

LDIR#037

VOCATIONAL

SCHOOLS

1960-1961

ALASKA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

TELEPHONE 6-1434
BOX 2199
JUNEAU, ALASKA

January 27, 1961

Mr. George M. Schaffer
Director
Bucks County Technical School
Newportville and Wistor Roads
Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Schaffer:

The Alaska Legislative Council is doing research concerning the financing of vocational education. Mr. James Pearson, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare has suggested that we write you concerning this research. We would very much appreciate any information you may have pertaining to the availability of funds from private foundations for vocational education.

It would greatly assist our research if you could provide us with this information as soon as it is convenient.

Thanking you for your assistance in this project,
I am,

Sincerely yours,

John C. Doyle
Executive Director

By

Harry J. Keats, Jr.
Research Analyst

HJK/hp

copies to -

Mr. Joseph T. Nerden, Chief
Bureau of Technical Institutes
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, Conn.

Mr. Wade A. Martin, State Supervisor
Trade and Industrial Education
428 Education Building
Raleigh, North Carolina

Mr. Mark Nichols, State Director
of Vocational Education
State Dept. of Education
Salt Lake City 14, Utah

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Vocational Plan Studied

Mary E. Switzer, federal director of vocational rehabilitation from Washington, D. C. took a first-hand look at Point Barrow this week. She discovered the need for a basic vocational training program in that area, which has a population of approximately 1,600 Eskimos.

A bright spot she found in a dismal picture was the success of Wien Alaska Airlines on-the-job training of young Eskimo girls who handle one of the largest and most important radio stations in Alaska, which works the international polar flights.

The situation she found is basically this:

1. During the U. S. Navy's Arctic oil exploration, Arctic Contractors, desperate for manpower during the war, trained local Eskimos to handle many jobs and found them apt and capable.
2. Since the operation closed down, there was no further local training. Meanwhile the original trainees are getting older and the imported white personnel for the DEW line and other government installations are younger.
3. There is a vast reservoir of untrained manpower between the ages of 16 and 26

which cannot be used because no training is available at present.

4. In 1953 Wien Airlines put in a far-flung radio network for its vast Arctic operation. Difficulties were encountered in obtaining and retaining qualified personnel to man the station. L. E. Parsons, then in charge of the airline radio department, decided to train young high school-educated Eskimo girls who lived in the village. He found them talented for the work and highly satisfactory.

Inspects Operation

Miss Switzer inspected the Wien operation, talked with the girls and regarded it as the type of operation that could be expanded into other fields.

5. She found many government agencies that could employ suitable-trained Natives on the DEW line, Arctic Research Laboratory, Weather Bureau, hospital and school.

There are no funds available for on-the-job training and vocational rehabilitation can only arrange for training of handicapped persons.

Miss Switzer who returned here yesterday and left for Anchorage, has promised to see what could be done to work

out a program for these Native peoples who are available and adapted to the far north.

She is accompanied on her trip by Ray Hruschka, state director of vocational rehabilitation from Juneau, and C. M. Craft of the regional office at Anchorage.

Do Something

Miss Switzer's reaction was that something should be done to equip the people in these many Alaskan villages for economical survival in the changing pattern of their lives.

She said, "Efforts should be made to train these residents for the maximum opportunity to be useful. This is a primary problem. The younger generation should be encouraged to get training and then go where they wish."

Her recommendation was for the State Legislature to push through a simple program that would help the Natives to help themselves. She suggested that adult evening classes be held in government facilities and taught by local available personnel from the various agencies.

Miss Switzer will spend some time in the Anchorage area before returning to her Washington office on Monday.