

My name is Amy Jo Meiners, I am honored to be the 2016 Alaska Teacher of the Year. I was born and raised in Alaska, and I remember a time before oil when my grandparents and parents had the opportunity to contribute state taxes to fund a quality public education and other important health and safety services. When oil monies first came along they were able to supplant the need for our taxes, and a quality public education and other services could still be funded. Now, oil monies have dwindled and a quality public education is in jeopardy without stable funding. I urge you to give my generation the same opportunity to support services as my grandparents once had – allow me the chance to pay to support a quality public education. Please work to stabilize our multiple funding sources so that Alaska can continue its service to families for health, safety, and education. Given federal changes now, it is a crucial time for Alaska to invest in our children and our families. I am asking you to focus on revenue sources and quality, comprehensive services for the education, health, and safety of our children and families. The other day, one of my students, Jack, found in his research that NASA considers Apollo 13 to be their most successful failure. It led us into a conversation about when is a failure a success and when is it a failure? If you do nothing to stabilize funding, I believe it will be a great failure for Alaska on a galactic scale. However, you have the opportunity to turn this current economic state of failure into a success by choosing to focus on alternate funding sources and providing quality public education, health, and safety services that Alaskans can be proud of. Turn this economic downturn into the most successful failure it can be by stabilizing funding and supporting the public education and health of all Alaskans. Please bring out the creative thinking of the Apollo 13, as Jack and the rest of us need you to be successful! Stabilize funding. Support education.

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