

From: [PSD Superintendent](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support for SB 88
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 1:46:56 PM

Co-Chair Senators Stedman, Hoffman, Olson and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Erica Kludt-Painter and I am the Superintendent of the Petersburg School District. I am also a proud parent of two Petersburg High School graduates, and have served the Petersburg School District as a principal and superintendent since 2001. Thank *you* for your continued work on behalf of Alaska's students.

I am writing today in support of SB 88 and to express my support for a change in the State of Alaska Teacher Retirement System. I am troubled by the current state of affairs in our education system, which is not only failing to attract highly qualified teachers for long term service but also failing to retain them. Moreover, the state's education budget has been unstable for years, resulting in less than optimal resources and opportunities for our children.

As a member of the Petersburg School District for 21 years, I have seen firsthand the challenges facing our education system, particularly in attracting and retaining high-quality teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of our children, and it is imperative that we provide them with the support and resources necessary to succeed. Unfortunately, the current retirement system in Alaska is not competitive with other states, and this, in addition to lower wages and high cost of living, has led to an exodus of experienced teachers who have decided to seek employment and full retirement elsewhere.

As you are aware, the State of Alaska has a history of recruiting teachers from other states who bring valuable skills and experience to our schools. However, we are no longer able to attract these long term highly qualified teachers because of the lack of a competitive retirement plan. This not only impacts the quality of education our children receive but also hampers the state's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

I urge you to take the necessary steps to reform the current retirement system for teachers in Alaska. By doing so, you will not only help to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers but also provide a better future for our children. Our state's education system cannot afford to fall behind, and we must take action to ensure that our teachers are supported and empowered to provide the best possible education to our children.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

Erica Kludt-Painter

MISSION: Petersburg Schools will advocate for continuous growth, promote a healthy environment, and provide diverse educational opportunities where all students achieve.

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