
From: Julie Zundel [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 26, 2022 10:47 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Sen. Click Bishop; Rep. Adam Wool
Subject: Please Hear HB 220

Greetings Representatives,

I am a teacher in the FNSBSD, I have two children currently attending schools in the District, and I am a product of the FNSBSD/UAF system. Fairbanks has always treated me well, so I have always wanted to give back to my community as a secondary teacher. I was hired in 2007 (left in 2013 when I had my second child) and then returned in 2018 - so I am tier 3.

As you are probably aware, Alaska has some of the worst teacher turnover in the country (even before the pandemic). National teacher turnover is about 6%, whereas Alaska is 22% (according to research by the Regional Education Laboratory Northwest). This turnover is correlated with poor student achievement. According to Dianne Hirsheberg of the UAA Center for Education Policy Research at ISER, the five school districts with the **lowest** turnover had 85.8% of students scoring proficient at reading, whereas the five school districts with the **highest** turnover only had 46.9% of students proficient in reading.

In my building alone (West Valley High School, Fairbanks) we are losing AT LEAST six teachers and one administrator this year (this number is likely higher, these are the only ones that have put in the paperwork to leave). There are two teachers who teach chemistry at West Valley - I am one of them. Since I returned in 2018, I have had two chemistry teachers come and go (we are on our third one now).

I want to continue teaching in Alaska, but as a tier 3 teacher I do not receive social security nor the defined benefit pensions tier 1 and tier 2 teachers receive. When I was first hired (2007) it was difficult to get a teaching job in Fairbanks - when I returned in 2018, there were hardly any qualified candidates who were certified to teach chemistry.

A 2019 analysis by the State of Alaska's Chief Investment Officer showed that after a 30 year career in teaching, only 31% of teachers would have sufficient assets to last 30 years into retirement. This means that without additional retirement savings, up to 75% of 30-year teachers could run out of money 15-20 years into retirement. I would have no backup, since I do not have social security.

I love teaching - and I want to continue to work in the place I grew up (and where I chose to raise my own children) - yet, I need to worry about my future and I have started to look for jobs that offer a retirement I can count on.

I want my own children to receive quality education in Fairbanks - but the recruitment pool grows smaller and smaller each year. When I went through the teaching program at UAF (2006-2007), there were at least thirty people in the 7 - 12 certification program. Today there are two student teachers in the 7 - 12 program at UAF.

Please consider supporting this bill - without a solid teaching pool, education will decline and this will continue to impact Alaska.

Sincerely,

Julie Zundel
Science Teacher, Parent and Lifelong Alaskan

From: Janet Murray [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2022 1:07 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Please hear HB 220

As an Alaska educator, I encourage you to give HB 220 a full and fair hearing in House Finance as soon as possible. HB 220 represents the possibility of a return to a real retirement system for educators and other public employees in Alaska.

Currently, with no access to Social Security, and only a defined contribution retirement option, I will likely outlive my retirement savings. I love my job, I love working with students, and I love Alaska. However, without any access to a secure income in retirement, I may be forced to make the difficult decision to leave the state for a more stable future.

HB 220 will give hope to the thousands of dedicated public employees in Alaska. Please hear and pass HB 220 this legislative session.

Thank you,

Sincerely,
Janet Murray
Educator, Alaskan and registered voter