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REMARKS TO:

ALASKA'S SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC POLICY:
A STATE-WIDE CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 16, 1983

BY

JAMES M. SCHLEGEL
SPECIAL PROGRAMS DIRECTOR
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN IN THE AUDIENCE, I AM VERY PLEASED AND HONORED TO BE HERE THIS AFTERNOON. PLEASED AND HONORED AND MORE THAN JUST A LITTLE ANXIOUS.

I'M NOT JUST ANXIOUS FOR THOSE REASONS YOU MAY SUSPECT, REASONS BEING THIS PUBLIC SPEAKING PROCESS, BUT BECAUSE I BELIEVE, WE FACE NOW, PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT TIME IN THE HISTORY OF ALASKA VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THIS CONFERENCE AS WELL AS OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY, SUCH AS THE STATE FINANCE STUDY, WILL IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS SHAPE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DELIVERY FOR OUR GREAT STATE.

THE PURPOSE OF MY REMARKS, AS WELL AS THOSE OF MY FELLOW PANEL MEMBERS, IS TO HELP ADDRESS THE QUESTION-CAN ALASKA TRAIN ALASKANS FOR ALASKA'S JOBS? MY REMARKS TO YOU WILL REFLECT ONLY A KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELVETH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP THAT IN MIND AS YOU LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.

I BELIEVE THE QUESTION AT HAND IS REALLY A QUESTION OF EFFECTIVENESS UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS. IF WE RETAIN THE STATUS QUO REGARDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THEN I THINK THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION CAN ALASKA TRAIN ALASKANS FOR ALASKA'S JOBS IS "NOT VERY WELL AND ONLY IN A FRAGMENTED MANNER." IF HOWEVER SOME REASONABLE CHANGES ARE BROUGHT ABOUT THEN THE RESPONSE WOULD BE "MOST CERTAINLY, ALASKA CAN TRAIN ALASKANS FOR ALASKA'S JOBS!"

FIRST, I BELIEVE THAT ALL INVOLVED HAVE TO COME TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE NOTATION THAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS DIFFERENT FROM GENERAL EDUCATION. IT IS DIFFERENT IN IT'S CHARGE/MISSION, DIFFERENT IN IT'S METHODS, AND DIFFERENT IN IT'S ACCOUNTABILITY/MEASUREMENT.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT AND VITAL. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS CRUCIAL TO THIS COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC HEALTH. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS EXPENSIVE. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION LACKS LEADERSHIP

AND COMMITMENT.

IT'S BEEN MY OBSERVATION IN THE YEARS I'VE WORKED WITH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THAT NEARLY 100% OF MAJOR DECISIONS, BOTH LONG-TERM POLICY AS WELL AS DAY-TO-DAY, WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CONTINUE TO BE MADE BY NON-VOCATIONALLY TRAINED PERSONNEL. THIS APPEARS TO ME TO BE TRUE WITH THE FEDERAL LEVEL, AT THE STATE LEVEL, AND PERHAPS, MOST IMPORTANTLY, AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

LET ME PROVIDE YOU AN ANALOGY, WOULD IT MAKE SENSE TO YOU TO:

- 1) ESTABLISH A MEDICAL PRACTICE IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY
- 2) PROVIDE COMPETENT MEDICALLY TRAINED STAFF, AND THEN HAVE THE DECISIONS REGARDING TREATMENT OF CLIENTS MADE BY NON-MEDICAL PERSONNEL?

OF COURSE NOT-YET WE CONTINUE TO ASSUME THAT THE SAME PROCESS USED TO MANAGE SAY THE INSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES IS EQUALLY APPROPRIATE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT JUST ISN'T SO: AND FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO CHANGE MUCH LESS FLOURISH, THEN THIS ATTITUDE MUST BE CHANGED!

ONE FUNDAMENTAL-PERVASIVE PROBLEM REGARDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SYSTEM IS THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE, BACKGROUND, AND EVEN BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL SUPPORT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. TOO MANY LEADERS TAKE AN ELITIST'S POSITION REGARDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, COMMUNICATING IF NOT ACTUALLY SAYING, "VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS FOR SOMEONE'S ELSE'S CHILDREN" OR THAT "VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS SOME PLACE TO PUT KIDS WHO CAN'T CUT IT WITH ACADEMICS."

PERHAPS THE BITTER COMPLAINT WHICH I ONCE OVER HEARD IS ALL TOO TRUE-"VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS MERELY THE BABY LEFT ON EDUCATION'S DOORSTEP."

IT MAY BE TRUE THAT QUALITY GENERAL EDUCATION CAN FLOURISH WITHOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BUT I CAN GUARANTEE YOU THAT QUALITY VOCATION-

AL EDUCATION CAN NOT FLOURISH WITHOUT QUALITY GENERAL EDUCATION. I BELIEVE A WORTHWHILE OBJECTIVE OF SCHOOLS TODAY IS TO ESTABLISH A GOAL WHEREBY EACH HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE COMPLETE THE EXPERIENCE WITH A MARKETABLE SKILL. I CAN NOT UNDERSTAND ANY SYSTEM, WHICH AFTER 12.5 YEARS, COULD STILL PRODUCE A GRADUATE NOT PREPARED TO APPLY SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE WORLD OF WORK IN A PRODUCTIVE MANNER. TO ME THAT IS NOTHING SHORT OF EDUCATIONAL FRAUD.

THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF ANY SOCIETY RESTS ON THE ABILITY OF IT'S WORK FORCE TO PRODUCE IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER. WHY THEN IS THE VERY LEGITIMACY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION STILL A MATTER FOR PHILOSOPHIC DEBATE? PERHAPS A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE TO EACH OF US INTERESTED IN, OR INVOLVED WITH, EDUCATION IS THAT WHILE LEARNING FOR LEARNING'S SAKE, OR FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEXT LEVEL OF SCHOOLING, IS CERTAINLY A WORTHY ENDEAVOR-THE REAL CHALLENGE IS TO COUPLE TEACHING OF SKILLS WITH AN APPLICATION OF THOSE SKILLS TAUGHT.

WE HAVE HEARD MENTIONED AT THIS CONFERENCE AS WELL AS OBSERVED IN VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS REFERENCE TO A NUMBER OF STUDIES OF EDUCATION. THE STUDY QUOTED MOST OFTEN IS A NATION AT RISK. LET ME PRESENT TO YOU A QUOTE FROM THE NATION AT RISK REPORT. "MORE AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE EMERGE FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY NEITHER FOR COLLEGE NOR FOR WORK." AGAIN FROM A NATION AT RISK-"SHODDINESS IS TOO OFTEN REFLECTED IN OUR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES."

FROM ANOTHER REPORT TITLED HIGH SCHOOL: A REPORT ON SECONDARY EDUCATION IN AMERICA (OFTEN REFERRED TO THE CARNEGIE REPORT) ONE OF THE TWELVE PRIORITIES MENTIONED IN THE STUDY WAS AS FOLLOWS: "THE HIGH SCHOOL SHOULD HELP ALL STUDENTS MOVE WITH CONFIDENCE FROM SCHOOL TO WORK AND FURTHER EDUCATION." IN OTHER WORDS-THE MAJOR FUNCTION OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOLING PROCESS IS TO PROVIDE A TRANSITION TO WORK AND LEARNING.

I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY THERE IS A CRYING CONCERN REGARDING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTRY. IN PREPARING MY REMARKS FOR TODAY, I DID A REVIEW OF SOME OF THE HEADLINES IN A PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATION WHICH I RECEIVE WEEKLY. BEAR WITH ME FOR A MOMENT AS I SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF THOSE HEADLINES:

- POLITICAL DISPUTE SIDETRACKS VOC ED AUTHORIZATION HIKE
- EDUCATION KEY TO BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS, EXECUTIVES SAY
- 1984 FUNDING BILL WOULD CUT EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
- ASSOCIATION MAKES AWARDS FOR INDUSTRY-EDUCATION COOPERATION
- TRADE SCHOOLS ENROLLMENT JUMPS THIS FALL
- CORPORATE PROGRAMS GIVE JAPAN EDGE IN TECHNICAL TRAINING
- GRANTS AFFECT DECISION TO ATTEND VOCATIONAL SCHOOL-STUDY SAYS
- REHABILITATION OFFICIAL CALLS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN TRAINING
- EMPLOYMENT EXPERT WARNS AGAINST OVER EMPHASIS ON HIGH TECH
- BUSINESS ROLE IN VOC ED HAS LIMITS-EXPERT WARNS
- COMPUTERS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH
- EL DEPARTMENT SITES TEN VOC ED PROGRAMS FOR EXCELLENCE
- CONGRESS EXPLORES SCOPE AND NATURE OF WORKER DISPLACEMENT
- CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS CRITICIZE VOC ED LAYOFFS
- YOUTH EMPLOYMENT WILL NOT GO AWAY-FOUNDATION PREDICTS
- WHITE HOUSE PRODUCTIVITY CONFERENCE WILL ADDRESS TRAINING.

ALL THIS SINCE SEPTEMBER OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

IN ANOTHER TYPE OF REPORT, VOCATIONAL STUDENTS RESPONDED TO THE COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION: VOCATIONAL STUDENTS, REPRESENTING OVER 275,000 STUDENT MEMBERS OF THE VOCATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CLUBS OF AMERICA (VICA), DELIVERED THEIR PUBLISHED RESPONSE TO A NATION AT RISK TO CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AND REAGAN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS. VICA IS THE FIRST ORGANIZATION OF STUDENTS TO RESPOND TO THE COMMISSION'S REPORT. PRESIDENT REAGAN AND SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, BELL, BOTH EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HEARING VICA STUDENTS REACTIONS TO THE REPORT WHILE ATTENDING VICA'S JUNE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.

THE STUDENT'S REPORT STATES THAT, AS VOCATIONAL STUDENTS FROM BOTH SECONDARY AND POST SECONDARY PROGRAMS, THEY VALUE THEIR VOCATIONAL TRAINING. THEY CONSIDER THE TIME THEY SPEND LEARNING AS CRUCIAL, AND ANY SHORT COMINGS IN THEIR EDUCATION WILL HAVE A DIRECT AND LASTING IMPACT ON THEIR FUTURES. THEY FULLY SUPPORT RENEWED EMPHASIS ON INSTRUCTION IN BASICS, BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF THEIR VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

ON THE ISSUE OF CURRICULUM, STUDENTS RESPONDED THAT THEY NEED THE NEW BASICS FOR THEIR VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE BASICS SHOULD BE COVERED BEFORE THEY BEGIN THEIR VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL. SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED THAT THEY BE IN A POSITION TO EARN A LIVING WAGE WITH THEIR VOCATIONAL SKILLS WHEN THEY GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

IN THE AREA OF TIME SPENT IN SCHOOL, THE CONSENSUS OF THE STUDENTS WAS THAT THE AMOUNT OF TIME WAS NOT SO MUCH THE PROBLEM AS THE COMPLETE UTILIZATION OF THAT TIME. "QUALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN QUANTITY," IN THE WORDS OF THE REPORT.

THE REPORT WAS COMPILED FROM THE WRITTEN RESPONSES PREPARED BY 288 NATIONAL STUDENT DELEGATES DURING TASK FORCE MEETINGS AT THE JUNE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE. THEIR RESPONSES REPRESENTED THE INPUT OF MORE THAN 2500 ELECTED DELEGATES FROM THROUGHOUT THE U.S. WHO ATTENDED THAT MEETING.

THE VOCATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CLUBS OF AMERICA (VICA) IS THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENTS IN TRADE, INDUSTRIAL, TECHNICAL, AND HEALTH OCCUPATIONS VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS, AND JUNIOR AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

THE CHALLENGE FOR ALL ASSOCIATED WITH VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ALASKA IS TO WORK TO FOSTER A CLIMATE CONDUCIVE TO INCREASING THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR OCCUPATIONAL PREPARATION-SUPPORT FOR MERGING THE TEACHING OF THEORY WITH PRACTICE.

I BELIEVE THE FIRST REQUIREMENT FOR BETTER CLIMATE IS AGREEMENT ON, AND SUPPORT OF, TIME PROVEN STANDARDS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. THERE ARE ELEVEN COMMON ELEMENTS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WHICH I BELIEVE REQUIRE LOCAL AND STATE QUALITY STANDARDS:

- PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
- INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY
- FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT
- SCHOOL-COMMUNITY INTERFACE
- STUDENT SERVICES
- VOCATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS
- SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS
- EVALUATION
- INSTRUCTIONAL STAFFING
- ADMINISTRATION
- FISCAL MANAGEMENT

EACH OF THESE FUTURE STANDARDS MUST ADDRESS CERTAIN SUBELEMENTS. I WILL ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE SOME OF THOSE SUBELEMENTS FOR EACH OF THE FOREGOING ELEVEN STANDARDS AREAS.

STANDARD ELEMENT NUMBER ONE: PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) OCCUPATIONAL TASK ANALYSIS SUPPORTING ALL VOCATIONAL CURRICULUM B) IDENTIFICATION OF ENTRY-LEVEL JOB REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS C) ANNUAL AND LONG-RANGE LOCAL AND STATE-WIDE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLANS. AS AN EXAMPLE OF LOCAL PLANNING WHICH DOES CONTAIN CERTAIN SUBELEMENTS I HAVE AVAILABLE HERE TODAY A COPY OF OUR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PLAN FOR THE FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT AND WILL BE HAPPY TO SHARE A COPY WITH ANY OF YOU WHO ARE INTERESTED. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PICK THEM UP FOLLOWING THIS SESSION.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER TWO: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) CURRICULUM CONTENT BUILT UPON ENTRY-LEVEL JOB REQUIREMENTS B) DELIVERY UTILIZING COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WHERE APPROPRIATE C) CURRICULUM DELIVERY UTILIZING COMMUNITY RESOURCES AS INTEGRAL PARTNERS D) CURRICULUM REINFORCING THE IMPORTANCE OF BASIC SKILLS.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER THREE: FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT APPROPRIATE TO INDUSTRY STANDARDS B) SYSTEMATIC MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT FOR EQUIPMENT C) INSURE SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS NECESSARY TO SUPPORT APPROPRIATE TRAINING.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER FOUR: SCHOOL-COMMUNITY INTERFACE SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) INVOLVE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES IN PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT B) ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN DISTRICT-WIDE VOCATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL C) ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEES WHERE APPROPRIATE D) PERIODIC INDUSTRY NEEDS STUDY E) ENTRY-LEVEL SKILLS STUDY AS BASIS FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION F) UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY AS A RESOURCE FOR PROGRAM DELIVERY.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER FIVE: STUDENT SERVICES SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) STUDENT CAREER INFORMATION B) STUDENT ASSESSMENT (TESTING-INTEREST, APTITUDE, ACHIEVEMENT) C) PLACEMENT D) FOLLOW UP BOTH STUDENT AND EMPLOYER E) STUDENT RECRUITMENT F) CAREER GUIDANCE.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER SIX: VOCATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) RECOGNITION OF THE CO-CURRICULAR NATURE AND B) PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND RECOGNITION OF ACTIVITIES, FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO PERHAPS ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH ALASKA'S VSLO GROUPS LET ME ENUMERATE THEM FOR YOU:

1. DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION CLUBS OF AMERICA (DECA)
2. FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA (FFA)
3. FUTURE HOMEMAKERS OF AMERICA (FHA)
4. OFFICE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (OEA)
5. VOCATIONAL INDUSTRIAL CLUBS OF AMERICA (VICA)

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER SEVEN: SPECIAL NEEDS SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) HANDICAPPED B) DISADVANTAGED, BOTH ACA-

DEMIC AND ECONOMIC C) SEX EQUITY AND SEX-ROLE STEROTYPING ISSUES D) SUPPORT SUPPLEMENTAL/REMEDIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER EIGHT: EVALUATION SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) UTILIZATION STUDENT PROGRAM COMPLETER FOLLOW UP DATA B) UTILIZE EMPLOYER FOLLOW UP DATA C) INVOLVE ADVISORY COUNCIL/COMMITTEE (COMMUNITY) INPUT D) INCLUDE SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND KNOWLEDGES REQUIRED BY THE WORLD OF WORK.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER NINE: INSTRUCTIONAL STAFFING SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) APPROPRIATE CERTIFICATION B) SPECIFIC OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR THE VOCATIONAL AREA BEING TAUGHT C) TECHNICAL UPDATING REQUIRED FOR RELEVANT VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER TEN: ADMINISTRATION SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) CERTIFICATION B) OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE OF EDUCATION C) VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHING EXPERIENCE.

STANDARDS ELEMENT NUMBER ELEVEN: FISCAL MANAGEMENT SHOULD ADDRESS SUCH ASPECTS AS A) A SOUND AND CONSISTENT FUNDING BASE FOR VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS B) CATEGORICAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF AVAILABLE FUNDS C) RECOGNIZE AND SUPPORT VOCATIONAL SKILLS DELIVERY AS DIRECTLY IMPACTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR ALASKA.

WHAT DOES VOCATIONAL EDUCATION NEED FROM THOSE OF US PRESENT AT THIS CONFERENCE AS WELL AS OTHERS? IT NEEDS HELP AND UNDERSTANDING FROM BOTH LOCAL AND STATE POLICYMAKERS AS WELL AS PRACTITIONERS. WE NEED TO CHANGE SOCIETY'S IMAGE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. WE NEED TO ADVOCATE FOR OCCUPATIONAL PREPARATION.

A GENERAL RULE OF THUMB IN THE PAST HAS BEEN THAT ROUGHLY 80% OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES DO NOT COMPLETE POST SECONDARY TRAIN-

ING-ONLY PERHAPS AS MANY AS 20%. YET, AS ONE EXAMINES OUR APPROACH TO SCHOOLING--MOST OF OUR EFFORTS IN CURRICULUM, GUIDANCE, AND MONETARY RESOURCES GOES TO SUPPORT THAT 20% NEED---GO TO COLLEGE.

FOR MORE EFFORT TO GO TOWARD MATCHING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH REALISTIC OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYMENT COUNSELORS AND OTHER SCHOOL OFFICIALS MUST PLACE MORE TIME, VALUE, AND EFFORT ON OCCUPATIONAL/CAREER GUIDANCE. STUDENTS MUST BE TAUGHT THERE ARE SPECIFIC STEPS TO LEARN REGARDING CAREER DECISION MAKING AND THEY NEED IN-SCHOOL PRACTICE WITH THOSE PROCESSES.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TENTATIVE CAREER OBJECTIVES MUST BE ENCOURAGED AND SHOULD BEGIN EARLY WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF CAREER ASSESSMENT FACTS ALONG WITH CAREER INFORMATION. THIS DOES NOT LIMIT STUDENTS, AS SOME CRITICS MIGHT SUGGEST, BUT INSTEAD BROADENS THE STUDENT BY PROVIDING A SET OF SKILLS WHICH MAY BE UTILIZED REPEATEDLY THROUGHOUT EACH INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE.

THOSE OF YOU WHO, LIKE I, HAVE CHILDREN AND IN PARTICULAR ADOLESCENCE REALIZE THAT WHAT KIDS DON'T KNOW ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THE WORLD AROUND THEM IS STAGGERING. THEY NEED TO KNOW-- AND IN FACT, HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW: THEIR OWN INTERESTS, THEIR OWN APPTITUDES, THEIR OWN ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS, THE RANGE OF CAREERS POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE TO THEM, THE TRAINING EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION REQUIRED TO ACCESS THOSE CAREERS, EXPERIENCE WITH THE WORLD OF WORK, AND THE SKILLS WITH WHICH TO SELL THEMSELVES TO AN EVENTUAL EMPLOYER.

MOST OF ALL, STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS NEED THE INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITY TO APPROPRIATELY CHOOSE FROM THE SCHOOL'S MENU. THERE IS LITTLE NEED TO CONTINUE TO TURN OUT STUDENTS NEITHER PREPARED FOR WORK OR FURTHER EDUCATION.

QUICK FIXES SELDOM WORK AND TEND TO ENDURE OVER A VERY SHORT SPAN OF TIME. WHAT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ALASKA REQUIRES IS A REDISCOVERY, THEN RETURN TO TIME-HONORED AND TIME-PROVEN QUALITY STANDARDS.

I CLOSE MY REMARKS WITH A FAVORITE QUOTE. IT'S FROM JOHN GARDNER, NOTED EDUCATOR AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL:

"THE SOCIETY WHICH SCORNS EXCELLENCE IN PLUMBING BECAUSE PLUMBING IS A HUMBLE ACTIVITY, AND TOLERATES SHODDINESS IN PHILOSOPHY BECAUSE IT IS AN EXALTED ACTIVITY WILL HAVE NEITHER GOOD PLUMBING NOR GOOD PHILOSOPHY. NEITHER IT'S PIPES NOR IT'S THEORIES WILL HOLD WATER."

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION THIS AFTERNOON.

Laws, Regulations and Court Decisions
December 15, 1983
Workshop A

Moderator: George Maykowskyj, Superintendent, Valdez City Schools

Panelists: Bruce Botelho, Assistant Attorney General, State of Alaska
Peter C. Partnow, Hellen, Partnow and Condon, Attorney
John Patterson, General Counsel, National Education Association, Alaska
Gary Thurlow, Manager, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Attorney

I'm George Maykowskyj, Superintendent of Schools in Valdez. I've been given the assignment to moderate this, which is good, which I don't have to be committal. And we can let the experts on our panel commit themselves and hopefully commit some of you in the audience.

I would like to introduce our panelists. On my immediate left is Bruce Botelho, Assistant Attorney General for the State of Alaska. And next we have Peter Partnow, from Hellen, Partnow and Condon. He represents various school districts in the State of Alaska. And we have John Patterson who is General Counsel for the National Education Association for the State of Alaska. And finally we have Gary Thurlow who is manager for the Mat-Su Borough and also an attorney in Alaska and California.

I'd like to welcome you to this session. The way we want to organize this discussion is, I have raised three separate questions that I have some comments on it. I will go through those three questions and comments and then we will have the panelists discuss and raise, make statements, raise some issues on the first question, then we'll go to the second question, then we'll go to the third question, and then we'll open it up for audience participation. If that's ok with you, fine, if not, too bad.

I would like to point out an error in the program. That error was due to me, in the printing. The second question should be "does the state system of funding for education depict an equitable formula" and then what's stated as the question should be the comment.

I'll go ahead now and go through my set of questions for those who might not have it. The first question deals in the area of school administration school boards and the local community. Are school administrators being required to hold juris doctorial degrees or higher as a part of the full time staff. Are attorneys specially trained in school related matters in order to maintain a trouble free district. The comment is that it seems that we in education are always faced with the problem of litigation, whether it be in the classroom or with our

employers. And we rely heavily upon the courts and the attorneys to make decisions that affect us in education. The comment speaks to possibly having legal schools, universities crank out teachers, administrators that have legal backgrounds to help preclude us from getting involved in those areas.

But then also the comments say that maybe we're just creating mountains out of molehills. Maybe we're getting too involved in those areas and we're too afraid in dealing in an educationally matter and being legitimate rather than worrying about all the problems within the law and the court system. I feel very strongly that if we were totally legitimate and acting with reasonableness and common sense, we wouldn't have problems with attorneys and courts. It's a nice statement but it's hard to follow, I guess. I guess we can go ahead and start with Bruce and work our way down, and then reverse that -----.

Botelho: Gary, I didn't realize you had problems with attorneys. I'd like to think that they're one of your best friends. At least from the litigation we get out of some of our districts you'd think so.

The questions, in case you're not aware of it, if you have the brochure, you'll find that there is a section in the back which has verbatim the question that George has posed to us as well as his commentary. I'm not going to tackle it all but I'll give a couple of reactions that occur to me in some of the text.

First of all, there's some assumptions in there, in the question itself and I will deal with the first portion, which talks about school administrators being required to have juris doctorate degrees. There are a couple other assumptions there and that is first of all, there are attorneys specially trained in school law. I think you'll find that if you look around and if you're trying to find somebody straight out of law school who has trained in education law to hire as your full time staff person for liberal matters, you won't find that person because by and large, from a legal education law standpoint, there is very little in the legal curriculum of most any law school that deals with education law. So there is an assumption that we just have to bring up briefly. And presuming that you do have that legal scholar, again I think it probably is too presumptuous to assume that that scholar is going to do anything to help the district maintain the trouble free atmosphere because the litigation obviously comes from decisions that are made either at the school board level, sometimes at the administrative level and most frequently what happens in the classroom. You have ---- numbers of individuals who are making decisions daily that could end up in litigation. And of course, the fighting of a suit doesn't eliminate any of the merits of it. Whether or not you have an attorney on board, really. I think is an illusion if you think it somehow or another is going to slow down the kinds of legal problems you will experience in the district.

Reacting to the comment which George has there, I'm only going to focus on one part. And that is a comment half way through which talks about if the regulations were clear and legitimate, we wouldn't have to determine their intent in the courtroom. And I think that's very important and rather accurate statement. And this is an area that I can --- I think, having worked with the Department of Education over the last several years, as well as other Departments. The problem that we have perhaps, is two sides. First of all, the Department of Education which comes up with the idea of a regulation, goes ahead, tries to get it introduced and we determine if there's fuzzy language. But, and we should catch it, but we don't always. In fact, judging from alot of litigation we have, we seldom seem to catch alot of the fuzzy language. But there are two things that any school district or any citizen can do to try to perhaps preempt some of that fuzzy language and regulations or for that matter, statutes. But especially in regulations. Every regulation which is promulgated in this state is a permanent regulation. It must provide for public input and in respect to regulations done by the Department of Education, every school district in this state receives a copy of the intent or the decision by the Board of Education to promulgate regulations and it specifically invites public comment. And frankly, very few school districts take the time in this State to comment on any of those regulations except as they specifically affect money and those tend to be the foundation questions, people, transportation, and sometimes certification of school administrators. And it's the school administrator who attends the Board of Education meetings.

The point to be made is if you're really concerned, at a local level, about the quality of regulations, then it behooves you to make sure that you review regulations being promulgated by the Department. That may be regarded as a somewhat passive role. That is simply to review something initiated by the Department of Education. One of the most seldom recognized, and even less utilized provisions of the Administrator Procedure Act which provides for public participation in the adoption of regulations by government agencies, is language which specifically allows any number of the public to initiate a regulation. And that is to say either to initiate a new one or to amend an old one or to repeal an old regulation. And all that it really requires is to request the agency to deal with the specific area. They have thirty days, by law, to act on your recommendation. By either telling you that they're not going to go ahead and do it or to actually schedule public notice and hearings on those matters. And I can tell you that in my experience, that in my seven years with the Attorney General's office, I've only seen two of those. And I worked with several state agencies. So again, in particularly, if you're concerned about do we have quality regulation, do they make sense. If they don't you have a particular mechanism to bring that to the attention of the public and if you're really truly committed to avoiding litigation, and cleaning up the mess, that's the way to do it. But that's my initial reaction.

Partnow: Good afternoon, I believe my comments on this are going to focus, somewhat differently, maybe pick up on a couple little things that Bruce had said. What I did in particular for me, I was late in getting my written comments, such as they were down. But having looked at what George did and what the others did, I sort of approached it in light of what this conference was going to be about and the bottom line, being what suggestions, if any, might there be for changes in legislation. And in my point of view, I think one thing that Bruce said is very true. That if you look through the bills that get all the action in the legislature every year and the area with the most bills are introduced. In fact you look at the material which is submitted for this conference, and the vast majority of things deal with funding issues. And in some ways, that's understandable. If there's a high enough level of funding, almost all the other problems will alternatively disappear. Assuming, as many of our public officials are now saying, that that is not going to continue to be the case. that there's going to be, we're getting to the bottom of the barrel.

At some point, the way that people are going to continue to operate efficiently or effectively is going to have to be cutting costs somewhere else rather than adding it to the bottom line. And again to say that things are always spoken to that effect, money ultimately, I think in the area that most of you are dealing with. Almost everything ultimately cost money. If you are suspending a student, or having a protest over your ----- or nonretaining the teacher or anything, when you get sued, you have to pay your lawyer. Even if you don't get sued, you have to devote administrative time, perhaps expert time, consultant time, to deal with the particular problem you're dealing with. And the more open to challenge you are, the more you may end up having to spend in dealing with these things. And the more confusion that exists in terms of your knowing how to address the problems, the more likely it's going to be that these problems are going to consume time and consume money.

So the approach that I took to this and just I suppose, threw out some ideas, particularly with John Patterson coming up behind me, I'll throw him a few hanging curve balls. Various things that might deal with some of these issues, not just give us more money, or give us more money according to a different formula. And I'll just be very quick with some ideas that I had dealing with this area. And then when George comes back to the second and third items, I have a couple of other things that have been occurred to me. I also would note that whatever ideas I'm throwing out are just my own opinions and not necessarily the positions of any opinions of clients I represent.

I cited a number of areas, a number of items initially in the labor area which I think deal with all school districts either large or small have problems with. I suppose one area I think that concerns me and particularly the large districts have to do with noncertificated employees. If you'll note looking through the Alaska statutes it's a group of employees whose

existence doesn't exist. According to Alaska statutes, they're not mentioned anywhere. Particularly looking at the area of collective bargaining, the area of retention and nonretention of such individuals. As somebody who represents school boards, I of course, like to see statutes enacted that preserved as much discretion as possible for the management side in terms of dealing with those issues. But I think that both sides are probably well served in having the issue at least addressed in the first instance.

Whether people even have the right to collective bargain if there is an unfair labor practice, who deals with it. If one union tries to take over from another union, who referees the dispute, who counts the ballots, who determines what unit of employees is most associated with what other unit of employees in order to form the bargaining units. The State for its employees, has a multi-section labor relation acts deals in some detail with all these issues. For the school districts, in particularly the larger districts, you're out there on your own. And every time you deal with the unions, and every time the unions and employees deal with you, you're both in an area where the guidelines and ground rules are basically what you agree them to be. And there's nothing that directs you any further then that as far as I can see.

In the area of certificated staff, relative to the question of collective bargaining, I know obviously that there's a lot of concern going on in the legislature every year relative to the issue of right to strike, -----, interest arbitration. I have some strong opinions on that issue but without reaching that particular issue, just a minor change in the statute which might possibly be of some assistance to districts is the way our statute is set up when there is an impasse between the school district and certificated staff. The federal mediation and conciliation services is supposed to be called in to mediate the dispute and to issue a mediation report if the dispute isn't mediated. Well, basically, the FMCS is an agency of the federal government and the state law cannot compel that organization to undertake that role. As a practical matter in most cases, that I'm aware of, that role has been assumed and the individuals have done a very professional helpful job. But given the size of the staff available here, just the number of school districts, if they were the only people who these people had to deal with, there is just not the time nor the willingness to draft a detailed report saying well, the teachers wanted this and that's stupid and the school board wants that, and that's stupid. What happens is that the parties aren't brought together, the parties aren't brought together and they proceed on to the next step of negotiations without the public certainly having anybody who is in a position of being neutral defining what the issues appear to be on the bargaining table. My understanding from a number of other states, is when you have a neutral fact finder who serves in this position to say that these are the issues that in some, but in not all cases, enough public opinion could be marshalled

on specific issues in order to have the public pressure lead the parties to an agreement. And I think that one of the reasons why there might be some problem with the statute, the way it's drafted, is because the statute is not interpreted or implemented as it's drafted. And as a result, we've never had any sort of real fact finding for the school districts labor disputes in this state.

Another area that I think is worthy of some concern has to do with the whole area of termination of employees. As I'm sure all of you are aware, certificated staff have substantial rights established by the statutes and I have no qualms with those rights having been established and certain job protection and job security being there. However, a number of these statutes were adopted and have been in affect since long before such things as mandatory annual professional evaluations occurred. Before the vast majority of the certificated staff and all the school districts became unionized, before mandatory interest arbitration is mandated and all collective bargaining between school districts and their certificated staff.

And as a result of all these things, in my opinion, a lot of the ground rules have changed. I don't believe a school board or a school district can in most cases be as unilateral or high handed in dealing with people. They may still be in some occasions but I think there's a lot of safe guards that are built in that that didn't exist ten years ago. Yet there's no recognition of that in the statutes the other way. The teacher can still acquire tenure within two years, for instance. The causes for which a tenure teacher can be terminated are extremely limited and as I can note from personal experience, very difficult to prove. And the question is whether the school district should be put in a position where it takes countless man hours of their staff, countless dollars of their limited resources to deal with these issues to the point where I think almost anybody who deals in the area would concede to only in the most extreme cases where anybody resorts to this procedure in the first place. And even when they ultimately do resort to this process, it's extremely expensive, time consuming, and unpleasant, for everybody involved. No matter who wins. Added on top of that, you have the situation that our state law and our state judicial decision interpreting that law indicate that in most cases, where a teacher has lost their job, they have a right to a to know vote hearing in the superior court and basically whatever decision that the school board made is not entitled to any weight, or not even looked at essentially by the Superior Court. And one would question why or if it is worth spending tens of thousands of dollars and countless man hours in order to go through a protracted proceeding which basically you have the possibility of throwing it out and doing it all over again when you get to court. To me, it seems that it's a disservice to both the employee and the employer in terms of the number of times that this particular fire drill has to be gone through and the amount of time and money involved.

It seems to me that there some fairly simple things that could at least be considered that might improve situations regarding this area. And again, some of the things that I might throw out would be legislative change indicating when termination cases are appealed to courts from school boards that the court give some deference to the school board opinion. The school board being the publicly elected representatives of the people in that area for that purpose and presumably, although not always representing the values of the people in the community that they serve.

Secondly, that in terms of the tenure laws, that either the time that be required to obtain tenure be increased to three or four years, or alternatively in the case of individual employees whose performance is marginal but not necessarily terrible, that some sort of probationary period be established so that the school district is not faced with the decision of either having to fire or give tenure to an employee who they're not really sure of. It seems to me that the second alternative might be in the employees interest as well and give the employee the additional amount of time that might be necessary to prove that they would be a good employee.

Thirdly, it seems to me that some effort should be taken to more clearly spell out the types of procedures that are legally permissible when a hearing occurs before the school board in this situation. Again, I think most school boards, either by their own policy or by ad hoc procedures, adopt the way that they're going to proceed in individual cases, and as a result, there are many areas where so called procedural objections or potential objections are built into the proceeding and one is not sure of how those things are going to be dealt with when one ultimately gets to court. Again, it seems to me that both teacher and the employer are well served by knowing exactly what the ground rules are in all stagings of the proceedings so that these types of potential glitches and expense involved in that could be avoided.

A final point that may or may not be worthy of some consideration has to do with perhaps either broadening or at least redefining the basis for which the grounds, if you will, for termination of a tenure teacher. The example I would look now, is we have one of the grounds for terminating the teacher is immorality which is defined as a commission of a crime involving moral turpitude. I would submit to that for all intensive purposes, particularly in light of at least one judicial decision, I'm aware of that cause is essentially nonexistent in existing statutes and if somebody commits a crime of moral turpitude in terms of what most people hear I think at least believe to be a crime involving moral turpitude, you're probably not faced with a nonretention situation but rather determining the address to send the card to the person who's in jail. We are aware of a case now where an individual who's a civics teacher in a school district, and essentially somehow hotwired their electrical box to avoid the meter and thereby got thousands of dollars worth of electrical services without paying

for it. He was able to convince at least one superior court judge that that did not involve moral turpitude. That may or may not be the case, but I would leave you with the questions to whether your child, or your friend's child, or any student in your system, should be taught civics and how to be a good citizen by somebody who is going to court that afternoon to accept his sentencing for having indulged in this type of activity. In that case, John, it's all yours.

Patterson: Thanks Peter. Peter I represented a guy who was accused of that and I know he was innocent. How do we know? Mr. Partnow has gone into a lobbying effort here. I'm going to try to get back to the original question. I certainly would like to get into some of the questions that Mr. Partnow raised. First of all, I would like to agree with Mr. Maykowskyj here, that from what I observed, the administrators who in good faith, attempt to look at the regulations, look at the laws, and make a fair, good faith attempt to abide by them, generally don't have a great deal of trouble. The trouble results from administrators who attempt to stretch those regulations or just to see if they can get away with them. Just this week, a superintendent told John Straum (sp?) that he would try to do just about anything until he was told not to. And in this case, he had done something that I think had been pretty well precluded to him by a case that came down from the Supreme Court in 1972. And everyone knows about this case and he knows about it and I know his attorney knows about it because we've run it across his desk about twentyfive times.

These regulations and laws, from what I've observed the ones that Mr. Partnow has been interested in and Mr. Botelho, are laws that generally just, it's not a matter of lack of clarity, it's a matter of state that essentially does not have enough time to build up a body of laws, statutory law to fill in all the voids. If you can compare Alaska education code and laws with California, you'd see that California has a quite different approach. You can find an answer to just about everything down there. I will admit there are plenty of cases out of California which suggest that maybe that isn't the entire answer but in this case it would help. And certainly Mr. Partnow's suggestion that the procedural approach to non retention hearings might well be better addressed in the statutes is well taken. There's very little guidance there and Mr. Partnow and I participated in one this year where we were kind of an ad hoc procedure. And he's right, if we had gone to court with that thing, I would have attacked it even though I willingly participated in it. And perhaps that is unappropriate. Perhaps we should have a better procedure, a way for school boards to conduct four week nonretention hearings under some sort of a reasonable procedure. Right now we don't have it.

On the question of clarity of regulations, I would suggest that unless we're talking about some particular regulations, that this discussion isn't really all that meaningful. You can look at, an example would be the materials men's lien laws(?) in this state. The contractors, the carpenters, the laborers; they're expected to read that statute which some people who work on it for years never understand. And understand it. It's just something that occurs when you have a closely regulated area. That doesn't mean that the carpenters and the mechanics are going to have specially trained people to interpret the mechanics lien statute, it's just going to happen. When you have a statute, and you're attempting to ----- you're going to almost necessarily have a certain degree of wordiness, where you are trying to cover almost all sorts of contingency. And sometimes the confusion is more apparent than it is real. But I think that school administrators are the least put upon, cause as I understand it, most of them think it's some sort of a school law course and probably have more input into these things than certainly than the carpenter does. I'm just about real upset about the administrators and I get to read the statutes, and sorry Mr. Maykowskyj, I wish I could get into it.

Has anybody looked into the hunting regulations? I was out hunting a couple of years ago, I saw a caribou run across the road and it took me thirty minutes whether or not I could shoot that caribou. Well, it was gone, I maybe should've had a hunting expert there with me. But it's life in the fast lane, I think.

Now, Mr. Partnow, I don't know if we're ever going to get back to tenure or not and whether teachers should be terminated on a broader grounds. But just in case we don't, I'd like to make sure that I cover this and not leave Mr. Partnow's remarks uncovered. I've observed that administrators are not always interested just in terminating bad teachers. That often times their interest is in terminating that they simply decide that they want to terminate. Now we should have a system, surely in a group of fair minded people will understand that we should have a system that allows people who are competent to come in and contest it. Even in the face of somebody who has his administrative certificate saying that the teacher is incompetent. That's what the system is designed to do and that's all it does. I really don't know just where Mr. Partnow wants to expand the reasons for nonretention. We've got incompetence and the definition in the statutes and in the case for incompetence is not that narrow. We've got substantial non-compliance. Well if the teacher tells you to whatever with your regulation, if it's of major import, it's substantial noncompliance and he can go. If he tells you whatever about some regulation and if it's not of import, if he does it again, perhaps that's substantial noncompliance. But there's nothing wrong with that. There isn't anybody in this room who has obeyed every regulation, every order from a superior, in his whole life and I doubt if he's been fired about it. The standards aren't that vague, the reasons are substantial enough and in the

immorality area, I don't know what Mr. Partnow wants, but if we, I'd like to take a vote here, how many people here would like to see teachers nonretained for cohabitation? Oh yeah? Thank you.

Thurlow: I'm Gary Thurlow, Mat-Su Borough. I see Pete tried to pick a fight with John and vice versa. So to keep you guys awake, I gotta find someone to fight with. I pick Bruce here, who's with the Attorney General's office.

My enemy is pork. But you see alot of pork here in this state in the last several days, last several years. But let me tell you where the pork is. I think Governor Sheffield talked to you or some of you this morning. He said 45% of the state budget goes to education. That's true, I'm sure. It's true in most states. And I think the important thing is that 45% be spent wisely. Maybe it should be more then that 45%. I don't like the way 75% of it goes to operations, because I don't think the school foundation program is as good as it could be.

We had a good system in 1962, a model system, developed with the help of experts in education finance. The Ford Foundation paid their way here. They worked for a year. What it called for was a minimum level of educational opportunity for every Alaska school child and then the taxpayers in the State were supposed to each make a equal effort towards supporting education in their district. In those days, it required expected was 3.5 mills and then that money would go into a requirement for providing the minimal level of education. And then what was left over, the difference would be made up by the state, and that would bring it up to the minimum level. That meant that where ever you went in the State of Alaska, every taxpayer is making an equal effort to support education and the opportunity for education was not the function of the wealth of the school district. We've gotten away from that system over the years. The requirement for any particular local effort has been repealed.

Then there's alot of disparities between how much one school district gets versus another. The Mat-Su Borough, because of their very rapid growth, expect with the local share of from about 9 million this year to about 15-16 million next year. That's because all those people moving into the Borough don't pay their way. The houses they build in the valley, the assessed value of those houses isn't enough to pay for the cost of educating the children who come into those houses. So we fall behind when you don't have the tax equalization measure.

Now when I talk about pork, I'm talking about 25% of the state's education budget. Of that 25%, about half the money goes out to municipalities as 100% grants. And there's really no rhyme or reason how that money gets out. But I can tell you part of the mechanism and see what you think of it. Image a great big pie. Now Governor Sheffield has a third, the Senate has a third and the House has a third. Now assume that Governor Sheffield would try to put some school projects in his third, probably the REAA's (Regional Education Attendance Area Schools). He'd probably try to stick some of those in his third. Probably get

some money for those schools. And then what about the House's third? We got two Representatives and a Senator in the Mat-Su Borough. How would our requirements be met? We're getting about as many new kids up there each year as you're getting here in Anchorage. I assume alot of you are from Anchorage. Ok. How do you house those kids? How do make those decisions? How much money should be built to put roofs over those kids heads? Well, first you get a computer. First you decide who's the majority and who's minority. Ok. After you do that, then you figure out how much the majority gets, how much does the minority get. Well, Joe Hayes, I have part of his deposition here, he says for every dollar the minority gets, the majority is going to get nine dollars. I think that this might not be that bad. But that's what the deposition says. Ok. For that nine dollars, how do you divide that up? Well, you get this computer and you give everybody a number, each member of the majority coalition and you tell that guy or women, to plug in their secret wish into that computer and that computer will record it. There won't be a record of who put that wish in in that list but that will finally come out as the proposed budget. And all kinds of marvelous things will happen when you use that system. You'll get \$2,000 appropriated to replace a carpet in the assembly area in Tudor Elementary Area School. Now I just wonder what John Liska is doing at that time. My wife teaches at Homestead Elementary School. They have a frayed carpet. Why wasn't any attention given to that carpet? \$7,300 appropriated to high speed copier. \$153,000 appropriated to election district eleven for micro computers, that's downtown Anchorage, I think it's election district fifteen. What's wrong with election district fourteen kids? Are they just too slow mentally to handle micro computers? And then the micro computer for Roger Park Elementary School and so forth. And so you get a budget for school buildings.

What I would hope is that school buildings could be handled the same way that that school operation cost should be handled, and that's based upon need. There's plenty of cases in other parts in the U.S. where things have gone way off the track and they're usually based upon some wealthy school district getting a disproportionate amount of the pie and poor school district getting too little. The paces come out on a basis that have a system of education, you're going to have to find a way of equalizing educational opportunity. You base those cases upon provisions the state constitutes providing for a system of public education, you don't have a public system of education worth pork. And you base those cases upon the equal protection of laws provisions of those state constitutions. And you don't have equal educational opportunities unless you look at the ability to pay in these individual school districts and you look at the educational needs in these individual school districts.

We filed in court, Mat-Su borough filed in court, challenging the way the State of Alaska allocates money for capital improvements. We relay on cases primarily from state of California, New Jersey, and West Virginia. So we have high hopes

that the system will be straightened up. We have a tremendous amount at stake, because we're double shifting Iditarod Dollar School in Wasilla next school, we're double shifting Wasilla Junior High School next year we're expecting probably another 20% increase next year. We had 20% increase this year and we have to find a way of housing those children and the money isn't there under the present system to do it.

Moderator: Well that led us right into our next question, which is a nice cue. On that first question, maybe one thing that we could keep in mind for the third one. I tried to keep the first question to the local level away from the state level, to help school administrators become more competent, whether the attorneys should write the policies, etc. But maybe we could address some of those issues in the third question which deals with the state level of regulations.

Alright, second question is: does the state system of funding for education depict an equitable formula? Comment is that I think it could provide a system of area equalized funding for education which would include a cost per capital improvements for each local education agency and REAA. I think that funding should be set in some sort of a restricted account within the state and be made available for communities upon application based upon need. Definitely, local districts should be able to add to this system of funding if they wanted to and have the resources. There also would have to be possibly some type of an emergency funding set for areas that were not planned for in advanced for a rapid growth, which I still think also we should be able to take a look at two, three, four years down the future and be able to know where the high increase in population centers are and what that projected growth is to some degree. However, an emergency fund would be available for that. One of the things that I feel an account, whether it be an endowment fund, restricted account, whatever the experts and the finances determine it should be, would do would lessen the amount of dollars that the State of Alaska would spend for school construction. When you work a debt retirement program you have to pay it back with interest, and you pay back considerably more dollars for a relatively small project. If you had this in the fund, the fund would generate interest, it would grow. You would be planning ahead, and at the same time, costing the State of Alaska less money to provide for school construction. How that it affects my district, I could go to our community and our school board and say, well we want that really nice technical center for our vocational students. However, we won't be able to get that for another six years, but that's ok. We can plan real well for six years and then have it. Why don't we, Gary, you went ahead and introduced that one, so why don't we go with John?

Patterson: I'm sure that Mr. Thurlow is going to have an awful lot more to say about this than anybody. He's got himself about a 400 page brief down there on him. He's working on this.

I just don't know enough about the process for funding in schools. I know that our client has given me very little guidance here and is interested in education of all the students in Alaska. I can't tell from Mr. Thurlow's comments or what his case is trying to accomplish. Whether the result is going to be taking the money from the big schools or from the little schools. Seems to me that REAA's probably get 100% financing and that in that regard, it would be some taken from them. I have observed, this is strictly my observation, that there is quite a bit of waste in operating some of these school districts. I think that probably that's an area that should be looked at more closely. That still doesn't answer the question that's been asked here. Which is how the money should get out there initially. To answer the question directly and inclusively, I personally find a good bit of good in Mr. Maykowskyj's suggestion. I would like to see more local control, more local responsibility.

END OF TAPE 1

TAPE 11

But it would be very helpful if the districts who happen to have some political clout, because they have the guy in the legislature whos been there since 1900. Possibly wouldn't think that they could get their technical center this year, they can get their new swimming pool next year. I think it's fair. I would guess that Mr. Maykowskyj is having trouble getting funds and is not in one of the situations where he's got real heavy duty legislator. As a result of that, I think he's made a reasonable suggestion. And as far as I'm personally concerned, I would give an opportunity to vote on something like this, I would probably vote for it. That doesn't mean any aids gonna do it. Ok? Thank you.

PARTNOW (?): Like John, I think in this one we're sandwiched between two litigents in this case. So I think it makes most sense to let them fight about the existing things, in terms of the particular construction funding. It does seem to me, generally, however, that the districts in the state are best served by way of general principle, by funding system that has two features to it: One, equity, in terms of the way the money is distributed; and the other is some degree of certainty. And I think that George's suggestion is, while, I'm not sure specifically as he stated it, as something that I would

personally favor or not favor. I think there's an attempt there to have at least those two elements contained. And from my experience practicing law in the education area, in the state since 1971, where the first major piece of litigation that I came in contact with was the Molly Hootch (sp?) litigation, I think that from that time forward, it can be said that there has not been, when you weigh rural against urban, organized districts against unorganized districts, and look at both the operational funding and construction funding, that there has not been, on a continued basis, a system which has the equity and certainty which regardless of what the legal requirements might be, just from a practical operational point of view, makes sense is fear.

I think the state foundation formula has changed almost annually for the last three to four years and it strikes me to be very difficult for a district to plan their budget from one year to the next without, particularly when the statute requires that the, when you're in an organized district, that you have your budget approved by the municipal assembly or borough assembly by May 1, and the legislature is popping along in June or July and they still haven't decided what formula they are going to adopt or to what level they're going to fund that formula so you people know how much money your're going to end up having or out of whose pockets its going to be coming.

One other area, since people are talking about legal controversies that they're involved in from time to time, one area relates to the whole funding area. It's a, in terms of the total operational costs and the total construction costs, it's not as significant, but there are huge amounts of money involved and it is a funding issue and it does relate between the ----- of responsibilities between the local level and the state level, has to do with the entire level of student transportation. My belief we have a system now that basically places the operational responsibility with the local school district but places the ultimate financial responsibility and attach uncertainty at the state level. And I believe, that from my experience with various districts, it creates a great deal of uncertainty. The system tends to, because the funding that is provided differs for different types of students, it puts a certain incentive on you to try to beef up in some areas and perhaps to try to skimp in other areas. It puts a great deal of pressure, it seems to me, on the businessmen who are trying to provide the service. They're trying to make money, which is nothing wrong with that, but they also providing the services and this is an area where there's a huge capital outlay required in order to get into the area in the first instance. And again, the uncertainty that is involved from year to year or as certain contracts expire, new contracts come up, is such that I believe creates alot of problems there. I'm not sure what the answer is except is that it seems to me there should be a system whereby both the financial responsibility and the operational responsibility are tied together in a system which allows a reasonable and prudent businessman to provide a good service and make a reasonable rate

of profit, not at the expense of the safety and welfare of the students who are being transported into the detriment of the districts, whose educational programs the transportation services should meet the needs of the educational program rather than vice versa. It seems to me, that to my recollection, almost every major busing contract in the state, and almost every district which has been awarded for the past several years, has been involved in controversy. And I think the existing system is part of the cause of that problem. I think it is an area that could be looked into and hopefully a more sensible system adopted.

Thurlow: The oral argument on the Mat-Su case wasn't going to take place until January but I guess it started today. But first to echo Peter's concern about pupil transportation. I can't but help but agree with him, in part, because it seems to be that most of my legal career has been spent in pupil transportation litigation. There is definitely a problem. I think he has identified one of the real sources and that is the ----- system where the Department of Education is saying to the districts that it's your job to go out and find that person, but remember who's got the purse strings and who's got the final say. There isn't a single contract that does end up in a dispute, even between a contractor and a district, that somehow or another, the state doesn't get sucked into. And again, I think it's an area that does need a great deal of work and perhaps one of the approaches is simply. I hesitate to use the word foundation, but, I guess my own suggestion, from a state level, would be throw the money at the districts without any strings, except making sure that transportation is provided and that it be done in a safe way. And allow the districts to figure out what the most economically and safe way of providing that service is.

On to Mat-Su, I have to say that the, in part, Gary's comments reminds me of the person who is put away his pork and stored it for five years and now is complaining about everybody else that's trying to get it. In a couple respects, we have spent a little time ourselves putting together our brief. I have some statistics here, and it's amazing to me that when you look at state funding for school construction, between fiscal year 1978-1983, I take the five largest school districts and just run through here very quickly. Anchorage had a per pupil funding of \$3,731; Fairbanks North Star Borough \$3,849; Kenai \$4,194; Mat-Su \$6,812; and Juneau, for the low of \$1,990. I'm really not sure of what's my districts been doing. They're certainly down at the bottom.

But there have been some comments made about the legislative process and I think friends would know that I'm not exactly the strongest and most ardent supporter of the legislature. But on the other hand, the system is not quite as arbitrary as it appears. I think one would find that looking at either at the depositions, or the actual practice of the legislative process, would show that there is a lot more equity in the system than may first appear, basically based on the horror stories that we read

each year. And again, I think Peter's comments about equity and certainty are certainly common issues and certainly the foundation that we'd like to look for. And I think we do have by and large an equitable system. We don't have a certain system, but it's one that I don't see any real certainty coming, because that certainty is tied specifically to the money available. And that is, as we all know, varies from year to year.

We've been in a very fortunate situation, unlike any other state, that we can complain that the amount of money we got available. I mean it's incredible to see that the state has put in more than a half billion dollars into education construction since 1977 and its phenomenal investment. I think it's also significant to note, that despite all the litigation nationwide dealing with public school foundation, and we're told it's something in the neighborhood of thirty-eight states have been involved in litigation over their foundation programs, as an example. There is not a single case in the U.S. that deals with construction moneys for school construction. And I can tell you because I've already seen Gary's brief; they don't have any. And we've spent our time trying to run that down as well. And I think it also says something about the uniqueness of Alaska.

The State really has gone out of its way to fund. Has it been equitable? Again, if you look at the record, generally, you'll find number one - we've recognized that the REAA's, because they have no tax base, receive essentially 100% funding for all school construction. Taking a look on the other hand, at the large, or we'll simply call them the municipal school districts, that is city and boroughs, and again, if we look at the legislative process, I think you would find that there has been an incredible sensitivity to funding of school construction around the state, not based upon political clout.

I think generally speaking, Gary's depiction of the pie is an accurate one, in the sense that you have a Governor who insists that he have his one third. Actually I think he has to have. I was telling this to Gary, it's not that the Governor really is trying to depoliticalize the ---, simply that he wants it all himself to pass out. Of course I didn't say that, I'm a state employee.

But in any case, what you do have is this general division. But if you look to the process, particularly in the area of education construction, there's a great deal of unanimity in terms of identifying those projects that are most important. And if you look at where the contributions have come for education construction around this state, you will find, not that the Governor took care of the one third that dealt with the REAAs, instead what you will find is that the leadership of the House, the leadership of the Senate, and the Governor have all agreed on statewide priorities and that they have all contributed to that process. Similarly you will find that on an area wide basis that there has been unanimity in the large part between the House and Senate in deciding, as an example, what are the priorities in Anchorage for funding.

You will also find that there's a great deal of sensitivity about those areas where there really isn't the legislative pull. I think the Mat-Su Borough is a good example of that. And for that matter, Kenai, as well, which is involved in litigation in the same issue. As I think most of you are aware, both districts came and they indicated we are the fastest growing districts in the State. Which is true, that is, in terms of their percentage increase. Although Anchorage, actually, in absolute numbers, is by far ahead of even Mat-Su. And they said we're going to have to build new buildings. And we got to do it quickly. And the legislature, in reducing the amount of state reimbursement for bonded indebtedness made an exception this year. They said we're limited in funds, we see that, that's the prognosis, that's what we're being told we're going to reduce what we had done the previous year. That is increase it to 90% reimbursement the same year. Because of our projected revenue, we're going to reduce it to 50%. But we recognize that there are two districts in the state who can't make it. They didn't identify it in the bill but the legislative history is entirely clear. And they basically said for those two districts, we're going to allow them to continue at 90% for this year. Giving them an opportunity to put a measure in front of their respective electorates on or before October 15 to go ahead and fund those projects. That's the kind of accommodations the legislature has shown and, I think, sensitivity towards the need for equity and to accommodate the varied needs in this state.

Obviously, there may be ways of improving the system. But I think one has to look also, at the, to the extent that one argues from a municipal school district, which has taxing power, that let's see if we can't get the legislature to put the whole bill invariably. And I can't see any way out of it. You have to realize that if you make that legislative choice, you are also going to have to give up some measure of local control. In fact, that's been the real tension in this state, the battle between local control and state regulation. And at the bottom line of it all is the question of money. The state is going to pay for it. The state is going to regulate it. It's going to have to decide, I think George made reference to vocational technical center. That may very well be a high priority for a particular school district. I'll pick on Valdez for a moment here. But if you're going to decide, you know, let the State say it's going to fund 100% of the projects. It means the pie is smaller. That is the state pie is smaller and the state's going to have to be finally making the decision of whether that particular vocational technical center really is justified.

My suggestion to you is, and I think despite the fact that there are a few cases in courts in this country, which have gone along with California in striking down their foundation programs. Which by and large, what you're going to find is an oft repeated language to the effect that local taxation is the ultimate measure of local control. And that is really where you have your

stake in what's going to happen and if you give that up, you can expect, and you're gonna expect, government regulation from the state level. That's the risk.

Again, I don't stand here to defend the legislative process. Well, I will defend the legislative process. Not any given legislature, but I think, by and large, you're going to find that it does operate rather equitably. That compared with any other state, both the foundation program and the capital projects, one of the soundest in the country. And the kind of disparity that California had doesn't exist in Alaska. And the kind of disparity that took place in New Jersey, which struck down its foundation program, does not exist in Alaska. And the third case is actually out of Connecticut, as I recall, Gary. Again, we don't have the same types of problems where you have 70% of school funding being taken place at the local government level. Which was the real problem in most of those areas. We have exactly the opposite picture in Alaska. And there are only a few states that can claim that kind of credit. So that's my pitch for you folks.

Moderator: Just to comment on the intent for equity, I do believe that there is all the intent in the world for equity for our system and I think the State of Alaska has done a tremendous lot of good will and good faith for the people of Alaska. However, when you have a system where you have a priority list and you rank that priority one year and then change that priority the next year. It seems to be that we've lost a little bit of equity there where it was important and then the next year somebody else is important and is more important than---- the year before. And that's the intent of looking down the road that yes, I can realize that people don't think my vocational center is very important however, it may be six years down the road, it can be a reality, and I can accept that. Hopefully we'll get more time and get back to this.

The next question deals with rules and regulations at the local, oh, not the local level but at the state level and who makes the laws and regulations that affect education in the local communities. In other words, we have the state school board that makes regulations, we have the legislative process that makes legislation and it would seem to me that we have organizations within the State of Alaska that are very knowledgeable in education, state school board, the administrators association, the principals, teachers association, and it would seem to me that yes, we all do have the ability to comment publicly but we're all human and that we don't do it. That maybe a system would be provided that would force us to comment through the use of task force approach or something like that. In order to review those regulations, so I'll go back down the line.

Panelist: This will be the Jekyll and Hyde. As much as I can count on the one hand about fairness, perhaps in funding, I can make some other comments to indicate the other side. In terms of other education related issues, obviously the pressure points are twofold. One is the state board of education; the other, I think, probably more critically, in the long run is the legislature itself, because it sets the overall policy, leaving to the board of education and to the Department of Education staff the responsibilities of carrying out the decisions. And in that respect, I think George, your suggestion of task forces particularly limits itself to the Board of Education, where perhaps the pressure to make decisions quickly. Well, there's always that pressure, but it's not the same as the legislative process where you got sixty people who can't stand Juneau and want to get out as quickly as possible, at least that's what they tell us, they want to get out.

And education is only a small part of the big picture and for some of them, it's the last part of the big picture, and fortunately we have others who consider education to be really important. And this seems to be a critical area from a couple of standpoints, because clout then seems to play a critical role and that is, certain school boards or school districts, which have hired lobbyists, essentially are able to exercise their influence in ways which none of us entirely understand.

I remember one example which I have to relate because it's the classic as far as I'm concerned. I was involved in writing an opinion about a school district board president who was serving simultaneously on the state school board. My opinion basically said, that the, this was a conflict of interest. And it was amazing, two weeks later the legislature passed a statute which eliminated the conflict. And the statute basically now permits a member of the local school board to serve on the state school board.

That may or may not be a, maybe that's an example of how effective the legislature can be when it really has an important issue to deal with. But it does raise some concerns about the inequity, in the sense that persons, who have access to the legislature and to the legislative process, are able to exert more influence than those who have less. And I think it would be a sorry state of affairs, indeed, if one took the position that the only way you could really expect to affect the legislative process is by professional lobbyists.

Obviously, I think there has been some things done to particularly loosen it up. There's always been the opportunity for constituent communications. The teleconference system, I think has been an incredible addition to the state process. But again, I guess I'm kinda shooting from the hip on some of my reactions to it. I think the bottom line is that task forces make sense in some contexts, the overall problems, the blue ribbon commissions, properly staffed, properly directed are beneficial. But I don't see a real legislative, particularly in the Legislature, particular orientation towards that approach.

Partnow: I think I want to come back to the same thing from a somewhat different angle. This is basically, as George said, there are a number of people who deal with education on a regular basis who have expertise. Of course, each group has its particular prejudices which in sometimes may taint the way in which their expertise is presented. And perhaps not only in our system, the Legislature, the state board of education and regulatory matters has the responsibility of hopefully calling out the taint from the actual expertise in adopting that which is wisest. I'm not sure that always takes place.

But in large regards, the bottom line is that the vacuums of power do not stay vacuum very long. And if somebody doesn't make a decision, somebody else will. I think John Patterson stated very accurately, if you compare the Alaska education statutes with the California education statutes, its a readers digest excerpt of a book of the month club versus War and Peace in the original. They may well have gone too far, I think in many areas we may not have gone far enough. And ultimately, when disputes arise and the types of things that those of us on the panel get involved in, those disputes don't get resolved, get resolved by the courts. And in my belief, some of those types of disputes, I think, the courts are extremely well qualified to deal with. Issues such as procedural rights, terminated employee, perhaps expelling a student, and questions of due process, first amendment rights, things like those. Those are things which are uniquely within the expertise of courts and people who are trained in that area.

But there are a large number of educational policy type decisions that end up getting resolved by the court because nobody else either can, or is willing, to make a good faith effort at resolving them. And I think in many of those cases, the courts are perhaps the least equipped of all the players to make a decision which takes into consideration all the factors that should be considered in terms of reaching a sound decision.

I think, one example that comes to my mind, and John and I were both involved in this, would've been the case of the teachers strike that happened here a number of years ago. Ultimately, you could say the case was resolved by the court to the extent that the court enjoined the strike and ordered arbitration but the problem what lead to the strike and the aftermath of the strike certainly was not resolved by the court. And furthermore, I think that we would, John and I, would probably both agree and I think, at least, I'm on record in a brief of the Supreme Court, in suggesting that even that which the court did when it did resolve it in the fashion in which it did, was not perhaps not consistent with the way the statutes was set up. But there was a real situation and the court was there and had to do what it best could do in order to resolve an existing situation.

And I suppose, you know, my pitch in this regard, which way certain issues should be decided, is that there is a number of issues which have not been addressed that I don't believe that people who are dealing in this area should leave to the lawyers and to the courts to be decided if they can be handled through sound administrative regulations, policy making and enactment of statutes to fill in some of these voids.

Panelist: The inconsistency that Peter just mentioned that I, this is something that I think I'm sort of obliged to mention here today, is that Judge Carlson actually ordered sort of a binding arbitration in that case. Something that everybody in this room probably knows is not allowed binding interest arbitration and just something that probably nobody in this room does know, but me and Bangston and Fossey (sp?), if either one of them are here. Is that recently, another superior court judge ordered arbitration in another interest case in which we're involved and we're getting ready to start that arbitration.

I think the point of it is that the judges, they have to scratch their head and figure out how these things have to be solved, resolve to binding interest arbitration. I think that that's the way it has to go. Now everybody else has lobbied, I can lobby, right?

The question here had to do with the development of a task force. The comment, the very end of the comment by Mr. Maykowskyj, is that input of a task force should be directed to procedures, how the substantive matter that is developed through the normal input will be carried out. I don't believe that's how it works and therein lies my concern about this task force. I believe that if an ex officio, de facto official task force is developed that has some preferential place at the ear of the legislature, that we're going to have a de facto official policy making body that isn't anticipated by our system. I think that if it's not illegal to do that, that it's unwise to have such a thing.

I can image that administrators and school board people if they predominate in such a task force would use their opportunity to grind their own axes. And I really don't think that administrators and school board people always have the interest of education and the interest of children in mind when they make their suggestions. They have a lot of things that they want because it makes it easy for them, because they think they're fantastic anyway, and therefore anything they decide to do is right, therefore they should be given all the latitude in the world to do it.

I think we need a system with checks and balances and I think we have a system like that right now. The task force that's been suggested here, I think will create a weight, one way or another, and from my view, it's the wrong way. Thank you.

Panelist: I'll come at this from a different angle for a minute. What I'm proposing for school operations and school constructions is that you have two different types of approaches. You have a professional responsible approach when you're dealing with that 45% of the budget that deals with education; and then for that other 55%, I hope it's not all pork barrel, but the pork barrel's gonna be there, let it be on that side and not on the education side.

I see hope as to what might happen in the future. There is a professional review of our school operations budget by associates for education finance and planning, Stanford University, it's under 1981 legislative appropriation. They've just been lined up to do this, I think a few months ago. And they're going to look at the problems that exist in the school foundation programs.

There's lots of problems in the school foundation program. Lots of odd things. Skagway gets 108% of Juneau, Anchorage base; Haines, which next door, gets 115%; some very high cost school districts get up to 145%, which is understandable, but many weird things in that program which have to be are in doubt. They have until December 1984 to do it, a year from now.

To my knowledge, there's no thought of looking at how school construction is being handled, in ----- part of the U.S. it's a very important thing, because it's a big part of many local school districts budget. It's about a third of our budget. Just handling our school --- about a third of our taxes are raised just for that one purpose. It's a serious matter. When reimbursement for school debt in our district changes from 90% where it is now, it was 80% a couple of years ago, but when it changes from 80-90% to 50%, where it's going to be for a while, at least, we sold, leased 20 million dollar bond, which reimbursement is going to be 50%.

We're in a new world all together, a world we've never been in before and it's going to mean a much heavier load on us locally, as far as finances go. I don't agree that all of our state, all of our school districts programs were heavily subsidized by state. They always have been in the state, and always have been in the territory of Alaska. And yet I think there has been a great deal of school district independence. I don't see that increasing the state's contribution to school construction will eliminate independence of school districts. In California, that argument was made that what an opportunity poor school districts have to improve their educational programs they just tax themselves more heavily. And that was connected up with the idea that if it's on you and you don't look to the state for the money, you have much more independence in your decision making. California State Supreme Court called that a fiscal free will is a cruel illusion in the poor districts. It is. And it is in almost every district in the state. All of whom are heavily dependent on the state for school operations and school construction.

I hope that one effect is that law suit that the Mat-Su Borough has filed is that there be some sort of court overview of what the legislature does. Because I disagree that the legislature has been responsible in handling this sort of thing. I think they've been flippant and irresponsible. Just this past seven to eight months, they knew, Governor Sheffield knew, it would take about \$94 million to handle school debt reimbursements for the school districts. He put in \$49 million in the budget for that purpose and it set there to have a proposal to half fund that, half fund with what the school district would have to come up with to pay for their school bonds. Until pretty late in the session, he came up with another \$10 million for \$59 million and it wasn't until after June 15, after all the school districts in the state have put together their school budgets and their government budgets set their property tax mill levies, the legislature finally thought the matter serious enough to address. And they did eventually come up with the full \$94 million. Not the \$49 million that was put in the budget this time last year.

That's something wrong with that process, we need certainty, we need professionalism and we need to politicalize it and we need to have professionals get involved. And that includes Department of Education. You just can't let these legislators go off and make their little side deals and hope for the best. And that's what's been done to date.

Moderator: At this time, I'd like to go ahead and open up for questions from the audience to the panelists, since the moderator can't be asked any questions.

Question and answer session commenced (through the remainder of tape II, tapes III and IV). For the most part, the recording is very faint and inaudible.

Back to the Basics and the "Common Core"
December 15, 1983
Workshop B

Moderator: William Brannian, Principal, Austin E. Lathrop High School

Panelists: Senator Paul Fischer, Senate Committee on Health, Education and Social Services, Soldotna
Dr. Mary A. Francis, Curriculum Director, Lower Kuskokwim School District, Bethel
Elizabeth Hickerson, Senate Advisory Council, and attorney
Robert Peck, Principal, Career Center, Anchorage
Susan Stitham, English Department Chair, Austin E. Lathrop High School

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to get started now. For your information, we seem to have a few problems during this conference. My name is Bill Brannian, I'm the principal of Lathrop High School, president-elect for the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals. I have been appointed the moderator of this section. The secretary, or whoever put the booklet program together, did make an error, Mr. Peck was given that honor. I should maybe sit down right now and say we'll go by the program but I don't think Mr. Peck would be too appreciative of that.

First I would like to state how I would like to organize this sectional for your information. I do not believe in running a long extended meeting where we don't get a break, so these panelists will have about fifteen minutes to make a presentation, then we will take a break at that point. Will come back after fifteen minutes of that break. I ask you please to be prompt. I will have a five minute ----- for each panel to rebut what has been said, and then there will be a period for questions and answers after that. We are running behind time, we will try to go along as rapidly as possible.

I would next like to introduce the panelists. And I've asked each of them to write a brief statement for me because some of these people, it's the first time I have met them in my life is right now in these last few minutes. First, who will start off the panel is Senator Paul Fischer. He is raised in the Pennsylvania Dutch community area of Pennsylvania, he's a teacher by profession, a baker by trade. He's taught at elementary, secondary and the college level as well as experience in school administration. His political activities: he's a member of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly for seven years, and is presently serving his first term in the Alaska State Senate. He's the owner of the Golden Nugget Bakery in Soldotna, Alaska. Senator Fischer.

The next panelist, and I'll introduce all at this time, is Dr. Mary Francis. She is the Curriculum Director for the Lower Kuskokwim School District in Bethel, where she supervises the district's curriculum development, implementation and assessment, Chapter One, vocational education, computer assisted instruction and community education. She is a board member of the Alaska Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. She is a member of the Department of Education Elementary Curriculum Framework Committee. She is a former high school teacher and a university professor. And did her internship I believe, working in Fairbanks. Alright.

Our next panelists is Ms. Elizabeth Hickerson. She's a retired teacher, nine and ten, was that in Oklahoma? She is a senior advisor for the Senate Advisory Council. Is that right?

Our final panelist, or next to our last panelist, will be Mr. Bob Peck. He has twenty-one years with the Anchorage School District. He's presently principal of the Career Center. He's taught English for ten years and school administration for twelve years. He has a BA and MA from Colgate University.

Our finalist panelist today has taught in Fairbanks since 1970-67. She arrived there one week after the flood. She's past president of the Fairbanks Education Association NEA/Alaska and she makes the comment, the thing she's proudest of, that she's been elected seven times by the senior class to speak at graduation. She's an English Department teacher and Department Chairman at Lathrop High School, Sue Stitham.

To start off this panel, I want to make just a few very brief remarks. As it says in your program, this panel deals with back to basics, are we getting there or what is happening? As I see this panel, is as overall charge, is to discuss what students know at various levels of their educational experience. Who should determine the curriculum, if you reach that knowledge and how the curriculum fits the specific situations, i.e., urban rural curriculums, back to basics movement. Then you have within that, how does that fit with vocational education or with cross cultural and bilingual education?

Also questions is presented, is how does Alaska education compare with the other states? In looking at the functions of various levels of government, normally we find, ask ourself, who determines what part of the curriculum? Is it done by the state board of education, is it done by the school boards, is it done by administrators or by parent groups? I think historically, the normal way that you usually find curriculum determined, is that by particularly teachers make recommendations to administrators, who suggest it to school boards, who pass on it and therefore become the district curriculum.

Very seldom has legislature, to my knowledge in experience in education, asked the legislative curriculum. When they have, it has usually been a special interest group or very narrow group. An example, being in the state where the principal for twelve years before I came to Alaska, the legislature did a legislative piece of equipment. It stated very specifically that all teachers in the state within twenty minutes per week teaching the evils of alcohol and tobacco. That was legislated in about 1930 and I doubt if twenty minutes have been spent by all teachers since then. But that is the type of thing than can happen when you deal with that.

When we discuss the back to basic movement, a couple comments I would like to make my own, and then I would like to read from one of my favorite columnists, I think who does a great deal to put things in perspectives at times. In discussing back to basic, is it reading, writing, arithmetic? Will the definition stand up for parent whose child is to be talented? Will it stand up for a student who wants to take auto mechanics and his parents own a garage and he intends to enter the family business? I think you have to question that.

And from this, I'd like to quote from a column from one of the persons I think, that many times put a great deal to put things in perspectives for us. Ms. Erma Bombeck, her column. And I think you've heard these quite often. And this is just one thing more. Ms. _____, it says "Welcome to teaching Ms. ?. Your mission is how to teach twentysix first graders how to read. Should you decide to accept the job, you will be reinforced by every modern bit of teaching technology known to education, including visual aids, computers and teaching aids. You'll have the confidence of the parents, the support of the administration and the love of the children. You have nine months in which to accomplish this miracle. With three and one half weeks off for holidays and an occasional close of school by an Act of God. Good luck. Oh, just one more thing, you won't forget to install good nutrition habits, teach the gifted, the neurology impaired, the emotionally disturbed, and develop civic responsibility, will you? Good. And check for head lice, make sure you have they have a hot breakfast, collect milk money, and arrange their transportation to and from school. Did I mention eye testing and inoculations and instruction of first aid procedures? It goes without saying, you'll provide sex education in good taste, of course. By the way, don't forget to maintain birth information, and age certification data, be on the look out for child abuse, and collect money for the repairing of the Statute of Liberty. And you'll have to make time to build economic awareness, assist in bladder control, stress bilingual development and eliminate sex discrimination.

Just be glad, Ms. ?, you aren't in the secondary. They have to assist in career planning, money management, teach kids how to drive a car, place them in their career, place them in jobs, identifying and solve alcohol and drug abuse problems, and counsel them in pregnancies. You're fortunate, all you have is bicycle safety, training and preliminary -----, promotion of physical fitness and metrics, building self worth and respect, and installing in them a sense of patriotism. All we expect from you is giving the public what they want, a back to basic education. And with that, we'll start with Senator Fischer.

Sen. Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A look around this room and in the halls, and I see all these people here and you start putting dollars and you wonder if we could just extend this for maybe a month, how much money the school districts would really save by leaving you folks up here and nobody's back home minding the shop. I have a real problem getting this thing together because I'm in a bakery, that this time of the year, we're usually busy. You know, making Christmas cookies. So between the cookies, I've been trying to scratch out ideas. But I do want to say one thing, whatever I say are my views, as just one Senator, not necessarily those of the whole Senate.

One of the questions that come up is what ought Alaskans students know in grade six, nine and twelve. And it's a very difficulty in even attempting to answer, so I really don't even want to attempt to do that. So I'll be honest with you. However, having eleven children of my own, and quite a few of them already going through this system, I guess you can kinda look a little bit and say what they ought to have and. At the sixth grade level, the only thing that I can really come up with is that they should have the foundation to go on. And I think that if we can do that at the sixth grade level, or up to that level, we won't have the problems in later years as far as the actual learning activities. In ninth grade, I don't think I could touch at all, everytime I look back and look at my ninth grade children, it's a period of time that is not necessarily the one to talk about when it comes to learning your, you know, everybody kinda wants to go their different ways.

But I think, what we can expect from twelfth grade students or graduates, is in one word is readiness. And I tried to identify three areas that I think they have to be ready. One area, which is the obvious, is to enter the area of post secondary institutions, whether it be college or whether it be trade schools. Another area is to enter the level of business, or whatever their occupation will be. I'll call it vocational area. And I'm talking here electricians, carpenters, or whatever.

But in this area, I find that the schools are doing a disservice many times. Kids come to us who are graduates, and they haven't over, they over emphasis what they think they know and where they should fit into the economics. In other words, they don't think they should start at the bottom of the ladder. They should start somewhere near the top.

And, just let me share two little examples at the bakery. We had a high school graduate who came to me and he wanted to work the summer before he went to college, a real smart student. And he told me he had worked in the kitchen, he really understands what goes on in a bakery. So one morning, I was kinda sleeping late and I caught him and I said, do you know how to mix a formula. He said sure. I said, ok, you mix the dough and then I'll come in and we'll cut it. This is for doughnuts. And in the bakery, those of you who are familiar, we have one panel, we use yeast, white yeast, one pound in paper containers. So I went in and he said yeah, I put three pounds of yeast in but I'm looking through this and I see little blue things. And I couldn't figure what it was and what it really was. He followed the directions, three pounds of yeast, paper and all right in the dough. So you really question, you know, sometimes, if they really have the expertise, those kinds of experiences, and I can go on. I'll leave the other one go which is another one in the bakery.

The third thing is I think the students should be able to cope successfully and survive in the world of life. And with this I include, and you may not call it curriculum but I do, and that's extracurriculum activities. I think one of the most important things that schools can do is to involve students, not necessarily as a participant, actively pursuing it, whether it's basketball or whatever, but as a spectator participant. And we don't do enough of that. And when they get out of high school they're going to be more likely sitting with a beer with somebody looking at television. And it would be neat if they had some background and be able to follow all those activities they're going to be seeing in later life. So I place alot of emphasis on extracurriculum activities.

Another thing is I don't think everybody needs twelve years of high school education. And that's why when he had asked my background, I gave it as Pennsylvania Dutch. I'm familiar with the Amish, and quite frankly the Amish need six to eight years. With their society and their culture, they don't want our lifestyles. And if you go back and look at the Pennsylvania Dutch, their emphasis is on the family. They believe there should be a mother, a father and children; they should work the farm. And they probably have the finest farms in the nation without being mechanized, they do it by hand. And they desire to maintain certain moral values. And I say there might be an implication here

to some of the cultures in the native areas, I don't know. But I guess my basic premise is that we don't all need twelve years of education. And the Amish, I get back once in a while and talk with some of them and to put it bluntly, they're not interested in getting the updates as to what's happening in New York City. They're not interested in the gay, the lesbian movement. Any of these things. They don't want their kids exposed to that. They just like it the way they are, keep their simple values.

In curriculum, who should control the curriculum. I believe the local school board should. I believe the state, whether it be the legislature, the Department of Education, they should stay out as much as they possibly can. I think local control is very important. The model procession, of course, is where you have a committee of teachers, that they work to develop it then you have the school administration who looks it over, makes some changes, possibly and recommends it to the school board. And then the school board accepts the curriculum, whatever it be, a change, revision, whatever.

But I would like to give you a couple observations that I feel needs to somehow be changed in the curriculum process. One is I think the school board members should be on that committee to begin with. Some of you may have been doing this, I don't know. But I think it's critical so that later when they are making a decision as to whether to adopt a curriculum or not, the committee isn't frustrated because they couldn't sense the direction, the direction the school board wanted to go. And I think from that basis alone they should be a part of the process. School boards need to know, I think their proper role within the school system. And I think there's many cases where this does not happen. The school boards have got to assume the directorship, the school administration if you look at the way it should be, it should be this way, too often it's this way. And granted, the elected official is part time but they are the stewards of the school system. And I think they have to start looking at it as though they are the directors. Give the direction to the administration and then let the administration run the show from that point on.

I think curriculum experimentation should be the exception rather than the rule. I grew up in an area when I get out of college, my God, the initial teaching alphabet was a thing, this was gonna save everybody. Well, it didn't really save everybody and I happen to have a child that took it. I bought the concept and we toured America for a year with our family and my kids couldn't read. Because they just didn't happen to have the same alphabet that they had. So we had a problem. The open classroom, everybody wanted that, you know, but now those teachers who really advocated that aren't here anymore. So now we're going back to structures and putting walls. Everybody doing his own

thing. I remember that period. I think we got over that error. Language labs, time out rooms, the whole works. And I think we really need to look at it a little bit more when it comes from experimentation. Far too often, the actual curriculum is decided by these kinds of people. Salesman, who comes into a good pitch, high pitch salesman comes in and gives you a story and boy that's the new curriculum you're gonna get involved with. College professors who make the circuit giving speeches, they come in, they get some, I'll call them converts. The converts, go back all excited, not saying it's right or wrong, they go back excited and then before you know it you have a change in the curriculum. Educational consultants would be in the same area. But they come in with their pet projects and when you hire a consultant, they of course come in with their preconceived ideas. I question, as a result of the last speaker how many school districts here in Alaska are going to go buy that system. I'm sure in the legislature we're going to be asked by somebody to give us a pilot study grant or a pilot grant to go through with this. And I'm not saying whether it's good or bad or whatever, but I can bet we're gonna see some district coming in, they want to adopt this kind of a system for their curriculum.

More money for teachers, that's another thing we often hear. And I'll say that more moneys for teachers does not necessarily mean an improvement in the curriculum. And I think you agree with that. For example, teachers are still going to have second jobs. I don't care what the revenue is. If you're a commercial fisherman also, you're going to do that in the summer, or when you're off. Higher wages are not going to guarantee that the teachers are going to use their prep time any better then they are right now. And I think we all know that sometimes that's not used to the best of the teachers ability. It's not going to stop the political activists who uses many times, teaching time to advance a political cause. That's still going to be within the system. But I do believe that teachers salary are not where they should be. I think they're not professional, and I think they need to be made professional. Which what I'm saying is that we need more money. But not on the basis it's going to improve the curriculum, but on the basis you are professional. Whoever teachers are here, you are professional and you should be getting that kind of money. I again believe that there are cases where teachers should make more money then the administrators. I see too often darn good teachers leaving teaching because the economic opportunities are not there, they're in administration. I think that has to change. And there's nothing wrong with a teacher making \$60,000 if they're doing the job they're supposed to be doing. And that's working with kids. That's the whole purpose of school.

We need to also look at extending the teaching, not the teaching year but the contract of the teacher. I still like the 180 days. But I think we need to start talking in terms of ten and eleven month contracts for teachers. It'll do a couple things, but one thing it will do, with the public, the public will buy increase salary if you wanted ten, eleven month contract. It also helps you because you can have pre-school opening and post school workshops. You don't have that interference while the school process is going on. So I support that very strongly.

The question, should state legislators, should they ever step into the curriculum arena and our speaker had said he doesn't know of many cases. But I think there's certain cases where you almost have to. You may not consider this curriculum but I'll just give you a point and it's a live one today. We're talking about opening Mt. Edgecombe, ok. We're talking there anywhere from \$27,000 to \$37,000 per kid. Ok. So when I heard that, I looked at that from an economic basis only. So I did some calling. I called Harvard University, I said where do you get some good students. They said, oh we get them from Phillips Academy. So I called Phillips Academy. I said what's it cost, room, board, tuition, etc. everything you can. When I took that figure and still gave the student a free ride down, a free ride back, back again after Christmas and back, it's still half the cost of what it takes to send them to Mt. Edgecombe. On another basis, that's academic, I was looking at. Now we say that oh, maybe extracurriculum activities. So I called a school in Florida who has water polo, anything you can think of, horseback riding, the whole works. The same thing, less than half. Then I thought, well maybe there's a religious implication here so I checked with a religious school, and that was one-fourth the cost, room, board and everything. So you have, oh, I did one other thing, which was amazing. I thought well, let's call a foreign country. Let's see if we can send our kids anywhere over there and still be cheaper. And I'm talking now from an economic basis. So I called a school in London, England. And after ten minutes, we both arrived at we could not understand one another. So I never did get the price. So in a case like that, I think the state legislature has to say no. And that's my opinion, you're gonna hear it tomorrow or later or another group is gonna say they think it's the greatest thing that came around.

I think the legislature also has to look at the concept of there is no free lunch. There has to be a way that everybody pays something for education, not just the incorporated boroughs. Now what I'm about to say, I'll probably get hung by areas that are not incorporated, but I maintain that we have to look at some form. And I'll just call it a boroughization and follow the regional educational areas. But they gotta have the power. Those people have to

become a borough or something so they have two powers. One is the power to tax, and the power for education. There's gotta be some local money put in some of these schools. There's too many areas that, let's face it, if I said to you what do you want, but you don't have to match it or you don't have to put up any money, you're gonna come in with the sun. Maybe you'll end up with the moon. So I think we have to look at that.

So just in conclusion, I believe we need to do alot more. I'm trying to hurry, because I know of the time, we need to do alot more with curriculum. But you can't do more with less money. And you keep hearing things. The feds are saying we want you to do more but we're not going to give you the money. And I think the State of Alaska, with the economy we have now, now we can look ahead and say, gee, ten years from now we may not have any money but I don't buy that scenario. I think the oil is gonna last us alot longer then that with the discovery of new fields. But I think we need to really look at it and increase the money then I think we'll get increase whatever else we need. Whether it be better curriculum, better educated children, whatever. So I advocate an increase.

Putting it in perspective, this year, I think there was a bill last year that came out. I don't know if you folks all know it, but you're suppose to. I think with this bill, the bill says you get the same amount of foundation money you got this year. And I think the bill said with the cost of living amount, plus an amount of money for additional students. Now I hear rumbles that maybe that cost of living won't be there, well, I think, and we're talking about \$18 million just for that cost of living. So I maintain that that is an obligation that we made to you when we passed that legislation and we have no way or no right to take that away. You need to know what you're getting next year. You also need to know in advance what money you're getting so you can plan your curriculums.

So that's real quick, I'm trying to hurry and I really appreciate being here. It's been a long time since I've had a chance to talk to alot of distinguished people. Now I don't mean that to infer that I'm a Senator and not distinguished. No, I enjoyed it thank you.

Moderator: Thank you. Next will be Dr. Mary Francis.

Francis: There were alot of questions raised by the workshop description and I didn't attempt to answer them all, so I'm focusing in on those that are nearest and dearest to my heart. Back to the basics and the common core, are we moving forward or backward? One could get motion sickness contemplating how often the pendulum has swung on this issue in the history of education. Perhaps more important than answering the question is to ask, why is

core curriculum once again in the limelight? Is it because of falling SAT scores? Is it because our children do not exit our schools with the skills they need to compete in society? Is it because our nation is at risk? Is it because revenues are declining?

There are many reasons, but the one that looms largest in my mind is that as revenues decline, we rethink the need for expensive educational frills and accountability becomes a significant issue. Parents, legislators, school officials, the state board, local school boards and other taxpayers all want to know what are we getting or not getting for our money. And we go back to the basics for solutions.

Accountability is indeed healthy. It is necessary to set goals and objectives, to have a plan for meeting those goals and to measure, at critical times, whether they were in fact met or not. Hardly anyone would disagree with such a fundamental principle of good management.

The matter begins to get murky though when we try to decide who should set the standards for accountability, and who should determine what students should be taught, at what grade, and with what proficiency expectations. If the legislature, for example, wishes educational accountability, should that body set the guidelines for school districts to follow in order to receive funds? Should the state school board? Should local boards? Should school officials? Should teachers? I believe that all these groups have a role to play in establishing curriculum. But each is a very different level of involvement.

The state board of education should be responsible for establishing the broad goals, content areas, and expected learnings for the education of Alaskan students so that their education is comparable to that of other states. These goals for education should take into account the recommendations of state and national professional associations, such as the National Council for Teachers of English. The state board's goals and objectives in turn can provide the leadership to local school district boards who then must establish their own district educational goals, which reflect the special needs of their students.

Local school officials, under the direction of their local boards should then work with teachers, principals, students and specialists to determine the specific skills and knowledge appropriate for their students. The Department of Education should be prepared to provide technical assistance in curriculum planning to those school districts that require it. The legislature's involvement should be to provide the funds to the Department of Education and local districts so that they might do effective curriculum planning.

Effective curriculum planning is expensive. It's expensive because it necessarily involves a lot of people and takes a lot of time. In the Lower Kuskokwim School District, we formed task forces of our own teachers who work together monthly over the school year to establish the scope and sequence of objectives and learner expectations for the subject area being developed. Their work is brought to a curriculum review committee for scrutiny at key points in development. The curriculum review committee is a board appointed committee with representation from all vested interests in curriculum, such as principals, advisory school board members, elementary and secondary teachers, students and so forth. When the curriculum review committee is satisfied, it recommends to the district board that the curriculum be approved and adopted.

A basic principle of curriculum planning is that if you expect it to be implemented and used, the users, that is the teachers, must be involved in its development or it will probably sit on a shelf. The same principle applies to plans made at the state level. For example, the Department of Education Elementary Curriculum Framework Committee, of which I am a member, is preparing guidelines for elementary curriculum development for the state. A crucial part of that effort is the review process in which we seek input from all the school districts and professional associations. Their feedback is an essential part of our planning. Development is only part of the picture, however, developed curriculum must be implemented, staff must be trained to work with it, student assessment must be aligned accordingly. All these activities are appropriately carried out at the local school district level.

You may be thinking, I thought she believed in accountability, but I hear her saying that the Department of Education and the legislature should provide technical assistance and money and then back off. Not really, I have two suggestions, one radical, one not so radical. I'll start with the easier, not so radical notion.

Every Alaskan school district should designate someone as responsible for curriculum development, implementation and assessment. Now I know that most districts already have done so in a nominal way, like in some assistant superintendent's description along with fifteen other duties. But I mean as a major portion of that person's job responsibilities. It can be considered a temporary appointment until the first round of development is complete. Then the need for full time involvement is indeed reduced. But I must caution that good curriculum is never finished. By definition, it is in continual need of revision and renewal.

Now my more radical suggestion. Districts should be monitored in curriculum just as they are monitored in Chapter One bilingual ed, special ed, vocation ed and so

forth. In the Lower Kuskokwim School District, for instance, we would welcome a chance to show legislators, state board members, other taxpayers, what we have done in our curriculum effort. I have always thought it out that this most critical area, the very core of the districts instructional program is not systemically tracked. The flip side of that coin though is that monitoring must come after the conditions have been set for effective curriculum planning to occur. I have been fortunate to work for a school board who set those conditions. Who put their money where their mouth is and fully supported my efforts. Many districts are unable to do the same. That's where the legislature can help.

The point of all this is that to mandate an emphasis on the basic skills, or to set competencies at the state level, would do little to change Alaskan students achievement and proficiency levels unless districts have a local curriculum in place that is theirs and that is implemented and evaluated. We need to provide the conditions for districts to plan their curriculum and then expect them to follow it.

I'd like to make a couple of comments on one of the questions raised. How does the back to basics movement accommodate cross-cultural and bilingual education goals? In rural Alaska, or at least in my district, we never left the basics. We were too busy working with second language acquisition to spend precious time in proliferal studies. As far as accommodating cross cultural or bilingual goals in basic skills instructions, bilingualism is ever present in our instructional programing. When students are truly bilingual, bicultural,; bilingual education is not an add on. It is a premise, a philosophy, an ideology that affects everything we do. Language, arts, and reading are taught utilizing SL (?) techniques in emphasizing oral language development. Predictable areas of difficulty for second language learners are identified and targeted for special works, such as reading comprehension and math concepts and application. Language, arts, math, science, and social studies all incorporate local culture and tradition into activities and resources used. Many local advisory school boards add Yupik language for arts and crafts courses to the graduation requirements but frequently extend the school day in order to include them. That is the basic skills are not compromised by bilingualism, they are enriched by it.

Moderator: Thank you Dr. Francis. And next, Elizabeth Hickerson.

Hickerson: Good afternoon. Glad to see so many here. When this symposium was first being put together, it was a great idea that Senator Josephson had and many of us sat around and talked about what do these people, you know, what do

they want to hear, what do we want to present. And I had no idea so many people would show up. Unfortunately I was unable to attend this morning but I hear that it was very exciting and very good. So it does work sometimes, a good idea does turn out well.

I'm working for the Senate Advisory Council. In that capacity, I work on a number of research projects and Senator Josephson, as well as other Senators, have been interested in the educational system we have here in the State. And particularly when the notion at risk came out and everybody went up in arms, oh God, oh God, what are we doing? People got very interested to see exactly what our requirements were here in Alaska. So I started on a project, I noticed that you all have my final copy there. And for you English teachers, I'm ready for the corrections, because I didn't expect this to go out to the public. But anyway, there are a couple of corrections. First of all I might say, what I did was, I sent out a letter, to first of all, all of the states requesting information on their curriculum requirements and I assumed that would be a very simple process. They would send me back the information. Well, as my, uh, I state on page two, nineteen states have recently revised their graduation requirements and thirteen states are in the process of revising. So I thought this would take a couple of weeks to put together, but it was constantly being revised as the schools decided that they or the states decided that they needed to upgrade their standards. So at any rate, I then sent back a, um, the attachments that you see for verification, if this was indeed what was being provided. And they responded back whether it was right or whether or not there had been changes. And I was amazed to see how many states, in this short period of time, had changed their requirements. So it's a hot item. It's going on. I had an opportunity to talk to a couple of states that just would not respond. And I had no other way but to just to get on the phone and say I got to have this information. And it's happening throughout the fifty states.

People are looking. People are deciding that the problem of our society is based on what's going on in the classroom. And in order to take the heat off of the teachers and the administrators, they're going to their state departments and saying we've got to do something. And that's not to say that improvement isn't needed. This is kind of a commentary here. It doesn't really matter what curriculum requirements you have, I don't think, being a past teacher, it's what going on in the classroom. And you all know that. You may be sitting in your classroom and the person next door may be opening up the book and saying on Monday, we read chapter one. On Tuesday, we answer the questions at the end of chapter one. On Wednesday, in class, we will grade those questions. On Thursday, we will

have a film and on Friday, we will have current event days. So it's not just what is required, but it's how the information is presented to the kids. Ok.

Then I did the same thing in Alaska and if you find mistakes, please let me know because I attempted to get the most current information within our state. Our districts are also revising their requirements. As you know, our state mandated requirements one unit of the basics, and that's it. And the locals decide what in addition will be required for high school graduation. I do not want to read to you. I assume everyone in this room can read, or know someone who can read this to them, if you're interested in it. However, there are a couple of corrections. Utah just sent me a letter and they now require a proficiency examination for graduation. Other than that, as of the end of November, these were the requirements for the fifty states, including ours. As you know, Alaska right now is presently looking at our requirements the board of education, the board voted just last month to increase the units to twentyone and also to increase the units in the individual courses. Now what will have to happen on this is it will have to go out to public hearing. Because this is in our regulations. And I encourage all of you, all of you, to attend these public hearings. To write a letter regarding the curriculum requirements that you feel are necessary and take a part in what we will ultimately have. The other handout is for the district requirements. And once again, if you find any, any particular requirements that are not so, please let me know. I tried to be as current as possible on that. During the question and answer period, if anyone has any questions about this information, don't hesitate to ask me. I feel like it kinda speaks for itself.

Now, as a retired teacher, I want to take a moment to say my personal feelings on some of these issues. And it certainly does not reflect any Senator or anyone I may work for after I get fired after this. No. I'm very concerned about what is going on in the classroom. I taught in Norman (sp?), Oklahoma, ninth and tenth grade, for three and one half years. And as Senator Fischer was saying, that's not exactly an ideal time for adolescence or parent or teacher or anyone else that's having to deal with those people. I found it very thrilling, sometimes. I am retired. And one reason I decided to get out of the teaching practice was it, at times, it was very frustrating. I had students that could not read, could barely write, if anything. Many of them that could read were not comprehending what was going on. And as you all know, you have five classes a day, I think I had a total of 125-130 give or take. Most showed up because we had mandatory attendance. Some I wish hadn't shown up. But it was very frustrating. There was not anything I could do for many of those students, because it

was too late. They were now in ninth or tenth grade, they had missed the opportunity in the first three years. I can't teach reading. I had problems with spelling myself because I moved from phonetics into memorization in the middle of the year. Broken home and oh, you know, all the problems associated with that. And it was very frustrating. But I tried and I tried. And I think I did a pretty good job, I enjoyed it. Then one day, sitting in the teachers lounge, they handed out the salary schedule. And after, if I put in twentyfive years, received my Ph.D., this was in 1974, received my Ph.D., my final year, after twentyfive years, I would be making \$25,000. And I thought, uh, there's got to be something wrong with this, because at the time, I had friends that were in what you might call unskilled jobs, already making \$25,000. And I started thinking if nobody cares, if nobody cares what a teacher is doing in the classroom enough to reward that person, then it was just too much. It was very frustrating.

I encourage you and I don't know exactly why I'm saying this, but I encourage you to stick with it. To stick with it. We have a good system here. I recently taught a short class at the university. And once again, I saw the same problems. People that, students that could not write, students that could not read and comprehend. And it was still frustrating. But those of you who are teachers, those of you who are administrators, stick it out. The kids need you. Times aren't real great in some families right now.

End of Tape I

Tape II

Peck: This has been an interesting conference for me. So far, I started out this morning as a panel member and then found out this afternoon I was a Senator. So uh, anyway, one of the privileges, I guess of being mistaken for the moderator, was that they printed remarks I had to make in the folders you received this morning. So I can't really escape by saying to you during the question and answer period that I really didn't say that. So if any of you have any questions, anyway I have the comments that are printed in there.

I guess the first thing I wanted to say is the quotation that I opened those comments with that is schools are a reflection of ourselves. And our high schools are what we have made them and they will become no more than what we wish them to be. I was trying to illustrate, for those of you who have not worked in public education for a

long time, I wanted to point out that we in education really don't do very much leading, despite of the fact that we say we do. Schools are responsive through the structure, I think that's the way it's designed, to public values, public changes in attitude. And that's the way it is. If you follow history and the history of education, each generation of Americans, consciously or not consciously, has modified the public schools system so that it better reflects the hopes and values and all that of that particular generation. And I guess, that one of the things you notice after a while is that in the system and in what you call education, things such as equity, equality, excellence and liberty are really in a constant state of movement intention.

Senator Fischer mentioned his concern with fadism in education and we tend to jump on bandwagons and you have this constant pendulum swing. And I personally agree with him. I think that's a serious problem. But if you look at these various terms, like equality, excellence you also notice that the some of these things are brought about by very real concerns, problems in society. For example, in the past two decades, the 60's and 70's, there have been massive changes in society and they have been influenced by education. For example, education, probably more then any other institution in this country, took the human rights and the racial relations and other things fairly seriously. And again, as a result of demand from concern from the public. We're all familiar with the results of some of these demands, whether they be public law 94,142, Title 9, multicultural and bilingual programs. But then what happens and what's happened as a result of these movements and the success of these movements, as a matter of fact, what happens is another movement. There is now concern, and I quote it in my paper, "equality is once an achievement to be celebrated and the degradation to be avoided".

Now what we're hearing is now that we've solved at least some of the problems, and made inroads in some of the more serious societal problems, such as racism among other things, that we now have to have standards again, as if we didn't as if we didn't have any standards in the past. But now we want different standards. We want "a return to the basics" and this is sort of a round about way of getting back to that. Basically, this is another reaction to turn to the right to a more conservative approach. And to reflect an even more conservative outlook in terms of the values and concepts of the current society. I think it's really an inevitable result of what's been happening for the past twenty years. In fact, and I've mentioned this could've been predicted, if you follow closely the PDK gallop poll every year. And for the past five years, four or five years, consistently the number one concern of the public has been lack of discipline in the schools.

Now as a result of this concern and this shift in attitude what you're probably going to see in the 90's, 80's and 90's, will be, there will be attempts, and you already see it, to bring about increasing test scores, stricter discipline, and attempts to somehow increase achievement in all areas, in both qualitatively and quantitatively. I think uh, what has to be addressed, to maybe cut down on some of these cyclical and fadish movements in education, is how can the system, or this bureaucracy, this giant bureaucracy, be modified without changing its basic structure and without restricting individuals freedoms. And I think that's critical. Now after all, as I mentioned, we have the highest, one of the highest literacy rates in the world. And probably the basic elements of the system really don't need to be changed very much.

But in an attempt to answer some of the questions posed for this panel, I would make some rather general recommendations. And these again, as how I feel what can be done about it. I do think secondary and post secondary institutions need to foster better and more extensive ties with the community and with the working world. The colleges and universities are notorious been insular in their approach to education and in many respects, many of the things that they proclaim. The secondary schools probably are also guilty of that to some extent. And I think that is a change in direction, again, I'm referring to what Senator Fischer said about making sure administrators, teachers, educators know what is going on with their graduates, how they're performing and what they need to change and be improved in, with.

Secondly, vocational planning and counseling needs to be improved and expanded in the public schools and in the post secondary institutions. I think I can say this somewhat objectively, I came from the classic liberal arts education where you took philosophy and you did all these things, but I don't know what you were supposed to do when you graduated. But anyway, what concerns me is that the people who are counseling our students, both at the secondary level and the post secondary level, have come through the academic chain and network. And they are inheritedly prejudiced. Now I don't mean that they are intentionally prejudiced, I'm not trying to insult their intelligence. What I'm saying is that they are familiar with the academic road, the academic path. Therefore, it's only natural for them to advise others in there and that is a serious problem. If you look at the students we are serving in the public schools, we are talking about, maybe at best, 20% of our graduates who will complete a four year bachelors program. What are we doing advising the other 80% and saying is that really the best way to do it is to go through the academic approach.

Number three, I think activities that some people have mentioned, I think are crucial also. Unfortunately, again we have 10-20% of the students who are doing all of the participating. We need to expand activities and diversify them to involve more of the population in the schools. Again, I would go along certainly with the increasing salaries. I cannot agree with Senator Fischer about not increasing administrators salaries but that prejudice, obviously. I think, we do need to increase standards to a certain extent, in all areas. But by increasing standards, I'm not advocating that we increase graduations requirements and restrict individuals freedoms again. I think that's a mistake. I think we have plenty of that. We need other ways to approach it. Standards in achievement are one thing but to start dictating again, more and more what students will choose and what they will choose to learn, I think it's a serious error. But I'm afraid because of the report by the nation of risk again, there's going to be this big movement to increase requirements again.

Now just briefly, as a specific questions that were asked, who should control the curriculum, the state board of education, the legislature, the teachers or the local boards? Local control is always been a sacred issue, a sacred cow, so to speak, and I don't think it's going to change very much, and I'm not even sure it should. However, I also would again, and I find myself agreeing with Senator Fischer, more then maybe I'd like to in some ways. But, the point is when the state is providing the vast majority of the resources to pay for the education, I would think they ought to be concerned about how it's being spent. And if they don't, I think something's wrong with them. And the other point is, the federal government has been in the controlling in the moderating of education for a long time. You can take anything from public law 94-142, so mandated busing. I think the most, as far as I'm concerned, the best way to handle it is to make sure you have an enlightened group of legislators who can help control in a constructive direction. But I certainly don't think you can dole out money in the amount that is required the state and the communities that get it without any kinds of controls. I think that was a serious mistake.

Number two, should standards for rural Alaska be the same as those for a larger school districts. Well, I don't know, it depends on what kind of a society the people in the rural areas wish to compete in. I think it's a mistake to say no. They don't need that or want that. One of the things that always bothered me about the Sierra Club is some of the groups Outside say that, well, we want to maintain the Alaskan bush community, the small villages in their primitive state, and in their pristine, original, whatever it is, they were in, back say in the 19th century. Well, don't they have anything to say about what they want? And

again, I think that is a question that would have to be answered by the community. But certainly, just like say, in Anchorage, we can't prepare, say in the career center only for jobs that exist in Anchorage. I think that would be a limiting thing. I guess I look at that question the same way.

What role should teachers be playing in the curriculum development. Probably, they are now working the state and local boards and advisors as consultants. Again, the question about how do they compare, the curriculum requirements compare, you have a very comprehensive study that was done. I don't need to get into that. How does the back to basic movement accomodate cross cultural and bilingual education goals. I don't think they're incompatible as they are stated. Standards can be raised and maintained at the same time to achieve all their cultural goals. What is the place of vocational education in the context in the basic curriculum. Again, I think there's probably nothing more basic for seniors and juniors in high school and even in exploratory things earlier. Again, my concern about vocational education is that probably it does need some reform at the school level, but certainly that doesn't mean getting rid of it. And I would have to say that the, again, my basic concern always for vocational education is that it's operating in a structure, in a bureaucracy, that's sort of it's enemy, in a way. But again, not in a conscious way. Anyway, that's basically what I had to say, and I'd be happy to answer questions later. Thank you.

Moderator: Thank you Bob. Next, Ms. Susan Stitham, Susan.

Stitham: Thank you. I have to confess that I begin this statement with some degree of bewilderment. I'm not exactly sure what the first part of the topic means, back to the basics. I haven't understood that phrase since it first became popular a number of years ago. As far as I can see, we never left the basics. They've just been buried under an avalanche of electives, demands from society to socialize students that used to be done by the church and the home. Work study programs, basketball trips and dance decorating. But I'd like to talk about that a little bit more later.

If I do need to define the basics, as I understand it, it would be to borrow some ideas I got from Dr. Oldes (sp?) of Alaska Pacific University, a number of years ago. When he talked about the basics of reading and writing and computation and I think, computer skills would be added to that list now, as tools. They are not ends in themselves but tools by which we get to the real basics which is the understanding of our world through the core curriculum areas. So if we mean by back to the basics, let's focus on those ends by assessing those tools as ends in themselves

with norm reference tests and some kind of arbitrary cut off lists, then I'm opposed to that. If we mean, let's focus on those tools that students need in order to move on, then we should be focusing on those tools across the curriculum, then I'm very definitely for that.

The second part of the topic I can relate to a lot easier. And that is are we moving forward or backward? I think that we're stuck with our heads in the sand and our feet waving in the air. I want to start by telling you what my perspective is on this issue, is quite clearly I am a classroom teacher. It's true that in that capacity, in a larger sense, I have been a leader, in my local professional union, in my national professional union; I've been a coach, both a basketball, softball and drama; a sponsor, I am a department head, I've worked in the curriculum leader, but I'm coming to you today straight from the classroom. And that's been the center and the heart of my professional life for these years since 1965.

I want to bring you a message from what people like to call the trenches or the front lines in a metaphor that's all too apt sometimes. The message is not very happy. I've spent the last couple of weeks talking, even more than usual, in preparation for this with my colleagues. And the word is that we're in trouble. Moral is low. People feel scapegoated and frustrated. Particularly from a federal level. And they hope very much that the State of Alaska is not going to do that but rather help us all work together to find some way out of this. It disturbs me to have to say this, because for years, this has been an evolutionary process. For years, I've been a real Pollyanna about public education, in spite of all the gloom and doom which has surrounded education, probably since I entered it in 1949, but certainly since 1965 when I became a teacher. I was positive, and I remained optimistic because in spite of all the rhetoric, I felt that I and all the colleagues I was working with were making a difference. But lately, I've had some serious doubts about that.

I'd like to tell you about Monday. I spent the weekend reading in preparation for this a number of the reports and articles. And I had a lot of ideas in my head. I came to school on Monday, I need to tell you, I teach at what I consider to be a very good school. I think it's one of the best schools in the state. Got a great faculty, a terrific staff and kids. But this is what happened to me on Monday. OK. First, I had to deal with the fact that there's a Christmas concert going on and so we had to have some mandatory practices during school time out of my classroom. Basketball team was going on a trip, they were going to then therefore miss five out of seven of my class periods because of the way the schedule was arranged. There were twelve absentees that had come back from the test they had missed on Friday. All with parental signed notes and excuses and I

had to deal with them and their makeups. I then had to deal with a colleague in my department who was totally frustrated with the fact that out of twentyfive kids, he could only get three to do their homework, even though he made parent contacts. Then I had prearranged absences to deal with, we're going to Hawaii, Florida, Mexico, my mother's in the car, could you give me my homework, will I miss anything? Some of them are not coming back until the day before the final exams, which is the second week after school starts. In the middle of all this, right, I had a conference with a student who was second highest GPA last year as a junior. She's in my advanced placement class, she's currently failing. She is taking about two college prep classes, teachers aid, something else, she is a member of five student government activities, and all the rest, decorating, selling cans, selling things. And when I said to her, what is happening here, she said I want to have fun this year, I'm a senior, it's my right. She's also making applications to colleges and she's going to be accepted. Because one of the problems that we have is that we've lost our leverage in terms of higher education because the college standards have gone down, in my judgement, and so, you know, no foreign languages and whatever else, and so, we're saying you have to have this, and they say no I don't. I don't even have to take college prep courses, I can still be accepted. And they are accepted all the time. I meet people on the University of Alaska campus, I can't believe that they're going to college. Because they did not take one single college prep class, as far as I know that we offer at our high school. And yet, there they are on that campus as part of the great, you know, whatever, the average student that we're dealing with. That was happening, while of course the omnipresent public address system and a steady flow of messengers who are summoning people to the attendance office, the counseling office, the principal's office, and the last judgement, for all I know. So, now, I want to tell you something, the point about this. We won the basketball games, we had a great concert, but something's wrong. And I am a department head, I have two preparation periods. Other teachers are dealing with that in my school without two preparation periods. And elementary teachers are dealing with even more of that as Mr. Brannian read to you today from Erma Bombeck and they don't have any preparation periods for the most part.

So, we've got a problem. And I have to respectfully disagree with Mr. Peck's statement that he so kindly mailed out in advance so I could do that. That we need not to modify the basic structure. That we need, that probably the majority of the elements of our system do not need to be changed very much. I would have agreed with that until fairly recently. But right now, I believe that we have to change at least the high school drastically if we are to effectively teach the tools necessary for a full productive life.

As a society, in particularly as a state, we have got to decide what we're all about. What do we want from schools? What do we expect them to do? Are they suppose to teach kids to drive? Are we suppose to give them entry level job skills? Are we suppose to produce a winning basketball team? Give musical concerts? Raise the SAT scores of every single student in Alaska, higher than everybody in the U.S.? We can do those things, one at a time. We could do them, if we had enough time and the facilities. But we can't do them all. And it is foolish to think that a few bandaids and some more money in the same places is gonna make any difference. It's not.

I am absolutely convinced that a free public universal educational system dedicated to excellence and equity is fundamental to our continued survival to a democratic republic. And that we need to prepare young people to take their places as productive citizens, articulate in English, competent in the other tools of learning, with a positive value for themselves and other people as human beings. But to get closer to that goal, we need radical changes. And structure even more than content.

Now Dr. Adler's core curriculum has alot of merit, I think. I do think the individual differences need to be accommodated more than what I've seen in the things that he's written about. But his recommendations include some suggestions and implications for structural changes. We don't have enough time in the right places right now to deal with that.

The most direct and comprehensive confrontation with that problem that I've read was in an article in the ----- in June that was Theodore Seizer's (sp?) article on the high school. And a new report is coming out, a full length book on his report is coming out very shortly. But in his report, he said we need to make complete and wholesale changes. (Excuse me, we also need manners. We don't get ice up in Fairbanks, we just live in it, right?) He said a number of things need to be changed. He said that probably the things that remain the same because it is impossible to change very much without changing most of everything. But some of his recommendations are to cut the distractions, consolidate the curriculum, stop trying to do so many things. Eliminate the artificial discipline breakdowns that we've got now. And this arbitrarily departmentalization, expand the time where it's appropriate for various subject areas, reduce the class load and the size, eliminate age grading, and teachers must have control over student program and schedule. He said it is unrealistic to expect change within the existing structure, trying to reform from within in is like pushing jello with a point of a pencil.

Now we can not do this alone. Donald Graves (sp?) has said that it's not that teachers are not willing to change, it's like asking someone to study navigation in the midst of

a hurricane. We need alot of help. We need not to scapegoat. Not to point fingers, but rather to identify the problems and move forward. And I'd like to say that we need, in addition to content changes, is some attitude changes.

First of all teachers need to change their attitudes, I think. We need to accept the fact that we're going to be needing to make some painful changes. We're gonna have to gird our loins again. To adapt to them and to assist and to try once again to demand more of students and put up with the flack and the hassle that we're going to get during the transition time that that takes place.

But we can't do that alone. The students themselves have got to change some attitudes. And I think that that's going to happen as a result of some of these other structural changes. They share the general flabbiness of society, as a whole. They desire quick, easy, fast results. Why shouldn't they? It's what they see on television. It's what they do in video games. It's often what they see at home and in school. We need to set up incentives, positive and also some negative consequences. The students will rise to our expectations. They're as good as they ever were, they're better in many ways. But we are not expecting enough.

It's going to be a tough transition, they're not going to like it, but we have to tough it out. But we can't do it without parents. We cannot do without the parents. The modeling is the key. We've got to have parents who are concerned enough about their kids to come to school on a regular basis, to monitor homework, to monitor student attendance, to stop signing fake absence excuses, to stop letting their kids hide that way from the real work.

There's an article by Jody Powell, in the Washington Post, and he said some pretty harsh things about parents and their role in education. I'd like to quote just one part that I think is accurate. He says that if broken homes are the most easily measured aspect of the problem, they are far from the whole of it. Whatever their marital state, parents who demand little of themselves, are apt to demand even less of their children. The idea of short term sacrifice for long term gain is not likely to be inculcated in children by parents whose lives give no evidence of it. The illusion that life and learning must be easy and fun excludes the possibility of learning the multiplication tables or English grammer. Parents who exhibit no respect for authority demand none from their children and fascination with rights to the exlusion of responsibilities, produce children who are but uneducatable and who disrupt the education of others.

It is imperative, that it seems to me, that the discipline in the schools which the --- has reflected accurately, I believe, and which President Reagan has

identified, discipline in the schools can only work if there's discipline at home. There's got to, I think you would ask parents, uh, teachers over the last five years, you would've heard that is the concern of teachers. The number one concern. There is not discipline and follow through at home.

And finally the whole of us, all of us, as society, have got to reinforce all the things that I've been saying. The Carnegie report says that schools reflect society. We get what our society is. We have to show that we care. That it's as important to be able to write clearly, as it is to be able to make some money. In fact, there's a connection between the two. We say that, but you know, who's saying that. We're saying it, English teachers are saying it. They don't believe us. They don't believe it because they don't see it. They don't hear it at home and they don't see it in society at large. We have got to do that. We have got to give that kind of modeling. Because they aren't going to believe us.

Finally, the reform will be slow and difficult but we must begin. John Goodlad (sp?) identified four factors that will affect the future of education, whether we like it or not. One is what he calls a self centered youth culture. I would say self centered culture period. Number two is a stunningly swift advance of technology. Three is the cloudy requirements of future job market. We don't know what the future job market is going to need in so many cases. And fourth, the need for a highly educated society will only increase. We must have that if we are to survive as a nation. And I want to be sure that you understand that I'm including teachers when I talk about society being flabby when I get that in there. We're all in this together. And we need not to spend time pointing our fingers but working together. We cannot afford to wait. I and my colleagues in Alaska are eager to get started and let's do it.

Moderator: I want to thank you all. Susan's from my high school by the way. I think I'll try the alternative, the alternative high school with her next Monday. Thank you though Susan. At this time, as I said, we are going to probably take, we've been here better than an hour and a half now. I think you're all probably getting just a little bit stiff, I think. Let's take ten minutes for a quick break and then we'll come back for rebuttal from the panelist. Please, just ten minutes, please be back here around a quarter after. By quarter after if you can.

Hickerson (?): ..And, the community colleges have an open door admission policy, which perhaps they should have, they should have to provide preparatory course work. I was just astonished to be eighteen years old is all it takes to walk into the university. What is that telling the student, as

Susan mentioned. It's telling the student you don't have to do anything. And that makes me very upset. Also, uh, just as kind of an additon to the report that I submitted to Senator Josephson, I was curious to see how many remedial courses are being provided at the university level. And there are alot, and why is that? It is because those students are not ready at that point to enter the university system and progress as a university student. We are playing catch up. And that is unfair, most all to those students because the system has failed them at that point. I'm not saying we cannot provide those remedial courses right now. We're stuck, we have to have something. The question is should everyone go to the university? Why aren't they prepared when they leave high school to enter an undergraduate program.

And finally, just to comment, I read in the San Francisco Examiner yesterday, an article, and as all articles in newspapers go, some of them are right, and some of them are wrong. But according to this article, and statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Education, one half of prison convicts have inadequate reading and writing skills. Maybe more, I question that one half. 85% of juveniles brought before the courts have inadequate reading and writing skills. 75% of the unemployed have inadequate reading and writing skills. 90% of the mothers receiving AFDC have inadequate reading and writing skills. In L.A., I was on a plane reading the various newspapers. In L.A., the high school dropout rate is 42%. These statistics, and I don't know what they're basing it on, but those statistics to me, are alarming. We have the money here in Alaska. If we don't put it with the kids to help them, we're going to continue to throw money through Health and Social Services, to take care of the problem.

Moderator: Thank you. Mr. Peck.

Peck: Yes, just a brief comment about Susan Stitham's remarks. I, one of the reasons, those of you who aren't in education, one of the reasons for fads in education, we go back and forth, is because most of the fads that we deal with involve curriculum and process that we can handle, that we can change and modify and that we can write a new book and then it looks new and there's something we have some control over.

The real problem that Susan's bringing up, is human behavior, values and ideals, now that is an entirely different ballgame and much more difficult to handle and control. And probably one of the main reasons we tend in education to look for these other answers, other approaches to how to change the student or modify the student or educate them, whatever you want to call it. So again, I guess I fundamentally disagree because I don't believe we

will change the behavior and ideals and the values of people to the extent to which she suggests you can do.

And then the other problem I guess, is with Miss Hickerson's comments. She is, I think, suggesting that there's a cause and effect here between either deviant behavior, whether it be criminal or whatever, and the fact that the student can or cannot read. And I think, again, if you, observing students and observing their behavior, there isn't necessarily this cause and effect. The problem may have begun much earlier and the student, as a way of getting even, say, with the systems, says you are going to fail because you are not going to be able to teach me. And I will show you you can't teach me. And there are things such as this that are a significant problem and just because many of these people can't read, it does not necessarily mean there's this cause and effect relationship. Thank you.

Moderator: Yes, finally Ms. Stitham.

Stitham: Yes, I'd like to respond to two things. First is the connection the university standards and whether or not we're preparing people. Glad that that came up. It seems to me that the University of Alaska, Juneau, is requiring it, which I just learned, is being eighteen, is very directly related to the fact that there are people there who need remedial courses. The kids are not choosing to take the college prep classes where they have that choice, in some instances. For reasons which may have to do with a million variety of things, they're not doing it. They're harder for one thing. So I would have to disagree with Mr. Peck, when he says that we need to be sure that we're going to give them, not restrict their choices. I think they have too much. Too much choice in what they choose to take. That's my concern about specific individual students over the last number of years. So that they do get to the university, walking in the door, and of course they're unprepared. We have, in my own high school and in our district, an excellent college prep program. But you have to choose to take it. Nobody's going to make you. And so that's also, by the way, my objection to the article I read in the paper about the SAT scores in Alaska.

Somebody's comment at the end was, this is important because it shows how well we're preparing students for college. Hogwash. It shows that anybody can take that test who wants to take it. If we are allowed to say who's gonna take the SAT, and if it's going to be people who had college prep programs, then you're going to test how well we're preparing kids for college. What you're testing now is, and what you're proving is, the fact that a lot of kids aren't getting that kind of training when they're choosing to take general classes. And yet everybody's allowed to take the SAT. The other point is we could raise those scores

very easily by restricting it to the top two or three kids in each school. We'd have tremendous scores here. And I know exactly who should take it this year.

The other point that I want to respond to, too, has to do with vocational education, that question. I didn't actually answer my questions, as you probably noticed. The reports, as I read them, say that traditional vocational education, the job entry skill stuff is basically not helpful, what we're doing right now. What we need to do is what Dr. Adler talked about today, briefly about the manual training and the kind of specific opportunities for people to develop, that part of their lives. Which we don't do very well now, seems to me for most kids. We need much more of that, and we need real individualized intensive career counseling, starting in the eighth grade, I think. We don't do that either. It's very hit or miss, it's a lot of lip service, it's real intermittent, this career counseling we do in most regular high schools. We have a career once a year or something, and we call that career preparation. And our counselors are overburdened with a whole lot of other things that they, they should be doing focusing on this. So traditional voc. ed., as far as job entry skills, is my personal bias is, that that's not the job of K12 system. But rather, as Dr. Adler and Goodlad (sp?) said, the best preparation for a job, especially one we aren't sure what its requirements are going to be in the future is a good general basic education. And that's what we need and we need not, in my, I guess all that New England, Protestant, Puritan, Calvinism is coming out in me, after all these years, I wish my father was here to hear that. But, he wouldn't believe it. Put, I, we're giving people too much choice, the students, and we need to take that back and to show them, I believe a structure that's going to prepare people as we're not doing now.

Moderator: Thank you Susan. The way I'd like to run the question and answer period, if it's agreeable to you, would you please identify yourself and direct your question if you prefer to a specific member of the panel. I will call on you as you raise your hands, I'll try to be somewhat in order as possible. If you want to direct the question to the panel in general, you're more than welcome to. At this time, it is available for anybody who has some questions or some clarifications they want from a panel member.

Question: I'm Ray -----and I stood on the Anchorage school districts-----I'm curious as to why the panel didn't address the question of bicultural, bilingual education in Alaska since Alaska has such a diverse ethnic background and especially with this being a problem with students -----, I'm somewhat-----Such a distinguished panel overlooked it, especially when some of

those people come from those areas. Bilingual, bicultural is a very important part of the educational system in the State as well as in the individual districts. And I'm wondering what, why is this overlooked and what the panels comments are in the way of making bicultural, bilingual courses more effective than what it is in the State, both in the bush and in the urban school districts?

Moderator: Dr. Francis has chose to respond.

Francis: I believe I did address that issue in saying that in particularly, in the Lower Kuskokwin School District, bilingual education is not an additional course, it is not an add on. It's present in everything we do. When we teach language arts, we refer to local traditional orals story telling, all sorts of. It's an infusion concept and it's there in everything that the students do. The bilingual component is there because the students are bilingual. In many cases, the only time the students speak a different language, i.e., English, and they go home and on the playground and so forth speak Yupik. So it isn't, it's a premise, a whole way of looking at the basic educational program takes into account the bilingual and bicultural nature of the student body.

Moderator: I believe we have another question.

Question: Inaudible

Hickerson: Once again, I have to say I did not know that this was going to be for public viewing. Electives are not listed on this tally sheet. And I, and so anything that dosen't add up, those are electives that people can choose. Really and truly, I ran out of room on this paper to include it and I decided that Senator Josephson and the other Senators could add and so.. But that's a good point.

Same person, another question/comment: Inaudible

Hickerson: Well, many are progressing higher and I was thinking, you know, well twentyfour units, that's not much. Even though that's high and even though we're looking toward going for twentyone, and I do agree with Susan and maybe I am getting very conservative. I agree that we have got to require so many of the core courses and to allow the kids to pick and choose. I remember when I was in high school, I went for, we had high requirements, biology and chemistry and what not, but also those electives. I went for the easiest one and alot of time it was what teacher was teaching and what they required and I went for that one. And I'm scared but that's what our kids are doing today.

Moderator: Yes, the reason I'm looking around, I don't want to miss anybody.

Question: Inaudible

Hickerson: Yes, nine through twelfth. And these units are based on, there's a statement in there as to kind of the definition. Many schools, many states are moving away from the Carnegie unit and improvising something that is similar to it. A unit is basically a course taught for 180 days, you know, generally.

Moderator: Gentleman, right over here.

Question: Inaudible

Moderator: Would anybody like to respond to that?

Stitham (?): I'm one of the people who mentioned increase time. We are on a six period day and get twentyfour, a student can get twentyfour units. So I'm not exactly sure about your particular time period. But what I'd like to propose in line with my unrealistic and radical views here, is that we should stop dividing the day into equal parts and meeting classes every day. That's what's stupid. And I'm sorry to use such Anglo-Saxon terms, but I feel that way more and more this year, in terms of the interruptive nature. It took me six days, six class days to show Hamlet, the video of Hamlet. You know, and we couldn't even talk about it. I mean in six days, this is with a group of students who have difficulty reading and writing and it's a special program for them. But how can they maintain you know, how can we get that going? It's just crazy. And there are a lot of things like labs and other things that should be done in a different kind of time sequence. And I think we need to be more creative about that and there have been opportunities and chances.

Moderator: Yes, another response.

Sen. Fischer: Just a quick comment, this doesn't alleviate, I guess what, if you look at the old parochial system has to always have been the track system. And maybe we need to get back towards that. But there is something else we need to change and that is, you know, teachers for some reason have this thing, oh I don't want a class over 25 or 30. And I think we got to start looking at what particular academic discipline we're talking about. And I've seen too many times where, we'll take social studies, the teacher lectures. I see give them 250 at one time. Because if they're going to lecture, why say the same thing five times when they can say it once. And I think we need to start

looking at that. I have no objection teaching 250 kids, you know, if it's a lecture approach. And with the age we have in the systems today, I think we can modify class size and I'm going to get hung today by teachers for that, but.

Hickerson: I just have one response. Right now we only have nine school districts that don't require at least twentyone units. I mean our districts here are very good. Our state requirement is the lowest in the nation that have that of states that set state requirement.

Moderator: I'll take the gentleman back here in the gray suit first, then I'll take you back there, sir.

Question: My name is Jeff E. Clark and I'm principal of High School out of Kuspuk Bay and I would like to comment on Susan's suggestion that I'm looking for a new model. And this is a statement rather than a question. ----- and Susan, I think if you're looking for a model, I think you should look for some of the smaller schools in the State where we do have local control and really have local control. Not only in terms of relationship with our advisor school boards and with our villages, but also ----- student body and we can identify all the students in the schools. And we can say this one needs this or this one needs that. And then we go about constructing pilot schedules and programs. If we have teams traveling for basketball, we can just turn the schedule around, if kids are always missing fifth and sixth period, we can ----- My suggestion to you is if you're looking for a model for doing some of these kinds of -----.

Moderator: Thank you sir. I'll take the gentleman back here with the brown sweater, I said you'll be next.

Question: Inaudible

Sen. Fischer: I guess my answer is if you're looking for how can you educate the legislature to think the way you do, I don't think you will. But if the question is how can we be open minded to look at things, I think we quite frankly are. I gave some of the experiences that I've had but I think that I can go further. I had mentioned, for example, time out rooms. Now I've spent alot of time with special ed. parents and they don't buy it. The educators say its marvelous, you can take the kid away, put the kid in a room, away from his peers and he'll modify his behavior. But when the parents find out about it, they don't buy that kind of concept. So if it means that I don't buy that, it doesn't mean that I'm not opened minded. It's that I have to, in the Legislature, look beyond what some theory is. I have to

look at the practicality of that theory working in a particular community. But I think the legislators as a whole are open, I really do.

Moderator: Sir, you had a question..

END OF TAPE II

TAPE III

Moderator (?): ...five high schools in Anchorage larger than mine. But I have just the opposite concern of being the principal of a large high school. I'm also sitting on the state steering committee for this finance study. My concern is if we put in a basic program, how many small high schools are we going to drive out of existence or how many small high schools are we going to require to have so many staff members to meet that basic program to be possible for them to do. I.E., I know of high schools out there that are junior, senior high schools with one teacher. That person must be a super person to teach everything that has to be taught. There are also, we know high schools out there, with maybe two teachers or three. Those must be tremendously versatile people to handle those jobs. Then in large schools, we have the resources, yes, to meet almost any requirement. I've been a principal, this is my twentieth year as a principal and I've spent twelve years Outside and I cry as much as everybody else for money. But in reality I go to bed each night thanking the Lord that I'm being spoiled all the time. I shouldn't admit that with the legislature here. Though when you come from the special education area, I mean the special levy area from the State of Washington, when one third of your budget was determined in June, I think you can appreciate where you're coming from. Any other of the panelists want to make a comment there? And then I have two gentlemen over here.

Hickerson (?): I'd like to make just a short comment. If you look at the requirements we have, particularly in the smaller communities, they are good. We are already implementing relatively good requirements based on the local boards decision. I personally think if we require more, you're just going to be taking away from the electives and putting back into basic courses that we're already offering, but not making it a requirement. Now, I may be wrong, I haven't been out there in the classroom and I haven't visited every school, and there are going to be some exceptions but overall, the basic curriculum requirements as

established by our local boards right now, I don't think will be very much affected by a change in the statewide requirement.

Moderator: Alright, one comment to the

Hickerson: their minimums anyway

Moderator: One comment to the panelist, I do have to talk to all of you after the conclusion of this meeting, please. Now we have two gentlemen over here. I'll take you sir, first.

Question: -----The biggest fad in the history of education is back to basics-----basics is important. If you go back and look into the history of education, you will find that this issue is there every decade, every twentyfive years. We gotta get back and start teaching people the way they taught while I was a kid. I would think that's something people here should remember. The other thing -----for Susan-----how different Alaska was in 1963, how poor the schools were and how much of a feeling of isolation we have from the rest of the world. I think maybe, if our schooling was worse, then it is not certainly our connections with the rest of the world in education, in the broader sense is much better today then it was twenty years ago. Television alone, for all the ignorance today, does----- . And I'd just like to see if Susan has some comment on that.

Stitham: Yeah, I'm happy to say that I wasn't there when Michael graduated in 1963. But I would agree with you, I don't know what education in Fairbanks was like in 1963, but I know that the education I had when I graduated in high school in 1961, even though we had far fewer choices, doesn't compare with what is available in Alaska now to the students who choose to take it. Those kids have got, I mean, I tell them every day. Of course, they're happy to hear it from me, like they are from you, gratuitous advice is always welcome, right? I say you are very lucky to have such a fantastic education. They really have the opportunities. And television is part of it, the media, the fact that we have been supported by the community, both locally and in the state, throughout the history of the state. But what I'm saying is there are kids who are missing, slipping through that, and there are lots of them. And they're choosing not to take that and we've got to close that, close that gap. Same message, I sound like a broken record.

Moderator: Yes, I believe there's another gentleman, right back here.

Question: ----- When I went to Fairbanks this summer for school, I was quite suprised and rather appalled the fact that there are no communications between the bush and what's going on in Fairbanks and Anchorage. Don't know what we're doing down there. People were quite suprised at the amount of work that we have ----- . If you asked us to increase the number of credits that we're offering, from twentyone to twentyfour, ----- .

Sen. Fischer: I have to take issue with you on the 250, if you recall what I said, we're talking one preparation. But the media, whether it be by television to each individual classroom or whatever, there's still one preparation. So it doesn't matter, I'm sure some of you folks have taken courses over television. There's thousands of people but one preparation. That's what I'm saying.

(Same person): Do you think that that would address the needs of our students? Do you think that we would educate them that way?

Sen. Fischer: No, I think you might be reading into it a little more than you should. I think what we're saying is that's all kinds of little segments sitting out here and you're just one little segment that could fit in a particular case. I'm not advocating every course be taught that way. But it may just well end with some kind of diversity in the curriculum or in the scheduling in the school, this just may fit the bill in some case.

(Same person): Inaudible

Hickerson: The requirement that has been voted on by the board is to increase from nineteen to twentyone not twentyfour. I believe the Florida requirement was twentyfour, maybe you misunderstood that. Another think I have to say, the members of the legislature are very busy people and some more than others. You all though have the opportunity to write them, to go to teleconferences to testify, and some of you won't be able to get through, others you will be. I would provide them with as much information as possible. I'll tell you, it's not government one that I took and taught. But it's very important for you all to take more of an active role, not just at budget time, but throughout the year. Particularly during the interim.

Moderator: We have two other people with questions, three now. We have a gentleman here and then a lady here and then there's a gentleman I guess back there. But you first, sir.

Question: Inaudible

Sen. Fischer: Sure, I think the parents have a tremendous responsibility. But I don't think you can blame everything on the parents, anymore then you can on the teachers. For, if you consider the system not to be really up to snuff or where it should be, but I think sometimes we blame everything on parents. Another thing, I think sometimes we expect too much of parents. They are not professional educators and you folks are. And maybe it takes on your part sometimes a little bit of adjusting to understand what the parents are going through. And I know some of you are parents, too. But often times the parents need some help on the how to go. You know, we can assume that, well they should help their kids with homework. A lot of times parents don't even know their students have homework. And I think maybe some correspondence between the teacher and home, just a little friendly letter, a telephone call once in a while. Hey, Johnny is doing ok, Johnny isn't doing ok, is there anything we can do. I think that communication channel has to be open between the teacher and the parent, which means more work for the teacher. But once it's open, you're going to get a parent that is going to support the program and be very assisting in helping that student learn.

(Same person): Inaudible

Sen. Fischer: But parents are a little bit awkward. You folks have gone through various courses. You know how to deal with the general public. When you have the open house or the time you come in for grades, maybe that's the time to make the initial contact. But the parents just come in to get the grades, they're kinda shy, they're not that forward. Maybe in your district you don't have that. But I think that, if I had to pinpoint who has to take the initiative, I'm going to say the teacher has to make that initial initiative.

Moderator: Miss, I believe you were next.

Question: Inaudible

Stitham (?): I think one of the information problem between the rural schools and the rest of the state is a real serious one. For example, the Lower Kuskokwim School Districts graduations requirements exceed those of Anchorage, when you, not in numbers, well I'm not sure about numbers, but in terms of designation. We have a stronger science requirement or math, I forget exactly the numbers.

But anyway, the point is we are raising our expectations in rural areas, and we're testing our students with the same kinds of standardized tests that the urban schools do and we're seeing growth, every year. I'm in charge of the testing for that district, so I track it and I know. And I think that the frustration rural people feel is that they go to summer school in Fairbanks and find out people are saying things about the rural schools that are absolutely not the case. And it's also true with the legislature. So there are good things happening out there and I think the people need to know it.

Moderator: Thank you. Excuse me, I'll take this lady here first, or are you next?

Question: Inaudible

Moderator (?): Can I respond to that sir, briefly. We did not select ourselves on this panel. I want to make that clear. Yes, we were contacted and asked to be served. Some of us because of elected positions, the Senator and myself. Others, I believe, because of their knowledge and their reputation within the state. ----- Yes, secondary dominated that sometimes, becomes a little more, next year, you can have this chair. The Senator would also like to make a comment.

Sen. Fischer: I'd like to address your comments. And this is going to sound like a cut down. But I don't mean it that way. And by cut down, I'm talking about teacher unions. Now, I've been in the legislature for one year. And I really haven't had any lobbying for the kinds of things you're talking about. Now at which time the teachers come in and they start talking about, hey, let's go lobbying for kids sake, you're gonna see alot of things happen. But it's not that way. The lobbying is more for binding arbitration and these kinds of things. But tie them together, don't come in and just ask for the goodies, come in and the kind of things you're talking about, I agree. But we don't have people coming in beating on our doors asking us for these things.

Moderator: Alright, I believe we had a young lady over here first.

Question: Inaudible

Hickerson: I'll jump right in on this. I think it's real important for teachers, whether the elementary having a problem or secondary or out in rural Alaska having a problem to take hold of it and to advocate for the needs to be a part of the decision making. We have a new Commissioner of

Education. And I believe that he will be open, if he is approached. The question is has your association approached, has your school district approached the Commissioner. I would say that that is an avenue open to possibilities for changes. The other is there are some very strong members of the legislature from the bush. Have you told them your concerns? Maybe they don't know. So I would take what is there, maybe it's not perfect what exists, but the possibilities for change do.

Moderator: Thank you. I'd like to make a comment here. This is unique. 5:00 at night, we're running overtime. We do have, I see two or three people still requesting. I'll take this gentleman here first. And then I saw a hand way back there.

Comment: Inaudible

Moderator: I have to be finished in ten minutes. Ok we will call closure 5:15 for sure. Sir.

Question: Inaudible

Hickerson: I would just like to say a comment. And that is when the hearings, the public hearings are held on the curriculum standards, be sure to take an active part in that and remember, that these requirements will only be minimums. They will not be, you probably right now have more than will be proposed. But once again, take an active role, attend teleconferences, hearings, write letters and that will be the Department of Education, that will not be the legislature. Ok.

Panelist: I'd like to make one comment about the state control, local control versus the state guidelines. Here in Anchorage, we are our own worst enemy. And probably could've used some state guidelines. For example, the size of schools, studies have been done repeatedly. The most classic was the Commissioner of Schools in New York State, about the optimum size of schools. That it's from somewhere between 800 and 1200. When you get over 1200 in the high school, your problems increase geometrically, you get all sorts of social problems. And yet, we insist in the name of efficiency or whatever, of building 3000 schools, thereby multiplying our problems, and in the long run costing the district more money in things such as vandalism, social problems, etc. I guess, the business of local control yes, I understand their concern for that but on the other hand, where do you draw the line and where do you allow these people to make mistakes that might be prevented from some sort of leadership with the, you know, the state a little bit. And I guess that's, I think there is a balance.

Moderator: Folks, I am running out of time. I'm gonna have one more response from the floor and then give the panel one minute each.

Question: Inaudible

Moderator: Panel members, I will give each of you one minute now, if you care to comment directly to this comment, fine, or something else. We'll start with Mr. Peck:

Peck: That to me is the key question. I don't know. I've been in the business twentyone years, and I think, as I've said before, I don't, we don't control what goes on. Basically we are reactive institution. And I don't think it's possible to control.

Sen. Fischer: I think you have to start somewhere, but you had mentioned day care, and just for, uh, you may be aware of it, but there is a bill that indicates, it didn't get anywhere yet, but that any public building will automatically put a day care center in that public building, providing the local community comes up with so many kids to put in the day care center. But just one quick comment about the qualifications to get in, say, the University of Alaska, Juneau, being eighteen. Sometimes, and I'm not saying this is the case, but sometimes, you sometimes you lower standards to get bodies. There is now for example \$11 million, I think in the budget for housing at the campus for Juneau. And I'm not so sure we need that, that housing. But we're going to encourage outsiders, from outside Alaska to come fill it. One other comment is at eighteen, Harvard did a study a while back, this is quite a while ago. But they took World War II veterans who were high school dropouts but because of the desire was there, they put them in Harvard. They had a higher percentage of dean, academic, you know on the Dean's list, than anybody, because the desire was there. So that's something else that has to be taken into consideration. Whether they're high school diploma or not.

Moderator: Alright, I'd like to keep going. Dr. Francis.

Francis: I'd just like to say in closing that I'm real pleased that the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee and the Department of Education saw fit to arrange this conference, because I think it's very important to be sharing the kinds of information that have been shared here today. I think that all of us have alot to learn from one another. It's the first time politicians and educators have come together in the same place and really talked over these issues.

Moderator: Ms. Hickerson.

Hickerson: One thing that struck me as being real strange, the whole time I was going over these numbers and my secretary was about to kill me because we were revising, revising, revising, is that we don't know exactly what children will be when they grow up. We don't know that. Except we know one thing, there is a tendency for most children to be parents and we don't require any type of, and often we even offer, any type of basic skills in being a parent. I don't know that we want to trust the schools to do that. But somebody's not doing the job that maybe they used to do and that concerns me. I don't know that I want to turn over my children, if I ever have any, to someone else to raise, but we have to face reality. Most people are working these days. How many hours of the day do the parents even see the kids? And so it's back to the schools because we have a captive audience and yet we don't even teach them the one thing we know most they'll grow up to be. And that bothers me, cause I'm also at the time working on the budgets for the Health and Social Services, and Community and Regional Affairs as a project. And I'm seeing the problems and it's scary. We can't just have a bandaid solution anymore. We got to get to solving the problems if that's possible. But somebody's gotta tell us what, how to do that. And I don't know that we have anybody that know.

Moderator: Ms. Stitham.

Stitham: Yes, I'd like to respond to Jean Ann's (?) comment, just by saying I'm not sure I know the answer either, except it's a spiral and we have to somehow turn it around and I think that Alaska has a better chance of doing that than almost any place in the country because we're small; because we have that kind of energy, and because we have some financial resources and alot of good people here and a commitment to education, I think. I'm sorry Hal left and Carol because I was going to say that not only are some of my best friends elementary teachers but my sister married one. And she even is one, and so, I'm concerned that he, I think that all my remarks would go double for what's going on in the elementary school. I'd like to say that. And finally, Senator Fischer, like Mr. Peck, I'm astonished at how much I agree with you today. And I'm not sure what that means. But you have said alot of things that I found very supportive and that I've agreed with. However, your comment about binding arbitration, I feel that I do need to say that in our minds, apparently we have not been successful in making the connection for you. But in our minds, the need for finality in resolving disagreements between school boards and employees, is directly related to what happens in the classroom and to the effectiveness that teachers have in

that classroom. And so we need to do a better lesson planning job in talking to you and explaining that to you, and you can be sure we will.

Moderator: Thank you Ms. Stitham. And one other comment. We didn't want to get into politics, Ms. Stitham. But, it is my appreciation that I am considerably older than Susan Stitham is and I am known as a traditionalist. And I hear a lot of traditional values coming back. I appreciate that very much. At this time I want to thank you people for attending the conference. It has been very interesting and entertaining and enlightening to me. We have to meet very briefly because I just found out they're going to put us on television tomorrow. So thank you folks and I have to go.

END

Workshop C
Extracurricular Activities:
Are They Only Fun and Games,
or Are They Learning For Living?

December 15, 1983

Moderator: Robert McHenry, Superintendent, Kuspuk School
District

Panelists: Robert Beau Bassett, J.D., Teacher, Service-
Hanshaw High School, Anchorage
Wayne Mergler, Teacher of Language Arts and
Theatre, Anchorage School District
Fred Pomeroy, Superintendent, Kenai Peninsula
Borough School District

(DUE TO AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF STATIC ELECTRICITY,
THE TAPE FOR WORKSHOP C IS INAUDIBLE.)

The Curriculum and The Student
December 15, 1983
Workshop D

Moderator: Dr. Robert Morgan, President, Alaskan Associates
For Human Development

Panelists: Jill G. McKelvy, Acting Director, Center for
Alcohol and Addiction Studies, University of
Alaska

Betty Bender, AWAIC

Sidney R. Bergquist, Dean, School of Education,
University of Alaska, Anchorage

Dr. Harry K. Wong, Teacher/Consultant

Moderator: ...studies at the University of Alaska. Betty Bender (sp?), who sheltered a rector for AWAIC, the Women's Crisis Center, I should guess I should say. And Sidney Bergquist who is Dean of the School of Education at the University of Alaska.

We're looking at education through different windows. And I think that's pertinent to the topic because most of the problems that would fall into this category are created by diversent situations. Students are not developed to become dropouts merely as a result of their educational experience. They become dropouts because of their life experience. And as they leave the institution and they go into the community, they carry with them learnings, either negative or positive, affecting the direction they go in. And the people on this panel will be talking about some of those directions. The results of student learnings in the community and why some of them return effectively and some do not. (OK). We have two people who want to go on last and I'll have to decide which will be ----.

I think one of the things we have to consider as we sit here is that this process is not new. This convention, the things that are being discussed here are not new and the problems are not new. They've been reviewed and replayed. Some notions have been developed over the decades and for some reason, and hopefully those reasons will be discussed, we seem unable to implement the changes that we create. The proposals that are developed from these conventions.

While I was preparing for this convention, I dug up out of my files a speech that I gave in New Orleans at the APGA in 1970 and it was directed to the concept of schools in crisis. And I tell you here that that speech could be given in this convention and it would be relative. And at the time I gave that speech, I felt that indeed people were going to leave that convention and go back to their communities and create the changes that were necessary to make education more relative to the needs of the individual

student. And by doing that, create a process of learning that could lead people onto the trails of their own success and a way in which they could be contributing members of this rapidly changing world. I think that that expectation was ill founded and probably so because teachers and counselors, educators, consultants, community people are all affected by the pressures occur as change occurs.

Education has been buffeted for a hundred years by a community, by a country who sees it failing in its process, failing in its goal, that is to educate youth effectively. I submit that perhaps that's a little bit misdirected. It's not fair there is much as it is struggle to satisfy so many pressures, so many individuals, so many institutions that we sit dead in the water at times. We have excellent teachers and counselors and other individuals who are striving very very mightily to do a good job for kids, to help them grow and become what we would all like to have them become. And they are faced sometimes with inept administration, with government regulations, with lack of finances, and just the mere fact that change occurs. That's one thing we can so look forward to is change and the effect of change.

So I hope that when you leave here today, we're gonna leave here with some ideas, and I hope that you're going to take those ideas back to whatever base you come from back to your reality and implement them. Be an agent of positive change, because if you don't, if we sit back and say let George do it, I think you're going to find as we have in the past, that George isn't going to do it, and if he does do it, it isn't going to work. It's one of these things that's going to go on for a brief period of time, like a ---- and then disappear. We have to find a way to be permanent agents for change in the education process. And hopefully that's what we're going to start the process, that's what we're going to begin today. Which of you gentlemen would like to go first? I'll start with Jill McKelvy and.

McKelvy: Well I would like to talk today about something that's a little extraneous to school, but definitely affects kids in school and affects school per say, and that's drugs. And alot of my remarks come from a recent study that we did, statewide study, on the extent and nature of drug use in Alaska. And I want to pull out those things that I think are directly of concern to schools. One of the things that we ask students is whether or not they've had any problems in school or whether or not they miss school because of drugs. And we had about nine or ten percent of our students say they had. One of the things that, let me preference my remarks first by saying that this is just a guideline. We asked only students in only eight regional centers, eight different school districts that we did not ask kids in alot of the rural areas. It's just a sample that we have out of the state. We have a pretty good sample of about 3,600

students. And in some school districts we were able to ask all kids. But it can only be used as a guideline and what I'd like to suggest is that it has some information for curriculum development. And the kids did indicate that they do have some trouble and in school, out of school and missing school because of drugs.

And therefore I think that drugs are something that we have to talk about in an educational symposium. One of the main things about drugs in schools is that schools are the main contact point. And we know that drug experimentation is a lot like any other fad behavior, it rises rapidly, spreads rapidly and then tapers off. Drugs are popular at different rates. Some drugs are popular at one point and then lose popularity. And the other thing that we were interested in is what's available in the way of drugs. We asked kids if they wanted to try a drug how easy would it be for them to get it. Over half of the kids said that it would either be easy or fairly easy for them to get a drug if they wanted to try it. Now in looking at opportunity to try drugs, we ask about the specific classes of drugs because some drugs are much more available than the others. For example, if you have the opportunity to try marijuana, 50% of the kids said that had the opportunity to try that. But when it comes to heroin, only 18% of the students indicated an opportunity. So it's important, this gives us one measure of some of the things that are available to students.

But another important part of the question as to opportunity, was once we asked them if they had an opportunity to try the different kinds of drugs, we asked them if they tried each one of those drugs. And two things came out of this kind of focus, one is something as educators you all know, kids are highly experimental. Given the chance, over half of them will try most of the drugs that we had on our list. And some more than others. For marijuana, for example, if given a chance, it was about 77% will try, did try, (I'm sorry), did try when they had the opportunity. However, another point that came out of this is that students are quite selective in whether or not they're going to experiment. When it comes to heroin, those that had the opportunity to try heroin, only 30% indicated that they did try. And so the students try the different drugs at different rates. Which means, how I interpret this is they're reflecting on what they're experimenting with. They're not just experimenting with drugs. They're thinking about what they're experimenting with and making conscious decisions. And I feel that this is an important aspect for us to consider and the kind of information that these students have available.

Another thing that I'd like to just briefly tell you about, the information in the study is we asked them why they did not try drugs and also, for those who did try, and

if they stopped, why they stopped taking drugs. And again, we got different answers. For those that have never tried a drug, a major reason for not trying was the disapproval of friends. Friends became, and peer influence was very important to them. However, for students who have tried drugs and who have stopped taking them, considerations about whether or not it's harmful to their body, to their mind, concern about whether or not it causes addiction were the primary reasons. They are concerned about themselves and they are making decisions about their behavior.

This kind of information, as I mentioned, I think leads us to examine what the kids have, should have in the way of information, gives us some guidelines. When kids were asked if they thought there should be, or if there is a need for drug and alcohol education in the schools, 80% of our kids expressed a need for this kind of information. And that doesn't make any difference between whether or not they've tried drugs or have never tried drugs. Those that have tried drugs, 77% said they'd like to see this kind of information in their curriculum. And of those that had not tried drugs, 84% said they wanted to see this in their schools. But I think that the desire of young people alone to have information like this in the schools is something that we should respond to.

But I'd like to carry this idea of curriculum just a little further. One of the things that happens with putting this kind of information in school is that we think that it is somehow extraneous. And I would like to suggest that it is an integral part of any kind of system, that we expect a program to go in and do something that we don't expect of other kinds of programs. We expect it to change behavior, we ask is this program effective. And we have a vague idea of what effective is. Effective for some people is that the kid will never experiment with drugs or the kid will immediately stop trying drugs. And I think this is an unrealistic expectation for a curriculum. I think what the curriculum should be is helping youngsters with something they have to do every day. And that's process information and examine risks and make informed decisions about their lives.

In the first place, drugs are an ongoing thing. As I said, they're popular. Some drugs are popular at one time. New drugs come on all the time. It is not a one shot thing, you don't have just one workshop on drug and alcohol education. It's something that happens in their lives all throughout the time they're in school and as they leave school. Because they're going to enter an adult drug world where our adults are confronted with drug decisions all the time. Just watch our commercials and get an idea of how many decisions you have to make about the drugs that you take and everything from caffeine to cigarettes to alcohol. It's much more available to us but it's that kind of a