



Anchorage School District

Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • www.asdk12.org

February 3, 2017

The Honorable Pete Kelly
Senate President
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 208
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Kelly:

As Superintendent of the Anchorage School District (ASD), I strongly endorse Governor Walker's recent legislation to fund and implement measures that would make Alaska compliant with the REAL ID Act of 2005. I respectfully request the State Legislature take prompt action to enact this bill.

The Anchorage School District is privileged to count five elementary schools on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) among the 60 elementary schools in the District. These high-performing schools proudly serve over 1,600 children of Army and Air Force families stationed in Alaska. In addition to our elementary school population, the District buses over 500 middle and high school students daily from JBER to schools in Anchorage and Eagle River. Approximately 500 ASD employees support the JBER students and District IT and Fine Arts programs on a daily basis. The employees require authorized access to JBER. In addition, approximately 800 substitutes vetted by JBER to fill school assignments when needed.

I am deeply concerned that the District's mission to provide for the needs of our military population will be significantly impeded when the federal government fully institutes the measures outlined in the REAL ID Act. The District is taking measured steps to ensure our school staffs and many support personnel have the necessary documents and background checks to enable their continued access to JBER when the law is fully implemented. I do want to emphasize that principals, teachers, support staff, bus drivers, and other support personnel that work on JBER will pay the costs out-of-pocket to attain this level of preparedness.

In closing, I want to thank the Legislature for addressing Alaska's many needs and challenges. My enduring commitment is to provide the finest education possible for all students in the Anchorage School District, and I am confident the Legislature shares my aspiration. Alaska's noncompliant status with the REAL ID Act does disadvantage military families, students, and the educators and staff who proudly serve them. I request the Legislature pass the Governor's bill to correct this matter.

Educating All Students for Success in Life

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I am happy to respond to any questions regarding the impact to students and families that would result if District personnel are unable to enter JBER as a consequence of Alaska not offering identification compliant with the REAL ID Act. I can be reached at Bishop_Deena@asdk12.org or by phone at 907-742-4312.

The District and I greatly appreciate the work you are doing in Juneau and your support of public education.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deena M. Bishop', with a stylized, cursive script.

Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Governor Bill Walker
Senator Mike Dunleavy, Chair, Senate State Affairs Committee
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Berta Gardner
Senator Tom Begich
Senator Click Bishop
Senator John Coghill
Senator Mia Costello
Senator Cathy Giessel
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