



Resolution of The State Board of Education & Early Development

Minimum Expenditure for Instruction

Resolution 01-2009

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska now has in place an extensive system of accountability, approved by the federal government, for schools and school districts; and

WHEREAS, the accountability system uses assessments to measure school and school district progress in reading, writing and mathematics in nine subgroups of students and in the student body as a whole in grades 3 through 10; and

WHEREAS, the accountability system is accompanied by regulations specifying actions that schools and districts must take to improve; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development has in place programs and services designed to assist schools and districts to improve; and

WHEREAS, the state administers a high school graduation qualifying examination in accordance with state law and aligned with statements of legislative intent; and

WHEREAS, since 1998 Alaska Statute 14.17.520 requires that at least 70 percent of school districts' operating fund expenditures be spent on instruction; and

WHEREAS, the assessment data since 1998 does not demonstrate there is a relationship between student achievement and the percentage of districts' operating funds spent on instruction; and

WHEREAS, districts consume valuable staff time each year to prepare requests for waivers of the minimum expenditure requirement, when needed, from Alaska Statute 14.17.520; and

WHEREAS, the department consumes valuable staff time each year reviewing districts' instructional budgets, expenditures and requests for waivers, and preparing an annual report to the legislature; and

WHEREAS, the minimum expenditure requirement also places a burden on the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee to review the districts' waiver requests and forward recommendations to the State Board of Education & Early Development; and

WHEREAS, the department has seen that nearly all districts that request waivers have small budgets that are heavily affected by rising fixed costs in necessary non-instructional areas such as heating;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the State Board of Education & Early Development respectfully requests the Alaska Legislature to reconsider or amend the statute that requires districts to spend a minimum of 70 percent of their operating funds on instruction, in acknowledgement that a system of accountability directly tied to student achievement is now in place.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Esther Cox".

Esther Cox, Chair
On behalf of the State Board of Education
& Early Development

December 5, 2008