



Anchorage School District

Education Center

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March 26, 2018

House Education Committee
Alaska State House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 514
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

As the Superintendent of Anchorage School District (ASD), I am writing in support of House Bill 406. This legislation would provide a phased period in which school districts could plan for school consolidation when experiencing decreased enrollment. Presently, the funding formula for schools does not take into account the needed transition funding to plan for efficient use of facilities and staffing.

House Bill 406 proposes provisions for school districts that will greatly assist with initial consolidations, enabling them to scale down using proven efficiencies, while still providing for the education of students. The present legislation would support districts' expenses for transportation adjustments, staffing changes, and the physical aspects of moving furniture and curriculum as districts engage in school consolidation.

Anchorage has historically provided its maximum allowable funding to support its schools, and school consolidation could save tax money for our city due to reductions in capital costs. The State will benefit as it will support fewer building sites, yet continue to support high quality educational experiences and instruction.

In ASD, we are working diligently to identify and implement efficiencies. Nevertheless, the costliest issue in education relates to staffing and compensation. While the need for teachers will continue, by combining student populations, a smaller number of support staff positions would be necessary. Considering capital and operations is a smart way to plan. Please support Alaska's urban districts by extending the school size factor to allow our district a hold harmless, which will permit us to consolidate schools as well as downsize support services.

On behalf of the Anchorage School Board, we recognize the fiscal realities which you are facing and appreciate your willingness to provide school districts with increased flexibility and discretion in a time of constricting resources. ASD embraces innovation and supports creative solutions. I want to thank you for the opportunity to share my support for your work.

Respectfully,

Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Tam Agosti-Gisler, President, Anchorage School Board

Educating All Students for Success in Life

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