

Six public school teachers receive sabbatical leave to study

Six Alaska public school teachers have been chosen by the Dept. of Education to receive sabbatical leave stipends during the coming school year, according to Paul Gulyas, former sabbatical leave officer for the department.

The teachers represent all areas of the state and their courses of study during their sabbatical year will cover everything from marine biology, to boatbuilding, to reading to physical education.

Selected were JoAnn B. Burgess, a fourth grade teacher from Ocean View School in Anchorage; John D. Lindeman, a K-12 physical education and high school geography teacher from Ninilchik; Robert L. Cochran, an industrial arts, science, math and photography teacher from Hoonah; Lucile E. Holden, who teaches tenth grade marine biology and 11th and 12th grade earth science at Ketchikan High School; and Joel Heck, who teaches seventh to 12th grade math, science, physical education and vocational education in the Matanuska-Susitna School District.

During her leave of absence, Holden plans to write a high school textbook emphasizing techniques and principles of oceanography, fish culture and commercial fisheries, based on biological principles and concepts.

Holden, who will work on the project at Oregon State University, pointed out that there currently is no basic high school text on marine biology.

Cochran plans to study boatbuilding techniques which would be applicable to vocational education in the rural high schools of coastal Alaska.

The Sand Point teacher wants to develop materials, plans and skills which would be utilized by schools to offer courses in boatbuilding and maintenance which are related specifically to the Alaska fishing industry.

McConnell plans to increase in knowledge in environmental education and ecology by doing graduate work in marine environmental sciences and food research at anadromous fisheries facilities in Washington state.

McConnell plans to work with the Washington State Department of Fish and Game and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in a study of the migration patterns

of anadromous fish. He will study political aspects of the International Fisheries Commission.

McConnell has a 65-foot boat which he plans to use for marine science classes.

Heck intends to further his training in vocational program administration and will be conducting research at the University of Oregon.

Burgess will take a semester off to pursue a master's degree in reading from the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Her goal is to become better informed on the latest developments in teaching or reading and environmental influences both inside and outside the classroom that affect the student's learning of reading. She will also study career guidance counseling.

Lindeman intends to update his knowledge of instructional methods in physical education. He plans to review and obtain data concerning development and implementation of physical

education curricula, specifically that which relates to elementary education.

The six teachers have an average of 10 years' teaching experience in Alaska.

In order to apply for sabbatical, teachers must have a bachelor's degree and teaching certificate and at least seven years teaching experience. Applicants must send in a letter of intent to the Dept. of Education, followed by the actual application which has to be endorsed by the school principal and superintendent of the school district. The deadline is March 15 of each year.

A screening committee reads the applications, and a composite ranking is worked out. The sabbatical funds are then allocated from the top down, until they run out.

The Dept. of Education sends out notices in October to every principal and superintendent in the state, advising them of the program. A follow-up letter is

sent out in December.

Criteria for judging the applicants are: will the particular study contribute something toward the state goals as certified by the State Board of Education; is it likely to do anything toward upgrading the capabilities of the individual school district; and what does it do for the teacher.

The screening board is composed of professionals from the Dept. of Education who have also had classroom experience. Gulyas looks at the content areas of the applications and attempts to include at least one professional with expertise or experience in the fields represented.

Teachers chosen for the sabbatical receive a minimum of \$6,080 in state funds for their sabbatical year. That amount may increase, depending upon the area of Alaska they're from and if they receive funding from their school districts. Also scholarships and grants may be

available from various sources.

"The incentive is there, but it's limited," Gulyas admitted. "I'd like to see the program funded a little more. We get 15 to 16 applications every year, which isn't a heck of a lot. I think that people look at the total kitty available and they look at the policies of their own districts, and they say, oh what the heck, it's not worth it. . . six thousand bucks for a family man, for example. He can't afford to go on sabbatical."

Gulyas hopes that the program in the future will have more applications coming in and more funding available.

"It's a good program, I'm sold on it," he said. "The teachers are isolated in the state. They spend six, seven, eight, 10 years sometimes in a little community."

"The benefits that accrue to the district when the teacher comes back off sabbatical are difficult to measure, but they're there nonetheless."

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