



February 24, 2020

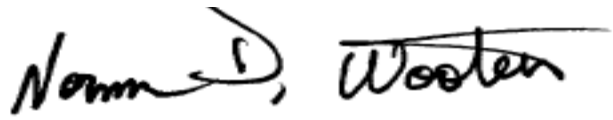
RE: Letter of Support for CSHB 136

The Association of Alaska School Boards is pleased to support CSHB 136 – Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). AASB is heavily involved in supporting school districts throughout Alaska to integrate SEL practices that support the whole child. Many students arrive at school with a myriad of experiences and challenges that negatively affect aspects of learning such as behavior, discipline, and the ability to focus. Our schools exist to provide an excellent education every day to every student no matter their challenges. Integrating SEL into school-wide processes and structures creates safe, supportive learning environments, builds positive relationships and promotes SEL skill development so that children are able to focus on learning and take advantage of that excellent education. The bill is broad enough to provide districts the latitude to localize SEL to fit the needs of students, families, and communities. We encourage the passage of HB 136.

Included is the AASB membership 2020 legislative priority for social-emotional learning as well as Resolution 3.2 on social-emotional learning.



Michael Swain, Jr., President
Association of Alaska School Boards
1111 West 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801
Office (907) 463-1660



Norman D. Wooten, Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards
1111 West 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801
Office (907) 463-1660
Cell (907) 539-1419
nwooten@aasb.org

“Embed practices to support the whole student and whole school (trauma engaged).”

AASB recognizes that Alaska students experience high rates of adverse childhood experiences and childhood trauma. These experiences disproportionately impact education, health, safety and employment outcomes of Alaskans. AASB supports whole- school and trauma-informed approaches that transform learning environments, school climates, teaching practices, and relationships with students and their families. This can include:

- Caring relationships that are foundational
- An understanding of trauma and resiliency
- Integration of learning experiences for the whole child (social, cognitive, emotional, and physical)
- Prepared adults practicing and modeling skills
- School-wide coordination and climate building”

3.2 PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

AASB encourages each neighborhood, faith community, civic organization, community, school district, tribal entity and state agency to review the research in order to advocate, create and sustain programs of social and emotional learning and other initiatives that build assets in Alaska’s children and teens, provide positive adult role models and support, and incorporate culturally responsive awareness.

Rationale. Research shows that effective schools, families, faith communities, and all adults in our communities can contribute to the positive development of youth. The difference between troubled teens and those leading healthy, productive, and positive lives, is strongly affected by the presence of what is labeled “developmental assets[®].” These assets are additive, meaning that the more a young person has, the better. Forty of these assets were identified – 20 exist in the student’s environment and 20 belong in the head and heart of every child. These developmental assets serve as building blocks for human development in a young person’s life and are developed through positive relationships with adults.

Research shows that the more assets students have the less likely they are to use drugs and alcohol, the less likely they are to be sexually active, to be depressed or have suicidal thoughts, to fail in school, and to exhibit antisocial or violent behavior. The more assets children have the more likely they are to succeed in school, to be involved in their community and to exhibit empathic and caring behaviors.

Research also shows that promoting social and emotional learning leads to reduced violence and aggression among children, higher academic achievement and an improved ability to function both in school and in the workplace. Schools that create socially and emotionally sound learning and working environments and that help

students and staff develop greater social and emotional competence, in turn help ensure positive short- and long-term academic and personal outcomes for students and higher levels of teaching and work satisfaction for staff.”