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SENATOR BERTA GARDNER
SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER
Senate District 1

SCR5-Alaska Reads Day

Data Summary

Importance of Early Literacy

- *Annie E. Casey Foundation* – Readers who are non-proficient by the 3rd grade are 4x more likely to drop out. We know that 90% of students without a diploma struggled with reading in 3rd grade.
- *3rd Grade Report to Gov. Snyder (2015)* – Students who do not read proficiently by the 4th grade are likely to fall behind in other subjects. Through the 3rd grade, curriculum is designed for “learning to read”, 4th grade and after it is designed for “reading to learn”. Developing reading proficiency pre-3rd grade, therefore, is absolutely vital to academic success in all areas.
- *New America: Education Policy (2015)*—Reading proficiency begins at birth, with lower income children at a disadvantage, (fewer words spoken in the home). Greater exposure to words yields better readers, and better students in general. Students who do not receive a high school diploma are more likely to be incarcerated and/or be dependent on social services. Poor reading proficiency is of high cost to the state.
- *Council on Foreign Relations (2012)*— Our students “lack of preparedness poses threats on five national security fronts: economic growth and competitiveness, physical safety, intellectual property, U.S. global awareness, and U.S. unity and cohesion.” “Too many people are not employable in an increasingly high-skilled and global economy, and too many are not qualified to join the military...”

Where the State Stands

- *Annie E. Casey Foundation*—Reading proficiency in AK was stagnant at 27% proficient from 2005-2013. This is a long term problem.
- *Education Week Resource Center (2016)*— Alaska’s educational “grade” is a C+. Only 30% of 4th grade students received proficient scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in ‘16, this places AK in the bottom 10 in the nation.
- *National Center for Education Statistics (2015)*—Only one state (NM) scores lower than AK in 4th grade reading proficiency. Our fourth graders, and in turn our students in general are at a great academic disadvantage compared to other states.