

# Some ABC's

## in education

BY RON INOUE

*Editor's note: This weekly column is being written to provide you with general information about educational issues and topics. If you would like to comment on the column, or if you would like to suggest additional topics to be covered, please write the author at the Center for Northern Educational Research (CNER), University of Alaska-Fairbanks, 99701 or call (907) 479-7815.*

In such diverse communities as Sand Point, Ninilchik and Anchorage, various types of newspapers are being published. Each paper provides information about what is happening in the schools and in some of the communities.

Newspapers like East Anchorage High School's "T-Bird Talons," the "Wolverine Weekly" of Ninilchik High, and "The Aleut" from Sand Point have a lot of features in common. They discuss student councils, sports, clubs, and usually include local gossip. Some newspapers are printed commercially and others are done on a mimeograph machine; some have photographs and others have simple but adequate line drawings. They all vary in the way they are produced, but they have one thing in common: they help students learn to communicate.

As Laura Turnbow said in her editorial in the March 23, 1978 "T-Bird Talons," "Without a good newspaper, a school is missing one of the best avenues of communication between students, faculty, administration, and community."

"The Aleut" and the "Wolverine Weekly" emphasize communication between school and community. There are school-related articles and there are also community-interest stories. The mix of information appeals to students and non-students alike.

In communities where a daily or weekly local paper doesn't exist, a school-community publication often develops. It serves as an academic course in journalism for the students, and it also serves the community. It provides information about city council meetings, tells who is getting married, reminds people of meetings, and often-times has a swap-and-shop column. Some newspapers include advertising, allowing students to learn about the business side of publishing and marketing.

Many towns lack communication between school and community. That lack of communication keeps students from seeing that classroom learning relates to the world outside of the school. That same lack of communication sometimes makes people feel that school is separate and isolated from their everyday lives, particularly if they don't have any children in school.

Through a community-school newspaper, the students learn about the community. By gathering news in the community, visiting city council meetings, interviewing local personalities, and printing a calendar of community and school events, students learn more about their community. Similarly, the community-school newspaper can help the community to know what is happening in the school. Improved communication is an important result of a good newspaper.

If you have an example of a good school-community newspaper and would be willing to send me a copy, I would certainly appreciate it. Maybe some of the ideas in the newspapers that you send in will appear in this column.