

March 31, 2015

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I know the budget situation is dire this year and I do not envy the choices you must make. I urge you to reconsider funding for early childhood. Cutting funding to zero is incredibly short sighted as costs to K-12 education will increase within a few short years. While preschool is an admirable goal that we should strive for as a state, I think our limited resources should be used to impact a larger number of families. Programs like Imagination Library and Parents As Teachers reach a broad audience at a low cost. Best Beginnings provides a great framework to support this work as well as many other projects that impact entire communities. Parents are a child's first and most important teacher, but they need support and so many live isolated from family, please keep this in mind as you deliberate.

In addition, I hope that some thought is being put into avoiding this situation in the future. There must be a way to diversify Alaska's economy so that the price of one commodity does not bring Alaska's progress crashing to a halt. My daughter enters kindergarten this fall and I am anxious that she will not be able to receive the high quality public education that I received in Fairbanks.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Emily Vockeroth

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