

EDUCATION: 'ONE DOWN AND THREE TO GO'

Governor to Allow Milit. Reservation Schools in ASOSS

On Friday, March 14th, Governor Hammond signed into law a bill which authorizes the Commissioner of Education to require that schools on military reservations to come under the control of city or borough school districts.

The Alaska Federation of Natives, in its Education Position Paper last December, recommended that military schools should be removed from the Alaska State-Operated School System.

The Human Resources Department of AFN believes that the needs and issues of the rural ASOSS schools are very different from those of the military schools and that the two types of schools should be separated. The new bill will cause that to happen. One down, three to go!

There are three other bills pending in the legislature which address recommendations from the AFN Education Position Paper. SB 35, and its counterpart in the House, HB 24, both deal with public education in the unorganized borough.

If these bills are passed, the ASOSS would cease to exist on July 1, 1975 and would be replaced by regional education attendance areas, each with locally elected school boards.

The educational attendance areas would receive school funds based on the State foundation support program just as any city or borough school district does.

In addition, all school districts, including the new regional educational attendance areas, will be eligible to apply for funding from the bilingual/bicultural education fund administered by the Department of Education.

The bills would also allow the regional school boards to contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs

for the operation of their schools.

SB 136 would create a local government commission. The commission would be responsible for studying and working in the unorganized borough concerning local government options. With a few amendments which AFN has provided, the bill could go a long way in providing technical assistance to local communities which wish to control their own education systems and to assume independent status.

In the House, HB 229 will provide funds for the Department of Education to study the public school foundation program. The study would bring the formula for foundation support up-to-date. Since the foundation program was created in the late 1960's, much has changed.

We need a new definition of "basic education" (which might include bilingual education) and a revised schedule for distribution of foundation monies to the various school districts in the State. The study would look at, and make appropriate revisions related to these concerns.

So, one down and three to go! The Alaska Federation of Natives' Human Resources Department has been working hard with the legislatures about these issues. The bills are important. Help by letting your Legislators know how you feel. We want to say "four down!"