

Governor names Education board

Calling education the most critical issue facing Alaska families and the economy, Governor Tony Knowles announced his choices for the seven member state Board of Education.

Named to the board were **Abbe Hensley** of Anchorage, **Marilyn Webb** of Juneau, **Robert Gottstein** of Anchorage, **Mike Williams** of Akiak, **R. Weaver Ivanoff** of Unalakleet, and **Mary Ann Eininger** of Fairbanks. Current member **Stowell Johnstone** of Anchorage will be retained on the board.

"Making sure that our children are prepared for the challenges of our economic future is one of the most important tasks we have," Knowles said. "I was gratified to see the strong interest in this board from around the state. Choosing from among the 90 applicants was difficult, but I believe that we've tapped the best of the best for this important job."

Abbe Hensley is a staunch advocate for parent involvement in the schools. She helped for the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in Kotzebue and served as president of the state PTA from 1989 to 1993. Hensley currently serves as vice president for leadership services of the National PTA.

Businessman **Robert Gottstein** is a graduate of Anchorage schools and Duke University. The owner of Iditarod Properties, Gottstein serves as trustee of the Alaska Native College and chair of the Winning with Stronger Education project and the UAA School of Business Dean's Executive Advisory Council.

Marilyn Webb of Juneau studied early childhood education and administration at Michigan State, Western Washington State and the University of Alaska. Webb taught kindergarten through second grade and presently serves as director of the Head Start program in Alaska.

Iditarod musher **Mike Williams** of Akiak has worked as a

mental health counselor and has served for many years of the Yupiit School District Board. Williams has also worked as Akiak city administrator and coordinator for the local Johnson O'Malley program and is active in the sobriety movement.

R. Weaver Ivanoff has ten years experience of the board of the Bering Straits School District. A graduate of Mount Edgecumbe, Ivanoff studied secondary education at Alaska Methodist University and University of Alaska Anchorage. He is a commercial fisherman and works as general manager of the Native village of Unalakleet.

A former school psychologist, **Mary Ann Eininger** worked for the National Education Association - Alaska from 1973 until 1991. Since then she has worked as a private consultant, facilitator, grant writer, and trainer for various groups including the Fairbanks North Star Borough schools and League of Women Voters.

Stowell Johnstone worked with the Anchorage School District from 1967 to 1982. A former Air Force pilot, Johnstone has a masters degree in education administration from the University of Idaho and currently works as a private consultant. He was appointed the board last year by Governor Wally Hickel.

In choosing the seven members of the Board of Education, the

Governor is obliged by statute to pick one person from each of the state's four judicial districts and one person must be from a Rural Education Attendance Area (REAA). The Governor can pick no more than four persons who are members of his own party and must consult with educational groups such as National Education Association - Alaska and the Association of School Board Administrator. Board members serve staggered five year terms.

To underscore the significance of the appointments, Knowles made the announcement of his education board at Dimond High School in Anchorage. Knowles also announced that he would introduce legislation that specifies that future education commissioners serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Presently, education commissioners are allowed contracts of up to five years.

"The Education Commissioner is such an important position that the Governor should be able to pick a person who shares their beliefs and vision," Knowles said. "That's why the state Constitution specifies that other commissioners serve at the pleasure of the Governor. It should be no different in the Department of Education."

Knowles' legislation, transmitted to House and Senate leaders, includes an immediate effective date in order to ensure that the next commissioner is appointed under the new terms.