

Operating  
Budget Public  
Testimony  
Early Childhood  
Education

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Kristin Riall <kristin.riall@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2017 12:31 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Head Start Funding

Thank you for taking the time to listen to Alaskans about their priorities. I'm writing to express my concern about funding cuts to early childhood education programs.

As a special education teacher in rural Alaska, I have seen how Head Start and Early Head Start are crucial to the academic success and college/career readiness of disadvantaged Alaskans, particularly those who also experience disability. Early intervention has been demonstrated to be one of the most effective ways to improve outcomes for youths with conditions like Autism Spectrum Disorder and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Cutting funding for these programs will only lead to increased cost of care later, when interventions are more difficult and less likely to be effective.

Thank you again for your time.

Best regards,  
Kristin Riall, Ph.D.  
Special Education Teacher

## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Deborah Trowbridge <hs.pd@kawerak.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2017 12:28 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Carol Piscoya  
**Subject:** Pre-K Funding

Dear Finance Committee,

I have been a foster parent in Nome over the past six years and have enrolled four foster children in the Nome Head Start or Early Head Start Program. The Head Start program offers a safe place for foster children to socially/emotionally and academically grow with other children their age. Head Start helped me and other parents get our children's well child and immunizations up to date. After my foster children left my care, they continued participating in Head Start when they transitioned back into their homes or new placements. Head Start provided stability for my foster children when so many other things in their lives were not stable.

Nome Public Schools receives Pre-K funds and provides 3 certified teachers in the Nome Head Start and the Nome Preschool (approximately 80 children). The Pre-K funds we receive in Nome contribute to the entire Kawerak Head Start being able to fully staff 18 classrooms and provide jobs to 100 people in our region which includes the 11 rural communities of Brevig Mission, Elim, Gambell, Golovin, Koyuk, Nome, Saint Michael, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Teller and White Mountain. Up to 280 children benefit from Pre-K funds.

Please consider how the finance committee can meet the obligation to meet the needs of our children and families in the Bering Straits Region.

Deb Trowbridge

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Emily Agloinga <hs.wmo3@kawerak.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2017 11:18 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** i testify

This is Emily one of the Teacher Aide's. I am currently working on my CDA and having my high hopes that I can finish this and becoming a teacher to the young children that we look at as our future.

I strongly believe our early head start and head start is really important to our young children. when they become of an age to start pre-school this is a big open door of learning for them, they explore many and different ways of learning and looking at the word in there way. this opens there minds and have them ready for kindergarten. head start is so important for children, we teach them safety, being healthy, physical, cognitive, communication, creativity, self, social and guidance. we work with families though out the head start years. we also work on our professionalism of teaching. head start is vary important to the children because we get them ready for kindergarten. we teach our children the basics of learning from writing their names, counting, lettering, days of the week, colors ect! cause once they get up to kindergarten and find out what they are learning the kids are going to be more confident of learning, they are going to think HEY I remember this! I learned this from head start!!! I know this!!! you know!!! this sets up their minds for kindergarten. cause if we do get the cut boy oh boy the kindergarten teachers are going to have a hard time teaching our children. this will be a longer teaching for them if we do not have our head starts and early head starts. we need our early head start and head start, this education for our young children is important for learning and for them to be ready for kindergarten. this is going to be heart hurting if our education is going to be cut fully. I mean come on man!! there's already so many cuts that might or are going to happen WE DO NOT NEED OUR EDUCATION to be cut even more!!!

Emily Agloinga  
Teacher Aide  
WMO 99784  
E: kawerak/hs.wmo3  
P: 907-638-2019

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Richard Steele <steeler@me.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 2:11 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Support blend of income tax, reducing oil credits and PFD

Dear Friends,

I am a long-time Alaskan and retired school teacher. I support an income tax, reduction of oil tax credits and capping or eliminating the PFD (or means testing it) to meet our budget obligations.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Steele  
1507 2nd St.  
Douglas, AK 99824

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** richard carlson <richardcarlson1040@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 1:48 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Spending

Dear Members of the Finance Committee: Thanks you for taking a strong stand to reduce spending. The House, on the other hand, seems convinced that tax and spend is the best solution. I disagree! The you for your work and leadership the budget and closing the fiscal gap.

## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Krystal Hensley <lynn\_1588@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 12:58 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Please Continue ECE funding!  
**Attachments:** IMG\_2038.MOV; ATT00001.htm

Hello my name is Krystal Hensley, not only do I currently work at the Head Start as the Nome program specialist, but I am the mother of Aliyah Hensley who is currently enrolled into our Head Start as a 3 year old and why I would like to share a video of my child and why she likes head start.

In the video, I ask her if she likes Head Start, and she said yeah. This was a biggy for our family, as this year was my daughters first year of Head Start.

Now before I get started about head start, I want to share a little more about my daughter. She was born a premie with medical issues which led her to having to be on an apnea monitor the first 6 months of her life. We kept her home all the time where she did not have much interaction with anyone because of her medical issues. As she got older, we took her out more. We also took her to a local child find held here in Nome put on at head start. There we had the opportunity to meet with Infant Learning where we later met to have other visits with concerns about my daughters speech, nothing went further because my daughter did not have major delays in her speech. Even though they were minor, we still had concerns and reached out to the Nome home based Early Head Start program. I knew about this program, being a former home visitor myself. This was one of the best decisions my husband and I made for my daughter. Through the home based program, my daughter was able to socialize with other children. She also had the opportunity to have a teacher come to our house to provide her with educational needs once a week. Knowing we had concerns with our daughters speech, the home visitor took the time weekly to help her with it. She even provided us with resources and educational materials to help her with her speech on our own time with her, and even then continued to support us and followed up with us on family and individual goals for our daughter. When my daughter turned 3, she transferred to the Head Start program where they continue to support my child and her education. You can't even tell she had minor speech issues and she is thriving daily as she is able to learn and socialize daily with other children and have her teachers there to support her as well. All this happened because we were provided the opportunity to get my child the education and support she needed through these wonderful programs. And just think, this is only one family that got the support we needed, can you imagine how many other families can benefit from this program?

In the video my daughter talks highly about teacher Linda. Teacher Linda is an amazing women who makes a difference in the childrens lives at head start. She's one of the reason why my daughter loves going to school daily and comes home talking about her too, saying nothing good about her. We need this program for our young children, especially when we have special teachers like Linda that want to be there to make a difference in the lives our our future leaders, so they too can make a difference as teacher Linda is.

In the video my daughter also says teacher Linda taught her how to sing her ABC's. I want to tell you this too is true. My daughter started off the school year not knowing how to sing them but practice at school and continued education from our head start program has helped her learn them as well as so much more and why we need to

continue funding these wonderful programs. They really do make a difference in our children's lives so please consider to continue funding for these programs to for our future leaders! Thank you for your time!



## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Christal Rose <christal.rose@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 12:55 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Funding Alaska's Future

I live at 7701 N Douglas Hwy, Juneau and I do not need a response. I was unable to make the hearings this morning regarding proposed budget cuts to early learning programs. I oppose these budget cuts and request that funding be maintained for these vital programs.

According to the National Education Association (nea.org):

...studies, like The Abecedarian Project, show... children in quality preschool programs are less likely to repeat grades, need special education, or get into future trouble with the law.

Early childhood education makes good economic sense, as well. In Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return, a high-ranking Federal Reserve Bank official pegs its return on investment at 12 percent, after inflation.

These programs benefit the children and families of Alaska and as a parent of a small child, our family personally receives benefits from these programs, such as the Imagination Library, AEYC-sponsored learning fairs and family activities, and Parents As Teachers. These programs have helped us as new first-time parents and will provide benefits throughout our child's life, enriching her future and helping to create a productive, contributing member of society.

An investment in Alaska's children is an investment in Alaska's future. The research proves it's a good investment. Please reconsider the funding cuts to early learning programs.

Thank you,  
Christal Higdon  
7701 N Douglas Hwy  
Juneau, AK

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Monte Lynn Jordan <mjresourceak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 3:15 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Most Valuable Resource in Our State

**The Senate Finance subcommittee on Education proposed cuts to the FY18 Department of Education and Early Development budget such as the recommended elimination of Pre-K grants, Parents As Teachers, and support for Best Beginnings, would have a profound impact on early childhood development.**

**While I was born in Washington state I have lived consistently in various parts of Alaska, including Southeast, Anchorage, Glennallen, Delta and Fairbanks since December of 1963 with the exception of 1965. We moved to Fairbanks in the summer of 1977 where I still live. So far I am not a "snowbird". All three of my children were born in Alaska although my daughters and one granddaughter live in Washington now. My son, an electrical engineer and graduate of UAF, lives in Anchorage with his family that includes my older two granddaughters. Before I retired I worked just short of 29 years for the state. I have also been on the board of the Resource Center for Parents & Children in Fairbanks and am currently a member of the Carol H. Brice Family Center. This is also my 20th year on the Mush for Kids committee in Fairbanks which serves as an outreach and "free family" fundraising event for the Alaska Children's Trust. I mention this information so that you understand that I am a fairly long time Alaskan and support children and families.**

**I believe children are truly "our most valuable resource". Oil is great for paying the bills when we have it but we don't run out of children whether we want to spend money to help them grow into physically and emotionally healthy, productive adults or not. Fortunately we were able to meet our children's needs but many families need helping hands to raise raise children who will grow into healthy, responsible citizens, workers and parents.**

**Please reconsider the proposed cuts noted above. Alaska, unfortunately has one of the highest rates of child abuse and neglect. Programs such as these give us a chance to lower our rating.**

**Monte L. Jordan (Ms)  
P.O. Box 73941  
Fairbanks, AK 99707**

**907 451-8696 (home)**

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Sara K. Gress <sgress@bartletthospital.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 3:03 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** PLEASE preserve the future of our children!

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to BEG you to please **maintain all funding for the early learning programs in our state**. The investment that **YOU** make in young lives has **by far the greatest impact**. Economics indicate this to be the greatest return on investment you can make in term of “allocation of funds” for human capital. I understand that there are many hands out asking for help. I understand that there are many areas that need the money. **NONE** are as important as children. These early learning programs make all the difference in at risk families lives, and save us all time, and money in the long run.

I work professionally with families of all walks of life, and have for the past 10 years here in Alaska. I have seen the difference that Parents as Teachers, The Imagination Library, ILP, Pre-K and early identification and intervention can make for families. I also personally have experienced the benefit. I am a mother of two and have benefited from having the number of books in our home blossom through the Imagination Library. I know the importance of early literacy. I know the benefit of reading to our children. And yet, some days it is hard to find the time. Let me tell you, when a new book shows up in the mail addressed to your kiddo, they are darned excited to read that book again and again and again. It makes a difference in my home, and I **KNOW** it does in many others. As a mother of a child with an expressive language delay, I was lucky enough to work with some excellent SLPs and OTs through the State’s Infant Learning Program. Because of that early intervention, my some was lined up with the amazing integrated Pre-K program that exists in our public schools. These programs and the interventions and resources provided through their efforts have transformed my son. Is every day easy? No. Are we discovering new challenges as we go? Yes. Would I have had **ANY** idea where to start with sorting through any of his issues without the help and benefit of these early learning programs. Not at all. And I am a highly educated, highly motivated, highly privileged person. Imagine if I was not? An there are plenty that are not. They, and their children deserve the same support and benefit of these programs.

I truly understand that your job is difficult. To spread funds around to all who “need them”. It has to come down to common sense. I beg you to look at the work of Dr James Heckman (Nobel Prize Winner in Economics) that clearly demonstrates that your best dollar are spent early. Find funds another way. This is not the right answer.

With respect,

Sara Gress, Mother of 2, Lactation Consultant and Perinatal Educator

Juneau, Alaska

(907)586-1145

## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** NIKKIS LITTLE ANGELS <NIKKISLITTLEANGELS@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 3:01 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** cadesol@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** What are you all thinking!

It is sad that all of you who are part of the Alaska House Finance will hear the Senate proposing budgets cuts to early learning programs that will affect the most vulnerable and important population. Did you ever think to lower your salaries or ask Senators to do it? Do you realize that most of the time your staff and senators expend citizens' money on luxury "working vacations"? With some cuts to their salaries, maybe that would be enough to keep programs running that exist to provide essential support to families. Also what are you trying to do with health care? I don't understand how the new proposed plan could be considered an improvement in any way.

I hope the next election cycle sees all of you removed from your offices; we need new, young blood for your seats, as you are clearly not working for us. Alaska needs strong people who can fight for the young population. Early Learning programs are needed to make a strong future generation.

Carmen Del Solar Clavel

Early Childhood Educator

192 Palace Circle # 5

Fairbanks AK 99701

## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Mary Long <MLong@kawerak.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 2:48 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Head Start Core Staff  
**Subject:** Support for EHS and HS

I am asking as a parent and staff of Kawerak EHS/HS that your support is needed for our children and families. Children who go through the program, according to the Kindergarten teachers, said that our children are socially and emotionally ready for school. It has also helped me as a parent and staff member of Kawerak to better understand children birth to 5 years old, and to attain my AAS degree in Early Childhood Education and am currently working toward my BA, which I will receive as early as 2018 or 2019. This opportunity is given to all staff who work for the Kawerak EHS/HS program to better their education. Please support these programs. It helps many of our families with children with living a healthy lifestyle. As a teacher, and now a supervisor to teachers, I have seen that our food program might be the only meal a child ever gets in the village, a place to learn through play, and to see services needed before they even reach the public school. Don't take it away from our children, parents, and staff members. Help support the programs. Thank you.

Mary Long  
Program Specialist South | Head Start/Early Head Start Taciq Head Start | P.O. Box 45 | St. Michael, AK 99659  
p: 907-923-3981 | c: 907-434-1547 | mlong@kawerak.org

Senate Finance: Education and Early Development, Parents as Teachers Testimony

March 16, 2017

Drew Hansen, RurAL CAP Parents as Teachers Manager

[dhansen@ruralcap.com](mailto:dhansen@ruralcap.com) 907-865-7331

Good afternoon Mr. Chair. My name is Drew Hansen and I represent the RurAL CAP Parents as Teachers Program. With the current amendment to remove the Parents as Teachers program from the operating budget I would like to share with you and your colleagues some information on the program. This fall, in my search to find accurate rate of returns for home visiting programs I was introduced to a detailed analysis used to determine the cost-benefits of early childhood programs. According to the analysis titled "Return on Investment: Evidence-based Options to Improve Statewide Outcomes", for every dollar invested in Parents as Teachers, a \$3.29 monetary benefit is realized for participants and taxpayers. This analysis was commissioned by the Washington State Legislature to provide policymakers and budget writers with a list of well-researched public policies that can, with a high degree of certainty, lead to better statewide outcomes coupled with a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Based on the analysis of the Parents as Teachers program the savings come from the low cost of the model coupled with early identification and intervention, less grade retention, the prevention of child abuse and crime, as well as better long term outcomes in life.

There are immediate results from this program as well. RurAL CAP as a community action program across the state has the ability to screen and assess children in our Head Starts who have transitioned from our Parents as Teachers programs within the same communities. Through the use of both the DIAL, which is a developmental screening tool and the GOLD assessment, which is the statewide Head Start assessment for identifying school readiness skills, the data has revealed that Parents as Teachers children entering their next educational setting are more on target developmentally and have more skillsets related to school readiness than their peers who were not enrolled in the Parents as Teachers program. There are few investments that have the rate of return that early childhood programs like Parents as Teachers provides. Our children are Alaska's future. I understand you have tough decisions to make. At some point I feel additional revenue streams will be required to sustain needed programs within our state. We can only cut so deep. I appreciate your efforts to find the most cost effective methods to help strengthen our economy in the long term. Thank you for your time.

Alaska State Legislature  
Senate Finance Committee

RE: FY18 Alaska Department of Education and Early Development operating budget/Pre-K

March 16, 2017

To Senate Finance Chair and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in regards to the proposed operating budget considered by the Senate Finance Committee. My specific concerns are related to the support of the preschool education and Pre-K Grants under the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, Teaching and Learning Division.

Providing excellent pre-elementary programs for Alaska's youngest learners needs to be a priority, especially during these turbulent fiscal times. I have personally witnessed the overwhelming benefits and long lasting effects of preschool education in my own children, as well as the students in Chugach School District. Development of skills in the areas of pre-academics, social skills, and love for learning are critical for success, especially prior to entering Kindergarten.

As a current recipient of a Year 1 Pre-Elementary Development Grant for the 2016-17 school year, Chugach School District has just begun the process of incorporating necessary state support for our preschool program options. These preschool programs provide dynamic, relevant pre-elementary education that are based upon national and state standards, parent and community input, key professional development for pre-elementary staff, and braided streams of funding to build a powerful program to support our youngest students, including those with special needs. Parents, teachers, community members and administrators are in the process of completing the Strategic Plan for furthering the efforts of Chugach School District's Pre-Elementary Programs throughout all of our schools.

I respectfully request that you fully fund the Early Learning Pre-K grant budget in order to continue the support for our youngest students that receive limited support from the K-12 Base Student Allocation.

Sincerely,



Debbie Treece  
Executive Director of Student Services  
Chugach School District



## Doniece Gott

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**From:** Whitelos <whitelos@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 5:44 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Early Childhood Funding  
**Attachments:** Pre Data start K 13-14.pdf

Dear Legislators,

Please reconsider cutting 100% of Early Childhood Funding from the budget.

I realize that the state is not mandated by law to fund Early childhood HOWEVER I also know the statistics for Early childhood and Head Start. IF you include a certified teacher such as we have for the PREK Grant the data clearly shows that these Preschool students are consistently for 7 years now of the grant AHEAD of their same age peers. In addition Kindergarten teachers report that these Early Childhood graduates are more ready for school and learning. The data shows that these students CONTINUE to show steady progress throughout the kindergarten year. In fact is there another educational program that can CONSISTENTLY SHOW YEAR AFTER YEAR that students are showing proficiency? This is a proven successful program.

Enclosed is the graph for kindergarten fall entrance for 2013. This graph shows Head Start graduates with the certified teacher in the classroom noticeably ahead of peers at time of kindergarten entrance. This data has been repeated every year. Below are the numbers for this past year's Head Start graduates going into kindergarten fall 2016 which show the same trend.

Here are the scores which show again this year that Head Start students score higher than the other groups when entering kindergarten.

### FALL KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE- 2016- Average score per student

DIBELS TEST DCS ( overall composite score)

Head Start students-27 students

27.1

Nome Preschool-17 students

15.7

No Known Preschool Education- 7 students

7.1

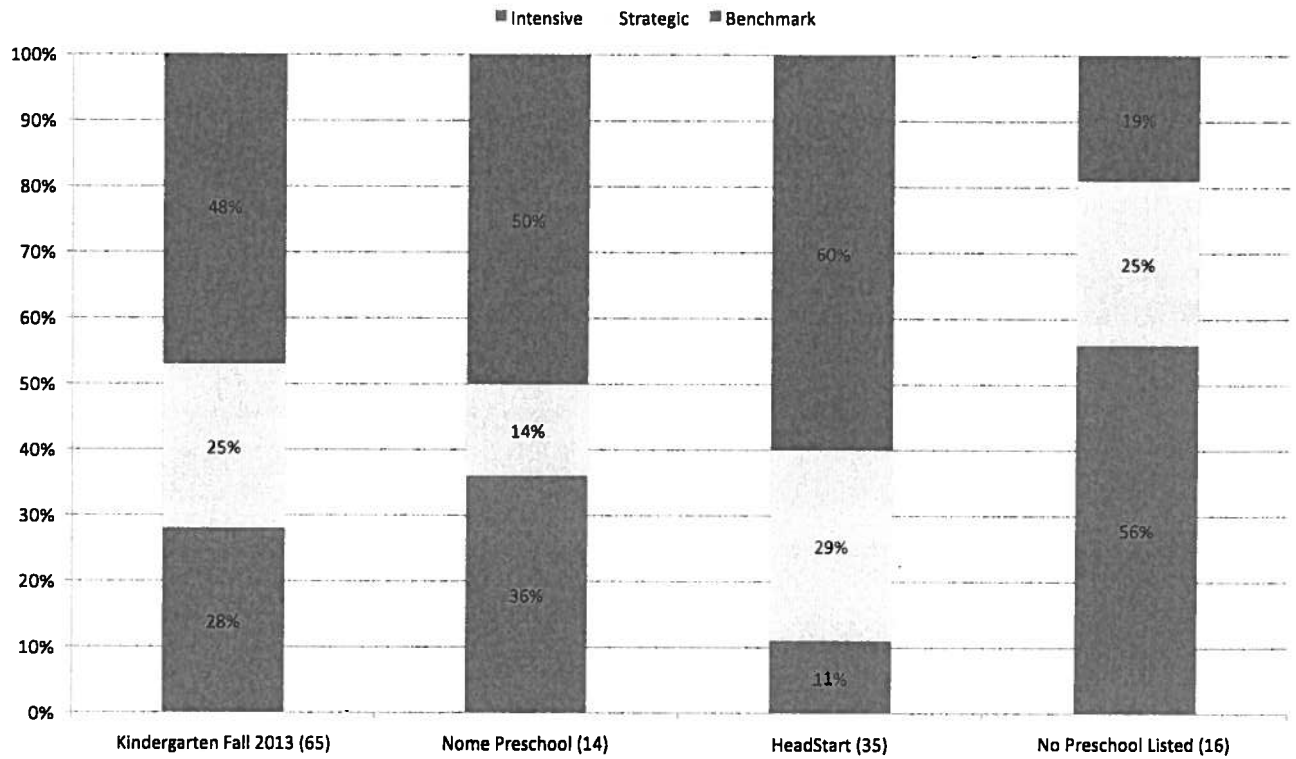
Thank you for your attention to this matter and all you do for the state.

Janet Balice

Nome, Alaska

P.S.- Please consider an income tax and a PFD capped at \$1000 as a source of funding.

## 2013-14 Kindergarteners DIBELS Results Based on Preschool Experiences



## **Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Dorothy Barr <dbarr@kawerak.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2017 9:51 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Support Head Start and Early Head Start

Please support Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The Head Start and Early Head Start has made a difference in Alaska. When my children went to Head Start and Early Head Start they learned how to socialize with one another, learn abc's and numbers; how to be independent therefore getting them ready for Kindergarten. Thank you for your support so that children in Head Start and Early Head Start can begin their education at an early age.

Dorothy Barr  
Tribal Coordinator  
Native Village of White Mountain and previous parent of Head Start children

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Kendra Nichols-Takak <nomemedia@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 10:14 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Keep Headstart Program

Both of our child have been blessed by this program and had the tools to be kindergarten ready!

Kawerak Headstart Graduate  
Nome-Beltz High School Graduate  
Alaska Pacific University Graduate  
Master's student at UAF

Kendra Nichols-Takak  
Nome, Alaska