



Contents

House Task Force on Sustainable Education, Sept. 30 & Oct 1 1
 Northwest Arctic Borough School District Overview2
 Northwest Arctic Borough Overview6
 NWABSD Budget Overview.....8
 NWABSD Cost Containment for Maintenance & Food Services9
 NANA Regional Native Corporation 11
 Maniilaq Association 12
 Teck, Inc..... 13
 Public Testimony..... 13

House Task Force on Sustainable Education, Sept. 30 & Oct 1

Audio (there is only audio for the afternoon of Tuesday, Oct. 1. Audio courtesy of Gavel to Gavel; not available on BASIS):

http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?category_search=House+Task+Force+on+Sustainable+Education

Documents:

For Tuesday Afternoon (there are no documents for Monday, or for Tuesday morning; additional documents should be uploaded to BASIS in the next week or so):

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_documents.asp?chamber=HSED&session=28&bill=&date1=20131001&time2=1300

On Monday and Tuesday the task force held its second set of two-day meetings. On the agenda:

- **Monday, September 30** - Visit Napaaqtagmiut School in the morning, and McQueen School in the afternoon.
- **Tuesday morning, October 1** - Visits in the morning to the Alaska Technical Center (ACT), and the Star of the Northwest Magnet School.
- **Tuesday afternoon** - Presentations, NWABSD Board Room
 - Northwest Arctic Borough School District: Small School Challenges, School Performance, Pre-K Programs Superintendent Norman Eck
 - Budget Overview: Karen Goodwin, director of Business Services
 - Cost Containment for Maintenance and Food Service Programs: Karen Goodwin and Craig McConnell
 - Northwest Arctic Borough: Mayor Reggie Joule

- NANA Regional Native Corporation
- Maniilaq Association
- Teck Alaska
- Public Testimony

All members of the task force were present except for Rep. Charisse Millett. Present were: Chair Lynn Gattis, Rep. Tammie Wilson, Jerry Covey, Andy Baker, Andrew Halcro, Brad Keithley, and David Nees (Rep. Tammie Wilson chaired the hearing because Rep. Gattis had lost her voice).

Rep. Tammie Wilson said the task force has been doing a lot of traveling to villages, and they've found that student attendance is an issue. One consideration might be cutting off benefits for parents of children who don't attend school. Vocational education is important because 14 and 15-year-old boys are the biggest number of dropouts.

Northwest Arctic Borough School District Overview

Superintendent Norman Eck, Northwest Arctic Borough School District

(<http://www.nwarctic.org/Page/1>) gave a presentation to the task force. Superintendent Eck reviewed information on the district and the borough (PowerPoint available through the documents link above).

District demographics, 2011 – 2012:

- 87 percent attendance rate
- 68 percent economically disadvantaged
- 48.72 percent graduation rate
- 25.37 percent are English language learners
- 25 percent move during the school year
- 12.24 percent in special education

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked if the district is ready for new standards. Superintendent Eck said no; ARRA funding was used to update curriculum, but that was aligned to NCLB. They probably spent over a million dollars on that, but now there are new standards, and they will have to verify alignment and determine what they have to replace. They have 6-8 months to move to new standards, which will be a rush.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked if they can do online testing in all their schools. Superintendent Eck said no. They have to do MAPS testing using caches overnight, and then sending it out to sites manually. The Smarter Balance test was initially not allowed to be cached on servers, and unless that has changed, they won't be able to use it. He said recently Commissioner Hanley mentioned they would be able to cache it. The NWABSD doesn't have enough broadband to administer those tests without caching because of the satellite hop which causes a delay. The testing website thinks the delay is a disconnection, and it shuts off the download.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked how they are able to deliver online courses. Superintendent Eck said while they are streaming online classes, the use of bandwidth is choked up and there isn't very much bandwidth for other uses. It costs the school district \$4.3 million a year for what individuals have at their house in the lower 48. Rep. Tammie

Wilson said the Dept. of Education & Early Development is supposed to put out an RFP for testing. She understands that DEED has done a broadband survey of school districts, and the RFP for the testing will have to address broadband issues.

Mr. Halcro said an attendance rate of 87 percent seems high. Why is the graduation rate so low? Superintendent Eck said after a student misses ten days, a student is dropped because of state law. They don't have the ability to track students after they've been dropped. Rep. Tammie Wilson asked how many students they dropped last year. Superintendent Eck said he thinks it's about 11-12 percent.

Superintendent Eck said because 25 percent of their students move during the school year from one school to another, they've worked very hard to standardize their curriculum and calendar throughout the district.

Mr. Halcro noted that four of the five most impoverished schools are two or three star schools and are actually doing okay. Why is Selawik [different from the other four schools]? Superintendent Eck said it's what's going on outside the school. Often schools are the only place where children have structure in their lives. Mr. Halcro said Anchorage also has about 25 percent of students moving during the school year, and it's an affordable housing issue. Is it the same here? Superintendent Eck said no, often students are moving between different relatives' houses.

Superintendent Eck reviewed the developmental profile for the district's Pre-K students:

- 90 percent are proficient in physical well-being, health, and motor development
- 70 percent are proficient in social and emotional development
- 63 percent are proficient in approaches to learning
- 73 percent are proficient in cognition and general knowledge
- 69 percent are proficient in communication, language, and literacy

Mr. Halcro asked if the students who go through Pre-K are tracked. Superintendent Eck said they are far enough in to the program that they are finally able to watch that. They have no funding for Pre-K, other than the four schools that have funding through the Moore Grant.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked if they do literacy screening, and if they've seen a difference. Superintendent Eck said yes, and they are now beginning to see an effect. But he would have to get details for the task force on that issue.

Mr. Nees said the state would like to invest in Pre-K. Would delivery by non-teachers be the best approach, or would it be better to have certified teachers? Superintendent Eck said a two-year kindergarten with certified teachers would be a better program. But for \$700,000 they are able to do their current program.

Mr. Nees said he's concerned the Kivalina school doesn't have a library; how does that affect the program? Superintendent Eck said they are discussing that issue with Kivalina, because they need a library. There was a school library until last year, when they had to add another classroom.

Mr. Keithley asked how they found \$700,000 in their budget for the preschool program. Superintendent Eck said every program is necessary. They only have one reading specialist in the whole district, which is inadequate, but the preschool is a higher priority. They reduced 19 teachers over the last few years because of a funding decline. They have cut wherever they could, including on energy costs, which has saved them \$1 – 2 million. Mr. Keithley asked if the Pre-K program will reduce other expenses later. Superintendent Eck said they hope it will.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked if there isn't anywhere in Kivalina where they could have a school library, even if they can't have it in the school. Superintendent Eck said they are considering different options, but it's too soon to discuss them. Mr. Halcro said the Kivalina principal said yesterday that the lack of a library means students who don't have a place to study at home, now also don't have a place to study at school. Superintendent Eck said the principal is doing everything she can to support what's needed. Her beef about the library is really a beef with the school district, because they didn't get it in place in time.

Rep. Tammie Wilson said the school is the community center, and school personnel are also the people expected to man the facility. That's something they need to look at, because people need some time off also. Superintendent Eck said absolutely; it is such a commitment to teach in the bush.

Superintendent Eck reviewed information on the district's ten high schools:

Village	HS Population Grades 9-12
Ambler	19
Buckland	46
Deering	12
Kiana	36
Kivalina	30
Kobuk	11
Kotz Elem	-
Kotzebue	157
Noatak	53
Noorvik	43
Selawik	69
Shungnak	21
Total	497

- In Northwest Arctic we operate 10 high schools
- Some of the high schools have 2 teachers and the largest has 22 teachers.
- Average of 100 high school graduates per year
- Historic average of 40 GED's awarded annually through the ATC



Proud Selawik High School students who earned an academic letter for each of the content areas of the HSGQE that they passed. →

He then reviewed attendance rates; 95 percent attendance rates are considered essential for success. He said Kivalina's attendance rate a few years ago was around 68 percent, which was alarming. There was a community push for attendance, and

they were able to get the Attorney General's Office to recognize it was criminal for parents not to send children to school. The school district can now file papers with the troopers to get parents to send their kids to school, and the attendance rate rose to 89 percent. Parents can be fined if they don't send their kids to school. Several parents in other school districts have served jail time for not sending their kids to school.

Superintendent Eck said their Safe & Civil Schools Program has been invaluable. They had a drop of 40 percent in suspensions in one year from the program.

Superintendent Eck said their most important success has been in reducing the number of student suicides. In the 2008-09 school year they had eight student suicides. They have had no student suicides in the last three years. He hopes that will continue. Students work on identifying problems with their peers, and have processes and reporting mechanisms to call attention to a problem. They still have adult suicides. But they've not had them in the school district. Teck was so impressed with the program, they have funded it for five years. Pretty soon that time will be up, and they hope it will continue to be funded.

Superintendent Eck reviewed proficiency rates on state assessments. Proficiency rates have risen from about a third of students to one half, although that has fallen recently. Proficiency rates were affected by a loss of teachers, which was caused by reduced funding and increasing inflation. They are trying to reverse the decline in proficiency.

Superintendent Eck reviewed their staff retention rate. NANA Management is now handling food and custodial services, which has reduced their total staff.

Mr. Halcro said it seems that most of the district's teachers are highly qualified and very impressive. How does that match with the statewide percentage? Superintendent Eck said he thinks in larger school districts well over 90 percent of teachers are highly qualified.

Superintendent Eck said they have had a 94 percent teacher turnover rate over the past six years [in total for that period], which is much lower than it was. Turnover wastes a lot of training funds, because they are constantly having to train new teachers. Students aren't able to have close relationships with teachers if they are always leaving. Mr. Nees asked if it would improve retention if they have a few larger regional high schools. Superintendent Eck said they would be able to offer a stronger, more comprehensive program and could improve student performance. The time for boarding schools is back, and people in bush Alaska are now calling for that, but there are still many students who want to be educated at home, and he doesn't think it should be forced.

Superintendent Eck said they hope they can keep up with inflation. It is a disaster every time they have to cut one teacher. It impacts them much more than it does larger districts and larger schools. Rep. Tammie Wilson said they are not comparing urban and rural districts.

Superintendent Eck read a letter from the Iñupiaq Language Commissioners.

Northwest Arctic Borough Overview

Mayor Reggie Joule, Northwest Arctic Borough, said the task force's job on education is not a new issue; it's an issue that has always been a hot button item in the legislature and will not go away. The focus on sustainability is apt – but sustainability of what? Education doesn't happen in a vacuum. What they are really talking about is schooling. Education is a community-wide and family concept. The focus here is on schooling and what happens in the classroom. The borough has been blessed with an abundance of natural resources, and with how they've developed their human resources.

Mayor Joule said the borough has the highest cost of living probably in Alaska and the country. That causes a lot of stress in an area with not much of an economy and few jobs. That's the stress people live under – the parents and grandparents of students, who live in over-crowded homes. There's not much the legislature can do about that, but he wants them to understand the environment. They previously opposed resource development, but NANA shareholders decided to take a chance, and now they have shareholders working in the mine. There has been a subsistence committee involved in the mine since the beginning. Both renewable and non-renewable resources are important, and the subsistence committee has the authority to shut the mine down, if necessary, and they almost did that once.

Mayor Joule said the paradigm is shifting, and more and more people are saying “what if?” Can they do [resource development] responsibly? Smaller communities are becoming interested in connections to Kotzebue. How long can they afford all 300 airports in Alaska? How long can they afford all the clinics in each community? How long can they afford a high school in each community? He's hesitant to raise this issue, but the reality is they've been expanding services and budgets for a long time, and have increased expectations that they can do just about anything. How long will the federal shutdown last? That impacts everyone. What the federal government quits funding, state and local governments will have to make decisions about. What's that all got to do with education? Their borough is either at the heart of or very close to many of the resources yet to be unlocked. Those jobs are real, not only for their borough, but for people across the state. A good education system in Kobuk should be as important to everyone in Alaska as it is to the people of Kobuk and the Northwest Arctic Borough.

Mayor Joule said they recognize that costs are high. There is a lot of healing that has to occur, and they are working on that. That will impact the classroom. There is a lot of change they have to adapt to. He is involved in the Arctic Policy Commission. There are places in Alaska that are truly arctic, and the changes that are coming will impact everyone. There is a lot of work to do and a lot of things to take into consideration. Part of the borough's role is public safety, which is becoming more of an issue. Children need a safe environment. Most rural areas have a regional tribal organization that contracts with the state to provide public safety officers, but the Northwest Arctic Borough has taken on that responsibility. They have six VPSOs, but there is a void in some communities. The environment of communities is as important as the environment in classrooms if you want sustainability.

Mr. Halcro said the alignment between the mayor, assembly, and school district in the Northwest Arctic Borough is admirable. He noted that he and Mayor Joule were in the

legislature in the 1990s, during a time when the state was broke, and rural Alaska felt a bigger bite from that. When you look at that time during the 90s, and the funding in the last ten years, there is an obvious boom and bust to education funding. He asked Mayor Joule's opinion of the impact of boom and bust funding on school districts. Mayor Joule said he recalls school districts around the state making a plea to the legislature because the legislature inflation proofed the permanent fund but not education. How real is that inflation? He understands the concept of "cost of living." School districts are straddled with certain responsibilities and added costs that may be due to laws the legislature passes. Any legislator is in office for an average of six years, and they don't have to see what they saddle future legislators with. What's driving up the cost of education? Sometimes it's as simple as what's hot in politics today. How much is that costing them? What he hears consistently is the desire for predictable funding. If the climate is right to get an increase, then you try to do that. Maybe education is a good investment? He thinks they are getting good quality for the money they are investing.

Mr. Halcro said the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce views all Alaska students as their students, no matter where students graduate from, because any of them could end up working in Anchorage. It's not urban and rural. Alaska kids are all of their kids, whether they show up in Anchorage or Fairbanks. Before this trip, he was focusing on really poor communities. There has been no appreciable population gain or progress in academics in these communities, such as Kivalina. Is there any effort to coordinate the public safety focus with the health and human services focus in these communities? That would add stability to the communities. Mayor Joule said at lunch someone mentioned the Northwest Leadership Team, which is their effort to coordinate those issues. The number one priority of the school district was public safety. Another thing, are there ways in a classroom where they can have students mentoring other students? He knows that would take a lot of work, but children's role models are just a little bit older than them, and they should harness that to facilitate learning.

Mr. Halcro said at the technical center one component is real-time experience. Can they do that in other communities? Mayor Joule said perhaps Superintendent Eck or Cheryl Edenshaw of the Alaska Technical Center could answer that question. He worked at the tech center before he was a legislator.

Mr. Keithley said he has talked before to Mayor Joule about the financial future of Alaska. The long-term expense of laws can be a burden. Mr. Keithley asked that the borough and school district identify those burdens. Mayor Joule said one example is the HSGQE; there is also an effort to get public funding to private schools. The decisions the legislature makes have ramifications. As good-intentioned as they may be, all the issues should be put on the table so people understand the full impact. Once costs go up, he guarantees that someone else will say costs have to go down. The impact it has in the Northwest Arctic Borough are profound. Mr. Keithley asked the borough and school district to identify what the costs are.

Mr. Halcro said it's not just a problem with education: there are departmental fiscal notes for legislation. Lawmakers don't want to pass a law that costs money, so the legislature zeros out the fiscal note. *[In addition, fiscal notes don't show*

any cost other than the cost to state government. If there is a cost to local governments or school districts, that is not included in the fiscal note.] It's always been a huge problem. There are laws that obviously have a financial impact, and departments identify the cost, and then legislators zero out the fiscal note. No one assumes responsibility for increasing government. It's pervasive. Rep. Tammie Wilson said they would also like to identify regulations, not just statutes; the HSGQE has hopefully had its last day already; funding is decreasing.

NWABSD Budget Overview

Next, the task force heard a budget overview from Karen Goodwin, business director, Northwest Arctic Borough School District. Ms. Goodwin reviewed the FY14 budget. There has been no increase in the BSA since 2010. There was no support for SB 182, which changed the calculation on required local contributions. There was only one year of relief for SB 182. That is one piece of legislation that had a negative financial impact to the borough.

Rep. Tammie Wilson noted that although the BSA has not increased, there have been other increases, such as the intensive needs student funding and the geographic differential.

Ms. Goodwin said the majority of their budget comes from state sources. They have had a slight increase in special education and operations and maintenance. She reviewed several slides breaking down the cost of wages and benefits for different personnel categories [PowerPoint available through the documents link above]. Energy costs are 17 percent of the total.

Mr. Halcro asked if they are using the AHFC loan program. Ms. Goodwin said they have two teacher housing projects being built with AHFC funding. They have also done AHFC energy audits at schools. They try to implement as many recommendations as possible. At this point, they are not using the AHFC loan program; they have used AHFC grant funding.

Ms. Goodwin said their biggest cost drivers are health insurance and workers' compensation insurance. Rep. Tammie Wilson asked if they are self-insured for health insurance. Ms. Goodwin said yes, and the borough is part of their plan; they use a third-party administrator.

Ms. Goodwin said the first place they look to make reductions is staff. She reviewed staff costs. Mr. Halcro asked what the starting teacher wage is. Ms. Goodwin said the base salary is \$50,500. The top is \$91,000. She reviewed other wages.

Mr. Nees said other school boards tell them the on-behalf funding for PERS and TRS; he asked for that amount. He asked whether the borough and school district support legislation for a statewide health insurance pool, and asked about the 70/30 waiver for instruction. Ms. Goodwin said they apply for a waiver every year; they've never been able to meet the 70/30 rule.

Mr. Nees said the definition in Alaska Statutes of "direct instruction" is loose. He asked for clarification on that definition. It's easy in the Anchorage School district to meet

the 70/30 requirement. What does instruction mean? He said he is confused about school boards awarding contracts where teachers can beat the contract and get higher raises than the contract because of steps. Ms. Goodwin said they have a career ladder, and reward teachers with step increases. Superintendent Eck said they have specific requirements for increases.

Rep. Tammie Wilson said many people believe that taking more classes doesn't necessarily make a teacher a better teacher. Why isn't there anything relating to performance? Ms. Goodwin said whether someone moves on the step scale is tied to an evaluation process.

Mr. Keithley asked if an increase of \$3 million is typical. Ms. Goodwin said no, it's generally been flat, but their energy and insurance costs have increased.

Mr. Nees said because the state has changed the standards and assessments, is new curriculum in the budget? Ms. Goodwin said no.

NWABSD Cost Containment for Maintenance & Food Services

Next, Ms. Goodwin and Craig McConnell, director of Property Services, reviewed cost containment for maintenance and food services. By contracting with NANA Management, they saved about \$400,000, and gained an additional half a million from NANA's purchase of school district inventory. Through contracting, they have also gained improved quality and expertise that would not otherwise have been available to them. Rep. Tammie Wilson said it sounds like declining enrollment had a bigger impact than not increasing the BSA.

Mr. Halcro said across the state there was a loss of 400 teachers; how many were lost from ARRA funding going away, and how many from lowered enrollment? Ms. Goodwin said they didn't use any ARRA funding for staff, so there wasn't a reduction in staff from that funding ending. Rep. Tammie Wilson thanked the Northwest Arctic Borough for not using ARRA funding for personnel.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked how they do maintenance. They noticed a lot of maintenance problems at other schools, but they are impressed with this school district. Craig McConnell, director, Property Services, said he's a former teacher. He tells their maintenance people that their real job is to educate kids, and save as much as they can to help in that effort. Maintenance and operations is wasted money, because it means less money for education. That's their philosophy. The borough is as big as the state of Indiana, with just 13 schools spread across that area, plus 95 housing units and a 40-bed dormitory. They want kids to have a safe facility. The most important job is to keep kids safe. Then you can educate kids. The building has to look fresh and smell clean, and the temperature should be comfortable. Kids shouldn't have to wear coats in school to be warm, or that's a distraction to learning. Many kids have hearing loss from the high winds, and to compensate for that, all the classrooms have a sound system. They got a \$120,000 grant from Shell for the sound system. The lighting has to be perfect. Rooms and facilities should not be cluttered. The junk in the board room [where this meeting was held] would not be acceptable. It would be a distraction to kids. He thanked a number of people and organizations for support of facilities. In the last 15 years they have done a lot of facility upgrades.

They always use in-house labor. They can't afford to contract work out. A recent bid was \$850,000 for a \$250,000 grant. So they did the work in house for \$250,000.

Mr. McConnell said every five years they have a maintenance audit by DEED. On the most recent one, everything was rated excellent except for accounting for man hours, and they were put on probation. They had to hire someone to do the paperwork, and that person tracked everything that was possible to track, and now they are doing good on that category too. Superintendent Eck said they now have all the reporting incorporated into tracking software.

Mr. McConnell said once the work is done, you have to gather information from the site, and SERRC (Southeast Regional Resource Center, <http://www.serrc.org/>) puts it in their database. Anytime you need information, SERRC can spit it out, either to the school district or to DEED. Rep. Gattis said in industry, those things are not a secret. She is not trying to dis the school district, but that is not a revelation. Did they just start doing that? Superintendent Eck said no, they were doing that, but they weren't tracking man hours.

Mr. McConnell said it took three years before they could even get to preventive maintenance, because they were putting out fires all the time. Rep. Gattis said there are school districts that aren't there yet on deferred maintenance, but it looks like the Northwest Arctic Borough School District is doing that. Mr. McConnell said he doesn't understand how there are only five school districts on probation, and how they ended up being one of them. Rep. Tammie Wilson said it's clear that the school district knew how to catch up, and how important it is to do preventive maintenance.

Mr. McConnell reviewed their custodial contract and energy management. They didn't know how to operate the schools when they were built. The systems were so complex. Also, the controls were not built right, and they had to hire contractors to fix the systems all the time. Finally they hired their own person, who they head hunted away from Control Contractors, and it has saved them a lot of money. **They manage the systems not the way they're supposed to be managed, but they way it works for them. Ventilation systems are supposed to be run 24 hours a day, but they only run them eight hours a day. There is no way they can afford to suck cold air in, heat it up, and push it out again 24 hours a day. They also close the louvres more than they are meant to be closed, because there are already holes in the building. They use carbon monoxide detectors to monitor the air quality, and the only time they have to open up the louvres more is when they have large functions with a lot of people. The systems that are put in the schools are not designed for this climate; they are designed for Anchorage.**

Rep. Gattis asked if there is local control over what kind of heating systems they get and how they are run. Mr. McConnell said DEED will not let you design a school the way the Northwest Arctic Borough School District runs their schools; they have to build them to a specific code. Rep. Gattis said they just toured schools where they can't get the heating system fixed.

Mr. McConnell said they have rooms in schools that aren't occupied, and in that instance they close the louvres. In the summer they shut everything down, which gives

them an opportunity to really save money. The facilities are used during the summer, but people are told the facilities won't be heated and there won't be hot water. For the building they are in now, 100 drums of glycol have to be heated before they can have any heat in the building. He showed an example of a daily log for a maintenance person in one of their villages. They buy all their fuel in bulk, and save about \$2 per gallon. They have their own fuel storage which allows them to save a lot of money. They paid for the tanks in 2.5 years with the money they saved, and have now bought more tanks. They are using energy efficient lights and appliances to save electricity. In the villages, they are the biggest customer in town, and peak demand kills them. Reducing consumption in half doesn't save them money in villages, because the electric company has to make up that cost by charging them for something else. The cost will still show up somewhere else on their bill. He thinks the answer would be transmission lines between the villages, because that would make the infrastructure more efficient.

Mr. Halcro asked about school being postponed in Kivalina last year because of water issues. Mr. McConnell said there was water rationing in Kivalina for five weeks in to the school year. It was mismanagement by the city of Kivalina; they waited too long after breakup to begin pumping water, and by the time they decided to pump, they realized their equipment had fallen in to the water. Last year the school district had to purchase \$35,000 in heating fuel for the City of Kivalina.

Mr. McConnell said they continually have to self-evaluate. He reviewed information from a fuel study they did. He said he is fanatical about waste.

Mr. Covey asked about standardization of employee training. Mr. McConnell said there were 175 different cleaning products in the basement when he first started. They got it down to about 40, until they turned it over to NMS (NANA Management Services). You want to have one of everything at every site, and it was impossible. They standardize as much as they can, down to the paint on their buildings – gray and blue on the outside, and white on the inside. Their village guys are the best of the best, and have been with them for a long time. They bring them in for three days of training every year. They have six people in Kotzebue, and ten out in the villages. When a school is being built, they place their maintenance person with the contractor for facility training while the school is under construction.

Mr. Halcro asked if there has been discussion of standardizing school design. Superintendent Eck said their latest school, Noatak, pleased them, and they will use that design again. Mr. McConnell said most of their construction has been remodeling of existing facilities, so they have been stuck with what they've got. Rep. Gattis asked if it was better to have a flat roof or a pitched roof. Mr. McConnell said it is better to have a pitched roof. He thinks a roof should last about 25 years, then you have to change the roofing.

NANA Regional Native Corporation

Chief Operating Officer Laurie Henry and Erica Nelson from the NANA Regional Native Corporation (<http://www.nana.com/>), made a presentation to the task force on how they support the school district. She reviewed information on NANA shareholders and school district students. NANA has over 13,000 shareholders. They are always

looking at school district numbers and where they can provide more support. NANA provides a lot of funding for language, culture, and scholarships.

Ms. Nelson reviewed details on NANA's education programs and the funding they contribute to education. They built an online scholarship database, which took them 15 months. They have a youth summer camp just up the Kobuk River from Kotzebue. The last two years they've held an Iñupiaq language conference. They are working on a language program with Rosetta Stone, which they would like to be as detailed as possible in regard to their culture.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked if there is an immersion school. Ms. Nelson said there is a tribal preschool that has a waiting list [audio was difficult to hear on this topic].

Ms. Nelson reviewed the number of scholarship students and scholarship funding. As their endowment grows, the funding can increase. Last year they spent more than double what was spent in 2005.

Ms. Henry reviewed their shareholder development specialist program, which helps with employment and job training, and in supporting the school district.

Ms. Nelson said they have paid internships, allowing students to explore career interests. They do direct outreach with shareholders attending college to help them with homesickness. They do career fairs. The next one is October 18 at the Teck Center. Ms. Henry said they used to have career fairs in the spring, but collaborated with youth programs and found that fall career fairs would be better.

Ms. Nelson said they also support extra-curricular activities. Another program is the Iñupiaq word of the week. They are proud of the efforts by the school district and their partnerships. They want to focus on building strengths and working together.

Mr. Nees said some students said budget constraints have causes sporting opportunities to be curtailed. Has NANA helped make that up? Superintendent Eck said NANA wouldn't know about those concerns. The costs for one weekend can be \$40,000 - \$70,000. They spend \$1.8 million per year on sports. Mr. Nees said sports is the hook for some kids. Superintendent Eck said they haven't curtailed activities. Mr. Nees said it's the responsibility of schools to have programs available, and it's nice for the community to step up and support programs. He said NANA might want to consider sponsoring activities. It's a cost of education that's not a cost of schooling. Ms. Henry said she understands that concern. They make contributions to activities, not just sports. What they presented on today are those they consistently fund.

Rep. Tammie Wilson said she wanted NANA to participate in the hearing because they do so much for the community, and she didn't want it to go unnoticed.

Maniilaq Association

The next presentation was from Ginger Sharrow, director of nursing, Maniilaq Association (<http://www.maniilaq.org/home.html>). She said they receive most of their funding through the Indian Health Service (IHS). They provide classes for certified nursing assistants. Previously, students had to go to Fairbanks, which was very

expensive. Most of those students then work for Maniilaq after they are certified. They also do other workforce training. ATC (the Alaska Technical Center, <http://www.nwarctic.org/atc>) is working toward getting a certification class in medical coding, which will bring that service back to the hospital from India.

Mr. Keithley asked if Maniilaq is focused on health. An unidentified person said no; they have a variety of programs. They have about 533 employees in the region. They have vocational and disability programs. They provide a range of services through compacts with the federal government.

Mr. Halcro said in Anchorage the fastest growing industry is healthcare. Are they seeing that? Ms. Sharrow said she believes they are. People are living longer due to advances in medical treatment. The limited funding they get from IHS (Indian Health Service) is not enough to keep their doors open, so additional sources of funding would be helpful. Expansion of Medicaid – she can't answer how that would affect them.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked if their workforce is stabilized by local training. Ms. Sharrow said they bring workers in from all over the country. Many come from Anchorage, Washington, and Oregon. CNAs (certified nursing assistants) are low-paid, so have high turnover, so she doesn't think those employees will ever stabilize.

Teck, Inc.

The next presentation was from Deeann Hamilton, personnel officer, Teck, Inc. (partnering with NANA on the Red Dog Mine, <http://www.reddogalaska.com/>). Ms. Hamilton said they collaborate with the Alaska Technical Center and the Star of the Northwest Magnet School (<http://www.nwarctic.org/Domain/320>). They also provide scholarships, including funding for ATC students. They are part of the Northwest Arctic Workforce Development & Education Consortium, and have been participating in that for many years. They talk about their needs as an employer, and ATC has been responsive. They have an aging workforce. They have an apprenticeship program. They depend on workforce training programs, and are looking at how to fine tune programs to better meet their needs. They are excited by work the school district is doing to meet their needs as an employer. She is a former employee of ATC, and so has a personal investment in it.

Rep. Tammie Wilson said those good-paying jobs are motivating for students.

Public Testimony

Brad Rich, NWABSD board member, thanked the task force for holding a meeting in Kotzebue.

John Alcantra, NEA-Alaska, and father of four, thanked the task force for holding a hearing in Kotzebue and for the site tours. The school district has been fortunate to have Dr. Eck for eight years as a superintendent, and 16 years total. In the Murkowski administration, a report was unveiled in approximately 2005 that over a 25-year period, 173 new programs were created. He hopes they can find that study, which has a lot of information. He pointed out that as a resident of Mat-Su, where NANA had a temporary custodial contract, that the biggest chunk is healthcare. He understands

that healthcare costs are unsustainable, but starting today hopefully there will be more affordable healthcare. He thanked the school district for their hospitality.

Rep. Tammie Wilson asked for examples of regulation or statute that Mr. Alcantra would change. Mr. Alcantra said the HSGQE is one thing. It is a very easy exit exam, and many students think they are done after they pass. Getting rid of that would save \$4 million per year. NCLB/ESEA is ridiculous, even in large schools. If he doesn't check the box for "Alaska Native" for his son, the school will fail to meet adequate yearly progress, but if he checks "Hispanic" or "White," it will. He is not an advocate for boarding schools. He has 16 nieces and nephews, and some have graduated from Mt. Edgecumbe, which is \$30,000 per year for the state, while it is only \$8,000 for high school at Palmer High School. He feels for people who have to send their child away to boarding school. He is sure there are advocates for everything, including the HSGQE, which Con Bunde will probably testify for.

Mr. Covey asked what Mr. Alcantra would recommend for replacement of the HSGQE. Mr. Alcantra said he doesn't know that there needs to be a replacement. There are other things that could fill that need, such as the APS, which requires certain grades and test cut scores. Mr. Covey said only 37.8 percent of students qualified for the APS, what about other students? Mr. Alcantra said he wonders if those other students got a lower test score on the ACT or SAT. Or maybe credits earned would fill that. Mr. Covey said the reason the HSGQE was created is there were students coming to employers and universities, and they had no way to know whether that student was at the bottom of the class or the top. For almost anything else, people have to pass a test. Without anything other than seat time, and the benevolence of people who will pass students from grade to grade and course to course, how do they know? Mr. Alcantra said students take multiple tests to pass an Algebra II class, or any other class. That would seem to him to be an indicator. He gets progress reports weekly that say how his kids are doing, and whether they have work missing or poor grades.

Mr. Nees said if education is an investment, and you have one of four dropouts from the \$8,000 per year school go to Mt. Edgecumbe, you will save money. Everyone wants the best of the best. At what grade level are Mr. Alcantra's children reading? The SBA scores don't tell parents that. The tests need to have a grade level equivalency on them. Can they make it so that when a department passes a regulation, the department has to pay for any costs associated with the regulation? Rep. Tammie Wilson noted that the regulations come from statutes, which come from lawmakers.

Rep. Tammie Wilson said 300 on the SBA's is 50 percent, which in her book is an F. She does not think that's on grade level. Mr. Alcantra said he did miss the last task force meeting. He said 35 years ago he took a test that specified what his grade level was in reading.

Mr. Halcro said the state collects data on 3rd grade reading. Why aren't parents getting this information? Mr. Nees said those are cut scores. The cut scores specify proficiency, but what is the grade level? If parents knew that their kids were behind, it would set off an alarm. Proficient on some of the cut scores is two years below grade level. None of the current testing shows proficiency, and the new assessments won't show proficiency either. Rep. Tammie Wilson said proficiency was really low on the

new assessments, so they lowered the proficiency scores. Mr. Nees said so many students failed the HSGQE the first time because they let engineers write the math questions, that they had to lower the cut scores. Superintendent Eck said MAPS testing gives them grade level information. **The SBAs are written for the grade level they are testing. If a child is proficient, it means they are at grade level.** There is so much testing now. The HSGQE is over the top, but at that time there was no other testing that gave them the same information; that is no longer true.

Mr. Halcro asked if they do WorkKeys. Superintendent Eck said yes. Mr. Halcro said he has heard many comments that WorkKeys is not a good judge of ability. Superintendent Eck said he likes the WorkKeys results. The test is used in job centers across the nation. He thinks it's okay; it's something industry understands.

Sandy Shore Beaver, school board member, said many of their villages don't have businesses to sponsor activities, and the villages are tapped out. Kotzebue has the luxury of business sponsors and community support. They need somehow to encourage more people to volunteer. People always want to know how much they will be paid. She thanked the task force for visiting the school district. She wishes, however, that they could have visited Kivalina on a day when the sewer was backed up, so they could see what that school is facing. Rep. Tammie Wilson said they have the same volunteer issues in urban areas.



The last photo in Superintendent Eck's presentation – what a cutie!