



Anchorage School District

Education Center

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January 25, 2018

Rep. Paul Seaton
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 505
Juneau, Alaska 99801

As superintendent of Anchorage School District, I would like to offer my support for HB 287 to provide known funding for education early in the legislative session as a separate appropriation.

Early funding will help to avoid unnecessary layoff notices going out to our teachers. As you stated, the statutory deadline for teacher layoff notices to go out is the May 15 for tenured teachers and the last day of school for non-tenured—typically the third week in May for ASD.

During this past legislative session, State budget negotiations went beyond the aforementioned statutory deadlines, funding levels were uncertain, and ASD was forced to issue layoff notices to 223 teachers. Some legislators at the time were calling for a three to five percent cut to K-12 education.

The risk for ASD was too high to avoid issuing the layoffs. Most of the teachers that received layoff notices were recalled, but the loss of morale surrounding the layoffs has been felt all year. The timeline for hiring quality applicants is also directly impacted by late or uncertain funding. If the District cannot issue contracts to these teachers early on, the highest quality applicants tend to find employment in states that are already hiring.

I appreciate your support for public education and would like to reiterate my support for having funding for education appropriated early in the legislative process. This will take the “guessing game” out of our budget process. Please contact me if I may provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Educating All Students for Success in Life

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