

# Some ABC's

## in education

BY RON INOUE

*Editor's Note: Thanks for your letters and phone calls regarding this column. If you have any questions about the column or suggestions for subjects to discuss, let me know by writing to me at the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies (CX-CS), University of Alaska-Fairbanks, 99701, or by calling (907) 479-7815.*

What kinds of information about the schools do most parents know? What additional information could help really ensure those parents that their children are getting the most from their schooling?

NETWORK, a newsletter published eight times a year by the National Committee for Citizens in Education, states that there are many things about which parents are unaware, and suggests that parents keep a "home information file" to provide that additional information.

That "information file" will help parents 1) keep track of important school dates and meetings; 2) know to whom to turn if problems should develop; and 3) locate their children quickly in case of an emergency.

Among other items, the following could become part of the parents home information file.

School personnel — do you know who these people are and how to reach them — child's teachers, department heads, guidance counselor, principal, school nurse, librarian, dietician, bus driver, security officer, school psychologist, district superintendent, public information director, and school board members?

Schedules — bus route pickup and delivery times, daily classroom schedule, days and times of extracurricular activities, hours when facilities are open to students and parents, your time to volunteer in your child's classroom, regularly scheduled school board meetings, the school budget cycle, and teacher in-service days and holidays.

Dates and deadlines — 1st parent-teacher conference 1st parents' meeting 1st school

board meeting, when report cards are sent home dates for standardized tests, appointment to review confidential records, deadline for parents' newsletter, and date teachers' contract expires.

Finances — student fees, parent group dues or subscription fees, total taxes paid by the household in support of schools per pupil expenditure in your district, salary scale of teachers and other school employees the school's annual operating budget, and the dollar sum and percentage total of local, state, and federal aid to your school.

Many school districts publish their own newsletters containing such "information file" facts; and newspapers in some communities publish a "back-to-school" issue which contains similar information. Using such sources, you can compile the suggestion "home information" facts for each of your children who attend school.

NETWORK is a stimulating paper and promotes the active involvement of parents with the schools. To receive more information about the organization or the NETWORK paper, write to the National Committee for Citizens in Education 410 Wilde Lake Village Green, Columbia, Maryland, 21044. The paper provides practical ideas like the "home file" and information about significant state and national issues which may affect your children.

If you have another paper or newsletter which you think parents, teachers, or students should know about send me a copy. Maybe a review could be published in a future column.