

# Alaska Skill Center Adopts Concept of 'One Wall' Facility

An "Open Wall" School — The Alaska Skill Center in Seward is about to become one wall in this concept in high school education.

The innovative Superintendent of Schools of the North Slope Borough School District, Dan Turner, is bringing educational options never before offered to eight new high schools in the farthest north borough.

The Alaska Skill Center and the North Slope Borough have entered into an agreement to provide vocational training for the 88 to 90% of the high school students who are not planning to attend college and to avoid the prohibitive construction costs involved in providing the facilities at the new schools at Anaktuvuk Pass, Pt. Hope, Pt. Lay, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Wainwright and the high school at Barrow, which has been taken into the borough school system, just this year.

In an exchange of visits and ideas, Annie Brower, president of the North Slope Borough School Board and members of the State Advisory Committee for the Skill Center; Rory Tate, Barrow High School counselor; Glenn Neakok, Barrow student body president and Helen Nunsunginya, student, came to the Skill Center.

Bob Lutz, counseling and educational administrator and Al Lamberson, counselor, who has been appointed the program coordinator, journeyed to Barrow to discuss the mechanics of the program.

The Alaska Skill Center will provide the instructional staff, counseling, facilities, accommodations while the North Slope Borough will pay all tuition costs, room and board for each student, transportation, medical expenses and a \$2 per day stipend for student spending money. This last item will be deducted if they "cut" classes.

Bob Booher, director of the Skill Center, is excited about this new program which will begin Oct. 28 with 10 students.

Twenty students are expected to be enrolled after Christmas and eventually all students in the North Slope Borough Schools will have an opportunity to participate in this voluntary program. All high school students or drop-outs who re-enroll full time in the high school are eligible.

They may enroll in any of the clusters at the Skill Center and may change clusters in order to explore other vocational fields.

In the event a student has to or wants to complete his high school education by obtaining a GED the period at the Skill Center would be extended to six months. Remedial reading and basic education will be available to the high school students, just as they are to any regular trainee at the center.

In the past students from Seward High School, enrolled in the Alternative Education program have taken classes at the Skill Center but this is the first time a full-time vocational program has been offered to high school students.

Additionally, the North Slope Borough has contracted with the Skill Center to train 28 operators and maintenance mechanics for the \$800,000 worth of new equipment purchased for the eight villages, for snow removal, airport maintenance, street cleaning and other work.

A survey conducted in the North Slope Borough illustrates the desire of borough residents to remain in their hometown but the need for employment is often the prime reason they must leave. With the coming of the

oil industry to Prudhoe Bay employment prospects have improved in the borough to such an extent that those with vocational skills are in demand, particularly in the Barrow, Kaktovik areas.

Because building schools, facilities and getting equipped takes too much time Dan Turner and the School Board saw an opportunity and now they have

a class which is 800 air miles from their high school. That is what one could call a real "open wall" school.

It will be interesting to see if other communities hampered by a lack of time and facilities will follow the progressive and innovative North Slope Borough in a quest for the best possible education for the greatest possible number of students.