

# Connections from Jerr

Volume 1, Issue 2 November of 2004

## *From Jerry's Computer:*

Dear Educators and Parents

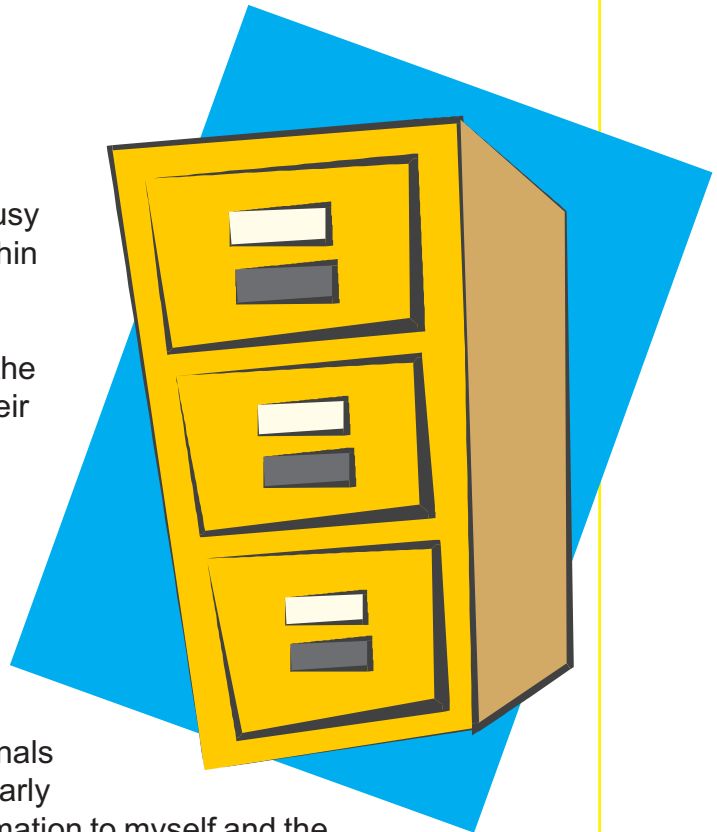
The last two months have proven to be very busy in the Executive Director's office as well as within the sections of the Special Education Division!

Secondary special education teachers, under the direction of Supervisor Cindy Anderson and their special education department chairpersons completed the fall 2004 administration of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in October.

The Executive Committee worked during September to prepare for the annual state audit. This administrative and records review is conducted each year by a team of professionals from the State Department of Education and Early Development. This audit provides crucial information to myself and the Executive Committee relative to policy changes and staff training that may need to take place. By working cooperatively in the audit process, the Anchorage School District Special Education Department ensures that we provide a free and appropriate education to all of our students, including those with disabilities!

***Jerry Sjolander***

Executive Director,  
Special Education  
Anchorage School District



## ***In This Issue...***

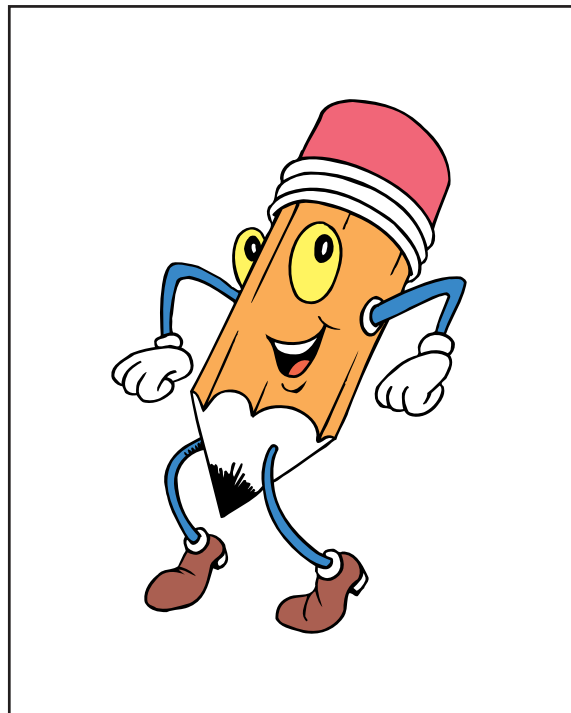
From Jerry's Computer  
Keep in Step - What's Happening with  
Accommodations for Statewide Assessment?  
Leadership Academy Opportunity  
The Local Scene -- Applause to High School  
Level Department Chairpersons and  
Diane Poage/SESSS

## ***Keep in Step - What's Happening with Accommodations for Statewide Assessment?***

The State of Alaska requires statewide assessment of students in grades 3-10. Assessments help identify the educational needs of the student and track how well the schools and the teachers are performing. Assessment of a student with a disability is complicated because a disability can mask a student's proficiency. Overcoming this masking effect can be especially important when a student is in high school, and must pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) in order to receive a high school diploma.

The Department of Education and Early Development has released the 2004 Participation Guidelines. This document is available in pdf format on the DEED website at: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/participation%20guidelines/participationguidelinesfinal.pdf>.

This booklet explains the assessment options available to a student with a disability, and the decisions that must be made by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or section 504 team. The first decision is whether a student is on a diploma track or a non-diploma track. A student who is not on a diploma track is required to participate in a state assessment; this is a special assessment called the alternate assessment.



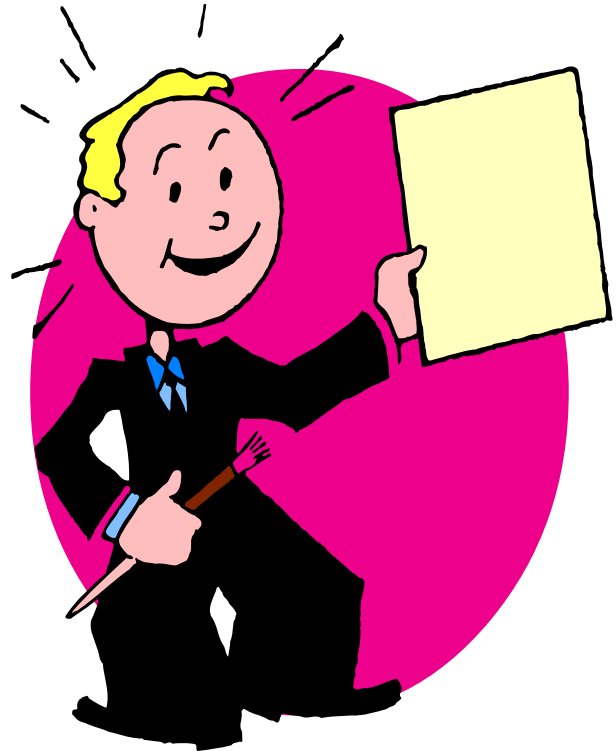
Students on a diploma track will participate in the regular assessments. Decisions must be made regarding how best to accommodate students so that their disability does not mask proficiency during an assessment. In addition, if a student with a disability does not pass the HSGQE as a sophomore in high school, decisions must be made on how to provide the student with an alternative assessment program, which consists of the Modified HSGQE or Nonstandardized HSGQE.

## ***Leadership Academy Opportunity***

The Assessment and Evaluation Division is offering a training on November 15th from 5-8pm entitled "Interpreting Our State Assessment Results". This academy class is designed for teachers, principals, special education and bilingual staff who are interested in learning more about interpreting our state assessments as well as using the information to guide instruction.

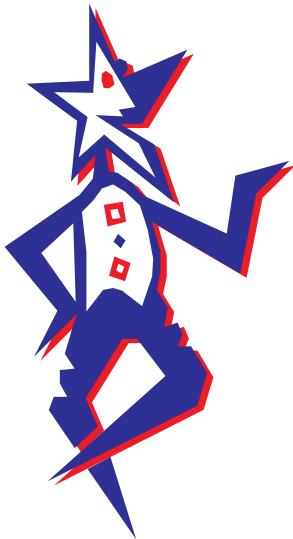
Information will include discussion of the TerraNova/CAT6, Benchmark and HSGQE. The Assessment Reporting System will be covered as well as various reports available on our district and state websites. Participants will be paid a \$75.00 addendum.

Questions regarding this opportunity can be directed to Julia Melson at 742-4886.



## ***The Local Scene***

Tidbits of information about the local happenings!



### **High School Level Department**

**Chairpersons** - great job on arranging meetings with parents to apprise them of the terms of the settlement of State v. Noon! You had so little time and these meetings certainly performed a valuable services to our parents and students receiving special education services!

Great job! to **Diane Poage** and all the Audit Response Team for working with special education administrators and staff throughout the district to complete the data review required for the Level 3 Audit. A short time line and everyone certainly stepped up to the plate and hit homeruns!