

March 31, 2014

Dear Senator Kelly,

I am writing in support of providing completion funding *via* the capital budget for Boreal Alaska Learning Adaptation Production (BAKLAP).

As the instructional designer for the project's K-20 STEAM Education component, I have seen the direct impacts that BAKLAP has had on the interior community over the past two years. To date, we have led integrative projects and activities with thirty teachers in a dozen FNSB schools. The customized lessons are aimed at meeting the needs of the school, teacher and student body. We have seen dramatic results with student content retention, an outcome furthered through creating peer-teaching opportunities across classrooms.

Teachers have added tremendous value to the activities BAKLAP project staff brings to their school by creating extension activities that hone critical thinking skills. In addition, they have begun to develop independent projects associated with their experiences with BAKLAP. The synergy between BAKLAP staff and Fairbanks North Star Borough School District teachers has allowed students to participate in novel citizen science research about the boreal forest (i.e., predicting sap production in local birch stands as well as investigating competition amongst genetically related trees).

Completion funding would provide the necessary funds to quantitatively evaluate the overall effectiveness of the education model that has been developed. The direction of education in the state of Alaska is at a critical juncture and we hope to provide a contribution that demonstrates the power of integrative learning as well as a model for evaluating learning objectives.

I understand the political climate is currently not ideal for additional expenditures but this program has demonstrated a highly successful model in integrative learning by empowering teachers, challenging students, and engaging community partners. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Zachary Meyers
zjmeyers@alaska.edu