

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**To:** UCSD BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

**Date:** September 21, 2000

I would like to start off by stating that I think that we have had an excellent opening of school. In fact, the very first week we did not have a "Saturday School," which has not happened in three years. I am very pleased with not only the quality of staff that we have, both certificated and classified, but also the students. This is by far the best school that I have been affiliated with since coming to Alaska. The quality of staff and students is without question, very strong. I am most happy with how much respect that everyone has for each other and themselves. And, the parents, every day, I am so very pleased to see the parents coming to the school, visiting classrooms and helping teachers. Education is a priority in Unalaska.

One thing I have noticed is that sometimes it is easy to be distracted by other situations, which takes our focus from education to some of the peripheral stuffs. I don't do "management by chaos" very well, but I do need to be more careful as not to do dumb things that create this type of situation. I will try not to do this again. My apologies for my error. As we go through our year, please let us continue to ask ourselves as educators, as parents, as Board Members, as community members, etc. "Are we focusing on the education of all of our children?" Their collective success is what we are striving for. This evening we will be talking about some important issues: the exit exam, CAT V results, the community survey, curriculum, and the graduation exercises. Let us always have education as the main focus for our children.

The Exit Exam or the "High School Graduation Qualifying Examination" has been a hot topic these past few weeks. I have been pleased to see that our faculty is very open to integrating reading, writing and math into their variety of subject areas. There is a concern out there that we will begin to "track" students. Tracking students has a very negative image. Many years ago students were tracked into either a college or vocational track. The exit exam forces us to track students in a different way to accomplish our goal and obligation: To have 100% graduation rate. We may need to have a number of extra courses available for some students such as *Math to Pass the Exit Exam I*, *Math to Pass the Exit Exam II*, and so on. Teaching to accommodate the variety of learning styles of the students.

This evening Holly Holman, our Business Manager, will be discussing what our enrollment numbers mean in terms of dollars. This morning our numbers were at 340. Much better than the 308 that I had reported at the first of August. Also, we have been getting the word out about students who are presently home schooled. They can participate in regular education, by taking a

course/subject or two. Some of these parents were unaware of this option. Also I am discovering parents may be unaware that we would work with them regarding their different travel schedules.

My congratulations to Rick Kniazowski for being selected by the Alaska Association of School Administrators as the recipient of the Don MacKinnon Excellence in Education and Human Services Award. I am pleased for Rick, and also our Board. This was the second such award in two years for our Board. Board members make some tough decisions, and the issues are not always as black and white as we would like them. Not always lots of fun being a school board member!!

We also had an incident with our Raider Swim Team. This was an unfortunate incident. The students had left their rooms after the coach had told them to stay in their rooms for the evening, close to midnight. When I first heard of the incident, my mind started remembering past experiences: personal safety, alcohol/drugs, leaving with an adult, etc. I have dealt with many of these issues. These students made a bad choice, and accepted their consequences. I believe they have learned from it. I am happy to say that this is the first district that I have worked at for many years that does not have two chaperones, plus the coach travel on activities. We do not hire security guards when our students go to Town. This would cut down on the number of students that can travel. I am pleased that the coaching staff and sponsors have the level of trust with the students where we do not need that. I would hate to see us ever move to that. I think that our students are better than that. I have made it very clear with the coaching staff that when our students travel, they are Ambassadors of our District. I will also ask that the coaches review practices so that our expectations and consequences are the same from activity to activity.

There have been some concerns expressed about not being able to hire a nurse for our school. Some discussions have started about the possibility of cutting the hours down and increasing the hourly rate, allowing us to remain within the budgeted amount. The idea of attempting to have an EMT on staff has not been widely supported, due to the health education, immunizations, records etc. We will continue to attempt to recruit a nurse.

The special education corrective actions are going well. We will meet all time lines and such. I have been very appreciative of the flexibility and openness of Mrs. Coplan, Mr. Whitney and Mr. Conwell. I have been real pleased with Mrs. Easton, as she appears to be taking this as a learning opportunity with all of the updates of IDEA – 97.

I would like to begin to thank the KEY Bank folks as they came up on Tuesday of this week to help in the Schools as part of their “Neighbors Make a Difference” program. I will recognize the individuals at the next Board meeting. It looked like these folks were enjoying themselves along with the students. Their projects included netting fish, classroom presentations, making copies, washing windows, moving furniture, etc.

We have lots of work to do on the curriculum issues, which I hope that folks that are interested become and stay very involved. This will be very tough at times, as curriculum does become policy, with standards, reporting systems, resources, scope and sequence, etc. It has been my experience that some subjects, such as reading and writing go rather smoothly with the recent research on whole language, but sometimes math is a bit more difficult due to the grade and ability levels.