

# Superintendent's Report

**To:** Unalaska City School District Board of Education

**From:** Darrell J. Sanborn, Superintendent

**Date:** December 21,2000

Tis quite the Holiday Season!! I do hope that everyone had the chance to see one of the three Holiday Programs last week. I am so impressed by the parents, grandparents, and community members that I saw at the different programs, and in school throughout this year. The successes that our students enjoy are due to the hard work of the students, and this support. I am happy to see that Unalaska City School District is starting to be recognized for the good work through the years. As you are aware, Offspring, The Magazine of Smart Parenting recently selected our school as one of the "Best 100 School Districts in the Nation." This is quite the tribute for our District and the community. There will also be a couple of other challenges that will face us within the next few months dealing with outside entities evaluating our school district. This spring we will be going through the Accreditation Process through the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. It is my expectation that Unalaska City School District will receive the full and successful accreditation of six years. Next August, DOE will establish the School Designator for all schools in Alaska. All schools are to be graded in such a way to be identified as "distinguished," "successful," "deficient," or "in-crisis."

Other good news of our students concerning "round two" of the Exit Exam came out last Friday. Although I was not pleased how DOE had put out the information concerning the results. Using DOE's format, 100% of our students that took the reading portion passed compared to the States 46%, Writing results were at 50% compared to the State's 27%, and Math at 55% compared to the State's 22%. In calculating our numbers, I removed all students that had since left our District, and utilized only those students currently enrolled. These eleven students that have moved are undoubtedly raising another district's percentages. Of our eighteen students of the Class of 2002, sixty-one percent have passed all three tests; therefore have met the minimal requirements placed by the State. Twenty-two percent of the students have only one test yet to pass to complete this exercise. We have two students yet to pass the reading, (neither have taken this test before,) three to pass the writing and six to pass the math. The best news that came dealt with my feelings that **ALL** students are now within striking distance of passing these tests. It is my hope that our Class of 2003 does as well as the Class of 2002. The next round of tests will also be given to the Class of 2003 on February 27, 28, & March 1<sup>st</sup>. We are looking at taking that entire week for all of our testing, CAT-V for grades 2,4,5,7, & 9, and Benchmarks for grades 3,6, & 8. There are no makeup possibilities for the Exit Exam. The CAT-V is a norm-reference test and the Benchmark and Exit

exams are criterion-referenced tests. We will have more information concerning this schedule and related activities at our next Board Meeting, as we will be asking for parental and community support during this important week.

This evening we will be discussing a couple of important issues; the first dealing with graduation requirements in Math. At the present time, we require two math credits of students in order for them to graduate. There may be a couple of different views of this, as I think that we should look at student's needs. With the exit exam now with us, many districts are looking at graduation requirements. We are blessed as we have different concerns, those that have passed the exit exam and those that have not. The discussion this evening should focus on the needs of our students. Many questions will come up this evening, including the need of those that are excelling in math, those that need assistance in passing the exit exam. Should we identify which specific math classes that students should take in a given year? (i.e. algebra for ninth grade and geometry for the sophomores.) Should we "teach to the test?" meaning the exit exam. (i.e. Math to Pass the Exit Exam I, II, & III.) I think that we should for those that need this. It may also be a good opportunity to visit all of our graduation requirements as our science requirements is set at only two and we do not require any technology credits for graduation.

Another discussion will deal with a student athlete substance abuse policy. This is also an important discussion as it sets expectations of students. I understand that this may have been a large issue in the past. At question is the zero tolerance expectation that is now in practice. Many different issues should come up this evening dealing with alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs are illegal, safe and drug free schools act, liability of the District, and coaches, definition of "association" and "treatment plans." We may also make many value judgments about a variety issues. Also, I think that it may be good to look at other issues as why students can and cannot participate in various activities dealing with grades and attendance. I would bet that we have had more students that cannot participate in a variety of activities because of their attendance and grades, and should we also address this. I do know that many of the faculty see attendance as slipping and as something that we may need to address in the very near future as I am hearing that this may affect some senior's plans for graduation this year.

This Board continues to impress me with their focus on educational issues, and for that I thank you. I have seen many boards that get bogged down on non-educational issues and it has been a breath of fresh air over the past half of a year. I have heard many boards state that they wanted to discuss and act on educational issues, but more often than not; they have gotten side tracked with other peripheral issues. I very much appreciate your focus, but I think that this may have been the case for Unalaska City School District's Board of Education for many years.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! We have much to be thankful for in our community and the success of our students. We enjoy an excellent faculty and staff, and very supportive parents and community, and most of all, students that work hard at their jobs, Learning!! I am very proud to be a part of this educational institution and this community!

Happy Holidays and Safe Travels for those who are!!