

Superintendent's Report

To: Unalaska City School District Board of Education

From: Darrell J. Sanborn, Superintendent

Date: March 29, 2001

It seems as though we were just here a few weeks ago!!! "Spring" Break was a fantastic opportunity for most staff and students to get away and take a break. Not quite sure that it is truly "spring" yet!! Now comes the time of the year to give this big push to keep things moving in a positive fashion, or as a dear friend and mentor used to say, "Onward & Upward!" Our students will need to continue the hard work that they have been doing for the remainder of the year. The final stretch will soon be upon us, if it isn't already!

The Northwest Association of Schools & Colleges' Accreditation Response Team Report is in front of you. The entire community of Unalaska should be very proud of their students and the education program that has been developed. A couple of quick issues, an 84 of 87 possible points score is fantastic!!! I have never seen a count this high!! And the rule of thumb for any response team is that the members are to have an equal number of commendations and recommendations. We had only four recommendations!!! 1) ESL, which we are attempting to address with our budget, 2) curriculum alignment, which we will have to you in May for Language Arts & Math, 3) lack of a media specialist, or librarian, but we have Gail, so we be fine!, and 4) Long range Staff development plan. Staff development is part of our Negotiated Agreement, and it can be argued that this is a benefit. I am pleased that our staff takes this seriously. I know that there are many school districts very much like Unalaska City School District, with the exception of our students' success. One of the concerns of these districts far, far away is that the faculty do not keep up on recent trends and current practices and research. I am glad that our faculty take this responsibility seriously. We had a quick celebration on Tuesday evening to distribute copies of the Report, but if you did not get one, we would be happy to send it to anyone. I was pleased with the turnout with such short notice.

This has been a fantastic year, and I am very happy to be a part of Unalaska City School District. This has also been a year of healing for our communities and for that I am happy. The success that our students are seeing now is a result of many years of hard work and cooperation. Through these many years there has been a desire for these higher standards. Changes are tough and meeting high standards does not happen over night. You have weathered many storms, and there will be more ahead. I appreciate this Board and the true emphasis that it puts on **all** students and their education. In short, many boards of education think that they are doing the right thing, but this Board

is doing the right thing with their steady and consistent direction!! The parents, the community and the businesses have equally been supportive through the years. Whenever I hear of the “quality of life” priorities that the Community has endorsed, I think that there have been many folks who have worked very hard to make this a great place to raise kids. And our students; there are none better!!! They are good people. They care about, and respect each other, and themselves. They have risen to the educational standards that the State talks about, and will rise to the higher standards, which Unalaska City School District has in place. There was a quiet comment made after the Accreditation Preliminary Report that I overheard at the last Board meeting. This person stated something to the effect of “It looks as though the kids have always been doing fine, and maybe just the adults were not getting along.” When you spend time with our students, you will see a great deal of diversity. I think that they see this diversity as a good thing, thus a strength. We can all learn something from our students. I am so very pleased that we are all getting along, and really happy to be a part of this community. I thank you for that!

I am also pleased to hear the support of our budget proposal with different folks that I visit with. I am impressed with what this very public process does in terms of folks understanding what we are asking of the community. In a nutshell, this budget includes the salary & benefits of our existing staff, the expenses for the new school and an ESL (English as Second Language) instructor. I have found that this community operates well with an upfront approach rather than a “smoke and mirrors” approach. This process strengthens my enthusiasm for the Strategic Planning Process and I am hoping that the Board will assist in setting the dates for this activity. Taking Unalaska City School District to the “Next Level” should be our goal for this activity. I am excited about this and I feel that the Faculty, Staff, Parents and the Community also are.

I also wanted to put a plug in for the Unalaska World Record Halibut Derby. After getting my arm twisted terribly to make a donation, I was given the full story of our Halibut Derby. The funds are raised for the prizes and other expenses, and all the ticket sales go toward scholarships for our students. If he had said that this was the case in the beginning, my arm would not have hurt so badly!!! I am just so happy to see all of this support for our students and their education. It seems every week, I learn of a new scholarship program for our students from this community. I hope that everyone will support this program for our kids. There is no donation that is too small. However, the size of the donation increases with the length of time that one twists your arm!!!