



April 9, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for taking the time to consider Senate Bill 200: Mandatory Physical Activity in Schools. On behalf of NEA-Alaska's 13,000 education support professionals and teachers, I would like to affirm our support for physical activity and physical education during the school day.

A healthy body leads to a healthy mind. Students of all ages benefit from physical activity during the school day – whether in a Physical Education class, a recess period, or a structured activity in the classroom. Numerous studies have shown that physical activity helps students to focus, learn, and be inspired in the classroom.

In addition, childhood obesity is a problem growing to epidemic proportions in the United States. While this is an issue that requires the full involvement of our communities to address – and recognizing the rights and responsibilities of parents when it comes to the health of their children – schools play an important role in making sure students have enough time for physical activity during the school day.

Recognizing also the importance of local control for school boards, we hope that the Department of Education and Early Development would work with school districts to ensure that districts have the flexibility to implement SB 200 without any unforeseen penalties or undue reporting requirements. We support the goals of SB 200, and hope that it will lead to greater health for Alaska's students – not additional paperwork for educators and administrators or additional costs for school districts.

Thank you again for considering SB 200, and for making the health of Alaska's students a top priority.

Sincerely,

Ron Fuhrer

President, NEA-Alaska