



Anchorage School District

Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • www.asdk12.org

February 8, 2018

Representative Jennifer Johnston
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 430
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Johnston,

As the Superintendent of Anchorage School District (ASD), I am writing in strong support of House Bill 224.

For many years, ASD has accessed the extensive experience and expertise of retired employees and educators by allowing for temporary and part-time employment opportunities. Nevertheless, our efforts to capitalize on such a talented and veteran workforce have been severely limited without a provision to allow for the unrestricted re-employment of retirees such as would be allowed by HB 224.

As I understand the proposed Bill, districts would be permitted to essentially enter into an at-will employment agreement with a retired teacher or administrator so long as that individual has been retired for three months. Current protections and benefits such as tenure, sick leave, and retirement would not be offered or required as the nature of the employment relationship with a retired individual is so different. Though some of these limitations are not clearly identified in the proposed bill, we would support their explicit restriction as well as ensuring that the benefits of HB 224 exist well into the future by also allowing the rehire of retirees under the new defined contribution plan. However, it is our interpretation that the State, under HB 224, would benefit from the District's continuation to pay the supplemental 12.56% for rehired retirees for the purpose of decreasing unfunded pension liability.

I want to assure you that the re-employment of retired teachers is not pursued in ASD to avoid the hire of new teachers. Retirees fill gaps when properly certified staff cannot be hired in hard to fill areas, they provide temporary or short term expertise for special projects or initiatives, and they give needed support during high demand times of the year such as during summer months, the start of the school year, or during assessment

February 8, 2018
Representative Jennifer Johnston
Alaska House of Representatives
Page 2

periods. ASD is encouraged by the possibility of being able to hire retired teachers rather than contract agencies to more effectively and efficiently fill these needs.

One of the most attractive aspects of HB 224 is the potential savings our district could experience. Again, because certain costs would not need to be provided to retirees, there are significant savings that could be re-directed back to the classroom environment or even used to hire other new classroom teachers.

On behalf of the Anchorage School Board, we recognize the fiscal realities which you are facing and appreciate your willingness to provide school districts with increased flexibility and discretion in a time of constricting resources. ASD embraces innovation and supports creative solutions. We are encouraged by the concept proposed in HB 224 and see that it has the potential to offer great benefits to our district. I want to thank you for the opportunity to share my support for your work.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deena M. Bishop', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Representative Charisse Millett
Representative Dan Ortiz
Anchorage School Board