


TO: Southwest Region School Board and Staff

FROM: Kay Andrews, SWRS Board Vice President 

DATE: January 19, 2008

SUBJECT: Winter Boardsmanship Academy Trip Report

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As you know, Superintendent Foster and I attended the Winter Boardsmanship Academy in Anchorage on December 13 and 14, 2007. This is a brief summary of the Topics and Subtopics presented at the training session. Please find attached material information I reference in this report and for your review. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn, gather and prospect information important to our district. Our shared gained knowledge as board members and employees helps us to better understand our roles and responsibilities to meet our top priority to educate children under the standards, guidelines and professionalism expected including our own policies to advance their successes.

#### Evaluating, Disciplining and Granting Tenure

**Evaluating Paraprofessional, Disciplining and Releasing Staff** consisted of two segments and was presented by Jim Hickerson, Bering Strait School District Superintendent. He first addressed in these segments a review of Federal and State statues which guide personnel law, defined certificated and classified staffs, and presented steps for successful recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and retention of employees.

Under Alaska Administrative Code or regulation 4AAC12.020 describes Classified Staff positions as not being required to possess a teaching certificate. (Please see page 1 second slide, Employee Related Topics that lists classified staff. Note that some Administrative positions are also under that classification.) Certificated Staff is also defined under the same regulation and these employees must possess certain certificates. –A. A type “A”, “B”, or “C” Alaska Certificate for teaching, administration, or special services. –B. Have completed a teacher/administrative education or special services program in a postsecondary institution as described by the Alaska State Board of Education. –C. Have a bachelor’s degree or higher and are recommended by the preparing institution or has completed a comparable program in another state and is recommended by the preparing institution. For example: A Superintendent should possess C, but can possess all three. If only A and B, Superintendent should not perform formal evaluations. Both Classified and Certificated employees have certain responsibilities and certain rights protected under Federal and State Constitutions, Federal and State Statutes/Laws (No Child Left Behind) NCLB, Local Board of Education Policies, and any Negotiated Agreement between employees and the Board of Education.

Bering Strait School District Superintendent Jim Hickerson also presented the district’s forms for both classes of staff regarding Plan, Standards, Professional Goals, Evaluation Matrix, Improvement and Complaint Procedure specific to their district, but can be a model system for any school district. Superintendent Hickerson did an excellent job in presenting all this information including an overview on recruitment, and sees Superintendent Foster as an excellent recruiter to contend with out in the field.

**Making Tenure Decisions** presented by Saul R. Friedman, Esquire of Jermain, Dunnagan & Owen, P.C. Reviewed Title 14, Education, Libraries, and Museums, Chapter 20, Teachers and School Personnel, Article 2, Employment and Tenure, specifically, AS 14.20.150: Acquisition and reacquisition of tenure rights; AS 14.20.170: Dismissal; AS 14.20.175: Nonretention; AS 14.20.180: Procedures upon notice of dismissal or nonretention. In addition to his review of the law, Mr. Friedman explained what procedures must be carried out in order to comply with Informal and Formal Hearings for Nonretention of Nontenured and Tenured Staff. Please see material titled *Making Tenure Decisions*.

#### Contracts & Evaluating the Superintendent

**Contracts** was presented by John Sedor, Attorney, SEDOR, WENDLANDT, WANG. Mr. Sedor discussed the *No Cause Termination* clauses in Superintendent Contracts across the State and used real issues of points and provided his counterpoints regarding whether to include or not to include this provision in contracts. Please see the Point and Counterpoint sheets attached for your review. In conclusion, John made these suggestions: Select the right Superintendent, put most of your eggs in the selection process. For example, the most successful Superintendents were attributed to length of service in Alaska as a Superintendent, and those with years of service in a school district are far less likely to have a no clause termination provision in contract. Mr. Sedor referenced the notorious Kilmer v. DSCD case (which he litigated) took many years to litigate, cost all parties a lot of money, and could have been avoided if a *No Cause Termination* clause was in the contract. Please know that if the board is presented to consider a new contract without this clause as suggested last year but failed, I respectfully request a formal legal opinion on the matter before any decision is made by the school board on this matter. As the board proved last year, "just because you can does not mean you should". See counterpoint sheet.

**Superintendent Evaluation Workshop** presented by Joseph Reeves, AASB, discussed why we evaluate the superintendent, what an evaluation cycle should look like for example, Prepare, Evaluate, Review and Follow-through. Review Superintendent Job Description, and Determine Involvement and Approached, Identify and Clarify Priorities, such as listing priorities for our district and superintendent, Develop a Timeline, and selecting an Instrument to Evaluate. Most of us have gone through this process last year on-site. One area we may want to consider in the future, is developing the current evaluation tool to meet our district goals and priorities. Other school districts developed new evaluation tools using the same concept, but revised it using the district's goals and priorities including the incorporation of the superintendent job description. See *Superintendent Evaluation* material information provided by Joseph Reeves, Associate Executive Director, AASB.

**Recruiting and Retaining Teachers** had three subtopics **Alaska Teacher Placement: Predicting Teacher Supply and Demand** presented by Melissa Hill, Alaska Teacher Placement; **Teacher and Principal Mentoring**, presented by Lesa Meath, Mentor Teacher, and the *School Incentive Program* given by Jade Bickmore, EED. See information materials made available for your review including Technology below.

**Technology Based Staff Development** had two subtopics **Web Casts for Professional Development** presented by **Alaska Staff Development Network**, and the **Role of the School Board in Highly Effective Professional Development** by Gerry Briscoe and Pat Chesbor, Alaska Educational Innovations Network & Professional and Continuing Education/UAA College of Education and the Alaska Comprehensive Center.