



January 31, 2020

Representative Matt Claman
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
State Capitol Room 118
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Claman,

Thank you for introducing House Bill 181.

At the NEA-Alaska Delegate Assembly on January 18th, 2020, NEA-Alaska members came together and voted to support passage of House Bill 181. It is clear to our membership that mental health curriculum is an important tool in supporting Alaska's students.

We appreciate and applaud your approach of seeking student input during the development of this legislation. In addition, our teachers and counselors appreciate the opportunity to offer input and support the development of effective and appropriate standards. Alaska educators are on the front lines of the student mental health crisis and have a lot to offer to this policy conversation.

It is an unfortunate and sad fact that our public schools lack the resources, counselors and mental health professionals necessary to systematically address the student mental health crisis in any serious or comprehensive manner. However, by raising awareness and beginning a conversation with students and educators about mental health issues we can reduce stigmas and build knowledge and awareness around mental health and mental health resources.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to supporting House Bill 181 as the legislative process unfolds.

Sincerely,

Tim Parker
President, NEA-Alaska