

Norm Wooten <nwooten@asb.org>

Good Afternoon Chair Ortiz and members of the House Finance Education Subcommittee. My name is Norm Wooten and I'm the Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards. I would like to speak against the amendment (Rep Talerico) to eliminate the \$250,000 to support the Best Practices Initiative.

- DEED is beginning a process to "reinvent " education with *Alaska's Education Challenge* referenced by the Governor in the State of the State message.
- That process will see five committees looking at every facet of the system: Improve Student Learning, Ensure Excellent Educators, Modernization and Finance, Inspire Tribal and Community Ownership, and Promote Safety and Well-Being.
- There will be State Board members chairing each committee which will be made up of Alaskans from across the state.
- With the severe budget reductions in DEED (37%) they will be hard pressed to execute any planning to improve education.
- A portion of the funds will used to help districts collaborate and bring the best of education to other districts.

This appears to be a good investment in our education system and begin to do exactly what the Legislature has been requesting of the department.

Thank you

Norm Wooten

Association of Alaska School Boards

From: Sean Dusek [<mailto:SDusek@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>]
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2017 1:22 PM
To: Rep. Daniel Ortiz <Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov>
Subject: DEED budget amendments FY18

Hello,

I apologize for not calling in for the public testimony today in regards to the Department of Education and Early Development FY18 Operating budget amendments. I do want to express my concern on the amendment eliminating the Best Practices Initiative. As we try to modernize our educational system, this program will be necessary to move our state forward to deliver a high quality education for all of our students. The department cannot become a simple compliance office. They should be a clearinghouse for districts to connect with each other, have shared services promoted/provided and support teacher improvement opportunities. The University of Alaska has pledged to develop our state's teacher needs within a few years. In the meantime, programs like the best practices initiative will bridge the development gap. Many district's simply do not have the capacity to develop their teachers or attract high quality teachers. This program supports their efforts.

In looking around the country, a common component of the highest performing states is a high quality, visionary, and highly supportive Department of Education. By continuing to "gut" the department, we are actually driving districts further apart, stunting the culture of continuous improvement in our state's educational system, and narrowing opportunities for our students through a compliance driven atmosphere.

I sincerely hope that our legislature will look to support the vision and efforts of continuous improvement from our Department of Education. They are the ones who can connect, support, and ensure efficiencies through collaboration of all our school districts if given adequate resources.

Respectfully,

Sean Dusek
Superintendent
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President, Alaska Association of Superintendents
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