

REA recommendations

Alaska Rural Secondary Schools Forum

..... A Position Paper

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Resolved that:

1. Whereas our rural schools find themselves lacking personnel qualified to teach specific skills and whereas qualified talent in vocational skills vitally important to the life style of students in the respective geographical locations can be found in our villages and whereas this talent goes unrecognized due to lack of State certification, the Alaska State Department of Education be directed to provide regulations allowing local school districts to certify experienced individuals lacking formal training to teach in their programs.

2. The Alaska State Department of Education be directed to develop alternate solutions to school funding other than the FTE or ADM.

3. these resolutions may include, but not be limited to, a minimum level of funding (a "floor") for each secondary attendance center and the allocation of operating monies based on block or program approval rather than head count.

4. further, that sufficient funding be provided for planning and design of rural secondary programs, including the funding of pilot or test site programs, the results of which will be made available to schools and boards for evaluation and possible incorporation into their curriculums. Allocation of pilot funds will be governed by representatives of rural secondary schools.

5. In view of the condition of school facilities transferred from the State or Federal government to the new districts, that supplemental funding be provided through the Alaska State Department of Education to bring these facilities up to

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued from page 3)

minimal standards for efficient operation.

6. prior to the involvement of out-of-community persons in the design of new facilities, local residents and school staff will be afforded an opportunity to present ideas and recommendations that will be followed in the design and construction of new schools. The State Department of Education will facilitate the transfer of responsibility for design and construction of such facilities from various State agencies to local school districts.

7. and further, that a percentage shall be set aside from all construction funds to seek and implement the recommendations of local people in design of new facilities. It is felt that buildings should reflect community and educational needs, not the reverse.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from Page 8)

8. the Alaska State Department of Education adopt a strong position of leadership in meeting the specific needs of the rural school districts, most particularly in developing new regulations in areas such as certification and in reviewing tenure as it affects the quality of education provided rural students.

9. district school boards, after consultation with community school committees, be allowed greater latitude in making decisions regarding the use of funds received from the State for education.

10. this leadership by the Department of Education and attendant reconsideration of funding strategies extend to, and place particular emphasis on, alternatives for facilities design, operation and maintenance.

11. a major revision in teacher training is needed in the State of Alaska to equip teachers to adequately meet teaching requirements peculiar to small schools including academic versatility and cross-cultural adaptiveness.

12. the University of Alaska be directed to develop programs to train and retrain teachers for bush teaching. Such programs would include, but not be limited to, a summer session to retrain teachers to meet immediate needs and a longer range program to meet continuing needs. Further, there should be established an advisory group of rural education practitioners to help shape the above programs.