



Anchorage School District

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99504-3135
(907) 742-4000

March 3, 2013

Senator Gary Stevens
State Capitol, Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Stevens,

I am writing to express the support of the Anchorage School District for the intent of Senate Bill 57 to increase support for K-12 education in Alaska.

Section 3 – Notice of Non-Retention of Tenured Employees

ASD is especially supportive of Section 3 which would move the notice of non-retention of tenured employees from March 16th to May 15th.

ASD develops a balanced budget every year by matching staffing levels and expenditures to projected revenues. Projected revenues are developed based on highly likely revenues which typically include the state K-12 education foundation formula. ASD has not built its budget on what *might* be forthcoming from the legislative process that typically concludes in April. As a result, the district has had to issue notices of non-retention in March based on early revenue projections, only to rescind them in May based on the incremental funding that ultimately emerges from the Legislative process. ASD believes that employees are better served by limiting notice of non-retention to those employees who are highly likely not to be retained – a determination made much more certain after revenues from the legislative process can be reliably taken into account by the middle of May.

Section 1 – DEED Promotion of Early Literacy

The Anchorage School District supports the promotion of early literacy to parents of students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade. ASD currently promotes early literacy through a variety of activities, including direct promotion of reading at parent meetings, family nights, literacy nights, parental referrals and the well-known “Battle of the Books” program.

While ASD understands and appreciates that not all districts provide this level of support and promotion of early literacy and that the Department of Education and Early Development may be well suited to support and promote early literacy in those districts, we are concerned that section 1 as currently written does not limit the Department to providing support where it may be needed. To avoid excessive duplication of efforts, ASD would like to encourage consideration of limiting DEED’s literacy promotion mandate to those districts not currently engaged in those activities.

Section 2 – 100% of CPI for Transportation

Section 2 would increase the annual escalation in per pupil transportation program for school districts from roughly 60% of inflation under current law to 100% of the Anchorage consumer price index.

ASD remains concerned that operating expenses are increasing for transportation and other areas without additional funding, despite our strong efforts to curb unreasonable growth. We also recognize that the governor and the legislature may have to restrain spending growth to enable the state to save for years when oil revenue is smaller and that downward adjustments in statutory formulas may be necessary as oil revenues decline. In addition, it is noted that when state oil revenues declined in the 1980s, the transportation program increased and support for direct instruction declined. Increasing the transportation reimbursement rate to 100% of CPI now, while holding the base student allocation at 0% of CPI, may not yield results that are much different.

ASD would like to encourage collective consideration of how the state and school districts can work together to exercise fiscal restraint across all support functions in order to sustain direct classroom instruction over the long term. Along those lines, supporters of education may wish to consider targeting additional transportation support toward initiatives that also expand school choice and improve access for all students to high quality instruction within our existing schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim Browder".

Jim Browder, Ed.D.
Superintendent



FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

520 Fifth Avenue Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-4756 (907) 452-2000

www.k12northstar.org



February 22, 2013

Senator Stevens
State Capitol Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Stevens:

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is supportive of Senate Bill 57. This bill provides for Early Literacy information to be disseminated to parents and guardians of students enrolled in kindergarten through grade three. Providing parents with the tools necessary to assist their child in learning to read is a positive step in preparing for success in school.

Section 2 of the bill calls for a change in the inflator from 1.5 percent to the Anchorage Consumer Price Index (CPI). This will match our Transportation Contract Agreement and will fully fund pupil transportation. This too, is a positive move as it keeps our district from using operating dollars for pupil transportation.

Section 3 changes the effective date for employers' notification of nonretention or layoff to tenured teachers from March 16 to May 15. Currently, school districts are forced to make early decisions and often adopt a conservative approach to notify teachers without having budget information from the state or borough. This bill would enable districts to have a more accurate budget picture and eliminate the need to impact teachers unnecessarily.

We appreciate your introduction of this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Lewis".

Pete Lewis
Superintendent of Schools

cc: FNSB Board of Education

SALLY SADDLER

PO Box 21356

Juneau, Alaska

99802.1356

Email: teal@gci.net

Phone: 907.723.2114

20 February 2013

The Honorable Gary Stevens
Alaska State Senate
Alaska State Capitol, Room 429
Juneau, Alaska 99801.1182

Dear Senator Stevens:

I write in support of SB57 School Literacy, Transportation and Teacher Notices. I am a member of the Juneau School Board and am currently serving my fifth year in this capacity. The opinions in this letter are my own, as our board has not yet had an opportunity to meet and take a position on this legislation.

Thank you for introducing this bill, which contains several low-cost provisions to help improve the work we do in the Juneau Schools.

Our board understands the importance of having students able to enter school ready to learn.


Section 1 of this bill directly addresses our indicator of success that all students enter school ready to learn. We realize that up to third grade students *learn to read*. After that they *read to learn*. Anything that can be done to support parental and community understanding of the importance of early literacy is a winner in my opinion. Further, it can have the effect of saving schools the cost of remedial literacy at later grades.

Section 2 of the bill will address an anticipated shortfall in our pupil transportation account given the current statutory inflation adjustment is fixed at 1.5%. Changing the adjustment to the Anchorage CPI is aligned with our pupil transportation contract.

Section 3 aligns the date for notifying teachers of non-retention to a date after which districts have received the final state budget allocation from the legislature. This means we don't have to over issue lay-off notices while estimating what the legislature will actually fund. While it may be perceived as controversial by some unions, I believe it actually has the potential to minimize unnecessary reductions and disruptions of people's livelihoods. The section 5 effective date ensures no current contract would be retroactively subjected to this provision.

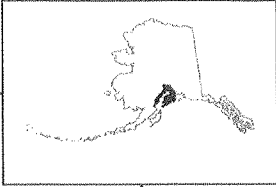
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,



Sally Saddler

Cc: Members of the Juneau School Board



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Superintendent

Dr. Steve Atwater, Superintendent of Schools
148 North Binkley Street Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7553
Phone (907) 714-8888 Fax (907) 262-9132

February 18, 2013

Senator Gary Stevens
State Capitol Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stevens:

I am writing on behalf of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) to support Senate Bill 57 as introduced. I will address each of the bill's three sections and offer reasons for my support.

Section I proposes to revise AS 14.03 by requiring the Department of Education and Early Development to provide parents of students in kindergarten through third grade with information on early literacy acquisition including strategies for intervention. KPBSD is pleased to see this new layer of parental support. As you know, academic success hinges on literacy acquisition; this amendment will help to ensure that this is the case for all of Alaska's children.

Section II of the bill amends AS 14.09.010 to annually adjust the per student amount for student transportation by the amount of change to the Consumer Price Index. This is a welcome and necessary addition for KPBSD.

Section III of the bill amends AS 14.20.140 by extending the date of tenured teacher contract notification from March 15, to May 15. This change will provide KPBSD more time to react to a shortfall in revenue. Further, it will allow the district to extend its period of teacher evaluation. Finally, it should be noted that the change in date does not preclude the district from offering a contract to a tenured teacher prior to May 15. I suspect that the majority of such contracts would not be held until May.

Please let me know if I can provide more information on why KPBSD supports SB 57. I view the proposed changes as positive for KPBSD and for all Alaska districts.

Sincerely,

Steve Atwater, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Nunamiut Wolves Amaġut

Nunamiut School
P.O. Box 21029
Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska 99721
(907) 661-3226
FAX (907) 661-6215

Atqasuk Eagles Tinmiaqpait'ch

Meade River School
P.O. Box 91030
Atqasuk, Alaska 99791
(907) 633-6315
FAX (907) 633-6215

Barrow Whalers Aġvīqsīuqtit

Barrow High School
P.O. Box 960
Barrow, Alaska 99723
(907) 852-8950
FAX (907) 852-8969

HMS Wolves Amaġut

Eben Hopson, Sr., Memorial Middle
School
P.O. Box 509
Barrow, Alaska 99723
(907) 852-3880
FAX (907) 852-7794

Arctic Foxes Tiġiqanniāt

Fred Ipalook Elementary School
P.O. Box 450
Barrow, Alaska 99723
(907) 852-4711
FAX (907) 852-4713

Kiita Snowy Owls Ukpiit'ch

Kiita Learning Community
P.O. Box 169
Barrow, Alaska 99723
(907) 852-9677
FAX (907) 852-4334

Kaveolook Rams Imnait'ch

Harold Kaveolook School
P.O. Box 20
Kaktovik, Alaska 99747
(907) 640-6626
FAX (907) 640-6718

Nuiqsut Trappers Naniġiaqtuqtit

Trapper School
P.O. Box 89167
Nuiqsut, Alaska 99789
(907) 480-6712
FAX (907) 480-6621

Tikiġaq Harpooners Kapuqtit

Tikiġaq School
P.O. Box 148
Point Hope, Alaska 99766
(907) 368-2662/2663
FAX (907) 368-2770

Kali Qavviit'ch

Kali School
P.O. Box 59077
Point Lay, Alaska 99759
(907) 833-2311
FAX (907) 833-2315

Alak Huskies Qimuktit

Alak School
P.O. Box 10
Wainwright, Alaska 99782
(907) 763-2541
FAX (907) 763-2565



February 20, 2013

The Honorable Gary Stevens
Alaska State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stevens,

We are writing today to strongly support SB57 as introduced in the Senate last week. The first section requiring the provision of information to kindergarten through grade three parents is straightforward.

The second section, which will set the Anchorage CPI as the adjustment for Pupil transportation reimbursement is vitally important to sustaining safe pupil transportation here in the arctic. We want to thank you personally, Senator Stevens, for keeping instructional funds in the classroom by fixing the Pupil Transportation Reimbursement Program.

The third section simply moves the notice of non-retention of tenure from March 16th to May 15, which improves our ability to complete the current school year yet deal with personnel issues. Concomitantly, Section 5 is the applicability section that applies to section three because the change in statute cannot break current contractual agreements, and thus we support it as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you have in regards to the North Slope Borough School District. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Cowan".

Peggy Cowan
Superintendent

Cc: Senator Donald Olson
Representative Benjamin Nageak
Representative Lynn Gattis

Letter No. 13-136

Box 169 Barrow, Alaska 99723 (907) 852-5311 Fax (907) 852-9503