



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Deena M. Paramo

Mission: Mat-Su Borough School District prepares students for success

March 31, 2015

RE: Testimony for Senate Bill 79

Good Afternoon Senator Dunleavy and Committee Members. My name is Dr. Deena Paramo, Superintendent for the Mat-Su Borough School District and I am speaking to you today in support of Senate Bill 79.

For years the Mat-Su Borough School District has accessed the extensive experience and expertise of retired employees and educators by allowing for temporary and part time employment opportunities. However, our efforts to capitalize on such a talented and veteran workforce have been severely limited without a provision to allow for the unrestricted re-employment of retirees such as SB 79.

As I understand the proposed Bill, districts would be permitted to essentially enter into an at-will employment agreement with a retired teacher or administrator so long as that individual has been retired for three months. Current protections and benefits such as tenure, sick leave, retirement, and health insurance would not be offered or required as the nature of the employment relationship with a retired individual is so different. Though some of these limitations are not clearly identified in the proposed Bill, we would support their explicit restriction as well as ensuring that the benefits of this Bill exist well into the future by also allowing the rehire of retirees under the new defined contribution plan.

I want to assure the committee that the re-employment of retired teachers is not pursued in Mat-Su to avoid the hire of new teachers. Retirees fill gaps when properly certified staff cannot be hired in hard to fill areas, they provide temporary or short term expertise for special projects or initiatives, and they give needed support during high demand times of the year such as during summer months, the start of the school year, or during assessment periods. We are encouraged by the possibility of being able to hire retired teachers rather than contract agencies to more effectively and efficiently fill these needs.

One of the most attractive aspects of SB 79 is the potential savings our district could experience. Again, because certain costs, most notably retirement and health insurance, would not need to be provided to retirees, there are significant savings that could be re-directed back to the classroom environment or even used to hire other new classroom teachers.

On behalf of the Mat-Su Borough School Board, we recognize the fiscal realities that you are facing and appreciate your willingness to provide school districts with increased flexibility and discretion in a time of constricting resources. Mat-Su embraces innovation and supports creative solutions. We are encouraged by the concept proposed in SB 79 and see that it has the potential to offer great benefits to our district. I want to thank you for the opportunity to share my support and the support of the Mat-Su Borough School Board and I welcome any questions you may have at this time.