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Letter of Support for HB70

Dear Representative Rasmussen,

My name is Carey Carpenter and I am a parent and co-founder of the Anchorage student advocate group called ASD60. I am writing to support the House Bill 70 that was introduced by Sara Rasmussen as it will hopefully add a mandate to the previous SB200 Physical Activity in Schools Law. I have two kids in Anchorage elementary schools and last year, when they were in 2nd and 4th grade, on the first day of school my kids reported back to me as I picked them up, that their recess time had been cut. Thus started the long process of finding out why and how this could happen in a day and age when mountains of data continue to pour out of education experts that kids learn better with more physical activity in their day, not less. It's not just their learning that is improved but also their physical, emotional and psychological health and wellness that is improved. Physical activity:

- Helps reduce the risk of developing obesity.
- Helps reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain cancers.
- Helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles.
- Promotes psychological well-being.
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety.
- Helps improve students' academic performance, including
 - academic achievement and grades
 - factors that influence academic achievement, such as concentration and attentiveness in the classroom.

As part of this journey to find out why schools are cutting recess, I found the SB200 Physical Activity in Schools Law that was passed in 2016. At first, I was ecstatic that the hard work had been done for me already. Imagine, I was just starting a journey to fight for kid's physical activity not to be cut at Alaska schools and found this new law! Perfect. All I had to do was bring this law to the school district and ask them how they can cut recess at the largest school in the state of Alaska with nearly 700 elementary students and still be meeting the requirements of this law. Low and behold, the district administration reported back, very quietly, that they are indeed meeting the requirements of the law. The law says that a district shall adopt guidelines for schools to provide 54 minutes of physical activity for students within the school day. At least for the largest district in the state, the "guidelines" are as far as they went. Implementing and enforcing the guidelines was never a priority and has since not been accomplished. The result is that schools can still freely cut recess and physical activity. This parsing of language does not meet the intent of the law and as a parent I want to see the opportunity for districts to hide behind language of this law taken away and I want to see Alaska kids get the results that all of us know will help them to be healthy and successful not just in school but in life as well. Alaska kids

deserve the best in education and opportunity in life. The kids of Alaska need adults to stand up and fight for them and do what is right for them and their future. The 6-year-old that sits through a six-and-a-half-hour school day with only 20 minutes of recess needs us to speak for them. They depend on us to provide equal and fair opportunity so they can reach their highest potential. To be sure, some districts and schools in Alaska are making physical activity a priority and they see the connection that it has to better education in the form of improved cognition and behavior. Hundreds of reports show that more physically active students have better grades and better attendance at school. Some schools are doing it right but children that don't have the choice to pick where they live or what school they go to deserve equal access to these same benefits. This issue is so important and carries so much weight in the lives of children now, during their education, and in the future for their long-term health and well-being that we need to make sure districts across Alaska are doing the right thing for our kids.

Please contact me with any questions or for further discussion at carey@carpenterprogramming.com or via phone at 907-764-8117.

Sincerely,

Carey Carpenter