

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

To: UCSD BOARD OF EDUCATION
From: Darrell J. Sanborn, Superintendent
Date: October 19,2000

Welcome Shannon Morrison and Trever Shaishnikoff to the Unalaska City School District Board of Education. I hope that you find your time here enriching and I look forward to working with you. I also thank you for your interest in our students' education.

Every time that I walk through the halls, I become even more impressed with our students, and I am not sure that we tell them often enough how great they really are. They are really great kids, with a great deal of respect for their fellow students, the staff, themselves and the little ones! If you had the opportunity to see or read about the various activities over the past few weeks, I am sure that you were impressed. Our volleyball, swimming, and cross-country have been in competition. Andrea Wilt did well in representing our community. We have a wrestling team this year, and I am pleased to see many students participating that I have not seen in other activities. The Walkabout Alternative School had a fine dinner last weekend, and the concert last night was fantastic! Our congratulations to Vanessa Robinson, Mariana Sandness and Amanda McConnell for their music awards Great students, every one of them!!

They are also great consumers of education. This evening we will be visiting our Exit Exam and Benchmark results. It is obvious as I look at the results, that we have a fantastic staff. And we have fantastic students. We also have the best parental involvement that I have ever seen in my years in public education. We have a very supportive City Council, public entities, and the private sector has proven over and over again their support for the schools. The way that parents, students, staff and community work together makes Unalaska – Dutch Harbor truly a great place for to raise children. Quality education based with this team approach of the support that we have does so much good for our students. It does take all of us to make this happen and I am very happy to be a small part of it.

Another topic that we will be discussing is transferring the Recycling Program to the Qawalangin Tribe. Unalaska City School District should feel quite proud of supporting this program through the years and watching it grow to where it is today. Over the past few months, the Qawalangin Tribe has been very helpful in administering this program. It will be something that will have long-term benefits for our community.

We thought we were fortunate enough to hire a registered nurse, but we will continue to look.

We have seen the normal “new to the district” numbers of new students during our count period. As you know, this count period ends on October 27th with the opportunity to request a different twenty day count period should our numbers continue to improve. At the present time, we are at 351, with last years’ count at 352. The budget was built at 357.

I also met with our Indian Education Parent Committee last month. I had the not so fun task to inform them that we did not submit our Indian Education Grant by the deadline of June 2nd and we were not to be funded for this fiscal year. I also gave them my guarantee that this would not happen again. I have been working with folks in Washington DC to hopefully locate some mini grants or other competitive grants to replace these funds for the year. I have also been in touch with our Congressional Delegation to locate some competitive grants for our Bilingual/ESL concerns.

We have started to get letters out to those in the class of 2002 and their parents who have just taken the exit exam. We will also send letters out to the sophomores, and their parents who will take the exit exam in February. These letters state that I encourage those that just have taken the exam, to act like they did not pass the sections and continue to work hard on these subject matters, and to revisit the practice test on a very regular basis. Also there will be much discussion over the next six to eight months about delaying the criteria to pass the exit exam to obtain a high school diploma. The length of the delay is anywhere from two to six years. First of all, I doubt that this will happen, even if it makes educational sense. The politics of it all will not allow this. My concern is that our students will receive a mixed message and may not continue to take these tests seriously and continue to work hard to meet these academic standards.

This spring we will be due to have our Peer Review for our Accreditation status. The Alaska State Committee, Commission on Schools, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges procedure has changed drastically over the past couple of years. My concern with going both the route of strategic planning and the accreditation process is that it would be too much for our faculty. I am looking at the development of the School Improvement Plan and the strategic planning process to see how we can mesh these two. We are thinking that the SIP process could bring the strategic plan along, as they are very much alike. This SIP may also be effective to enhance our strategic plan.

Another mistake on my part deals with the opening of the new school. In my visits with the construction superintendent this week, he had shared that the timeline agreed to was a November 15th completion date. I have always worked on the idea that we would be moving in at the beginning of the next academic year. I will be checking with the various city folks to verify what is in the contract. I did want to report that the windows started going in today, however some were broken during delivery. The weather has been cooperating greatly!!!