

**From:** Jones Margaret <[jones\\_margaret@asdk12.org](mailto:jones_margaret@asdk12.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 16, 2021 3:27 PM  
**To:** Rep. Geran Tarr <[Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Restorative Justice Bill Introduced After 5 Years!

Rep Tarr,

Thank you so much for your work in this area. I have been interested in RP for many years and I feel like my learning has expanded 10-fold since attending the summit. After attending a 2-day IIRP course, I have been able to slowly introduce RP in my school.

In one recent example, two 5th grade boys who were constantly fighting on the playground found friendship after attending proactive circles to help them and similar students talk about their similarities and differences. It was a joy to see them play together and I complimented both on being able to find ways to be friends.

Keep up the good work,

Margaret Jones

Administrative Intern/Instructional Coach

Ursa Major Elementary

907-742-1600

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[Book a time with me on Zoom!](#)

Representative Geran Tarr  
Alaska State Capitol  
Room 128  
Juneau, AK 99801

April 15, 2021

RE: HB 173 – School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Act

Representative Tarr,

I am writing to you today to express my support for House Bill 173, the School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Act. This bill will modernize and transform Alaska's approach toward education and will make our schools safer, more supportive, and more culturally-competent.

The prescriptive and generalized approach that Alaska (and the US as a whole) has generally approached education with is harmful to all children, but particularly those marginalized by socioeconomic circumstances. A renewed focus on social-emotional learning, trauma-informed practices, and local cultural values, along with a mitigated approach to disciplinary actions, will go a long way toward enabling all students to succeed.

Our students will not be students forever. Moving toward a healing-centered, restorative approach to behavioral intervention will equip them with interpersonal and relationship-mending skills that will serve them throughout their entire lives. Current zero-tolerance punitive practices deny students the ability to develop these skills and neglect their social and cultural health and development. We can and should do better for our children, and HB 173 would be a significant first step in the right direction.

Additionally, an update to our educational policies to reflect the diversity of our schools, as well as the Indigenous values that are ingrained in the communities our schools serve, would begin the process of healing and reaffirming the educational system's role in the community. When the state attempts a one-size-fits-all approach for all students, many will inevitably become alienated or even distrustful of our schools (which, frankly, is understandable given the fraught history Alaska has had with its colonial boarding school system). HB 173 is an opportunity for our educators to intentionally reimagine their approach to better serve our kids and the communities they're from.

Finally, I support HB 173 because it does more than simply provide an unactionable mandate – it provides a support mechanism for school districts. The multidisciplinary and diverse School Climate and School Connectedness Improvement Committee created on the state level will serve as a wealth of knowledge that can support our educators through the planning process. HB 173 also provides stringent guidelines for the selection process, which makes me comfortable knowing that this group will be representative of our diverse state.

In closing, I am grateful for everyone who has been involved the formation of this bill, and I appreciate Rep. Tarr for being a staunch advocate for our students. I urge all of our legislators to support HB 173 for the benefit of all Alaskans!

Sincerely,  
Maya Lapinski

From: MICHELLE BOYDEN <Michelle.Boyden@matsuk12.us>  
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 5:01 PM  
To: David Song  
Subject: Re: Restorative Practices in Schools Bill  
Attachments: ACEs Flyer April to July.pdf

David,

I've never testified to the legislature before and am not sure I have a worthy quote (as a lay person) for a news release. However, this topic is a passion of mine. I'm a 33-year educator (semi-retired) that has been giving presentations on ACEs, trauma informed practices and resiliency for the past five years in the Mat-Su Valley and via Zoom all over Alaska. What follows is a small bit of the 90-minute presentation I give. I've also attached a flyer with more information that might work as a quote. Use what you'd like!

We all know it's difficult to reason with anyone, young or old, who's upset, angry or overwhelmed. When our emotions control our thoughts and behavior, we call this dysregulation, or as it's often referred to with little as "flipping our lid." Any person can have a bad day, but dysregulation is common in children with ACEs. Their stress response activates not only from the abuse, neglect, and family dysfunction they suffer, but from daily triggers like a locker slamming shut, someone yelling down the hall, bullying, or a person standing too close, causing a fight, flight, freeze or submit reaction.

To learn, children need to be in their prefrontal cortex where learning, problem-solving and all executive functioning takes place. Being a trauma-informed school means teaching and practicing self-regulation techniques, so they become second nature. Calming practices such as engaging in specific breathing patterns, listening to music, playing with clay, watching a glitter jar settle all promote regulation and bring students back to their prefrontal cortex, ready for the day's lesson. Proactively having mindfulness and breathing practices to start the day, before a big test or after recess brings children into their learning mind.

Bringing trauma informed practices to schools increases learning, teaches life-long healthy ways to handle stress and naturally decreases discipline.

Michelle Boyden  
K-12 Guidance Counselor  
Mat-Su Central  
(907) 352-7463

I live and work in the ancestral territories of the Ahtna and Dena'ina Peoples.  
"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."  
C.S. Lewis