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Alaska state-operated school superintendents; John Jaffith

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Series: Potlatch tapes

1975

Unidentified song.

Dave Lannigan is the associate superintendent of instructional services with the Alaska State Operated School System. He is in town to conduct a meeting to determine the plans for the Indian Education Program for the coming school year. There are regional superintendents from several locations in Alaska as well as parent advisory committee members. They will determine how the program will be run for the coming school year. He is located in the Anchorage office. Others are from Bethel, Fort Yukon, Glennallen, Delta and other rural places. They are interested in having the involvement and input of people being served. They are trying to determine the best way to administer the program. The parent advisory boards in each village will have a greater say about how the funds will be used. The Alaska State Operated Schools are the recipient of funds from Title 4 Indian Education Funds. This is the initial planning stages for the next school year. They have been discussing various methods and how the students should be served. There is an agreement that more funds should go directly to serving each student in the schools and less in administration. They are interested in direct involvement of the local village people in the operation of their school. They feel the funds should go directly to the school level and not to the regional level. They are questioning the value of having regional support budgets because they feel the money can be better used by channeling directly to student needs.

Unidentified song.

Al Weinberg introduced himself. He is the regional superintendent out of Bethel. Presently they are working with other regional superintendents from state operated schools, parents, and field coordinators on trying to develop a proposal for use of the Indian Education Act funds for the next school year. The state operated schools are expecting 600,000 dollars from the Indian Education Fund. The funds are designed for supplementary education for Native students. In Bethel they have about 1200 Native students. Next year with the addition of three or four high school programs they should have 1400 students who will benefit from this program. Each school is appropriated money based on the number of Native students in the school. The parents, school board and local teachers will develop individual proposals for the use of that money. The regional office and the central office will support the proposal with technical assistance and other help. Levi Lott asked what some of the duties were for school board. Al Weinberg said it varies from location to location. The function of school board should primarily be to determine what the priority needs of the students are in the school, determine what the goals should be and what the curriculum should be trying to accomplish. They work with the principal or primary teacher.

Unidentified song.

Maxwell Fincher is the regional superintendent of state operated schools in Glennallen. He said they are here for a meeting for the Indian Education Act. They are reviewing what has happened in the past, what the future potential is for the Indian Education Act, how much funding is involved and trying to get delivery of services closer to the people. The meetings have gone well and everyone is committed to delivery of services closer to the people with less administrative costs. He feels the conference will be very profitable as they plan the 1976 school year. Levi Lott asked how many school operated schools were in Alaska. Maxwell Fincher said he has nine in his region. There are a little over 100 spread across the state. Things are changing and it makes it very exciting. He hopes the local school board and parents determine the programs they want and then get the programs they want. Local people should be making the ultimate decisions.

Unidentified song.

Jim Tosher is the regional superintendent of the lower Yukon McGrath schools. The local advisory school board meets once a month to discuss local problems in the school, help the teacher to hire personnel, help with any problems with community use of the school, to determine what kind of programs should be taught, help with associated school programs such as Title 1, and things of this nature. Title 1 is a government funded program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It provides funds to the schools in areas where the local region or area can't provide enough funds to provide a good overall school program. The programs are used to assist developing programs in these schools. Title 4 is the Indian Education Act and deals with funds for American Indian students.

Unidentified song.

James Eekus is the regional superintendent in Fort Yukon. He said his region consists of seven schools: Arctic Village, Birch Creek, Circle, Rampart, Stevens Village and Fort Yukon. They have a total student population of 290 and 95 percent of the students are Native. The parent's committee established in each village determines how the money should be spent. They determine the priority needs. It can be for cultural skills such as skin sewing or materials for playground development. It is the parents who make the final decisions. Each village must have a parent's committee made up of parents of children who will benefit from the funds. In some villages they use the same people as the school board. In some places it is made up of parents that the school board has determined.

Unidentified song.

Steven Spangler is the regional superintendent for the upper rail belt schools and the Fort Wainwright schools. He said they have about a thousand military dependent children. The rail belt schools consist of the areas between Fairbanks and Mt. McKinley Park. They have Native students at Fort Wainwright. They also have American Indian children at Fort Wainwright. The rail belt area has the community of Cantwell which is about half Native children. There are other Native families in the rail belt area.

Public service announcement about planning a garden and seed selection.

Old Man John Jaffith of Tuluksuk gives a message in Inupiaq. Levi Lott provided a translation: Our way of life long ago was not like living in white man's world. We used to go out hunting day and night. We worked hard for our living. Ours is a hard life. Other than hunting we set fish traps in the rivers or lakes. That is our way of living.

Music from Saint Lawrence Island.

The moderator said Potlatch is produced in the KUAC studios in College in cooperation with KTOO Juneau, KOTC Kotzebue and KYUK Bethel under Title One of the Higher Education Act.