

**From:** [Stefanie Wolter](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Department of Education Budget  
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I am concerned about the money allocated to the Department of Education. I feel that the any cuts to this department directly or to the schools would be a mistake that would play out in the years to come. Please consider the following:

If Department of Education positions are cut, those employees will probably leave the state. The money they spent in the state will not be replaced. They will probably not return to the state, nor will their children.

If the Department of Education positions are cut, there will be less support for students and teachers. Less support means less opportunities for achievement. I thought the whole point of education was so that students could achieve.

If the Department of Education positions are cut, then nationally Alaska will be less represented and it will be harder to draw talent to the State.

If the Department of Education budget is cut, there will be less support for students. At one time it was important to the State of Alaska that ALL students had an opportunity to learn regardless as to where they lived or their ability. It seems like the diversity that Alaskans have held so close to their heart, has been forgotten by the legislature. At a local level, I am watching the students in my daughters' classes have less and less opportunity to learn, at a time when they are very interested in learning.

I'm not sure when Education became a target for budget cuts. I'm not sure what your experiences were in school, but if you have children or grandchildren in Alaska public schools you should realize that their experiences are lacking. If you want to find a fix for the Alaska state budget, maybe you should consider that cutting the Education budget is counterproductive. Only through the students in K-12 and post-secondary will the answers come. Maybe right now, as you cut the education budget you might be cutting the one person who motivates a teacher, who in turn motivates a student, who in turn could have come up with a working solution.

It might sound dramatic, but I am sure that most of you have had one teacher who motivated you. Or your spouse did. Or your child did. Or your grandchild did.

If you want the State to get stronger, build a strong base. The base is education.

Thank you,

Stefanie R. Wolter

Parent of a first grader and sixth grader who has already seen the education budget cut since the five years we have been here and who is scared of what the future holds for their learning if we stay in Alaska for the next five.

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