he is attending college for the first year, and it is going to be a struggle for him, cause he didn't attain the skills that he needed when he was attending school up here. He attended our district from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

I have four other children in school. And I know Thomas, my eldest son's IBBS testing was always below average. I met with administrators, I asked for tutors, I mean I did my share as a parent, but where did I fail. Where did the system fail me? That is one question that I have always asked myself. And I am sure that I am not the only parent in that situation. And if the kids were given proper education up here, we would be seeing them here, but where are they, and why are they dropping out in college. Maybe they didn't attain the skills that they were supposed to have attained when they were attending school up here. That hurts! That really hurts. When you have a child that doesn't attain his education when he should have. He was faithful in school, no behavior problems, faithful attendance. Where did the system fail me, or where did I fail? I was so hurt, I went to see the superintendent and the assistant superintendent concerning my situation. And I realize how critical education is. And I am always so proud that a lot of us left and it was our responsibility to earn a education, which we did. We earned it. We got the skills that we needed to learn.

We were bilingual, fluently bilingual when we sent out. But my son, his first language was English. He was fluent in English. That is one of the things that I can't understand. He can speak the english language more than the Inupiaq language. If he was fluent in Inupiaq like what I went through, it could have been different, but he was fluent in english.

I also attended all the parent-teacher conference. I was always there. And I think where the system failed was, we had a no-fail system. And we had the same superintendent for so many years. And I think that within the grading level, I was cheated. My son was getting the grades that he didn't earn. Otherwise, it wouldn't have reflected. That's a clear reflection. But now we have a different superintendent, after having had that same superintendent for a number of years, but now my responsibility as I see it as a parent was starting with my son is in third grade now, my youngest boy. I started selecting his teachers. It was my choice and I am happy I have that opportunity to select his teachers. And I had to do it from talking to the administrators, talking to the teachers in the district, who's best for my child, who can best teach my child. And it is a clear reflection that it makes a difference. It makes a world of difference. My child is in third grade, and he's about average now in ITBS testing. And I am doing the same thing with my daughter, I'm going to select the teachers and be on top of it. I'm not about to let what happened to my eldest child, I am not about to let that happen again because it hurts too much.

And I know from listening to your first session, Tuesday, I know Jerry Davis mentioned the five year tenure time line. Maybe that has to be implemented. If the teachers are not giving proper education to our children or respect to our culture, you know they should be, they shouldn't even bother teaching. I know our district is going into the direction where we are getting quality teachers and I'm seeing that. That's in elementary. I have one in middle school and one in sophomore and I know that they are below ITBS testing. I mean, it's too late for them now. I ask for a tutor, I even ask for a special education for my child, but they told me that he doesn't belong in special ed. He doesn't belong in special ed. Well, where will he go? So he just tagged along, tagged along. Fell through the cracks. So I think the tenure time line on the teachers, that needs to be considered.

Maybe the best move I can do, is get away from the community, so my kids can earn better education. I mean I have had so many thoughts about that. But my lifestyle is up here, we go camping every summer, I mean I can't trade that. But I can stress how important when you send your child to school, how important that teacher is to that child. Just as how important it is as parents as we are toward that child, towards our children. So it really makes a difference on the selection of teachers in our district.

And for closing, I sure like the heading of this on your report. I haven't read this or anything, but I like having Schools Succeed at Helping All Children Learn. All children are capable of learning given the proper instruments. Given the proper instruments by the teachers. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you, Ida. Are there questions or comments? Thank you, and the next person is Anne Armstrong.

ANNE BRENNER ARMSTRONG, TEACHER, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Madam Chairperson MacLean, Senator Kelly, Senator Adams, Representative Koponen, Dr. Darnell, thank you for this opportunity to testify. As an educator, I'm Anne Armstrong, Anne Brenner Armstrong. As an educator of the North Slope Borough School District, I would like to speak toward the performance of middle schools.

[TESTIMONY BY ANNE BRENNER ARMSTRONG, TEACHER]

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, Anne. Are there any questions or comments? Thank you. Ronald Brower, Sr. will be next and after that Rex Okakok.

RONALD H. BROWER, SR., PARENT:

Thank you Madam Chairman for giving us this opportunity to make our presentations to you and also to thank the Senators and Representatives for being here with us and listening to our community and our concerns.

My name is Ronald H. Brower, Sr. I'm a parent of six children and at the current time I am working as the President for a local village corporation. I'm involved as a parent with my children's education in various ways and I'm also involved in other activities with the school. Whether it shows or not, in occasion, I do a little bit of guest teaching.

As an employer of students, who have recently graduated, we who have to employ the students who are graduating from our local schools have a particularly difficult time in hiring potential native employees, especially in consideration of the technical advances our companies in our State has achieved at this point. One of the most appalling things that we have had to deal with, is that in the hiring of these young people, who have decided not to go on to college, the degree of their comprehension level is so low that it makes our companies, it makes it very hard for our companies even to consider hiring them. Without considering, providing the necessary training for them to achieve even some of the simplest tasks.

Even though our school has a lot of technical advances, such as computer training, when these skills are being applied, what in the business community. It is appalling to find that even the simplest work performance can not be completed unless additional supervisory skills or supervisory attention is given. As employers of these very same individuals, we are finding that we have to expend additional dollars to train these individuals so that they can be competent enough to perform the work required of a corporation. Whether it be simple letter writing, whether it includes research. This basic skills of our children is not there. And it is very difficult to see ourselves in this kind of situation. We have the most advanced school systems, we have the nicest facilities probably across the State, and we think we have the best teachers. But we are having very difficult time of hiring and retaining these local students, whether they be native

or not, because of the level of comprehension that they have achieved at this point. Some of the individuals that we have worked with, recent graduates are showing that they can not do writing levels beyond third grade. This is a very dangerous situation in our community.

And listening to Ida's presentation, I feel the same pain that she does. It's difficult. I have a daughter that just graduated from our school. She was going to go to college, she has decided that she is not ready yet. And she is pursuing other avenues of work and also to prepare herself, so that she can enter college. This is a painful thing that our community is experiencing. And I think, when I look at this type of performance, even though the school has done a very nice job of making their presentation here, I have to look at the reality of our situation. It is, once they are done with the process of educating these children, even though we are participating in that process of education, the comprehension level, the skill level of these children that are graduating....

TAPE 2, SIDE 2

....That a rural education system is delivering this level of education, and this level of performance far below standards. It is also this situation, which I feel is leading to the high rate of teenage pregnancies, the suicides, the drop outs, and all these other social problems that we are experiencing within our communities. It is especially this level of students, whether they are students or recent graduates, where we have this problem, and it shows. From eighteen thru twenty-five, we have the highest rate of suicide. We have the highest rate of drop-outs. It is appalling that our legislative system does not take into serious consideration, or has not before taken into serious consideration the situation that our educational system is in.

I am pleased that you are making some attempts. But I would recommend that the State and the Legislatures consider taking the sputnik approach of programming school performance the way the United States did when Russians sent up the sputnik. I would, it is important, I think at this stage that the State Legislature take this kind of approach. Because it is a critical situation throughout the State, not only here. We may have all the fancy facilities we want, we may have all these nice little programs we want, but if the comprehension level of these students to perform even simple tasks after graduating is a very deep concern within our communities, which we would like our legislators to address and reassess much more closely than what you have.

Our dollars in our community, much of it comes from taxation, much of it is local. You have heard our school board report to you on the amount of money the State is spending on the North Slope. At the same time, it is very difficult looking at the flow of those dollars and looking at the State's regulatory requirements in addressing our community needs and regulating our schools. I think, and from our prospective or especially from mine, this type of performance is a disgrace to our State. It should be a disgrace to our Legislators. You are the ultimate decision makers who are funding our schools, who are is funding our education. And you are the people who we look to to provide us the type program we need. I am sorry if I may sound a little bit harsh, but this is the reality of our situation.

I would also recommend in consideration of the rural Alaska that the Legislature consider reviewing the ICC Arctic policy on education. I think you would find this a very useful tool in your deliberations, especially in consideration of rural schools. And it may change some of your philosophy toward education. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you, Ronald. Representative Koponen.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

Have you or other employers, been invited into the classroom at any level, by administrators or teachers to stress to the children the kind of skills they will need in the world of work?

RONALD BROWER:

Well, it is become of the situation that we as the corporation have taken the step to be a participant in our school. We are taking that step voluntarily on our own.

REPRESENTATIVE NIILO KOPONEN:

The other question is, are the kids listening to you seriously.

RONALD BROWER:

Yes, they are. In fact, as a result of this direct participation, in employing some of these students, we have been able to prevent atleast four or five of our local students from dropping out of school.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

Excellent, I am glad to hear that. The other thing I understand essentially that you are recommending something like the State version of the National Defense Education Act, that specifically targeted certain skills, and required the districts to prove that they were able using the money given them to raise those skill levels.

RONALD BROWER:

Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you, Ronald.

RONALD BROWER:

I think that the State legislature consider that approach.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

And evaluate whether it is working or not.

RONALD BROWER:

Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Okay. Thank you, Ronald. And the next person to testify is Rex Okakok. After that, Reva Shircel.

REX OKAKOK, PARENT, BARROW:

I always heard that politicians were full of hot air, and I can belief that tonight sitting back here, so hot.

[TESTIMONY BY REX OKAKOK]

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, Rex. Are there any comments or questions?  
Thank you.

REX OKAKOK:

I said, I would like to see some research and studies done to see to what extent the school board should have control over programs and what things the school advisory boards can have control over. Because you know, we hear a lot of villages want a lot more involvement in schools.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Excuse me, would you please come to the mic so that we could get you name for the record and your words. Thank you.

ROSE ISAAC:

Yes madame, my name is Rose Isaac, and since I neglected or forgot to sign in to testify, I think I will take advantage of the situation. I am from Tanacross, Alaska. That's in the interior of Alaska, located half way between Fairbanks and the Canadian border.

Today, in one of our workshops, I made a suggestion or made a request and I believe at that time, and I have been thinking about it all day, I think I opened, I thought I opened a hornets nest, or a can of worms. But now that I heard this gentleman say what he did, I don't think so. I believe that throughout the whole State of Alaska, I think I can safely say that most of our people need and want local control. We have local control. It looks real good on a piece of paper in black and white, but in reality we don't have local control. I sat on that advisory school board of my village for the last five years. All we are is advisory. That is the only thing we are. The board is thing that has control, the board that sets the curriculum, the people who decide what to teach my children are sometimes total strangers.

You have a big task before you, and I would like to suggest that you have listened to different people tonight, testifying on whatever their interest may be. For the record, I am strong advocate on education, any type of education. We need quality education, we need quality teachers. We need local people to control the schools. To have that authority to set policies and regulations for our schools, for the education of our children. And I don't think we have that. I'm not sure what the answer is. There are people who are going to disagree with what I am

saying, but I don't think I will back down because I firmly believe in what I am saying. I live in a village. I see how my....what progress, if any my kids are making in today's educational system. Some of our kids don't even know how to subtract. Recently, my son who is thirteen, started high school. I was lead to believe, just like this lady over here....[indisc.].....she attended every PTA meeting, every teacher conference. Where did she fail as a parent? I don't think she failed. I am telling you there is something definitely wrong with our educational system as it exists today. As it existed in the past. Especially, since the creation of how it is today.

I was educated in the BIA system. Many people will disagree with what I am saying. I had one BIA teacher with over thirty students, first grade through eighth grades, who taught me very well. Who also lead me to believe that I could be anything that I want to be. Not only within the village of Tanacross, but where ever I go in life, I can be what I want to be.

I have heard a teacher, educator tonight, saying that kids seems to think there is no point in education here in Barrow. I would like to disagree with that person. That is the kind of attitude that we need get out of our school system. We need to portray the attitude to our kids, the positive attitude, that they can be anything that they want to be regardless of where they go in life. Whether they are in a fish camp, whether they are in Anchorage, whether they are in Juneau. It is there choice!

I totally agree with Rex, and God, am I happy to hear him say that, because I think that we do need to restructure the system. The task is before you, and you need to take all of these factors, everything that you hear, and I'm asking you to absorb, trying to absorb it all with an open mind and try and not be biased in any way. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, Rose. Are there any questions or comments? Okay. Thank you. Reva. After that we will hear from Wendy Esmailka and then Sam Towarak, then Elsie Itta. Elsie will be the last one.

REVA SHIRCEL, EDUCATION DIRECTOR, TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE:

My name is Reva Shircel. I am the Education Director for the Tanana Chiefs Conference. This is my third presentation to your committee and I thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I appreciated also your giving Rose, a couple minutes of your time, because essentially what she said was what I was going to be saying anyway.

There are eight school districts within the Tanana Chiefs area. And we have successes on certain issues in

certain of the school districts. We have two school districts, where we are not to sure about having appropriate representation as school board members, we have another school district where we have no native teachers, at all, even though we have a total of forty-eight native teachers within the interior. We have problems with social promotion, where students are graduated or promoted to the next grade level for whatever reason, which hinders the students when they are ready to get into college or ready to get into adult vocational training. We have sent students outside of the State of Alaska, both in and out of the State of Alaska, and found out after we had sent them to the schools with our funds that they were on a fifth or sixth reading level and probably the same math level. And as result of that, these young adults returned home as failures although it wasn't any fault of theirs. It is like Ron Brower said, we have a system in place that is probably the best quality physical buildings are good quality, supposedly we have the best teachers there are, and yet there is something lacking.

We have a problem with tenure. We have many students or many teachers being hired sometimes through the administration with the different school districts or by school boards who tend to stay, or come up with their own ideas on how children should be educated in the villages. And that is a big problem. There is someone here tonight that talked of cross-cultural courses that should be required, and I agree with that concept and those should be required for teachers who come into any village. It is along the same concept of the Peace Corp, where you have to pretty much understand what the language is, what the culture is, what the tradition is of the place that you're going into. Tenure, we would like to throw, to abolish that system entirely. We believe that teaching children should be based on merit and of course there is going to be a big human cry over that, but we just can't condone having teachers staying in villages, you know, to the detriment of our children.

Social issues. I don't see any problems with schools coordinating efforts with other agencies. Social service agencies, with mental health agencies, with any appropriate agency that would focus and benefit the child, because we do have a high suicide rate. We just recently lost two young cousins on the Yukon, which was an alcohol related incident. It's a painful thing to see, to endure.

We need a lot of information, probably some monetary systems to get more education on drugs and alcohol. We, I guess, probably the most important thing would be the

language and the culture. It doesn't make any sense to me or to us in the Interior, that our children have to learn one way of life and one way of looking at things, especially in a location where they spend the majority of their time during the day. And I think that government agencies and entities everywhere should recognize the fact the indigenous people are people that are very fortunate indeed, for having a culture, two ways of looking at things, two ways of doing things, and have the capability, you know, because of their family or their elders, to be able to learn the second language, without any problems. I think that incorporating that two should be done in a wholistic manner. It shouldn't be done after hours, and I know that you have heard this before. I have said it many times before. I think it is time now to do something about it. I think that it is a good starting for our children to start building up their self-esteem and knowing, you know, beginning to realize where they come from and where there roots are.

The biggest recommendation that I would like to make is to initiate a reform of education for the students. Not only for native students, but for students, for other students as well, because I think the majority of our students are having some real problems adjusting to the way of life that we have today. And you need to start acting on that right away. Again, thank you.

SENATOR AL ADAMS:

Are there any questions?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

Is your position that because of tenure, you can not discharge teachers that you don't feel are doing a good job. Is that your problem with tenure?

REVA SHIRCEL:

We have gotten rid certain teachers, even though they have had tenure. It has been done through the evaluation process and through documentation. I don't think that is the only way you can do it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

So are saying that it is just too difficult to go through that process.

REVA SHIRCEL:

It is extremely difficult. Sometimes it takes as long as two years. And yet, that person is in the classroom,

probably to the detriment of students. And I think that that's probably the main reason we would like to have them on a merit system.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Are there any other questions? Thank you, Reva.

JEANIE NELSON, TEACHER, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT:

I'm Jeanie Nelson. The question that I had is that I have been here since 7:30 pm, and I understood it was a public meeting and I didn't realize that we had to sign up to talk, and I have to teach school tomorrow, so I would like to know if there is a chance that I could speak tonight.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

You could submit written testimony and we did have a sign-up sheet right at the end, but we accept written testimony. Okay, thank you, Jeanie. We could also put you down, Jeanie, tonight if you would like to testify. We have three other people. Wendy Esmailka, after that Sam Towarak, Elsie Itta and Jeanie Nelson.

WENDY ESMAILKA, DIRECTOR, INTERIOR CAMPUS, UAF:

My name is Wendy Esmailka. I am the director of the Interior Campus which is the sister campus to Chaichi and the step-sister to the North Slope Higher Education Center, I would like to thank the Joint Committee for hearing me and also for the people of Barrow for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

One of the programs that the Interior Campus offers as well as the rest of the College of Rural Alaska offers the teacher education program which off campus is known as EXCEED. We have had some success over the past twenty years in the Interior in graduation of a number of teachers. I think Reva said forty-eight teachers in the Interior. Fortunately, many of them are employed as teachers in the Interior. Several of them have not been employed in the Interior for reasons that are unclear to a lot of us. I understand that there is a bill in the House and I apologize for not having adequate information. I heard it on the plane into Barrow from Jim, that there is a bill in the House that is requesting an affirmative action policy for school districts. The University of Alaska has an affirmative action policy, which the Interior Campus joins in having goals set at all levels of administration, faculty and classified staff. And as the Director of the Interior Campus, although I don't represent the Interior

Education Council, I don't think. I would strongly support an affirmative action policy in the schools.

I know that, although many teachers have been employed in the Interior and the North Slope and in many other communities. We are currently facing a backlash in the Interior from school districts that will go unnamed on the record. We are hearing from districts, they've reached some sort of quota of unknown numbers, we are hearing from districts that they are dissatisfied with the teachers, native teachers that they have hired, we are hearing from districts that they are refusing or are quite negative about native teachers, native teacher education students doing their student teaching in the villages, particularly in their home villages. It just seems to be getting stronger and stronger and it's ironic that the backlash is coming from districts that in the past had history of hiring quite a few native teachers.

There are a number of other difficulties in helping native teacher education students attain there certification and I would also support any legislation that's purposed, that involves forgiveness loans. Most of the students that we serve in the Interior are women that about my age with several children. They are involved with subsistence activities, church activities. Some of them have full time jobs. All of them are full time busy. All of them are committed to their education, and many of them simply can't afford to go to school, even with grants, even with assistance from the corporation. They are afraid to take loans because they are afraid that they won't be able to pay them back, and consequently, people are deciding not to go to school. I don't think in the Interior that we can afford to let those people go by, and not to be able to get a teacher education degree simply because they can not afford it.

As a parent, I have two young children. We live in Fairbanks. My little children have little or no opportunity in Fairbanks to have native teachers, and I feel that they're deprived. I know of certified native teachers that live in Fairbanks that haven't been hired by the schools. And, while this isn't a direct criticism of the Fairbanks North Star Borough as opposed to any other school district, I think that if there were affirmative action policies in place, that we would see more teachers in Fairbanks and in the rural districts. I think that we have to do absolutely everything we can do to assist people from the Interior and the other districts of the State, to get people into the schools. And if affirmative action policies help, if forgiveness loans help, then I'm for it. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, Wendy. Are there any questions or comments? Okay. Sam Towarak.

SAM TOWARAK, ADMINISTRATOR, BERING STRAIT SCHOOL DISTRICT:

My name is Sam Towarak. I'm from Unalakleet, Alaska. I work as Administrator for the Bering Strait School District, however, I am going to speak in the capacity as an individual, as I was unprepared.

I have given a talk before to this committee, and I will just reiterate two points that I have, insight of what has transpired since.

The first point is real simple. It deals with the capital improvement program dealing with schools. I would like to talk with you with regard to that as it relates to school performance. And the other is to retrace the history of the REAA's and how we have come to 1989, as it again relates to school performance. One of the advantages of speaking late, is that you may not ask any questions, and the other is that less people that need to put up with what you say.

The capital improvement programs for the REAA's for the last three years has been very nil, as near as I can tell. Because not been as rapid as the cities, I'm sorry the municipalities and boroughs. I was pleased to see that Wainwright just dedicated their school, and then Barrow will be getting a middle school, and they are now planning for a 1992 completion date. We in the REAA's can't do that. We know that the State has spent one hundred and ten million dollars for municipalities and boroughs. And this is good, but it diminishes the ability of the REAA's with regard to quality of education. And I think that school performance is that. We are basically dealing with the quality of education. I have a school in Gamble, which is on St. Lawrence Island. Pretty soon, we are going to be visa-free. We will have natives being able to visit there for a few days and possibly student exchanges on the island. But we have a school there that is overcrowded and they are going to see that as an example of the education program that we deliver. I think that more than anything, the parents in that school have been waiting and within the last three years, we have told them they are number ten, they are number twelve. It doesn't look like we'll get funded for next year. That is pretty hopeless. And what is happened, what is happened as an aggregate over one year and then the next year of no CIP programs, is that we are coming to a critical point in the REAA's building programs, possibly three to five years from now in which we will be dealing with dilapidated school buildings. Most of the buildings that we've acquired are old BIA buildings that have code problems. And, while the Barrow area has those

particular BIA schools also, they are now upgrading and changing over, and also probably the Nenana region will be not to far behind, once they figure out the tricks of bonding.

I think that I don't need to correlate too much the need for new schools to be built in rural Alaska. I do need to let you know that the quality of education will be affected; thirty-five years from now you will start hearing some complaints from people, and it will be pretty critical. I was glad you funded Unalakleet school. We were about to be flooded out. Every fall we get the rains into our buildings, and we once had Governor Sheffield observing rain coming down the kitchen, rusting our stove. It was a good sight for him to see. We hoped when Cowper went by to see the Gamble Elementary School, but he only went up to the high school, and I don't know if he wanted to see the elementary school. But the Russians did, and I think they got a favorable impression of the particular school.

But then I want to go back to my second point, which is the history of the REAA's. You know they started, I hope I've got the right dates, 1976. And that has been like thirteen years. And so last year was the first year in which we have had a K-12 student graduate from those REAA's. And then any organization, they are open to criticism because they are fairly new system. School systems across the country are a little bit older. And it would be fair to criticize those people, and I think it is fair to criticize the REAA's. I think they have come a long way, on the other hand I think they have a long way to go. And each school system is different across the board. The point that I want to make is that while we are only, we have had only one graduation class, graduating as a result of the REAA's, I helped start a Molly Hooch school. We started that from scratch, and I pity the high school students that went there in their freshman year of school, because it was tough. It wasn't a very easy situation.

We have since improved. In the last three to five years, I have heard REAA's and borough rural school districts talking about academic excellence, talking about improvement of the quality of education, talking about the concern, and it is at the board level, it isn't at the teacher level, it isn't at the administrative level, it is at the board level where parents and community members have expressed concern for education. And it was real good to hear the business portion. I have also noticed in the State now businessmen are starting to hop on the band wagon. I know in this summer, we listened to Barney and I believe a lady from the Jean Buchanan from the Anchorage School Board. And it is real good to hear that business people are now becoming concerned about the education, the

quality of education, as it relates to their employers. And for me, I want to encourage it, and I hope you guys in your report include some concern on the part of those constituents as they express their views. It will challenge the schools that are currently operating. And I sympathize with the parents that have seen their kids possibly graduated three to five years ago, and yet understand that these kids were possibly educated in the BIA school and possibly educated in the start of a REAA, in which case maybe possibly wasn't a very good situation. But I have seen also within the REAA itself, an improvement in the way we deliver education. And it is becoming so formal and as I worked as a principal and I can see the changes that I affected and what I do in my, as a teacher and as well as an administrator when I was a principal. I used a gauge class, and I picked on the kindergarten and I followed those kids through to see if my evaluation of how I was doing. I followed them for three years, and now they are into fifth grade. I am seeing how some other results of which I did, that they are now in the fifth grade, that they go on. It was the same thing for the basketball program, which is really ....[indisc.]....understand in rural Alaska. When I got there, I started a basketball program with my community education program so that it was more of an instruction type thing and they grew up to be pretty good kids in the elementary grades as to athletic instruction. The point is, now that we have graduated class this year, our seniors are the product of the first day of instruction for that particular program, for that athletic program that we started in the elementary school. So in essence, we have four years of kids that have taken the basketball program, and I'm willing to bet you that we are going to be State's small school champs this year.

TAPE 3, SIDE 1

....[Tape change. Text lost.]....doing manuals, going over and redoing organizations. And if REAA's were a profit making corporation, and we restructured them, I would assume that there would be some expense to go into restructuring, which means more money from you. And then a plan to do it. And give us time to establish that plan. A good example of planning was standardized testing. We only had one year to get ready. And we are going to be criticized for standardized testing. Fault testing at that. We are going to go to the Legislature and our kids are going to be as good as they could be for the amount of preparation we had in one year. Great expectations and I hope we deliver them.

That's basically what I wanted to say as far as, and I hope I related the historical reference as it relates to school performance and any changes that you may affect in rural education. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you very much, Sam. Any comments or questions?  
Thank you, Sam. Elsie Itta.

ELSIE ITTA, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT:

I'm Elsie Itta. I'm speaking for myself this evening. I work for the school district. I have been their employee for the last ten years, or eleven years. I'm an Inupiat. I am from Barrow. I certainly would like to talk in Inupiaq, but for the sake of those of you who can't understand Inupiaq, I will speak in English. Even as having just gotten my masters, I still feel a little bit uncomfortable talking in English. But I prefer to speak in my Inupiaq language, however, I am going to talk in English.

I was born and raised here in Barrow. I went through BIA school system. And my situation was a little bit different because I was raised in an extended family situation and therefore had a lot of support from my relatives. And when I was going to school, I had a lot of support at that respect to from the teachers we had. And because I like to speak up when something was wrong, I spoke up and got sent to the principles office often. But I felt that our teacher had to know somethings and we just couldn't just be quiet about it. I don't know if that part of me comes from having a great grandfather who was non-native, I forget that once in a while when I start getting political and native.

But I have taught in the school district as a teacher. I have worked in the Inupiaq Department in the bilingual program, worked on materials and I have taught in the Inupiat classroom, also. Then recently, I worked as a college student advisor for the students who were dropping out going to college and it was such a high rate of drop-out, not only from this region, but it seemed to be high in other regions also. But I guess my point tonight of speaking, coming up here and speaking, I think of my thirty-six other classmates, who never went on, well there was a couple of us who went on to college. That's two out of thirty-six. Which is a very small percentage when you think about it, that we had such a good education from BIA school system. But I feel for some reason, how come my other classmates failed within the first three weeks of college. Everyone of them could have completed that college degree. I had classmates who could have become civil engineers, teachers, whatever. And all my time, I have gotten my degrees, that has bothered me. Why all these colleagues of mine, my classmates for twelve years, I hate to say it, but were left behind. And they had, I feel they had all the attributes to go on beyond and get their

degrees, and then when I started reevaluating my situation why I went on, the main thing that keeps coming back is this: That from childhood, even with my mom's fifth grade education, she taught me one thing, that this responsibility thing. She taught me that you have certain chores to do and you take care of them, and from there on you take care what happens. At the same time, that religious aspect of my person, we had it strong in those days, too. Where the values were strong, and now in that time, at that time, when we were growing up we had a grandparent in most of our homes, and that grandparent or parents taught us some cultural values that we live with now days. And there again, it comes back to that responsibility of your actions, of your own person.

And I feel that the school if it had played any role in helping us in becoming responsible, I feel that our parents, my mother had a lot to do with teaching us that thing that made me pull through those years of going on to higher ed. She still supported me, and fortunately last year, even though I am a mother myself, but she was still there. She expected me to finish. But it is that parent support that is so important. I'm a parent now and I don't think I let my children go more than a month or so letting them know of my own expectations of them. That I expect my daughter to go college, in a way she has no choice, and I expect my son to do something similar higher, going on beyond high school.

Being a teacher, having being a teacher, do I expect the school to teach the entire responsibilities to my kids. I would say, yes I expect that, but I at the same time as a parent, because I was taught to be responsible, will take that responsibility too. And so when they don't get their homework done, my children fifth and second grade, we check on them, both of us, my husband and myself. And I feel I don't get on my kids case to the point where I'm forcing them, but to nurture it.

I think it is very important, not when they just start school, but this is way back when they are just born. Because research has told us that kids go easily into reading when you start teaching them reading, when they are born or even before they are born. I had my own, because I never liked to read. Believe it or not, I never learned how to read until about four or five years ago. I read because I had too! That wasn't something I liked, but I did it. But not until four or five years ago, is when I finally liked to learn to read. I read to my oldest when she was six month. I started reading to her, I wanted to see what this research was about and see if it was going to tell me the truth. When it was time for her to start reading in first grade, there was no problem. But that was just one child. And then we did it again with our second

child. And because of the nature of our home situation last year, I was very concerned for my son, because he was going to be in first grade. That meant that he was going to be expected to read. And because our home was such that I was away from home eighty percent of the time, my husband helped in the meantime. I was very worried of what he was going to do. I was so afraid. And if he failed, I was going to blame me. When I heard that he was reading, within a few weeks of entry into first grade, I couldn't believe it. I had to hear it for my own ears. So when I came home during a break, and he read to me, that's when I was convinced that when you read to children when they are so tiny, it's so important but its, as native parent, teacher, administrator, there's so many things going on, as I listen to so much testimony tonight. So much turmoil, saying well our teachers in Alaska should have this and this, our teachers here. I understand everything. I understand, but having to be equal, having to like to be equal, to be fair, if I was placed in a situation where I would just coming out, and getting certified, I would wonder at that time, should I take Alaskan studies, should I take multi-culture education, when I myself has been a subject all my twelve years, in bilingual multi-cultural education. Because we have had to learn English, when Inupiaq was your first language.

And, there are just so many things going through my head. I had to say my piece tonight, because I just couldn't sit back and be quiet having been Alaskan native, a teacher, and working in a place where it is my home town, where it is open to anything. And I take full responsibility for who I am, for my position, for my teaching career, for my administrative career. I acknowledge Ida's comment. I was one of her son's teachers. Her eldest son, teacher. And I take full responsibility for that. And we talk about teacher certification, and you, we talk tonight about getting more Alaskan native teachers. Which brings to my mind, the certification process. Sure, we need more Alaskan native teachers. When I look at the statistics, and I don't like to talk about statistics, but when it comes down to money and all that, I think it is what people look at.

And I see in 1987-88 year, Alaskan native teacher population was 2.9% of the State. I just wonder to myself, what would be the most expeditious way to get that number up to even 5%, much less 10%. I would like to pick about 50%, but we would have to do something drastic to get it up there. I mean drastic, something beyond teachers scholarship loan program. I think that something like that can happen. I am currently working with teacher certification program here on the North Slope. Recently, I just went to a small village and talked with a group of seven teacher-aides. And because I had gotten used to this

whole terminology of college, and I take for granted a lot that anyone can understand what college is all about. The ladies took me back to when I didn't know what college was about. I had to back track and tell them, because it seemed such an intimidating situation for them. And I had to really get off my professional self and just be my native self, which fortunately I am an Inupiat. And I thank my stars I am. And that I can talk in Inupiaq with the ladies, and just act normal. And they showed an interest that they would want to get certified, but they would like a full time facilitator on site, all the time. And we need that kind of thing in all our villages. Someone to help these people, someone to mentor them. 'Cause someone from a district wide bases can't do it all alone. I certainly don't think I going to do it all alone. If I think I can, then I'm quitting my job tomorrow. I can't do it all alone. We need on site facilitators. We need programs you can do during the summers, when they aren't working, and support their tuition, their stipends. Encourage them. But 2.9% is far off number from 50%.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Thank you, Elsie. Any comments or questions?

SHIRLEY MOSES, TEACHER, LIME VILLAGE, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT:

I'm Shirley Moses and I am currently teaching in Lime Village with the Iditarod School District. I would like to speak as a parent, because I have four children, I have a vested interest in our students in rural Alaska.

When we talk about students at-risk, I feel like going up and grabbing people sometimes and they say you know we are students at-risk and you've got to help them. I think the people that are at-risk should be the school boards that hire teachers, that are incompetent, or not fully prepared to come out and teach our children.

We need to have more community involvement in the say and hiring of teachers. And more say in the curriculum that's taught in the schools. You know a lot\ of parents don't get involved because they feel threatened by any teacher that comes in or administrator that comes in, that has a written curriculum, that's set. They are afraid to challenge that, because they don't know there rights or responsibilities as parents or as community people. I would like to see some sort of grass-roots organization that is made up of native community members, both, it could be a mixture of make-up of nonprofit people that are interested in education, profit making entities, having someone on staff to work in facilitating getting information our to communities, so that parents are more up

on what is happening in education and what laws are being enacted that will have an impact on education.

I think we talk about, we want to have parent involvement, let's get some information out to them so they won't feel so threatened when we, or even I as a native teacher come out and try to stir things, I don't really stir things up, but I like to see parents feel good about sending their kids to school. Feel like they have, they can come up to me and say, I would like to see this done, or I have a suggestion. I don't like to see parents stay at home, because they don't feel like they can walk into the school and have something to say. I think that we as native people, native educators, native parents, should start thinking about looking out beyond our little realm of our school or our community, and get together and network. We have got a lot of young talented parents, community people, who have put a lot into education. But yet, we are at these hearings, and we're sitting here wondering what we can do to make education better and stronger in native Alaska, in rural Alaska.

Why don't we start up a grass roots organization of people that have time to commit themselves to looking at alternatives to education. It's not, you know, the REAA's have been only in existence for thirteen years. That's like a new born infant when you look at a time line. And I think that we are going to be meeting like this for the next thirty or forty years, if we don't start getting our own native people involved in looking at the process and looking at empowerment of our schools.

We have very few native administrators. Those are the positions that we could have a great affect on. And the people would have the power to go in and talk, organize changes and to facilitate ideas that come into the community.

We have got to quit pointing our fingers at one or the other. I'm caught in the middle. I'm going into school administration, I should be finishing up my masters in administration next spring, yet I want to be in the classroom, because I know that is where I can really have an impact. Right now, the current system doesn't allow many native people to have a real impact in rural settings, because the people that are sitting on the boards are, they have been institutionalized. They get elected by the people, yes, and they have good intentions of representing the people, but who are the people that tell them what things they can do. It is administration, school administration. The superintendents and the people that are in the district office that give, go over rules and regulations, they'll go over what ever they want the people to know. But unless the person has time and spends a lot

of effort, they don't know what , they don't know the school regs, and they don't know what powers they have. That's got to change if we are going to make an impact in education. That's all I have to say.

REPRESENTATIVE EILEEN MACLEAN:

Thank you, Shirley. Are there any questions or comments?

REPRESENTATIVE KOPONEN:

Just one comment. I hate to take up the time, but I would like to tell you that when I was at the University some thirty odd years ago or so, I think a greater percentage of my classmates were native and went into teaching, and that has been the case for a longtime since. They did find at that time, it very difficult situation, in going back to their home villages, because they were then young people trying to take the role of an older elder. The situation has changed largely, but not in every case.

But remember that we then got succeeded in getting the Native Land Claims through the help of various activists and everybody, and the fact that the oil pipeline. And there was a need for talented people in all of the corporations and all of the .....not just the regional corporations, but the profit making corporations, the village corporations. And then we had the pipeline and the oil boom and there was much money to be made in those kind of things. During that period, I was working for Head Start, having to reduce my salary in order to keep the program going, and trying to recruit folks at the public schools and for Head Start. And I could recruit very young people and older people, but the class of people, the age group of people who had been my classmates, like [indisc.] Albert Ivy and Jerry Ivy, who were one of my student teachers and Bella Hammond and the others. They had other jobs that paid more or were more important to the community at that time. Things will change because we don't have the oil boom any more, and the corporations and the regional corporations are now in place. But there was a whole period, that even if we had wanted to, and we did want to, some of us anyway, we just couldn't find the people because there were other demands for those kind of talented native people.

You see some of them in positions of power now, might have ended up teaching in class, or running a school.

REPRESENTATIVE MACLEAN:

Okay. Thank you. Any other comments? This will conclude our hearing, and I would to thank everybody that

has been here, and all the reports will be sent to the people who have signed up. And if you want a report, please sign up with Helen Pootoogooluk or Dr. Darnell.

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 Everitt     | 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                                    |

Dorothy 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