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Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 3:08 PM
To: Sen. Shelley Hughes <Senator.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov>
Subject: something to add to the education bill

Hi Sen. Hughes:

As you are drafting or considering things to add to the education bill, how about giving some teeth to truancy laws?

Right now, absenteeism is a big problem in Alaska schools. Parents take their kids on long vacations in the middle of a month, kids are mysteriously absent for days at a time with no explanation. As a teacher, I could open my attendance book at any time and see 20-30% absenteeism.

Kids who are absent don't learn. And it isn't the schools fault. Yet we teachers have no way to enforce attending school.

In New York City, parents who want to get their kids into good, PUBLIC middle schools have to prove they have good attendance. Kids with bad attendance don't get their choice of schools. Why can't Alaska do something like that?

You want to close the achievement gap? Consider funding truancy officers.

Thanks,
Melodie Wright