

ADE Approves Statewide JOM

The Alaska Department of Education has approved formation of a statewide Johnson O'Malley program review committee to increase Native involvement in the education of Native children.

The proposal, subsequently approved by the board of Directors of the Alaska Federation Inc. will give Natives a say in distribution of the JOM funds now in great demand. It will be implemented for fiscal year 1974.

It directs that the state department of education cease acting as a single state agency

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for all JOM activities and become the single applicant for only those programs operated directly by the department. It further directs that the Bureau of Indian Affairs be urged to form the statewide review committee.

"We have talked about Johnson O'Malley programs and funding in the past," John Borbridge Jr., president of Sealaska Corp., told the board of AFN Inc. "We will now be in a position to act responsibly and effectively."

Alaska Natives have long sought to increase their involvement in policy-making decisions affecting the quality of education to their young people, Borbridge said.

"Burgeoning responsibilities related to the implementation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act have only served to make the meaningful involvement of the Alaska Natives in education policy shaping a more critical issue.

"In light of these long standing educational concerns, it is somewhat surprising to acknowledge that the Alaska Natives have not been directly involved heretofore in negotiations affecting the disposition of Johnson O'Malley funding for Alaska. The fact that the level of Johnson O'Malley funding for fiscal 1973 is \$4625 million only

serves to dramatize this omission," he said.

In the past, the State Department of Education acted as the sole party to a contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs for administration of all Alaska education programs funded by Johnson O'Malley funding.

But this year requests for Johnson O'Malley funds exceeded available funds.

"Requests for funding had broadened in scope and concept so as to include applicants from non-education agencies, corporations and individuals," Borbridge noted.

"As a consequence, a competitive situation was created, which involved programs operated by the state department of education and programs proposed by the state operated school system, the district school systems and other agencies and individuals," he said.

"The State Department of Education thus acted as both the single state agency for all Johnson O'Malley activities and it also submitted proposals as an applicant," he said.

The new commitment from the State Department of Education will put Native people "in a position to act responsibly and effectively" in direction of JOM funds, he concluded