

From: [Roxanne Mourant](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Alaska's Learning Network
Date: Thursday, April 02, 2015 4:37:29 PM

To Whom it May Concern:

This is in support of Alaska's Learning Network. This is the only statewide distance education service available to high school students. The service ensures that students can take their high school courses not offered locally by highly-qualified Alaskan teachers. For the students I have been teaching this past year, it has meant the difference between graduating or not. Students are often caught in the middle of smaller class sizes due to declining enrollment, but still needing the minimum requirements for graduation and also performance scholarships. These students are often high-risk for not completing their high school career. Supporting Alaska's Learning Network another year means a way for the University of Alaska to build their rapport with districts and students statewide and allow for sustainability over time.

As a teacher and curriculum developer for AKLN, it has been my pleasure to work with students around our state. They are often grateful to have lessons that are appropriate to their level and fulfills the need they have. Each semester I have been asking the students to provide some anonymous feedback to help me improve the class. Here are some of their comments:

Question: When you signed up for this class, what did you hope to learn?

- About Alaska overall
- I suppose to gain some insight to the state's recent history – in elementary school we learn way too much about the Russians and the gold rush, but not what really matters, like oil, politics or native corporations.
- I didn't hope to learn anything. I only signed up for the class to fulfill a state education requirement.
- About Alaska and its cultures.
- The History of Alaska in-depth, to know and understand the full thing of Alaska; but it's too much to ask.

Question: What is your favorite lesson about Alaska's history so far through this course and why?

- Most important resource I spent a fair amount of time learning was about the geology of Alaska.
- I'm working on stuff about oil revenues at the moment. I like the self-directed lesson plan regarding the way it encourages more research to be done.

- My favorite assignment has been the form posts about Alaska's natural resources, as large amounts of information were readily available.
- Cultural aspect of history and geography.
- Doing the work on the discussion board because we can talk about where people live.
- I liked learning about the different cultures in Alaska.
- Natural Resources, because it's a big thing when I heard they are shutting down jobs for forestry. It kind of gave me a little bit of a shock when I heard that.

Question: What do you think has been the most difficult aspect of this class so far and why?

- Nothing.
- For me, only time management. I was in and out of town a lot and had other big projects, etc. Doing the reading and the work isn't exactly hard the same way calculus or biology are to me.
- The only difficulties I had were the Alaska Humanities Forum. The website is not complete yet, and therefore can be buggy.
- Collages – the big assignments.
- Turning in the homework on the blackboard, because it doesn't always accept my assignment and I never know if it did or didn't.

Additional comments:

- It's been a much more effective way for me to learn Alaska history than in a classroom!
- I think this class is definitely beneficial and it's a good way to learn.
- It feels like I learned nothing, but I did learn a lot that I didn't know. I enjoyed taking this on-line class and helping me understand Alaska more.

AKLN provides a very necessary service to students throughout the state of Alaska, and especially in smaller, rural villages. It provides equality for services. Thank you for your continued support for this much-needed service.

Please feel free to contact me if I can answer any questions.

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