



NEA-ALASKA

Leading Alaska's Public Schools

Leading the Profession



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Statement of purpose: Like all Alaskans, educators want each and every child to have a world class education. As professionals, we are not only accountable for managing, monitoring, and inspiring student learning, but we are also trained experts on evaluating which education reform ideas will most improve schools. Directing Alaska's resources and energy to the following principles will provide the substantial gains in student learning at reasonable cost. Alaska should say YES to these six items:

1. Make every educator a great educator. *It takes time, resources, and support for educators to become highly effective. Mentor and teacher-coach programs are essential for all teachers. Alaska public education should improve its professional development by providing adequate time to accomplish it, and by making it relevant to the specific needs that reflective practitioners identify; and continue to support the growth of collaborative activities and professional learning communities.*

2. Create opportunities for innovative practices. *We want to create opportunities to test practices that advance student learning, including such innovations as peer review programs that are sound and support continuous teacher development.*

3. Increase the amount of time that students spend learning. *We believe distracters such as excessive standardized testing, poor attendance and too many students in the classroom minimize the amount of time students spend learning. We would invite a dialogue that addresses these concerns, and explores other ideas for maximizing student learning such as alternative daily schedules or adding days to the school year*

4. Create a quality teacher evaluation system. *We believe in reasonable accountability systems with multiple measures that help teachers strengthen their knowledge, skills and practice. We welcome relevant and constructive feedback and support that improves instruction. The public has a right to expect us to be accountable, and we embrace that idea as long as it is done in a fair way, and it involves factors within the teacher's control.*

5. Reinforce effective family-school partnering. *We believe that parents have a direct effect on student learning, and should have a rich variety of opportunities to be actively involved in schools. We support family education, advisory boards, and other methods of inviting parents and other local leaders into schools and helping them to become integrated into the learning process.*

6. Deliver a rich and varied curriculum. *We believe that the arts, sciences, physical education and humanities all help students become healthy, creative, and innovative citizens. Schools must have the funding and resources to provide a variety of opportunities for students.*

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