

Superintendent's Report

To: Unalaska City School District Board of Education

From: Darrell J. Sanborn, Superintendent

Date: January 18, 2001

January is already half over and the school year is zooming! I was pleased with the crowd that we saw at the Boys' Basketball game against Bethel. Again, my hats off to our students! They continue to impress me, not only those on the court, but also those in the bleachers and pep band. I was pleased that the Boys did so well, and I also heard that our girls were fantastic ambassadors for the District. They all make us proud in the way they represent the District. The Seniors, on both the teams, are growing into excellent leaders. These are lifetime skills that they will take with them. I thank them for their leadership with the underclassmen.

Parental and community involvement continues to impress me with the various activities in the school and around the community. Next month I will have a listing of those people who made donations to the school through Unalaska's "Community Christmas Tree" that was held at the Grand Aleutian Hotel. Contributions to the District were over \$350.00 and it appears that the total amount raised was more than double the amount raised last year. Thanks much to the Community, and to the Grand & Sheryl & crew.

Also, my congratulations to Mr. Kins Chon who was one of our Alternative School students. Kins completed the graduation requirements at the semester break. I am sure that Kins's mother and sister are very proud of him, and that he has proved some folks wrong. Kins is now making application to the Alaska Job Corp's electrical program. He is a taxpayer now, as he is working down at the airport.

Last month, we heard comments concerning the idea of changing the new school to serve grades five through nine rather than grades pre-K to four. I know that the new school was a very controversial and divisive issue over the past number of years. However the building is being built with the intent that it is a pre-K – 4 school, using little people doors, windows, bathrooms, and specifications for space. Change orders can be very, very expensive. The delays would also be expensive. It is my recommendation that the Board not consider this as a viable option at this time, not only due to the costs, but the history of the divisiveness that this issue has caused in the community. I have seen the healing process begin over the past number of months and I am real appreciative of folks reaching out.

New Immunization requirements will be in affect for the beginning of the next academic year. Mumps and hepatitis A & B will be required for students to enroll in school. Mumps shots may have

been taken care of if students had the MMR shot, (Measles, Mumps, Rubella.) The hepatitis shots may have been administered to some younger kids, kindergartners and maybe, first graders, so the focus may be on the older students. Another concern for us is the tracking. One of the shots requires three separate injections. The public Health Nurse is scheduled to be here the week of January 29th. We are encouraging folks not to wait until next fall, and to start early. We have sent notices out to teachers, parents and students concerning these new requirements. Those students who have not had these shots will not be allowed to attend school next fall.

We will again be discussing various math options this evening. I did want to report that Mr. Duhan is teaching an additional math class after school for audit or credit. This class filled within hours! It appears that the motivation to participate in this class ranged from wanting to prepare for the Exit Exam to getting ahead or catching up with the graduation requirements. I appreciate the work the committee that looked at the math requirements for graduation has done. Those folks that have done work in this area include Jerry Whitney, Mike Duhan, Teri Boyles, Ken Sweenhart, Bonnie Whitney, and Sara Wolfe, who chaired this committee. Last month, we heard that the committee had recommended increasing the math requirements to three credits for graduation. Tonight we will be looking at the specifics of course descriptions, offerings and sequence. It is my goal to give you enough information that, if you so choose, we are able to take this policy change to first reading at our February meeting.

Another issue that may come up at our Budget Committee meeting concerns a more inclusive Kindergarten program, which may require Board action in the future. At the present time, we serve three & four year olds on a limited basis and at a tuition cost for parents. The Quality Schools Initiative allows districts to run a more inclusive kindergarten program, if districts choose to do so. It would mean changes in the way that we do business and would require a change in Board Policy, if you choose to do as the present policy states that children must be five to enroll in kindergarten. Unalaska City School District's Free & Reduced meal rate is less than fifteen percent and many may not qualify for the Head Start program. Forty nine percent, almost half of our students in the pre-K and Kindergarten, at this time came to school not speaking English. The benefits of the additional academic time should be of assistance our students.

The week of February 26th will be a very busy testing week for our students. As I reported a few months back, we will be testing all students during that week in either the Benchmarks and Exit Examinations, grades 3, 6, 8, 10, & 11, or the CAT –V for grades 2, 4, 5, 7, & 9. I will be visiting all classes participating in this to discuss the importance of doing one's best during this week and helpful test tips such as getting enough sleep, eating a good breakfast, and some general information concerning the tests. I will do this after DOE puts out the practice tests for our use. I expect these out in the near future. We will be asking different organizations, groups, businesses, parents, and you all to assist in motivating the children to do their best. We are looking at serving snacks and such during the testing breaks.

We have distributed draft copies of the reading, writing, and math curriculums in draft forms to those involved in past curriculum committees. Bonnie and I will be conducting public meetings to ensure that we allow for all interested parties to comment on this document. We are looking at a weeknight and Saturday afternoon meeting unless the Board would like to hold these in a work session. February 19th & 20th, we will be having in-service days with our staff. The focus at these meetings will deal with curriculum issues and accreditation tasks. I would encourage Board members to stop by any time as well as parents and interested community members.