

Valid criticism of education system

Alaska Native leaders were right in sounding off about the shortcomings of Alaska's educational system.

For too long, our students have been taught that the white man's way is the only way. For too long our schools have taken a colonial posture towards the teaching of traditional Alaska Native language, literature, arts and history.

The Tundra Times believes there are sensitive teachers of all ethnic backgrounds working hard to enlighten our young people. Their efforts deserve our applause and support.

But we also believe that many administrators have fallen far short of their responsibility to promote a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of all Alaskans, be they white, Native, black or Hispanic.

The Bilingual Multicultural Education conference sponsored this past week by the state is the only one of its type in the United States. In its seventh year, we believe this annual conference is valuable as a vehicle for heightening the consciousness of educators towards the problems of minority students in the state, and as a forum for teachers to discuss new approaches to the unique problems of education in Alaska.

We think the criticisms of the system offered by some of the speakers are valid. And we hope those in the state Department of Education, and teachers and administrators around the state were listening.



Wally Kalerak, 4, and Lilly Tuzroyluke, 3, are anything but overjoyed at a Native Dress Review sponsored by CINA Friday. The two attend Saakaaya Day Care Center.

Photo by Bob Koweluk