



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Education & Early Development

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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February 23, 2026

The Honorable Alyse Galvin
Chair, House Finance Subcommittee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 502
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chair Galvin,

This letter serves as a response to questions addressed to the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) during the presentation which provided updates on the DEED budget and Teacher Recruitment and Retention (TRR) on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, House Finance Subcommittee meeting.

1. Provide additional information for the Executive Administration and Division of Administrative Services components over the last 15 years. Provide details on the number of positions in each area for each year, including specific job titles.

See the attached documents titled *DEED Executive Administrative Services 15-Year Position History*.

2. In the TRR presentation, on the slide referring to "Strengthening Working Conditions," what does "Create System Alignment" mean, and how does this specifically "Strengthen Working Conditions"?

The TRR Playbook was developed through a multi-year statewide effort led by a cross-sector working group and informed by educator surveys and broad stakeholder input and reflects the working group's recommendations rather than the DEED's policy or guidance. Within the TRR Playbook, "alignment across the system" means coordinating the actions of districts, state entities, partner organizations, communities, and elected officials so they rely on shared data, common tools, and consistent improvement cycles rather than acting independently.

For example, a district may identify onboarding as a working-conditions concern through teacher feedback; the state can provide vetted tools or small grants to support induction planning; a partner organization may offer mentor training or structured mentoring programs; community members can help welcome new teachers and assist with local logistics; and elected or governing bodies, such as local school boards, can formalize expectations by adopting policy that all new teachers participate in onboarding professional development and have access to a mentor during

their first one to two years. Working together in this coordinated way improves the day-to-day experience of new teachers and strengthens overall working conditions across the system.

3. On the slide referring to "Restructuring Retirement Options," provide details on "Financial Education" and why that is needed.

Under "Restructuring Retirement Options," the TRR Playbook recommends providing financial education to educators about retirement systems and long-term benefit planning. The recommendation emphasizes helping educators understand total compensation, not just salary, including retirement contributions, vesting timelines, portability between systems, health benefits, and the long-term value of employer contributions.

This serves as an example of alignment across the system within the state departments, with the Division of Retirement and Benefits serving an important technical role. The working group recognized that many educators may not fully understand how retirement plans function, how early-career decisions affect long-term security, or how benefits fit into their overall compensation package. Improving clarity and confidence in these areas was intended to support retention by reducing uncertainty and helping educators make more informed long-term career decisions.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Deena Bishop, Ed.D.
Commissioner

Enclosures: DEED Executive Administrative Services 15-Year Position History

cc: Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office