



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Education
& Early Development**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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Legislators,

Attached you will find a report from last year's work referred to as Alaska's Education Challenge. Though the work continues, this provides you with a summary of the process to-date, including the recommendations made by over 100 Alaskans, including some of your colleagues, for improving the public system of education.

The recommendations are robust in varying degrees, yet all of them provide an opportunity to work with locally elected school boards, educators, community members, and most importantly, families, to improve student achievement.

Parallel to the work on Alaska's Education Challenge, DEED has worked with hundreds of stakeholders to develop Alaska's plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act. Both efforts led to the identification of three overarching commitments that we are calling upon all Alaskans to share:

- 1) Increase Student Success: Success will be identified using multiple measures as part of a rich and varied curriculum.
- 2) Cultivate Safety and Well-Being: All schools will be safe and nourish student well-being.
- 3) Support Responsible and Reflective Learners: Families, tribes, educators, and communities will provide relevant learning opportunities.

Keep in mind, the attached document is a report, not a plan. I look forward to meeting with any legislators that would like to provide feedback, ask questions, or make suggestions after reading the report. Please do not hesitate to contact Marcy Herman if there is an opportunity for us to visit. Your willingness to offer counsel and guidance as we work to affect the entire system is critical as we collaborate with our partners to implement change.

Finally, I would like to thank your colleagues on the both the House and Senate Education Committees who sacrificed many hours to participate in the process. Their presence at meetings and contribution to the discussion added clarity, and reassured Alaskans that the process included a level of accountability.

The work has only begun and will continue based on our shared dissatisfaction with Alaska's tragic achievement gap. Based on the commitments, we are working with educational partners to align efforts around a shared vision to raise expectations and outcomes for ALL students.

With Great Anticipation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Johnson".

Dr. Michael Johnson
Commissioner