

Schools look at budget cuts

By LONE E. JANSON

Pinched by the State's tightening purse strings, delegates from school boards from around the state gathered for a pow-wow in Anchorage last Friday.

In an all-day session, the Association of Alaska School Boards met with representatives of the Governor's office and other state agencies to discuss budget cuts for 1980. Approximately 40 school boards, both urban and rural, were represented.

Ron Wesley of the North-

west Arctic School District explained that the meeting had been called in response to the new budget, "to discuss it and figure what is happening. We just want to let our concerns be known."

Sue Greene from the Office of the Governor made a presentation on the budget, pointing out that the decreases are basically in two areas: in pupil transportation, which affects both urban and rural districts, and in budgets for rural school districts. The state's REAA's

will receive approximately \$2.2 million less in 1980 than they did in 1979. These cuts will not affect city and borough school districts.

Wesley said that many of the REAA's had developed surpluses and carry-overs of funds, so the state feels they don't need so much money.

"But what they are overlooking is that the REAA's are just getting started and do not really have their feet on the ground as yet."

(See SCHOOLS, Page Seven)

● Schools

(Continued from Page Three)

Greene pointed out that although there were large cuts in several areas of the budget, in others there would be a slight increase. This is especially true in the case of community schools.

Thelma Langdon, president of the Alaska State Board of Education, commented briefly on the part played by the community schools program — the use of the schools for community activities after hours. The program has been a notable success wherever it has been instituted.

But the greatest concerns still remained the budget cuts for REAA's. Each of the school districts present was able to give a presentation of their views and concerns. Northwest Arctic School District tried to point out "some of the fiscal realities" of providing quality education, complying with all the new laws, and still staying within the budgets in a rural Alaska environment.

"Like all school districts, the Northwest Arctic School District must comply with state and federal laws and regulations, not only concerning education (as the Hootch decision and bilingual education laws), but with other legal restrictions, such as environmental protection regulations, health and safety laws and building codes."

In the light of these commitments, in order to provide quality education, "it is vital that general state support of education continue at least at the anticipated FY 1980 level."