

HIGH SCHOOL REPORT IN

Regional High Schools Suggested at Bethel And in Urban Areas

The preliminary report on regional high schools in Alaska arrived in Juneau this week with the specific recommendation that a "large regional high school be built in the Bethel area" and that "an integrated urban high school system" be used throught the rest of the state.

The \$25,000 study, contracted by the State to the Training Corporation of America six weeks ago is expected to be completed in final form "in about 30 days," according to Robert Isaac, assistant to the State Commissioner of Education.

Copies of the preliminary study are being sent to various agencies and persons who took part in the study.

Isaac said the purpose of the Training Corporation study was "to go into the feasibility of regional high schools; to attempt to find out where they should be located; the types of programs they should include, and what facilities already exist in the State."

Isaac said the Bethel site location was one recommendation "that the Corporation seemed to think they could live with and it will probably be included in the final report."

The recommendation calls for the Bethel regional high school to be "within commuting distance of the town and to accomodate from 700 to 1,000 students."

(Continued on Page 2)

School Report...

(Continued from Page 1)

State Education Department officials seemed to think that the second part of the recommendation pertaining to an "integrated urban high school system" meant that existing public high schools, such as Lathrop High School in Fairbanks, would be given funds to expand so they could handle the extra students from outlying areas.

Alaskan voters passed a \$5 million bond issue proposal on Nov. 8 designed to provide funds for regional high schools to serve students in outlying areas that presently have no high schools.

The use of the bond funds is subject to the Bureau of Indian Affairs providing dormitory facilities.

Barry Jackson, Democratic representative from Fairbanks, said the first thing that should be done is "some kind of official request from the State of Alaska to the BIA for a commitment to fund dormitories at the regional high school locations.

"This funding request should be included in the federal budget which will be submitted to Congress in January," Jackson said. "This needs to be done immediately if the funding request is going to be included in the budget.

"Even if it is included in the January budget request it will be two to three-years before construction begins.

"Also \$2 million of the total bond issue is intended for construction of a regional high school at Nome, providing the City of Nome contributes \$1 million in cash or in-kind services for the project.

"Nome should be asked whether or not they are going to be able to raise \$1 million. They are going to have some problems raising the money. If they can't raise the \$1 million then the \$2 million should be released for construction of a regional high school in some other area."

Isaac said the State of Alaska as yet has made no official request to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for dormitory-construction funds.

"I doubt if we can get anything ready in time for the January budget hearings," he said.

Rep. Jackson said he was convinced "the regional high schools should be combined with the regular public high schools, such as Lathrop. Then some of the \$5 million could be used to expand present high school facilities."

Roscoe Wilke of Nome told the Tundra Times that "absolutely nothing" had been done by the city regarding the the \$1 million cash or in-kind services.

"One of the problems is where they intend to build the school," Wilke said. "Our school district is a city district and the present regional high school (the old Beltz Vocational School) is outside the city limits. The \$3 million would probably be used on that site. The city taxpayers aren't sure they want to raise the money to build a school outside the city limits."

Wilke said the city could raise the \$1 million and that

the council would be discussing the matter soon.

"This is the first year the vocational school has been a high school and they have so many students that 26 are being boarded in a hotel in town. Our city high school is so crowded that eight classrooms are being distributed in several different churches in town."

Wilke, who's wife is president of the Nome School Board, said he thought the school board "would like to administer the regional high school."