

**From:** [Michele Galla](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Senate Finance Committee Members FY2016 Budget  
**Date:** Saturday, March 28, 2015 12:38:12 PM

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Dear Senate Finance Committee Members:

Within the last few years, I've seen the Alaska Learning Network grow from a startup program with a few dozen students to a statewide success currently serving several hundred students in 47 districts. I realize this time is a time of budgetary challenge, but please consider the educational opportunities AKLN provides across the entire state:

- In the 18 months since AKLN has been managed by UAS with supervision from DEED, **student participation has grown by 119%** and completion rates have increased to 83%.
- AKLN currently successfully delivers a vast assortment of **107 courses to several hundred students in 47 school districts** across Alaska. These are classes for credit recovery, AP and honors college credit, dual credit, professional development, career readiness and training, fine arts, foreign languages, and other electives.
- Students receive full support in these courses from **Alaskan certified teachers and trained local mentors**, and are **backed by experienced Alaskan counselors**, who all together as a network aid student achievement.
- Cutting this far-reaching program, as the Subcommittee recommends, would impact students and schools across the state, though **the cost for the entire program is less than one tenth of one percent** of Alaska's education budget.

**If anything, Alaska's current budget challenge proves we need AKLN.** AKLN provides multiple ways for rural AND urban districts to give students a whole spectrum of individualized educational options. AKLN enables students across the state to have equity in education; it enriches students' opportunities, provides them with credit recovery, engaging electives, college credit, and pathways to career success. AKLN is becoming a one-stop shop for educational needs across the state.

Furthermore, to put it bluntly, it's time to stop being fickle. It's time to end our state's history of trying various statewide education distance delivery programs only to abandon them a few years later. We need visionary legislators who understand what AKLN can do, who know growth for distance learning in a geographically immense state, with many remote and isolated communities, is a worthy investment of resources and time. So far AKLN's engendered exponential growth, and is on the way to enduring success, but the program will soon be gone without your help.

Sincerely,

Michele Galla

Wrangell, Alaska