

House Health and Social Services Committee
HB 343 School District Medical Assistance
January 20, 2024



Chairman Prax and members of the House Social Services Committee. I am Lon Garrison, the Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to **HB 343 School District Medical Assistance**.

One of AASB's three 2024 legislative priorities includes student wellness and safety.

AASB has several resolutions supporting the merits of this bill and the positive effects it could have on students. The resolutions attached to this written testimony are:

- 3.1 DECLARING CHILDREN OF ALASKA OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE AND THEIR HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE, AND EDUCATION IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE
- 3.17 STUDENT WELLNESS
- 3.21 SUPPORTING EXPANSION OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE TO
- SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

AASB stands in support of HB 343. These bills align with our organization's priorities to increase access to health care services for children and will increase flexibility for schools to seek Medicaid reimbursement for eligible children. In addition, this bill will:

- ✓ Provide more convenient choices for parents seeking care for their children.
- ✓ Support parent-directed services provided in the school setting.
- ✓ Promote early intervention and prevention.
- ✓ Remove barriers preventing schools from leveraging federal Medicaid match.
- ✓ Increase flexibility for schools to seek Medicaid reimbursement for eligible children.

Currently, for Medicaid to cover services provided in schools, the child must have a disability and the services must be included in the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Not all children covered by Medicaid who could benefit from the types of services that can be delivered in school settings need an IEP or have been diagnosed with a disability. This bill would remove the current requirements and presents an opportunity to further leverage federal dollars by enabling schools to seek Medicaid reimbursement for services provided on site.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Lon Garrison,
Executive Director, AASB

