



FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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February 23, 2017

The Honorable Bryce Edgmon
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 208
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Speaker Edgmon:

As superintendent of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, I strongly support Governor Walker's recent legislation to fund and implement measures that would make Alaska compliant with the REAL ID Act of 2005. I respectfully request the State Legislature take prompt action to enact this bill.

Not having a state identification option that meets the REAL ID Act requirements will impact our students, our families, and our employees.

Our school district includes three schools on Eielson Air Force Base and one school on Ft. Wainwright that serve about 1,400 students, over 10 percent of our district students. Most of those students are military-connected, but many are not. For decades, civilian students from Moose Creek, Salcha, and the North Pole area have attended schools located on Eielson Air Force Base. I experienced this myself, growing up in Salcha and graduating from Ben Eielson High School.

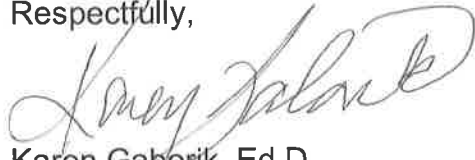
This arrangement requires a process to provide families from the surrounding communities access their students' schools. In the past, a valid Alaska ID has been sufficient. Without a REAL ID Act compliant state identification option, families won't be able to attend a school concert, participate in parent teacher conferences, or pick up a sick child without a passport or passport card. I am deeply concerned about the potential barrier this situation would create between civilian parents and their children attending on-base schools.

I am also apprehensive about the potential impact on our district employees. All school site employees and districtwide staff who visit those schools to deliver instruction, student support services, and staff support, will need to have a REAL ID compliant identification. The additional identification requirements will also impact the ability to attract needed substitute teachers, nutrition services staff, and custodial staff to serve those schools. We already struggle to fill absences at our schools on Eielson due to the distance from town and additional obstacles will exacerbate the situation.

We support the increased security measures taken to ensure our military members' safety and we need to adapt to those changes while preserving a continued sense of community and maintaining excellent service to our students. Providing a REAL ID Act

compliant state identification is an important part of sustaining the strong and long-standing bonds between our local communities and our military population. I urge the Legislature to pass the Governor's bill to bring Alaska into compliance with the REAL ID Act of 2005.

Respectfully,



Karen Gaborik, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Governor Bill Walker
Representative Chris Tuck
Representative Charisse Millett
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Adam Wool
Representative Chris Birch
Representative DeLena Johnson
Representative Gary Knopp
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Chuck Kopp
Representative Neal Foster
Representative Paul Seaton
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Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Scott Kawasaki
Representative Dan Ortiz
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Representative David Talerico