

**RurAL-CAP****ACTION REPORTS**

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EDUCATION TASK FORCE ASSEMBLED

E. B. LUTTERMOSER, Director of Operations for Region X's Office of Child Development, chats with Head Start children at the Denali School Center.

Will Give Information to Rural Areas

A Task Force for Community Education has been brought together by RurAL CAP for the purpose of disseminating information to outlying areas. The RurAL CAP Board of Directors has felt that there are two needs to be met: First, there is an immediate need for information

so that villages can effectively deal with questions concerning the Land Claims Settlement Act and Local Government. And, second, that there is a long range need for the schools in each community to be the focal point for community education.

Several meetings were held with representatives of the State Department of Education, Alaska State-Operated Schools, State Office of Economic Opportunity, National Education Association, and the Alaska Native Foundation.

RurAL CAP has accepted the responsibility of collecting, collating, and distributing the relevant information, as requested by the villages.

As the result of a meeting in early November with the NEA Alaska Curriculum Commission and other representatives of the Task Force, the Commission endorsed the idea of a pilot program, using the school systems in five villages. A proposal was written for submission to the State Department of Education which would fund a group of educators to work with appropriate agencies to develop, by next spring, a complete set of materials on the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Local Government. This will be distributed to all teachers in the schools of Alaska by next September.

Nils Sara, Trainer for RurAL CAP, said that the program was going well in St. Marys and Bethel, the students are interested and teachers are en-

thusiastic, yet sensitive to the fact that it is an immensely difficult area. These two communities are not designated in the pilot project, but both have requested the information.

Members of the Task Force include Sally Jaime from State-Operated Schools; Eva Kriger from the Bureau of Indian Affairs; Lare' from the State Economic Opportunity Office; Roger Lang formerly with the Alaska Native Foundation, now with the Alaska Federation of Natives; Terry Stimson representing the National Education Association; George Swift from the State Department of Education; Baxter Wood, State-Operated Schools; and from RurAL CAP, Phil Smith, Deputy Director, and Nils Sara, Trainer.

Barril is New Director of ANCADA

George Barril of Juneau has been appointed as Executive Director of the Alaska Native Commission on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ANCADA) to succeed Ralph Amouak according to ANCADA President Richard Carol of Ft. Yukon.

Barril, 40, is the former director of the Juneau Senior Center and was a programs specialist for the Model Cities Agency for the City and Borough of Juneau. He is married and the father of nine-year old children, Amelia and Kelly, both 9.

Head Start Programs Visited

E. B. Luttermoser, Director of Operations for the Office of Child Development in Region X, ate lunch with Head Start children at Denali School as he observed the Anchorage programs in three RurAL CAP Head Start Centers. The O.C.D. official complimented each of the center teachers on their programs, and was enthusiastic about what he saw in each of the centers. "It's amazing how well organized the centers are, considering the fact that the program was funded late."

All of the Anchorage programs were late in opening this year, because of a transfer of the programs from the Greater Anchorage Area Community

Action Agency to the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, a move to consolidate programs and cut administrative costs.

Mr Luttermoser stopped in Anchorage to view the program on his way to the annual state Head Start parent's conference in Fairbanks. The conference was held on December 6, 7, and 8 and the Greater Fairbanks Head Start Associations Head Start Center in McKinley elementary school on Fort Wainwright. Parents from all over rural Alaska, Anchorage, and Fairbanks will meet and participate in workshops.

Alec Mitchell, Director of

Child Development at Southern Texas University was the key speaker, and other participants included Carol Johnson, Director of Child Development for State-Operated Schools, Barry Morrisroe from the Region X office of Human Development, Roger Mooney the Director of Child Development for RurAL CAP, Sylvia Munsey the Program Director of Child Development for RurAL CAP, Jane Southerlund, Vertis Williams, and Linda Osborne from the State Technical Assistance and Training Office, Dr. Nancy Curtis from the Alaska Methodist University, and Mayor John Carlson of Fairbanks.

Forum Concludes SOS Should Be Decentralized

One point that was unanimously agreed upon by all participants in a forum on "Education in the Unorganized Borough", was the decentralization of the present Alaska State Operated Schools System (SOS). The concept of decentralization is based on the precept that would allow for the improvement and responsiveness of existing systems. The forum, conducted by the Center for Northern Education Research, which was held on December 10, 11, and 12, 1973 was an expression of the feasibility of decentralization in different areas of Alaska.

These areas included all ten of RurAL CAP's regional development corporations. Position papers were presented by the regions, the State Department of Education, SOS Board of Directors, Teachers of District One Education Association, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood Grand Camp, Military Alaskan Command, and RurAL CAP.

One of the greatest concerns expressed by the regions was the establishment of local control and authority of the school

system. This endeavor entails options on 1st and 2nd Class Cities, borough, municipality, or some type of government body to support the school system.

If a particular region or village wanted to be independent from SOS but did not have a sufficient tax base to support the school system then it is the State's moral responsibility to provide capital improvement programs in the training of local school policy boards so they can handle all aspects of school administration and support the maintenance and operation of school facilities.

The regions further contended that existing State statutes will have to be amended in order to encourage sovereignty in the development of rural government structures that are responsive to the needs of residents. If there is any legislative action of policy making by the Department of Education, it must have the input and consent of the rural people that it will affect.

The North Slope Borough's experience with the transition of responsibilities from State and federal agencies to local control offers little support to

transitional plans covering more than a one-year period. They also stated that the basic problem appears that there tends to be a let-down in overall effort on the part of the "transferor" during the transitional period resulting in additional expenses and problems to the "transferee".

Robert Clark of the Bristol Bay area voiced strong criticism of the SOS inability to provide proper materials for the schools, and payments to persons who had worked for SOS in maintenance and operation of school facilities. Not only were these requests ignored but there was virtually no correspondence from SOS as to whether these requests were approved or denied. Bottle necks in communications must be eliminated.

Mike Harper, Executive Director for RurAL CAP, stated that it will be the position of the agency to try and reflect those positions of the sub-regions that bear common interest in this endeavor and to leave specific positions or requests to each respective region.

He said that RurAL CAP is in favor of establishing independent school districts only if

and when the people in the community feel it proper. In order to accomplish this, the communities could be encouraged in their efforts in several ways, such as local school board effectiveness training should be immediately undertaken; appropriate legislation should be enacted to allow second class municipalities to form independent school districts without encumbering them with the financial and management burdens of first class city status.

Also, where appropriate, clusters of small communities should be encouraged to form independent school districts, third class borough status should not be a prerequisite for this arrangement. Other possible models of municipalities have to be developed with the input of the people in the planning stage.

RurAL CAP strongly endorses course context that is relevant to the rural Alaskan experience. This would include the Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act, bi-lingual programs, cultural heritage programs, and local government training. Additionally, courses should be offered that prepare students

for the realities of 20th Century life. Mr. Harper commented.

Adult education should become a function of the school system. There must be a program which will train and develop people for positions that will be created on school boards, teaching positions, administration positions, etc. A curriculum was advocated that deals with the totality of each individual community; and which, at the same time, maintains a high standard of education comparable to any western school.

Additionally, the agency desires a highly developed communication system organized between all educational institutions within the State. This could include increased research into the feasibility of satellite communications, local control of media development, etc.

RurAL CAP also feels that capital improvement programs should be continued, especially in those areas that have been deprived of their tax base and monies should be made available for training local school policy boards.