

**From:** Monegan, Walt C (DPS) [<mailto:walt.monegan@alaska.gov>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2017 6:36 PM  
**To:** Rep. Daniel Ortiz <[Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov)>  
**Cc:** Peterson, Darwin R (GOV) <[darwin.peterson@alaska.gov](mailto:darwin.peterson@alaska.gov)>  
**Subject:** Written testimony - Investment in public safety through early education

Rep. Ortiz – I urge you to consider carefully the proposals to cut funding from early education; because though we might save a few dollars today, we will spend that and much more in the years ahead.

Historically Alaska has continually struggled with the issues of sexual and domestic violence, substance abuse, violent crimes, and suicide; all terrible outcomes that arose from a lack of education, opportunities, understanding, and support. This is a tragic pattern that is being passed from one generation to the next, and will continue to do so; because despite all the resources we are spending on it, we continue to attack it from only one direction - reactively.

Part of this ongoing struggle is that even despite a growing awareness of the injurious effects of *Adverse Childhood Experience Study (ACES)*, there still seems to be less understanding of the importance of *Childhood Development*. All children, even as infants, watch and learn what their parents do; they pattern on our behavior. So if substance abuse and violence are a part of their home environment, no matter how frightening, if not intervened and supported, they most likely will accept that to be the “norm;” and will have a propensity to emulate that same behavior later, *unless they are taught differently*.

Perhaps a simplistic way in viewing this is to look at ACES is a disease, and that inadequate Childhood Development is the means of transmitting it.

I would also suggest that we include and emphasize the social concept of “*Acknowledgement and Acceptance*” (and I prefer acceptance rather than tolerance, as tolerance still permits passive prejudice to exist), at the very onset of schooling; as it is perhaps the most fundamental social need within every human. If you question that know:

- that neonatal ICU nurses’ first protocol for an infant who goes into cardiac or respiratory arrest is to remove their glove and lay their bare hand onto of the infant’s bare torso, skin on skin – this touch is usually enough to jump start the little one;
- that recent courts have determined that prolonged solitary confinement is cruel and unusual punishment; or,
- historically many castaways living in isolation lose their sense of reality and at least contemplate, if not complete, their suicides.

We are indeed social creatures, drawing strength, solace, and hope from one another through the recognition that we are not alone. Yet this too is strengthened through our teaching of this to children; the earlier the better, for them and for all the rest of us.

The Departments of Public Safety and Health and Social Services are almost entirely reactive in design, Education is essential because it is totally pro-active; without Education lending it’s weight, we will just continue spending more resources chasing these problems. We must enlist the Department of Education, and support them to craft these age-appropriate lessons in their curriculum; beginning even at Pre-K, with the concept of *respect*. Teaching and understanding these aspects of human needs and behaviors will provide what has been missing in our battle against abuse and violence; but it must be done during their formative or younger years, if we want to succeed. Adequately

funding early Education will allow us an earlier intervention to provide those corrective lessons within a time sensitive window to counter any trauma before it patterns into their lives.

This analogy is overused, so I advance my apologies, but we are pretty fair at pulling people out of the river, what we have not been good at is preventing them from falling into it in the first place. We can be, if we educate our children so that they have the information and our support to help them make the appropriate choices when it is their turn to create our next generation.

Thank you-

Walt Monegan  
Commissioner Designee  
Department of Public Safety

**From:** Lindsey Fees [<mailto:lindsey.fees@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2017 5:36 PM

**To:** Rep. Daniel Ortiz <[Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov)>

**Subject:** DEED Budget

Dear Chairman Ortiz,

Thank you for accepting testimony on the DEED budget on behalf of the members of the House Finance Budget Subcommittee.

I am writing to express concern about the cut to Pre-K funding. As a teacher, particularly a teacher who has spent her career in Title I schools, I can attest to my personal experiences with the importance of preschool education and the difference it makes in students' preparedness for elementary school. Moreover, much research has shown that the money we spend on Pre-K education is some of the best money we can spend in education, as this is the most formative time for children.

We can close the achievement gap by starting early. Cutting Pre-K funding is not the way to do this.

I adamantly oppose the cutting of Pre-K funding, even in these tough fiscal times.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lindsey Fees

Anchorage



## *Nome Public Schools*

Date: February 19, 2017

Subject: Testimony Pre-K Grant Funding Cuts

From: Shawn Arnold

To: Representative Dan Ortiz

Thank you for the opportunity to share a little information about early childhood education here in Nome, Alaska. Nome Public Schools serves the educational needs of over 700 students from our community located in the Bering Straits Region. Since 2012, funding from the state PreK Grant has allowed us to provide high-quality early childhood education to over 60 students annually, most of whom come from low-income backgrounds. However, countering reductions or the complete elimination of funding for our smallest of students has been an annual fight even before the current budget crisis.

Five years ago, the community of Nome gathered together to increase opportunities for our youngest of students by leveraging state PreK funds. We have since then served hundreds of students in Nome who as primary students shown increased attendance, academic performance, and other social skills that make them successful students. Parents worry what we will face without these funds to prepare their children for success in kindergarten with high-quality early childhood education. On their behalf, I would like to make a plea for continued funding and encourage legislatures even to discuss the possibility of expansion of early childhood education.

By the time children enter kindergarten, children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds lag significantly behind children from high socioeconomic backgrounds in academic skills. High-quality early childhood education programs such as ours have proven to help fill this gap. Investing in our children means substantial cost savings later for our schools, community, and other public support services.

While we are profoundly grateful that the State of Alaska has provided for our students in the past, it is critical that this funding remains. Thank you for this opportunity to share these concerns with you and your ongoing commitment to Nome's and Alaska's children.

Sincerely,  
Shawn Arnold  
Superintendent, Nome Public Schools

**From:** Alicia Berka [<mailto:aberka@thrivalaska.com>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2017 10:09 AM  
**To:** Rep. Daniel Ortiz <[Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Funding Cuts for Pre K and Parents as Teachers

Hi – I am writing to urge you NOT to cut any early childhood programs. Our state needs to support early learners from Birth to Five so that the foundation for building their brains is stable and sets them up for school readiness and life long success. Please do not balance the budget on the backs of our youngest citizens. Early childhood funding occupies less than 1% of the DOEED budget and is minimal in the HSS budget.

In order to get our state on track we must begin investing in early childhood programs. The McDowell report, The Economics of Early Care and Learning was published in October, 2015. It has been widely distributed to legislators around the state. It illustrates that investing in early care and learning is a smart investment with a big return, providing thousands of jobs for Alaskans, and quality early learning experiences for children. Investments in early childhood PREVENTS the achievement gap. It is far more expensive to intervene during the K-12 years than it is to make an early investment. Investing in early care and learning generates economic activity and growth – we desperately need this – if we’re to stop the spiral of depopulation. James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics (please see attached article for the State of Alaska) states “those seeking to reduce deficits and strengthen the economy should make significant investments in early childhood education.”

I encourage you to vote in favor of children and early development programs to stabilize our State and improve our tragically low numbers for success in school and high school graduation; and high rates of drop outs, crime and incarceration. We can do better.

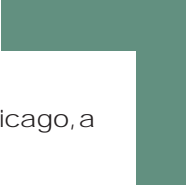
Thanks for your consideration.



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**Invest in early childhood development:**  
**Reduce deficits, strengthen Alaska's economy.**



**James J. Heckman** is the Henry Schultz Distinguished Service Professor of Economics at The University of Chicago, a Nobel Laureate in Economics and an expert in the economics of human development.

### **Those seeking to reduce deficits and strengthen the economy should make significant investments in early childhood education.**

Professor Heckman's ground-breaking work with a consortium of economists, psychologists, statisticians and neuroscientists shows that early childhood development directly influences economic, health and social outcomes for individuals and society. Adverse early environments create deficits in skills and abilities that drive down productivity and increase social costs—thereby adding to financial deficits borne by the public.

### **Early childhood development drives success in school and life.**

A critical time to shape productivity is from birth to age five, when the brain develops rapidly to build the foundation of cognitive and character skills necessary for success in school, health, career and life. Early childhood education fosters cognitive skills along with attentiveness, motivation, self-control and sociability—the character skills that turn knowledge into know-how and people into productive citizens.

### **Investing in early childhood education for at-risk children is an effective strategy for reducing social costs.**

Every child needs effective early childhood supports—and at-risk children from disadvantaged environments are least likely to get them. They come from families who lack the education, social and economic resources to provide the early developmental stimulation that is so helpful for success in school, college, career and life. Poor health, dropout rates, poverty and crime—Alaska can address these problems and substantially reduce their costs to taxpayers by investing in developmental opportunities for at-risk children.

### **Investing in early childhood education is a cost-effective strategy for promoting economic growth.**

Our economic future depends on providing the tools for upward mobility and building a highly educated, skilled workforce. Early childhood education is the most efficient way to accomplish these goals:

- Professor Heckman's analysis of the Perry Preschool program shows a 7% to 10% per year return on investment based on increased school and career achievement as well as reduced costs in remedial education, health and criminal justice system expenditures.
- It is very likely that many other early childhood programs are equally effective. Analysts of the Chicago Child-Parent Center study estimated \$48,000 in benefits to the public per child from a half-day public preschool for at-risk children. Participants at age 20 were estimated to be more likely to have finished high school—and were less likely to have been held back, need remedial help or have been arrested. The estimated return on investment was \$7 for every dollar invested.<sup>1</sup>
- Investing in early childhood education to increase high school graduation rates would boost Alaska's economy. For example, a 5% increase in male high school graduation rates is estimated to save Alaska \$10 million<sup>2</sup> in annual incarceration costs and crime-related expenditures. If that same 5% not only graduated but went on to college at the same rate as typical male high school graduates, their average earnings would accrue an additional \$8 million annually<sup>2</sup>. If just one year's high school dropouts could be converted to high school graduates, Alaska households would have an additional \$1.1 billion<sup>3</sup> in accumulated wealth over the lifetime of the students from the graduating class.

<sup>1</sup>National Institute for Early Childhood Education Research

<sup>2</sup><http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/SavingFutures.pdf>

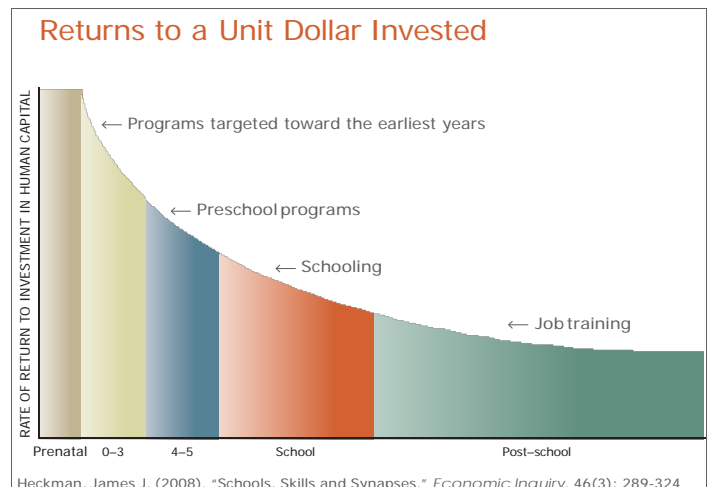
<sup>3</sup><http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/HighCost.pdf>

# Make greater investments in young children to see greater returns in education, health and productivity.

Keep these principles in mind to make efficient and effective public investments that reduce deficits and strengthen the economy:

- **Investing in early childhood education is a cost-effective strategy—even during a budget crisis.** Deficit reduction will only come from wiser investment of public and private dollars. Data show that one of the most effective strategies for economic growth is investing in the developmental growth of at-risk young children. Short-term costs are more than offset by the immediate and long-term benefits through reduction in the need for special education and remediation, better health outcomes, reduced need for social services, lower criminal justice costs and increased self-sufficiency and productivity among families.
- **Prioritize investment in quality early childhood education for at-risk children.** All families are under increasing strain; disadvantaged families are strained to the limit. They have fewer resources to invest in effective early development. Without resources such as “parent-coaching” and early childhood education programs, many at-risk children miss the developmental growth that is the foundation for success. They will suffer for the rest of their lives—and all of us will pay the price in higher social costs and declining economic fortunes.
- **Develop cognitive AND character skills early. Invest in the “whole child.”** Effective early childhood education packages cognitive skills with character skills such as attentiveness, impulse control, persistence and teamwork. Together, cognition and character drive education, career and life success—with character development often being the most important factor.

- **Provide developmental resources to children AND their families.** Direct investment in the child’s early development is complemented by investment in parents and family environments. Quality early childhood education from birth to age five, coupled with parent-coaching, such as home visitation programs for parents and teen mothers, has proven to be effective and warrants more investment.
- **Invest, develop and sustain to produce gain.** Invest in developmental resources for at-risk children. Develop their cognitive and character skills from birth to age five, when it matters most. Sustain gains in early development with effective education through to adulthood. Gain more capable, productive and valuable citizens who pay dividends to Alaska for generations to come.



Early childhood education is an efficient and effective investment for economic and workforce development. The earlier the investment, the greater the return on investment

