

Study of school becomes study of dropouts

By LOUISE DONHAUSER
Tundra Times Staff

Plans to do a feasibility study on establishing a Native optional high school in Anchorage have been shortstopped because the state Legislature didn't fund the study but another study, this one conducted by the Anchorage school district, will be conducted to find out why Native students drop out of school before graduating.

Anchorage's Native Education Coalition tried to get \$100,000 from the Legislature to do a feasibility study but the Legislature

rejected the bill.

Al Adams who opposed the bill said he thought an alternative high school was a duplication of services already offered by the Cook Inlet Native Association offered. He said CINA was supposed to have services that would resemble an alternative high school.

But he said the bill had some merits to it although he didn't specify what the merits were.

Jackie Guzialek, Native Education Coalition chairperson, said "I sit on the CINA board of directors and I don't know of any such services that are available."

Esther Combs, CINA personnel director said "I was rather puzzled by that statement because we don't have what could be termed an alternative school."

She said CINA's services are mainly tutoring and providing cultural information to Native students.

The Anchorage school district study is to determine if there are one or more common factors which make Native students drop out before graduation.

Contractors for the school district will interview 100 dropouts to find out what problems they encounter during high

school and why they dropped out.

The study will also try to find out if the students went on to receive other training. The school district is also hoping the study will answer the question "is there anything the school district can do?" Harry J. Donahue and Bruce Tideman are contracted to conduct the interviews, according to Ray Fenton.

Jackie Guzialek, Native Education Coalition chairperson, said the dropout study would "tell us where we can start." She said the coalition agreed to take off for July and August. She said

she thought the alternative bill was going to pass and she added, "If here is any other additional monies we will have to pursue those avenues." She said the coalition also is waiting for information on other funding sources for the study.

Native Caucus president Pat Anderson said the Caucus hasn't taken a position on the high school yet. He said, "Until the legislative session starts (in 1981), it's not crucial we (the caucus) do anything." But he said something has to be done in the "education arena" and the Caucus will continue to look for solutions.