

December 11, 2019

Dear Governor Dunleavy and Alaska Legislature,

It is with great urgency, high interest, and critical care that we, the undersigned superintendents of Alaska school districts, declare Alaska's students are presently in a reading achievement crisis. National tests, state assessments, and local reading data all provide clear evidence that too many of Alaska's children are not reading at acceptable levels of proficiency and are far below their peers across the nation. While there are great examples of successes, the failure of a large number of students to read successfully is a story that must have a new ending.

Literacy is a fundamental right of all students and must be a no-fail mission for all Alaska stakeholders. School boards and districts, policy makers and business leaders, along with parents must rally together to support the learning that is essential to gain competency in reading—from birth to three, pre-school to graduation, and into adulthood.

We, superintendents, support the work begun by Commissioner Johnson to engage the 31st Legislature to pass a reading bill to hold Alaska's schools and other stakeholders accountable for critical, evidence-based teaching and learning of the five components of reading (Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension). All students in our state deserve high quality curriculum and instruction based on the science of reading.

This need for collective support rises above outward blame, self-service, finger pointing, finances, and personal agendas. The time is now for our state to come together as a whole to ensure the children of Alaska learn to read with fluency. Our children have waited too long for the adults to act on their behalf.

The following superintendents are seeking action, grounded in law, to ensure all students learn to read.

All means ALL.

Sincerely,



Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.
Anchorage School District



Larry LeDoux, Ed.D.
Kodiak Island Borough School District



Andrew (Hannibal) Anderson
Lower Yukon School District



Michael Hanley
Aleutian Region District and
Chugach School District



Monica Goyette, Ed.D.
Mat-Su Borough School District



Bernard Grieve
Kuspuk School District