



LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Edgar Hoelscher
Chairman

Dr. Rob Picou
Superintendent

April 18, 2017

Representative Johnston
State Capital Room 430
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Johnston,

Thank you very much for making time to meet with me on April 10th. This testimony is in support of HB 224 for the following reasons:

1. All of Alaska, but in particular rural Alaska, is facing a serious crisis with teacher and principal recruitment.

The Lower Yukon School District has 29 vacancies this year. We typically experience a 30% teacher turnover rate. In conversations with my colleagues in the Northwest Arctic School District and the Bering Strait School District, I have learned they are experiencing the same crisis with teacher and principal recruitment.

2. We currently have retirees from other states who are filling critical positions.

I am unsure of the exact numbers, but anecdotally I can say there are a fair number of retirees from other states working in Alaska. In fact, I just spoke to two retired teachers from Arkansas this week. It only seems fair that we afford the same opportunity to Alaskans who have dedicated their entire careers to Alaska's children and who wish to work after retirement. In addition, their lifetime of experience in Alaska makes them infinitely more qualified to be successful in Alaska.

3. Job Fairs have been to say the least less than productive.

At a recent job fair, I looked out on the floor and counted exactly 23 candidates. The HR director for LYSD just returned from a job fair in Portland where he interviewed 4 candidates. There is a very real possibility that many districts in rural Alaska will start the school year with vacancies in critical positions.

CHILDREN FIRST

For these reasons, I can support HB 224 and believe it is the right legislation during this time of critical teacher and administrator shortages in Alaska. Thank you for your courage in support of Alaska's children.

Sincerely,

Rob Picou, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Lower Yukon School District