

ALASKA STATE HOUSE

SUSTAINABLE

EDUCATION

TASK FORCE

December 31, 2013

Basic Principles

- As made clear in the Alaska Constitution, education is a core mission of state government.
- Alaska believes in local control of education where appropriate, through involvement and direction by local school boards.
- Alaska is facing a challenging fiscal future, which requires new ways of thinking in order to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of education.

Sustainability

- Education is a key to the long-term sustainability of Alaska; the purpose of education is to help ensure that all students will have the opportunity to succeed in their education and work.
- A critical component of achieving sustainability in education is to ensure a sustainable funding stream.

State Strategic Education Plan

- A state education plan shall be developed.
- Hearings shall take place involving the public.
- Develop inter-organizational collaboration for data collection, management, analysis and sharing all relevant aspects of K-20 education.
- Analyze the potential benefit of establishing a state curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure literacy and numeracy.

Funding

- In order to provide for an overall sustainable future for Alaska, current state spending levels must be reduced with a portion of the current revenue stream set aside to provide for future generations.
- Recognizing that education is one of the core constitutional missions of state government, funding for education should be given a priority.
- Alaskans shall be made aware that current education spending is not sustainable.
- Analyze the financial impact on school district budgets of implementing the new Alaska State Standards and assessment, realigning district curriculum, and providing professional development prior to implementation.

Prioritizing Funding

- Within education, spending should be focused first on the operating funds necessary to provide education opportunities for all students.
- Review and align as necessary the DEED and legislative processes for capital expenditures.

New Ways of Thinking

- Achieving a sustainable future will require new ways of thinking.
- Establish regional residential education centers to enhance secondary education.
- Standardize school facilities, with the goal of reducing overall construction and maintenance costs using “recognized best practices”.

New Ways of Thinking (cont.)

- Evaluate the current level of facility cost sharing between the state and localities. Consistent with local control, increased local contribution may not only be necessary but a better way to ensure that facilities are built and maintained efficiently.
- Analyze the potential benefit of school district consolidation and shared services between school districts and other entities.
- Review and eliminate unnecessary regulations.

Flexible Education Delivery

- Invest in technology that is compatible with local infrastructure.
- Expand public choice in education opportunities to include: boarding, charter, virtual, homeschool and neighborhood schools.