
From: Cathy Bolling <lalalaska11@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 18, 2013 12:06 PM
To: Tim Lamkin
Subject: please support SB17

Senator Gary Stevens,

I am writing to urge your support of SB17, reauthorizing the Special Education Services Agency of Alaska as well as calling for increased funding.

14 years ago our daughter was diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum. We live in Craig and one of our first thoughts was HOW will we provide her the services she needs in this small area with so few resources. Fortunately, there were other local parents who had blazed a trail for us and it was not as difficult as we had first thought. We were able to remain in the town we love.

Thanks to SESA, our 16 year old daughter, now a sophomore, has been able to learn and function in the public education system as any other child.

SESA specialists visit her school to provide support to teachers who work with her, including training on her specific disorder. I greatly appreciate that, not only for my daughter's sake, but for those students in the system and yet to come, with similar disorders. Teachers need to have the benefit of this knowledge, rather than wallow in the frustration of not knowing how to get through to these students.

SESA specialists meet with our daughter and when possible, with us. As a team, they work with our family and the school so that there is continuity in our approach to helping our daughter learn and function alongside her peers.

SESA also has an incredible lending library that has saved me hundreds of dollars. Their excellent selection and wonderful service allows me to read (and view DVDs) on my child's disability. If I had had to purchase all of these in order to gain the valuable insight and information in them, it would not have happened. We used SESA materials when explaining our daughter's disability to her. Today, she reads and relates to books written by those her age with her disability, books loaned to us by SESA.

SESA's project, the Alaska Autism Resource Center, AARC, has also been a invaluable support to us. Its offerings include information on statewide training for family members and professionals, a monthly call-in help session for parents and a weekly email entitled "Tip of the Week," to which I subscribe. Topics can range from what to do when first receiving your child's diagnosis, to preparing teens on the spectrum for college.

There will come a time when I will no longer be my daughter's main advocate; she will be. And thanks to the services and materials provided by SESA to our family and to her school, she will be able to do that well. I urge you to support this legislation for this valuable agency and the services it provides to a growing population in need in Alaska.

Sincerely,
Cathy Bolling
P.O. Box 509
Craig, AK 99921
(907)826-3061

From: Patrick Pillai <ppillai@sesa.org>
Sent: Sunday, February 17, 2013 10:24 AM
To: Tim Lamkin; James Ellis
Subject: Fwd: SESA: Letters of support

From: Ron Levy <rlphoto@gci.net>
Date: February 15, 2013 12:49:02 PM AKST
To: Anne Freitag <afreitag@sesa.org>
Subject: Re: SESA: Letters of support

Hello,

I would like to put in a strong word of support for SB17 and HB87.
SESA has been not just INVALUABLE but a SAVIOR for us and my special needs/IEP boy.

They have provided me with a true wealth of resources -- books, DVDs, training, one-on-one help -- under one roof on a moment's notice that have saved my marriage, saved my sanity, and helped my boy slowly climb out of what we once thought was an unimaginable black hole of troubles.

They have helped us avoid unnecessary medical treatments.
They have helped us re-focus our priorities and use positive actions to motivate our boy
They have helped us improve his school academics and social life.

I can go on and on and on. SESA is a service that saves lives, and saves tons of money on medical bills, and tons of time trying to track down and research clinical and subclinical problems that many doctors either aren't willing or able to treat.

The free, accessible information they provide to us as parents and teachers informs us enough to avoid using unnecessary government sponsored programs, once we learn the wealth of interactive techniques available through their kind people and immense library.

Please don't kill this program. Reauthorize these 2 bills.
I am positive you will be saving marriages, relationships, families and, most likely, lives.

Best,
Ron Levy

From: Ron Levy <rlphoto@gci.net>
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2013 12:48 PM
To: Tim Lamkin
Subject: SESA SB17 and HB87

Hello,

I would like to put in a strong word of support for SB17 and HB87.
SESA has been not just INVALUABLE but a SAVIOR for us and my special needs/IEP boy.

They have provided me with a true wealth of resources -- books, DVDs, training, one-on-one help -- under one roof on a moment's notice that have saved my marriage, saved my sanity, and helped my boy slowly climb out of what we once thought was an unimaginable black hole of troubles.

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I can go on and on and on. SESA is a service that saves lives, and saves tons of money on medical bills, and tons of time trying to track down and research clinical and subclinical problems that many doctors either aren't willing or able to treat.

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Please don't kill this program. Reauthorize these 2 bills.
I am positive you will be saving marriages, relationships, families and, most likely, lives.

Best,
Ron Levy

From: Cate Koskey <ckoskey@loweryukon.org>
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2013 12:50 PM
To: Tim Lamkin
Subject: SESA SB17 and HB87 Please Renew Funding For SESA!

Dear Senator Gary Stevens:

Hello and Good Morning. My name is Cate Koskey, and I am a special education teacher in the rural village of Hooper Bay, on the coast of the Bering Sea, and have been for the past 13 years.

The Special Education Service Association has provided an invaluable resource for our students. In our district, since we are so rural, our specialists only see students once per quarter, and less if weather causes travel problems with planes. We have extremely high-need students, many with intense and challenging behaviors and academic struggles. Our school as a whole struggles with academic progress, as we are labeled by the state as an "In Crisis" School, and many of our school and district resources are used to help remedy this academic "crisis". This leaves few resources or methods to help our most struggling students: our students with low-incidence disabilities.

But SESA professionals step in to fill that gap and provide amazing, creative, inventive, and resourceful help. What would I have done the first days of my career as a special educator, when I was faced with two students with vision impairments and teaching students with vision impairment was not part of my previous education, except for the help and care of the SESA vision specialist who came to my village within days of the school year's beginning? I don't know how I would have continued to manage three students with emotional disturbances who were violent and aggressive and were constantly facing suspension, if it had not been for the SESA professional who came to the rescue, with resources and ideas and new ways of thinking about their behavior.

I cringe to think what will happen if SESA is forced to close its doors. The quality of education in rural Alaska for students with low-incidence disabilities will plummet, for sure. Please renew SESA's funding with bills SB17 and HB87!

Thank You --

Cate Koskey, Hooper Bay Elementary Special Education

w: 907-758-1200x2419

c: 907-758-2548

ckoskey@loweryukon.org

skype: catetundramomma

~ " Your self-sacrificing devotion to your purpose in life and your unwavering faith will carry you through times of difficulty." ~

— Martin Luther King Jr, from the Jefferson County Jail, Birmingham, Alabama 1963

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From: Debbie Collins <dcollins@cordovasd.org>
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2013 1:00 PM
To: Tim Lamkin
Subject: SESA SB17 HB 87

I am an paraprofessional in the Cordova School District. It has been brought to my attention that SESA may not get funding to continue its services. Over the years I have worked with many students with special, unique needs. The SESA library and staff has provided me with support materials and much good advice to give my students the very best help. Our school district would never have been able to purchase all the materials I have borrowed from the library. When working with special needs students, it is often trial and error. When one thing does not work, we try something else. I could borrow something, then borrow more. I have kept materials over the summer to be ready for the upcoming year. The legislature originally funded this program and it needs to continue, not just for staff, but more importantly, for the parents of children with downs, autism, and other disabilities. Please take this into consideration, and look at how we can help parents who live with struggles everyday and how we can support them.

Thank you,
Debbie Collins
Cordova

Stephen Bailey

1688 Skyflight Ave • Fairbank, AK 99709 • Phone: 907-474-2886
E-Mail: stephen.bailey@k12northstar.org



Date: February 14, 2013

Senator Gary Stevens
Representative Lynn Gattis

Dear Senator Stevens and Representative Gattis:

I am a special education teacher with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and currently serve the district as an Assistive Technology Specialist. I am also a parent of a blind child who has received important services from SESA (Special Education Service Agency) for the last four years.

I am writing in support of the reauthorization of SESA, as Senate Bill 17 and HB87 are now being heard in legislature. In both of the above capacities the ongoing needs for which SESA exists, and was created, compel me to write this letter requesting continued, or increased, funding. Students with low incidence disabilities in rural Alaska require very specialized services that would otherwise be unavailable without the help of SESA and its specialists. Special Education teachers in the bush also need the specific training and support that SESA provides to serve their students with special needs. Many of these teachers are new or have expertise in areas other than those required for a particular student's FAPE (free and appropriate public education) under IDEA 2004. SESA provides important in-service training across the state.

Personally – even as a member of the more sizable community of Fairbanks – I can testify to the very great importance of the early childhood ILP services we received from SESA for our blind son. Andrea Story, Teacher for the Visually Impaired and an Orientation & Mobility Specialist, was able to provide my wife and me with invaluable information and resources toward an effective early intervention and understanding of our son's disability.

Please consider the needs and purpose for which SESA was created, and continue to fund this important agency.

Sincerely,

Stephen Bailey
Assistive Technology Specialist, FNSBSD
And Parent

From: Monica Doss <mdoss@kuspuk.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 6:41 PM
To: Tim Lamkin
Subject: SESA SB17 and HB87

Please vote for increased funding for SESA with bills SB17 and HB87. SESA employees Belinda Lafleur and Michelle Radin were enormously helpful with my intensive needs elementary students. They both provided individual training for me and my student's aid. They have both been available via email for any consultations about my students. Our school has also borrowed needed audio enhancement equipment and communication devices from SESA--equipment that was needed but the district could not afford to buy. Again please vote for increased funding for SESA. Their help to our school and many other schools and special needs students is invaluable.

Sincerely,

Monica Doss

Special Education Teacher

Joseph and Olinga Gregory Elementary School Kalskag, Alaska

From: mandy evans <evansm@sitkaschools.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 11:49 AM
To: Tim Lamkin; Rep. Lynn Gattis
Subject: SESA SB17 and HB87

Dear Senator Gary Stevens and Representative Lynn Gattis,

I am writing in regards to Senate Bill17 and HB87, which are now being heard in the legislature. It is **critical** that funding for SESA is reauthorized. As a Special Education Director, I want to emphasize the importance of services from SESA in our district -- and the need for continued and increased funding for an agency created, by the legislature, to assist the state in guaranteeing students with low incidence disabilities a free and appropriate public education under IDEA 2004.

In my eight years as an educator in Alaska, as a teacher and now as the special education administrator for Sitka, I have found the expertise and support provided by SESA to be invaluable to students, teachers, paraprofessionals, and families. The training SESA provides in autism and other brain-based disabilities is of the highest quality, and has resulted in significant academic progress for our students. Our district is very fortunate to have talented and experienced special education providers – but we will always require support in providing relevant and effective services to students in our district who experience autism, hearing or vision impairments, multiple disabilities, significant physical/medical challenges, and who are emotionally disturbed.

Two specific and recent examples: This fall, the intervention and consult provided to our team by a SESA specialist in Emotional Disturbance was critical in preventing a student from dropping out of school. This morning, a parent came in to talk with a teacher to specifically thank her for the amazing year her daughter is having; her daughter is a child with autism. When I asked the teacher what changed things from the crisis state of the previous year, she said “SESA!”

SESA has provided in-service training for both special education and general education staff this year in best practices regarding Executive Function and Social Thinking Skills, Accommodations and Modifications in General Education, and Inclusion. The resources that SESA specialists and the SESA library provide are also very important for our teachers, families, and students – including books, technology, and connections to grants for students.

Please continue your support of this essential resource, so that we can continue to provide effective special education services to students in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Mandy Evans

Mandy Evans (907) 966-1253

Special Education Director

Sitka School District

Sitka, Alaska

From: Shirley Harris <shirley.harris@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 1:41 PM
To: Tim Lamkin
Cc: Patrick Pillai
Subject: SESA Funding

TO: Tim Lamkin

I am writing in support of re-authorization of SESA along with a funding increase.

I am a special education teacher in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. I have an endorsement in Low vision/blindness. I have worked closely with SESA in the past nine years here in FNSBSD and in the past 11 years throughout Alaska.

SESA has proven to be an extremely valuable resource providing the following services and funding:

- Teacher training
- Para-professional training
- Care provider training
- Parent training
- Direct instruction to students
- Library media resources/materials
- Federal quota for blind both administration and material distribution
- Dual sensory impaired (blind/deaf) funding and training
- Funding for traveling for Parent to National Conference (CHARGE Syndrome)
- Funding for me to travel to National Conference on Deaf/Blind

The districts throughout Alaska do have Special Education services available, and services are provided to our students. Still, the importance of SESA and the overall expertise provided by Patrick Pillai and his staff is something that is desperately needed throughout our state. Providing services to a “low incidence” population is

a difficult duty. It is critical to have a co-worker or a “go-to” person or group in which to question, brainstorm, and use as a sounding board. SESA provides all of this within a friendly professional cohort.

I find it a privilege to work with this group of dedicated professionals and feel the overall level of service within the state would be greatly impacted in a negative way if funding is eliminated, decreased even not increased.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, I know these are difficult financial times for our state and country. It is critical, however to never forget the ones we are providing services to.

Shirley Harris TVI/COMS

--

Shirley Harris - TVI/O&M
Teacher For Visually Impaired
Orientation & Mobility Specialist
District Wide Tester
(907) 452-2000 Ext. 415
Cell: (907) 978-3529

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From: Wendy Jacobsen <wjacobsen@cordovasd.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 2:03 PM
To: Tim Lamkin; Rep. Lynn Gattis
Subject: SESA SB17 and HB87



CORDOVA SCHOOL DISTRICT

PO Box 1330 * 100 Fisherman Avenue

Cordova, Alaska 99574-0140

(907) 424-3265 * FAX (907) 424-3271

Cordova Jr/Sr High
School
Elementary

Mt. Eccles

(907) 424-
3266
(907) 424-3265

FAX (907) 424-
5215
X (907) 424-3117

FA

February 14, 2013

Dear Senator Gary Stevens and Representative Lynn Gattis,


As a secondary special education teacher in a rural school district like Cordova, I'm writing this letter to encourage the reauthorization of SESA SB17 and HB87.

Special Education Service Agency (SESA) is an important agency for our students and the services they receive. As a rural school district, we do not have direct access to specialist for students with low incident disabilities. Our district, even though small, services students with low incident disabilities and without the support of SESA, I have to wonder if their families would consider living somewhere else so that their child can receive the support needed. I'm so thankful for the level of support SESA provides that allows our families to receive specialized services for their child and can consider Cordova their home.

As a teacher, I rely on the SESA specialist to provide training to our paraprofessional and regular education teacher, provide supplemental material (i.e. social skills curriculums or adaptive technology) and provide input to make transition plans successful for the students. Without the support of SESA, I truly believe our special education services would be incomplete.

I do encourage and hope that you will support the reauthorization of SESA SB17 and HB87.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Jacobsen". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Wendy" and last name "Jacobsen" clearly legible.

Wendy Jacobsen

Cordova Jr/Sr High School Special Education Teacher

From: John Conwell <jconwell@UCSD.net>
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2013 10:48 AM
To: Tim Lamkin
Cc: Patricia McDaid (pmcdaid@sesa.org)
Subject: SESA SB17 & HB87

ATTN: Senator Gary Stevens

SESA provides our district with much needed access to specialists that are otherwise unavailable given our size and location. As a small district, we provide services to students with disabilities from mild to severe. The specialists train our teachers and paraprofessionals while working directly with students to target individualized needs. This currently includes Autism, Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, Multiple Disabilities, and Teacher/ Administrator Mentoring. They also focus on family involvement and building the valuable relationship between school and home. Each site visit from a specialist is concluded with a comprehensive report that guides the teacher and IEP team when considering services and practices for students.

SESA also has resources available for check-out including professional books, student materials, and assistive technology. Most recently we have depended on SESA books and videos to support teacher instruction in American Sign Language. Some students depend on sign as their main form of communication. This support from SESA not only allows for better instruction, but also decreases behavior problems because the students have a means of communicating effectively within their learning environment.

We have seen great progress with our students and SESA has been a large part of that success. I cannot stress enough the importance of continuing funding SESA to assist districts the support needed to guarantee students with low incidence disabilities a free and appropriate public education under IDEA 2004.

Jeannie Schiaffo, principal

Eagle's View Elementary School

Unalaska, AK

Given the remoteness of our district, the limited resources, and many hats instructors and administrators wear, special education can seem like an overwhelming proposition when we receive students with autism, multiple handicaps, hearing deficits, or other categories for which a generic special education teacher may have little more than academic experience. Fortunately, we have SESA with whom we can consult and receive direct services. The SESA specialists provide our district with materials, training, support in developing appropriate programs, and endless collegial support. Our special education program depends on the SESA specialists in order to provide support, knowledge, and expertise. We are grateful to have SESA as a resource.

Marti Rookala, special education teacher

Eagle's View Elementary School

Unalaska, AK

The Special Education Service Agency (SESA) provides indispensable assistance for rural school districts and their students with severe disabilities. Small districts do not have the "economies of scale" that the larger urban districts have with regard to hiring specialists in the fields of autism, severe cognitive delays and traumatic brain injuries. SESA provides experts who work with special educators and the families of severely disabled children to develop specialized programs that enable these children access to the school curriculum and programs. The Unalaska City School District wholeheartedly supports increased funding for SESA and its reauthorization!

John P. Conwell, Superintendent

Unalaska City School District

P.O. Box 570

Unalaska, AK 99685

jconwell@ucsd.net

Phone: 907-581-3151

FAX: 907-581-3152

From: Priscilla Goulding <pgoulding@sisd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2013 8:43 PM
To: Tim Lamkin; Rep. Lynn Gattis
Subject: SESA SB17 and HB87

Dear Representatives,

I am an itinerant special education teacher for Southeast Island School District based in Thorne Bay on Prince of Wales Island. I serve children at six different schools and have had the privilege of working with two SESA specialists. I can't say enough about the high quality of service they have provided for students, families, and teachers in remote sites. So when I heard about the possibility of this terrific organization sunseting soon, I felt compelled to voice my support for continued funding.

While I have wondered from time to time why parents of a child with the low incidence disabilities might choose to live in such small communities without access to services, I have come to realize how safe some of these villages are for kids who are raised by the village and looked out for with caring understanding. SESA has been able to educate teachers, parents and improve the quality of the children's education. Their expertise is far beyond what a special education teacher can bring to the table. They have had training in each specific disability and contribute immensely to the IEP process and to the level of understanding of the school staff who work with the children. The SESA specialists I have worked with have brought books and DVD's out of the SESA library so that parents, teachers, and instructional assistants can learn more after the specialist leaves.

I urge you to support refunding SESA for the future in order to continue to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education for students around the state with low incidence disabilities.

Priscilla Goulding

Bering Strait School District

P.O. BOX 225 • Unalakleet, Alaska • 99684 • (907) 624-3611 • Fax 624-4288

Rebecca Concilus, Director of Special Education

907-624-4278 • rconcilus@bssd.org

BREVIG MISSION • DIOMEDE • ELIM • GAMBELL • GOLOVIN • KOYUK • SAINT MICHAEL • SAVOONGA • SHAKTOOLIK
• SHISHMAREF • STEBBINS • TELLER • UNALAKLEET • WALES • WHITE MOUNTAIN

DATE: February 10, 2013
TO: Tim Lamkin
SUBJECT: SESA SB17 and HB87

I'm writing to support the reauthorization of Special Education Service Agency (SESA).

Bering Strait School District relies heavily on SESA services and support for our students with low incidence disabilities. Due to the remote locations of our schools, we have limited access to services for our most severely handicapped students. SESA has helped fill some of the gaps through consultation, training, distance and on-site support from their experienced staff.

During onsite visits, they not only work directly with students, but also provide training to staff and parents. They help staff develop strategies and provide resources that tailor to individual needs of students.

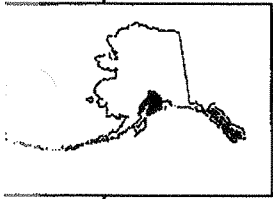
Training and support from SESA are not limited to direct services during on-site visits. Our staff has received in-district, off-site and web-based training on topics related to Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support. We've also been able to access technical support through cameras in some of our schools that allow SESA specialists to give feedback and make recommendations regarding strategies and interventions for students on their caseloads.

SESA services are vital to helping meet the needs of children with low incidence disabilities in our school district and other districts in rural Alaska. I ask that the State reauthorize SESA's statute. I also ask that the State increase funding to allow SESA to sustain their ability to serve special needs students in rural Alaska.

Thank you,



Rebecca Concilus
Special Education Director
Bering Strait School District



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pupil Services Clayton Holland, Director

148 North Binkley Street, Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7553 Phone (907) 714-8881

Fax (907) 262-1374

To: Senator Stevens

From: Mr. Clayton Holland, Director of Pupil Services, KPBSD

Re: SESA

Date: 2/8/13

Dear Senator Stevens:

I am the Director of Pupil Services for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. I am writing you in support of the reauthorization of the Special Education Service Agency. SESA has been a valuable resource to our district when working with students with low incidence disabilities. On several occasions we have asked for their assistance with students that we have struggled to serve effectively. SESA has always been able to help our students and work productively as a team with both our staff and parents. The positive impact that SESA has on students, families, and schools in the more remote locations of the state must be even more substantial than here, where we do have access to more resources.

Respectfully,

Clayton Holland

Clayton Holland
Director of Pupil Services
KPBSD
907-714-8899
cholland@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

Superintendent's Office
(907) 886-6332
FAX: (907) 886-5130

Business Office
(907) 886-6009
FAX: (907) 886-5130

Special Education
(907) 886-6020
FAX: (907) 886-4122



ANNETTE ISLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 7 • Metlakatla, AK 99926
Accredited by Northwest Accreditation Association

Metlakatla High School
(907) 886-6000
FAX: (907) 886-5120

C.R. Leask Sr. Middle
School
(907) 886-6003
FAX: (907) 886-6019

R.J. Elementary School
(907) 886-4121
FAX: (907) 886-4120

Representative Ms. Lynn Gattis
Chair House Education Committee
Attention: Mr. Jim Ellis, Legislative Aide
Alaska State Capitol
Room 420
Juneau, Alaska 99801
February 7, 2013
Regarding: HB85

Dear Honorable Gattis,

This letter is written in support of funding for the Special Education Service Agency, Anchorage, Alaska. The Special Education Service Agency (SESA) has provided quality services to our district since 1986. Throughout those years, SESA has been a consistent force in helping our district meet the needs of our special education students.

The Special Education Service Agency has sent highly qualified specialists that are trained in designing effective programs for students diagnosed as vision or hearing impaired, autistic, emotionally disturbed, and multiply disabled. These specialized programs have allowed our students to access their educational opportunities to the fullest extent possible.

Small school districts that serve low-incidence disabled students would find it challenging to meet the special needs of individual students without the expertise of the Special Education Service Agency, who are specifically trained and qualified to provide assistance to rural districts, such as ours.

As the Special Education Director of the Annette Islands School District, I can attest to the loss we would incur if the Special Education Service Agency would not be granted funding to ensure their existence.

In closing, the Annette Islands School District and our community can only offer our utmost respect and gratitude to Mr. Patrick Pillai, as well as his highly trained staff.

Professionally,

Susan Beardsworth
Director of Special Education

Cc: Mr. Eugene Avey, Superintendent of Schools

From: Patrick Pillai <ppillai@sesa.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 7:21 AM
To: Riley Leonard; Tim Lamkin
Subject: Fwd: Support for SESA extension and funding increase

Bradley/Tim

Below is a letter of support for SESA. Thanks
Patrick

On 2013-02-05, at 4:15 PM, Karla Jutzi <KJutzi@alaskabvi.org> wrote:

A copy of my email is below. Best wishes on success with the Legislature!

Karla

Karla Jutzi, Executive Director

Equipping Alaskans for success

Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

3903 Taft Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99517-3069

Tel: 907-248-7770 Direct: 907.771.4311

www.alaskabvi.org

www.facebook.com/alaskabvi

<image001.jpg>

From: Karla Jutzi
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 4:14 PM
To: 'james.ellis@akleg.gov'
Subject: Support for SESA extension and funding increase

Mr. Ellis,

Please share with Representative Gattis and the Education Committee the strong support of the Alaska Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired for continuation and increased funding of the Special Education Service Agency. Our Center is the only organization in Alaska providing vision rehabilitation. We work with high school youth through senior Alaskans statewide to help them reach their goals for life and work, even after uncorrectable vision loss.

Ten percent of the Alaskans who are blind and visually impaired are youth under the age of 18 – some 1,500 young people statewide. A rural student with this low incidence disability might be the only one or one of a handful in their school district with this special need. SESA provides access to literacy, instruction in independent travel in their community, training for their teachers and assistants to support children's development, and, in partnership with our Center, the appropriate assistive technology to allow them to keep up with their peers.

Alaskans with disabilities already have a more challenging route to employment and life goals than those of us without disabilities. To add to this a failure to provide the support necessary to access an equal education would be unconscionable. SESA plays the indispensable role of making sure Alaskan children with low incidence disabilities have the same shot at education and their ambitions as others.

Thank you for the Committee's consideration of generous support for SESA's good work for Alaska's children.

Sincerely,

Karla Jutzi

Karla Jutzi, Executive Director

Equipping Alaskans for success

Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

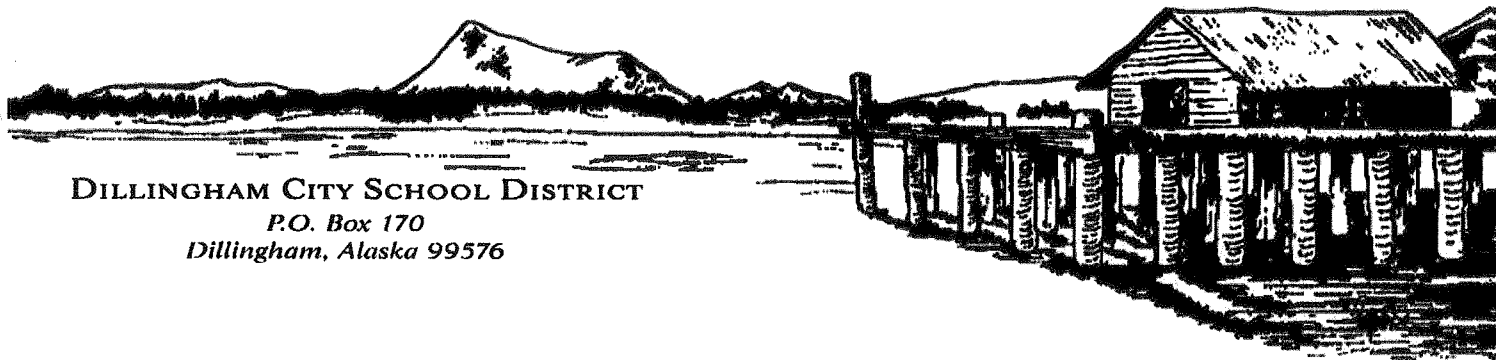
3903 Taft Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99517-3069

Tel: 907-248-7770 Direct: 907.771.4311

www.alaskabvi.org

www.facebook.com/alaskabvi



DILLINGHAM CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

*P.O. Box 170
Dillingham, Alaska 99576*

January 31, 2013

Dear Senator Gary Stevens,

It is indeed a genuine pleasure to submit this letter of support to increase per student funding for the Special Education Services Agency (SESA). As you no doubt know, SESA was established by the Alaska Legislature to help Alaska School Districts meet the unique and diverse needs of students with low-incident disabilities as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

I have been fortunate to be able to request and receive SESA services for over the past 20 years. There have been times as both a classroom practitioner and a school district administrator that I have sought advice and services from SESA, and in all cases found their professional wisdom and responses to my queries to be invaluable.

The need for a special services organization, such as SESA, can best be explained by providing a typical example of what school districts encounter in rural and isolated Alaska villages. Example, Dillingham has five children with autism and four children with Down Syndrome. To locate and retain the services of a qualified professional in autism is quite expensive, and in many cases impossible. We also have a student that is blind and one that is hard of hearing. Dillingham Schools need centralized expertise in a variety of special service fields in order to provide adequate services for special needs children in their school district. SESA provides that expertise. SESA also provides staff training.

In conclusion, Dillingham City School District fully supports the increase in funding. The increase will assure that SESA is able to continue to seek and retain the services of highly qualified professional experts to address the growing demand we have for their.

Thank you for your interest, time and support of SESA. If I can be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Danny Frazier, Assistant Superintendent

Superintendent
Ph: 842-5223
Fax: 842-5634

Central Office
Ph: 842-1046
Fax: 842-3756

Business Office
Ph: 842-3318
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Alternative School
Ph: 842-5023
Fax: 842-5024

Tim Lamkin

From: Tim Stathis <tstathis@aebsd.org>
Sent: Monday, January 21, 2013 4:16 PM
To: Ryan Wilson
Cc: Tim Lamkin
Subject: AEBSD Supporting SB17

Honored Senator Stevens and Members of the Senate and House Education Committees:

I am writing to earnestly convey to you the dire need for SB17 to successfully pass, for SESA funding to continue. SESA's service for our youth in the extremity of remoteness of our region is essential to the fulfilling of my promise to the parents of our Special Needs students, that ALL our students shall be provided an equal opportunity for excellence of education. We have an autistic child in the remote community/island of Akutan. SESA's intervention for this child has been a vital part of the child's development, positive self-esteem, and building identity. SESA support to our Teachers who work with our special needs students has, as well, been vital to our efforts. The costs of travel to Akutan are enormous (r/t ANC-Akutan is approximately \$1800), and these costs have been rising over the years; rising costs has a proportional negative impact on offered services. I therefore encourage increasing SESA's State funding to meet such rising demands (as I understand SESA has been flat funded for 15 years!). We cannot deny our pledge to provide for Alaska's youth no matter how remote the destiny of their upbringing. Please support everything SESA needs to continue with its mission.

Thank you.

Tim

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T. Stathis, Superintendent
Aleutians East Borough School District
Sand Point, Alaska 99661
tstathis@aebsd.org
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c. 907-538-4962
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REC'D 08JAN13

Margaret Kavanaugh

3260 Peninsula Rd

Kodiak, AK 99615

Senator Gary Stevens

305 Center Ave, Suite 1

Kodiak, AK 99615

Re: Re-Authorization of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA)

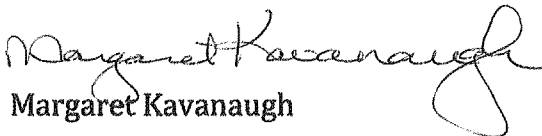
Dear Senator Stevens,

I am writing as a resident of Kodiak, a retired Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD) special education teacher, and as a parent of an adult son with a disability. Over the course of my 23-year career with KIBSD I have consistently worked with specialists from the Special Education Service Agency (SESA), and fully support the reauthorization of SESA. I urge you to sponsor a bill in this regard.

As a special education teacher it is impossible to be knowledgeable in all the content areas necessary to adequately program for a child with a disability. It is even more difficult in areas of low incidence disabilities since every child is unique in terms of their cognitive, sensory, and medical needs. SESA specialists provide a critical service to Alaska's school staff, parents, and communities in this regard. The SESA specialists support teachers and paraprofessionals and create a sense of community by networking staff with resources across the state. This is a critical service to teachers who feel overwhelmed with encountering specific disabilities for the first time. Of extreme value to me as a classroom teacher was the sharing of the specialist's unique skill set honed from working in special education classrooms across the state of Alaska.

I have worked with many SESA specialists over my twenty-three year career and understand the value of their expertise with low incidence disabilities. I fully support legislative reauthorization of the Special Education Agency and urge you to sponsor a bill to reauthorize SESA.

Sincerely,


Margaret Kavanaugh

E-mail: kavanaugh@gci.net

Phone: 907-539-2950