

Jenny Martin

From: Debbie Cary <debbiecary@live.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2017 5:06 PM
To: Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Louise Stutes
Cc: Patti Tilbury Ninilchik School; Jeff Ambrosier; manderson; pvadla; wholt; jarness; tnavaree; djones; lhohl; dtressler@kpbsd.k12.ak.us; dcastimore@kpbsd.k12.ak.us; millg@kpbsd.k12.ak.us; jkelly@kpbsd.k12.ak.us
Subject: Proposed cuts in funding on the Kenai Peninsula
Categories: Jenny

Dear Senators and Representatives of the Kenai Peninsula

It has always been my believe that living in small town Alaska is one of the most gratifying places to grow up and raise a family. We offer a community of support. Everyone knows everyone and the greatest thing is we care about one another. The caring crosses multi generations and extends well past the normal caring, like when there is a death or a major catastrophe. For small town Ninilchik it's an everyday caring. We care if people have food on their table, we care if the kids have warm clothes, we care if the Elders of our community have someone to talk to. At least that is what I have believed over the past 26 years. I have had the awesome and humbling opportunity to live in Ninilchik, Alaska. Growing up in a large city and moving every couple of years, I never had that kind of support. But what I have discovered is we care so much sometimes it hurts. It hurts deep in our hearts. It hurts even more when our children don't receive what they need to be successful.

Children are our future. I have always believed "The least we can do for our Children is to Love them". Part of loving the children is giving them the opportunity to learn, to grow, to become the finest they can. Children dream of a better future for all. Our mission statements says it all.

Ninilchik School Mission Statement: To develop in partnership with educators, parents, and community, enduring learners committed to academic, social, and personal excellence.

For children to succeed they need us to BELIEVE in them. It is our responsibility to teach each individual child how to learn. We need to light the "spark" in each of our children, TEACHERS make that difference. Children are not just numbers, they are the future, they are the problem solvers, they are the greatest asset this state has. The most important crucial element of a young person's life is EDUCATION.

At this point in time the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is looking at cutting funding, along with the State of Alaska. There are many factors as to why the funds are being cut. The bottom line is Ninilchik, and other K-12 schools, stands to lose. Ninilchik will lose our interventionist based on some obscure, one size fits all formula. The interventionist is the first line of defense to ensure every student is performing at grade level. Ninilchik has reached a point where we no longer have 75 students in grades K-8. Yet, we are a Title 1 funded school with a poverty rate over 45%. Let that sink in for just a minute. With a projected student population of 113 for next year, we know over 45%, or 51, of those students live under the poverty rate. What does poverty mean in our community and many small communities in Alaska?

The World Bank Organization describes poverty in this way:

“Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time.

Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So, poverty is a call to action -- for the poor and the wealthy alike -- a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities.”

Hear OUR VOICES! There is a direct correlation between poverty and overall student success. Our Students deserve a chance, we all know the younger we can intervene the more likely we are to have a positive outcome in the child’s education. No child should fear the future. No child should be denied an education.

Losing a full-time teacher, in addition to the interventionist, would mean NO STUDENT would be able to graduate with a teacher in front of them for every class. Every High School student would be required to take two online classes. Ninilchik would not be able to offer highly qualified teachers in every subject. We have a declining enrollment in part since we no longer offer a variety of experience for our students. So, this turns into a catch 22 situation, we must determine what is more important, The numbers or the Students?

The mission of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is to develop productive, responsible citizens who are prepared to be successful in a dynamic world. Let’s help them succeed. Fund education. Benjamin Franklin said “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest”. It is time we stop looking at numbers and start looking at people. Invest in our future, Invest in our Children.

Sincerely,

Debbie V. Cary

Jenny Martin

From: Jennifer Meyer <jameyer2@alaska.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 12:47 PM
Subject: Copy of my letter sent to the Governor - Why cutting Public Health Centers/Nursing is a bad idea

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

February 15, 2017

Dear Policymakers,

In Governor Walker's third state of the state address the following:

“By the end of this year, we will have closed seven trooper posts; six public health centers; three maintenance stations; one correctional facility; two youth detention facilities; multiple job centers; and a fire training facility,” Governor Walker said. “We can’t keep cutting the budget and expect to improve our situation. Alaskans demand – and deserve – better.” Along with center closures, the public health nursing workforce who actually live and work in the communities they serve was reduced by thirty positions and the budget cut by 25%. Constituents have complained to their representatives about the closures and cuts in services, but it appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

I agree with the Governor we can’t keep cutting our way out of the fiscal disaster. Cutting public health centers is a particularly bad idea and here is why.

I could launch into a lecture on cost saving, show you statistics, and remind you of your sworn statutory obligations, but instead let’s review a short story.

This story is designed to help you understand the difference between Public Health and Health Care.

“People are being swept downstream by a river's raging water.

The crowd on shore works to pluck them out of the rushing

water, but many are missed and swept away.

Some of the rescue group decided to pull out those that could not swim first. As the rescue group continues it's never ending battle, a few hike upstream to see what is causing people to fall into the river in the first place.

They identify the root cause of the problem (people crossing a dangerous river without a bridge), come up with a solution (build a bridge), and put the solution into action.

As a result: people stop falling into the river. They are no longer at risk and there is no need to focus all the resources on pulling people out of the river one at a time.”

This parable is standard in the health sciences to help illustrate the difference between public health and health care. If you haven't already guessed the individuals looking UPSTREAM are your public health professionals and those working DOWNSTREAM are your traditional health care providers and rescue professionals. **We need BOTH.** You can't have a healthy population without BOTH public health and health care systems working in collaboration.

Think of public health centers as your population health and disease detectives. Not only do they offer health education on healthy diets, safety, and suicide prevention, they also work to prevent and control communicable diseases like measles, whooping cough, STD's, TB, and respond to outbreaks. Additionally, they work on challenging social issues like drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, domestic violence etc.

Now, take an issue like opioid addiction. Restrictions on opioid prescriptions have led to more people seeking heroin and unfortunately this drug is often cut with highly potent fentanyl leading to more overdoses. Walker just declared a state of disaster regarding the opioid epidemic and narcan kits are being distributed (via public health centers to community partners) which reverse the opioid action during an overdose event. This is an excellent example of a downstream intervention

But, where does that individual go when resuscitated, who pays the hospital costs, are there enough rehab beds, after discharge where do they go? The public health professional is trained to prioritize UPSTREAM

interventions and work with community partners to ask what are the causes and conditions of addiction, how can we prevent addiction, how can we identify early signs or risks of addiction and how can we coordinate groups already working on these issues? What are the root causes of the current crisis and how can we mobilize most effectively and not duplicate efforts? Now, eliminating the UPSTREAM action, as the Alaska Legislature wants, will clearly result in endless expensive DOWNSTREAM demand, negative consequences, and ever increasing costs for all Alaskans.

Join me in defending Public Health in Alaska. It is simply the fiscally responsible thing to do.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Meyer RN, MPH CPH

Past President of the Alaska Public Health Association

--
Jennifer Meyer RN, MPH, CPH
Assistant Professor of Allied Health
Allied Health Department Co-Chair
Expanded Access Allied Health Programs
UAF College of Rural and Community Development,
Kuskokwim Campus <http://www.bethel.uaf.edu/>
Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KuskokwimCampus>
email: jameyer2@alaska.edu
twitter: @JenniferMeyer6

For more information about e-learning and community-based Allied Health Programs, please contact me directly or visit: elearning.uaf.edu

Jenny Martin

From: Rep. Paul Seaton
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2017 4:06 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: RE: Alaska Scholarship Program Funding

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: Mitchell Hrachiar [mailto:mrh@alaska.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 15, 2017 8:33 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Cc: Jenny Martin <Jenny.Martin@akleg.gov>
Subject: FW: Alaska Scholarship Program Funding

Finance Committee,
The attachment is for dissemination, please contact me if you have any questions or additional items for debate.

Mitchell Hrachiar
Box 27, Homer, 99603

Mitchell Hrachiar
PO Box 27
Homer Alaska, 99603
235-5258 (H)

RE: Alaska Performance Scholarship Program Student Funding

Dear Representative,

Once again our Alaskan legislature will decide the fate of student education funding. An item of my concern is the Alaska Performance Scholarship Program, a program that provides financial tuition for students wishing continuing education at a college or trade school. Those students who have a higher Grade Point Average (GPA) will receive a higher scholarship funding. It is no secret that students of a higher social and economic status will have higher GPA's. I am not against this program, however all students who may decide to further their education should receive the same and equal financial support regardless of status. These students as young adults should start life on an even keel free adverse social parameters out of their control.

I trust that the Alaskan Legislatures will evaluate this thesis for consideration.

Mitchell Hrachiar
Greater Homer Area

-----Original Message-----

From: Mitchell Hrachiar <mrh@alaska.net>
Date: Monday, February 13, 2017 at 9:13 PM
To: <Senator.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Berta.Gardner@akleg.gov>,

<Senator.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Les.Gara@akleg.gov>

Subject: Alaska Scholarship Program Funding

>Please see attachment

>

>Best Wishes,

>Mitch Hrachiar

>Box 27

>Homer, AK

>99603