

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

March 14, 2022

9:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Roger Holland, Chair
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair
Senator Shelley Hughes
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Tom Begich

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 225

"An Act relating to a paraprofessional training program; creating a teacher resident certificate; creating a teacher residency program; relating to requirements to issue a teacher certificate; relating to subject-matter expert limited teacher certificates; relating to limited teacher certificates; creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program; and creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program fund."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 225

SHORT TITLE: TEACHER REGISTERED APPRENTICE PROGRAMS

SPONSOR(s): EDUCATION

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|----------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 03/04/22 | (S) | READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 03/04/22 | (S) | EDC, L&C, FIN |
| 03/07/22 | (S) | EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205 |
| 03/07/22 | (S) | Heard & Held |
| 03/07/22 | (S) | MINUTE(EDC) |
| 03/09/22 | (S) | EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205 |
| 03/09/22 | (S) | Heard & Held |
| 03/09/22 | (S) | MINUTE(EDC) |
| 03/14/22 | (S) | EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205 |

WITNESS REGISTER

BRIDGET WEISS, Superintendent
Juneau Borough School District (JSD)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 225.

RANDY TRANI, Superintendent
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District (MSBSD)
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 225.

CLAYTON HOLLAND, Superintendent
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD)
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 225.

ED KING, Staff
Senator Roger Holland
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 225.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[9:04:08 AM](#)

CHAIR ROGER HOLLAND called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Hughes, Begich and Chair Holland.

SB 225-TEACHER REGISTERED APPRENTICE PROGRAMS

[Contains discussion of SB 111.]

[9:04:42 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 225 "An Act relating to a paraprofessional training program; creating a teacher resident certificate; creating a teacher residency program; relating to requirements to issue a teacher certificate; relating to subject-matter expert limited teacher certificates; relating to limited teacher certificates; creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program; and creating a teacher registered apprenticeship program fund."

CHAIR HOLLAND stated this is the committee's third meeting on SB 225. Superintendents from three urban school districts will testify to provide first-hand insight into the problem to be

resolved. He stated he is not related to Mr. Holland and asked superintendents to introduce themselves.

[9:05:53 AM](#)

BRIDGET WEISS, Superintendent, Juneau Borough School District (JSD), Juneau, Alaska, introduced herself.

[9:06:01 AM](#)

RANDY TRANI, Superintendent, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District (MSBSD), Palmer, Alaska, introduced himself.

[9:06:06 AM](#)

CLAYTON HOLLAND, Superintendent, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD), Kenai, Alaska, introduced himself.

[9:06:22 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND said he would ask four questions. He requested that the superintendents respond to each question before committee members ask questions.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked the superintendents to describe the challenges they face when trying to fill classrooms with qualified teachers.

[9:06:57 AM](#)

MS. WEISS stated that the challenge to find teachers was aggravated by the pandemic. However, there was an extraordinary shortage of special education teachers before the pandemic, and the applicant pool for regular education positions had diminished. Many years ago, Washington and Alaska had hundreds of applicants in the elementary teaching pool. The applicant pool has changed dramatically. Five special education teaching positions in Juneau went unfilled in 2021-2022. A Montessori teaching position also went unfilled. She opined that the demand is greater than the supply. She said she went to Michigan a year before the pandemic to recruit excellent teachers as she had previously done. She attended several university job fairs and found that the bleachers were virtually empty of candidates. Many students who became classroom-certified teachers also became certified in special education to increase their potential for hire. This level of competition no longer exists. She said teachers have also left the classroom to work for various grant programs.

[9:09:37 AM](#)

MR. TRANI stated that his district hires about 120 teachers each year. Thirty-five to forty percent of vacancies are due to

retirement. The remainder are due to attrition. From the school district's exit survey, the two main reasons for leaving were personal and leaving the state. Teacher tourism is happening in Alaska, unlike in the 1980s when teachers came to Alaska and stayed due to the golden handcuffs of the state retirement system. Young teachers now come to Alaska for the experience and leave because nothing incentivizes them to stay. Special Education (SpEd) positions have been the hardest to fill. He stated that MSBSD is a desirable work location in Alaska and hires teachers from rural schools. Although this benefits his district, it robs rural schools of teachers. MSBSD employs several full-time recruiters. The school district has barely been able to meet its staffing needs by sending recruiters to job fairs. The substitute teaching pool is insufficient to meet the district's needs, even with minimal requirements. Alaska does not have enough certified teachers. The University of Alaska, at its peak, produced 25 percent of the teachers needed in Alaska. Alaska needs to recruit from out of state but does not offer incentives to stay.

[9:12:20 AM](#)

MR. HOLLAND said he has been with the school district for 20 years and in the district office for 15 years. General education teaching positions would have 10 - 20 applicants ten years ago, but now two to three teachers apply. At times there was only one qualified applicant. Special Education has the same challenges. The school district could not fill all its positions for the first time in 2021 - 2022. Therefore, changes were made to fill the positions by allowing retired teachers to return with credit for their years of service. He stated he is concerned about the 2022 - 2023 school year because of the teacher shortages experienced over the past three to four years. Teachers have backed out of contracts before or shortly after arriving in Alaska. They cited the lack of defined benefits, cost of living, and housing as reasons for not staying. Many teachers with a J-1 visa are being used temporarily. However, the use of the J-1 visa may change, which is concerning.

[9:14:28 AM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE said the US is short a million teachers. He asked if data shows a differential between the unfilled positions in states with defined benefit plans and teachers living in states without a plan because it seems every state is short.

[9:15:07 AM](#)

MR. HOLLAND replied that he does not have hard data. He only has anecdotes from people communicating with the human resources department on why they are not staying to have a teaching career in Alaska.

[9:16:01 AM](#)

MR. TRANI stated that his information is also anecdotal. He recalled teachers talking in the hallway about staying to get three high years of service. Those types of conversations are no longer heard. About two-thirds of the school district's employees are Tier I and II. The rest are under the new system.

[9:16:32 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND said the committee had been told there were not enough teachers in Alaska. However, there are 14,000 certified teachers registered in Alaska. He asked if there is insufficient motivation to keep teachers working in schools.

[9:16:48 AM](#)

MS. WEISS replied that there is a combination of reasons for the shortage of teachers. She likes SB 225 because it offers a combination of solutions. The problem is complex and layered. She said Alaska's salaries are relevant to Washington and Oregon. It used to be that teachers were encouraged to come to Alaska for the adventure and stay for a career. Now advertisements encourage them to come for an adventure that lasts about five years. School districts want teachers committed to Alaska's children and communities, but teachers are not incentivized to stay. She illustrated the current lack of incentive by sharing a retired teacher's experience. The teacher left a position in another state in 1981 as a step 5 with a master's degree earning \$14,500 a year. The teacher had a 25-year defined benefit program and full social security benefits. The woman received a salary of \$28,000 and a 20-year retirement option in Juneau.

MS. WEISS said it was not just one element that would encourage a teacher to stay. However, teachers need to know that they can afford to live in Alaska and have some incentive to stay when the salary is not more.

[9:19:22 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said she recalled loan repayment programs for healthcare providers. She asked if there is a federal loan repayment program for teachers willing to work in underserved areas.

MS. WEISS replied that she was not aware of any programs. Loan repayment programs would be an option to pursue because it is the type of incentive young people need.

SENATOR HUGHES said she worked with Representative Bob Herron as an advocate in setting up a companion program for healthcare providers. The providers were required to serve time before receiving quarterly loan repayments.

[9:21:10 AM](#)

ED KING, Staff, Senator Roger Holland, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, stated that DEED was looking at Senate Bill 93 from the previous legislature to determine whether a similar loan repayment program could be established for teachers.

SENATOR MICCICHE said that it has become increasingly difficult to fill positions since the pandemic, and he would like a comparison of states' incentive programs. He wondered how much weight should be given to defined benefits versus other societal issues in the quest to fill positions.

[9:22:35 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH stated that in 2009 the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCLS) conducted a study and found that Alaska was the only state with a mandatory defined contribution plan. He suggested Mr. King ask the NCSL for an updated analysis to see how Alaska currently compares to other states.

CHAIR HOLLAND reminded the committee that HB 220 documents would likely contain the study.

[9:23:36 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES shared an anecdotal story of a meeting she attended where older firefighters wanted to revert to a former retirement system, whereas younger firefighters preferred portability. She opined that younger teachers might also prefer portability. She stated her belief that the teacher population would become more transient. There are societal factors to consider, and a solution for some would not necessarily be a solution for all.

[9:24:15 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND interjected that the teacher population nationally was down by one million.

[9:24:23 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH stated he received a text from Dr. Parady confirming Alaska was now the only state that does not have a defined benefit plan for teachers.

[9:25:11 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND interjected that Alaska was not the only state contributing to the national teacher shortage.

SENATOR BEGICH affirmed Chair Holland's comment but stated that the remark was in response to Senator Micciche's desire to compare states' incentive programs to determine if there is a correlation to position vacancies. He opined that it would be impossible to know since forty-nine states offer a defined benefit and only Alaska does not.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked the superintendents what they could do in their districts to deal with the teacher shortage facing Alaska.

[9:25:24 AM](#)

MR. TRANI replied that his district would be launching a program modeled after the state's discontinued Alaska Teacher's Scholarship Loan Program next year. Students who want to be teachers or paraeducators would take remote coursework through Chadron State College (CSC) while participating in work-study at a Matanuska - Susitna (Mat-Su) school part-time. Once a student obtains a degree, their loan could be forgiven up to 100 percent over five years if they teach in the Mat-Su district. Rural districts could send students to Mat-Su to participate in the program by contributing funding if the trial proves successful. The idea is to hire teachers who live in the state and want to remain rather than pay to recruit tourist teachers. He stated that MSBSD could pay for the program because of the teacher and paraeducator shortages. Money is available to hire teachers, but there are no teachers to hire.

[9:29:21 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked whether the University of Alaska (UA) was approached to be a partner.

MR. TRANI stated that CSC was flexible and quick to respond, which made partnering easy. He said the Mat-Su district would be willing to partner with any university, especially UA.

[9:29:53 AM](#)

MR. HOLLAND stated he was doing a similar program for paraprofessionals through CSC. He said it bothered him not to partner with UA, but CSC was tuned into remote learning and had

a well-laid-out competitive program. Local paraprofessionals make some of the best teachers because of their experience. KPBSD adjusted pay scales by increasing the years that experience can count towards pay. It has transitioned to virtual job fairs making it possible to recruit from all states. KPBSD also helps people move to the peninsula by paying moving expenses, assisting them in locating housing, and providing a mentor. He said recruiting for KPBSD costs rural schools by losing teachers to larger communities.

[9:32:54 AM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked if superintendents collaborate on ideas to bring before the legislature, such as requesting funding for retention bonuses. He wondered whether educators were working to find the right combination of offerings to keep people in Alaska. He opined that an extra service could sometimes sway a person's choice.

[9:34:43 AM](#)

MR. TRANI responded that the "big five" meet informally every other Friday to discuss issues relevant to urban school districts. However, the Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA) is the official organization where ideas are discussed and then taken to the State Board of Education for consideration.

[9:35:40 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND asked Mr. Weiss what the Juneau School District (JSD) has done to address the teacher shortage and if she had input to add to Senator Micciche's comments.

[9:35:44 AM](#)

MS. WEISS opined that superintendents had been working to uplift and work through a difficult experience over the past 20 months, so the amount of time to dialogue had been sparse. She said structures exist for superintendents to share ideas, and she would support front-end engagement with potential legislation by contributing to the amazing ideas put forward by legislators.

MS. WEISS said JSD partners with UA through the Educators Rising Program to offer a course that supports the early learning of being an educator. JSD also works with UAS to expand dual credit and create a broader experience for students attaining post-secondary credits before graduating high school. UAS and JSD have worked to build the middle college model and put together a joint work team called JSDUAS because statistics show that students who have a head start are more likely to graduate from college. JSD has also been trying to support teachers and

increase morale because teachers are the ones who inspire students to become teachers. She opined that it is hard for teachers to be inspirational at this time. JSD has been focusing on meeting teacher needs so they can be inspirational to students.

[9:39:35 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND asked how high teacher turnover affects available finances and the ability to provide quality instruction.

[9:39:57 AM](#)

MR. HOLLAND commented that it was a crazy first year as a superintendent, and the "big five" provided him the support needed to survive. He said a study revealed that each new teacher hired costs a school district \$20,000, including recruitment and training. The non-financial cost is lost connection. Kids learn best in a trusted relationship. Without permanent staff, students will struggle academically, socially, and emotionally regardless of the legislation. Also, when teachers are required to fill gaps and teach outside of their content area instruction quality is impacted

[9:45:38 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said a considerable portion of SB 111 addresses the need for DEED to enhance the support of teachers and superintendents in their work. He asked whether SB 111 would help improve teacher morale.

[9:46:23 AM](#)

MS. WEISS replied that SB 111 could be part of the solution. However, Alaska has structures outside of DEED that offer good support. She opined that developing and enhancing existing structures through partnerships with the Alaska Superintendents Association (ASA), Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), and National Education Association (NEA) would help the morale issue and provide the mentorship that new teachers need.

[9:47:07 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked what, besides mentor programs, could be done to improve morale because SB 111 also includes the virtual education consortium. He asked her to elaborate on how recruitment and retention could be accomplished.

[9:47:33 AM](#)

MS. WEISS responded that ASA created a sliding two-year cohort for superintendents so that new superintendents are supported. A retired superintendent runs the program, which meets several

times yearly and receives ongoing mentor support. ASA developed it because superintendent turnover is also high. Many issues could be more efficiently integrated with statewide support. The Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA) and DEED could create incentives for first and second-year teachers to participate and use commonalities from across the state to create efficiencies, such as the need for equity, culturally responsive teaching, and a reading initiative.

[9:49:15 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said he often argues that similarities within the state should move legislation like SB 111 and HB 164 forward.

SENATOR MICCICHE related that his experience examining the cost of training state troopers indicates that \$20,000 to hire a new teacher must not include peripheral costs. Peripheral values are difficult to quantify. Replacing an experienced teacher is expensive because the value of experience is lost. The continuity of intergenerational teachers brings family and community support to a school. He encourages using incentives such as paid moving expenses and loan forgiveness as alternatives to defined benefits. People need to understand the challenges educators face. Outreach to the community should happen to educate the public.

[9:52:35 AM](#)

At ease

[9:53:22 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND reconvened the meeting.

CHAIR HOLLAND asked Mr. Trani to comment on the financial or other implications of high teacher turnover.

[9:53:29 AM](#)

MR. TRANI said that continuity is the most significant consequence of the teacher shortage from an educational standpoint. It is hard to put a price tag on peripheral costs, but one study he read said the cost would be \$50,000 for a teacher and \$75,000 for a principal. However, the programming for students is more concerning. Mat-Su promotes its 8,000 courses in career and technical education (CTE), which are difficult to hire positions because teachers leave to work in industries that pay more. Teacher turnover in CTE and special education (SpEd) occurs constantly. SpEd teachers are the highest in demand, making it easy for them to relocate. Therefore, students that need the most consistency receive the

least. Kenai and Juneau are magnet locations that rob from rural areas when they are robbed by the lower 48.

[9:56:02 AM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS arrived.

[9:56:23 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH mentioned the House has been discussing adding between \$40 - 60 million to the budget outside of the base student allocation (BSA), which the governor indicated he would veto. He said it seems like superintendents are suggesting that a more targeted approach would work better for teacher recruitment and retention. For example, teachers in rural areas might receive housing assistance, while another district might target mentoring. He asked the superintendents to discuss the efficacy of a blanket amount of money being put into the budget outside of the BSA versus targeted support where outcomes could be measured for success.

[9:57:37 AM](#)

MS. WEISS stated her belief that there would be added value in targeted financial efforts with concrete, measurable deliverables, which could be used to determine where future resources are placed. The downside would be that superintendents may have varying opinions because their districts might have differing needs. Open financial commitment allows districts to tailor funding to their needs. She suggested that a combination of funding might incentivize districts to obtain some funds based on initiatives and commitments.

[9:58:47 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said that if the House and Senate pass a budget with blanket funding for education outside the BSA and the governor vetoes it, there would be zero added funding. He stated it is important for the Senate, House, and governor to unite in funding identified needs because having something would be better than having nothing.

[9:59:38 AM](#)

MS. WEISS replied that she agreed. She opined that zero-added funding would not help public education through the crisis it is experiencing. Students lose if public education does not rise, survive, and constructively utilize resources and initiatives. She said she has been in the field of education for 38 years and sees that the challenges facing education today are in the substantial social-emotional needs of students. The challenges

have a ripple effect on families and affect educators' morale. Issues cannot be fixed without resources.

SENATOR BEGICH said he does not wish to belabor the point but wants colleagues in the House to know that the governor has said there would not be excess funding for education without a reading bill.

[10:01:02 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if Mr. Trani would like to comment on Senator Begich's question regarding the efficacy of funding outside of the BSA versus targeted support.

MR. TRANI replied that he could not entertain creative ideas such as teacher retainment incentives without guaranteed funding because other elements like collective bargaining agreements extend into the future. One-time funding makes it difficult to develop plans because the source of money is not guaranteed. Everyone would favor something over nothing if it came down to having blanket funds inside or outside the BSA, especially if the fund was more permanent than a one-time boost for a particular idea.

[10:02:32 AM](#)

MR. HOLLAND agreed that \$50 million one-time would be better than zero, but he would like a long-term fiscal plan for the state that includes an adjustment to the BSA. An inside BSA solution would be better than an outside solution because it would continue beyond one year. He would favor a legislative solution that adjusted the BSA and made it inflation-proof. The next best option would be to allocate funds to a specific solution. He opined that the BSA needs to be adjusted for the long-term health of all school districts.

[10:03:58 AM](#)

CHAIR HOLLAND asked the superintendents to assess the usefulness of SB 225 and provide suggestions for improvement.

[10:04:13 AM](#)

MS. WEISS stated she approves of SB 225 because it provides multiple solutions to school districts' challenges. None of the challenges facing education are simple enough for one solution. One of the hardest things at the core of what superintendents do is plan budgets a year at a time with flat or regressing funding. She said finding a solution to the BSA needs to be discovered as a state before other challenges are addressed. She opined that it is counterproductive and faulty thinking to

expect education in Alaska to get better when school districts need to be adequately funded on a yearly basis so that innovative instructions and plans can be designed. She appreciates that SB 225 looks at growing from within. Alaska must find and retain good teachers through the three options SB 225 offers. She said she did not have an obvious solution to add but encouraged the committee to attend the superintendent fly-in because collective thinking is how problems are solved.

[10:06:45 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH stated his belief that no one would rationally be opposed to supporting an increase in the BSA. However, the administration has made it clear that there will be no increase to the BSA without a reading bill, and there are not enough votes to override a veto. If an increase in the BSA is the bottom line, then the reading bill needs to be addressed. On a narrower level, SB 225 explores teacher retention ideas similar to what Mr. Holland described. In 2010 when the Moore lawsuit was being settled, there was a legislative proposal to establish a teacher retention grant to make funding more permanent. However, establishing a grant when there is a structural deficit is difficult. He opined that Mr. Holland is correct; a fiscal plan is needed. The education committee is broaching the need for a fiscal plan and reading bill. If superintendents, teachers, and students are to be successful, the answer is eminently clear, yet there is resistance from the House. He asked the superintendents to determine how much they value a fiscal plan and what they are willing to fight for to achieve it. In the meantime, the committee will try to pass SB 225, which addresses one of the five concerns identified in the Alaska Education Challenge. There are also initiatives addressing other Alaska Education Challenge concerns. Education improvements will be seen if the initiatives move forward with superintendent support. He said he wants people to be open to solutions and not count on a solution dependent on other legislation passing.

[10:09:42 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said she was willing to consider a fund specifically created to address teacher retention for about ten years so school districts could implement incentive plans to help Alaska get through the teacher shortage. She said she would like to know what other legislators think of the idea and was certain superintendents would approve.

[10:12:30 AM](#)

MR. TRANI replied that most superintendents would support a ten-year fund outside the BSA for teacher retention if it could not be inside due to political loggerheads. He offered two suggestions to improve SB 225. First, human resources and SpEd teachers have said that flexibility in certification would make it easier to hire teachers because the particulars of SpEd certification often get in the way of hiring. Another idea that would draw teachers to Alaska without costing the state money would be a four-day workweek. It would only require a statutory change allowing teachers to earn their retirement in hours instead of days. About a third of the school districts in Oregon, primarily rural, are on four-day weeks. It is attractive to people, and it saves money. Teacher pay would stay the same because they work the same number of hours.

10:15:50 AM

MR. HOLLAND opined that more pathways would help address the teacher shortage because the content areas needed are varied, and individuals entering the paths have different work experience. The ASA supports SB 111. He has talked with Kenai borough officials and school superintendents about the BSA increase and welcoming the accountability that SB 111 requires. Rural school districts have unique concerns and higher turnover, so it is key not to be unfairly punitive to them. Superintendents also support HB 220 and are getting the word out that they support both bills. Superintendents are willing to be creative and flexible to obtain funding that support teachers and students. He thanked the committee for meaningful solutions to create change.

10:18:00 AM

SENATOR MICCICHE said superintendents are politicians, and demagogues carry the day in today's politics. They say things people want to hear on popular issues and may not intend to deliver. The popular issue with Alaska's education system today is that outcomes are a problem. He opined that if superintendents ask for something, they should tie it to the governor's concern for outcomes in education. The message of concern should be the same because superintendents carry the same flag as the governor. Do not talk about increasing the BSA; speak about programs that will help with the educational outcomes in Alaska. Learn how to promote an idea so it is accepted. Consider community input. The bottom line is to make Alaska first in educational outcomes, not fiftieth.

Outcome-based programs and requests will be supported by the House and Senate and signed by the governor. The ability to

retain teachers affects outcomes, and this committee walks in lockstep with the governor on SB 111 because of its outcome solution. Therefore, put programs and requests together that are tied to SB 111. He stated that he does not care if critics are listening who do not like the fact that there is a hard push to change educational outcomes. A broad spectrum of individuals on the education committee understand the message and a little bit of the demagoguery but want a product that results in a comprehensive solution for education in Alaska. He said superintendents need to politic and talk about increasing the BSA in terms of specific programs that will result in better outcomes, retention, and results for Alaska's children. It is the primary message being sent by the committee and the governor to educators. Educators should hear the message and lean on legislators to get something done that will improve education outcomes this year because the option is available.

10:21:20 AM

CHAIR HOLLAND asked if the superintendents had closing comments.

10:21:42 AM

MR. HOLLAND said he appreciates the committee's work to create a sustainable long-term fiscal plan to improve education. He said he agreed that messaging is important, and requests should be tied to outcomes. Superintendents are willing to be held accountable and want to improve school district outcomes. Alaska is not first in spending and last in outcomes. A national study revealed that Alaska's BSA is average when adjusting for the cost of living. Alaska has districts that do very well. For example, Kenai's SAT and ACT scores outperform the rest of the nation. At the same time, other school districts struggle in areas both inside and outside of education. Those areas need support with outcomes and a stable workforce.

10:23:48 AM

MS. WEISS stated her belief that the committee and superintendents are on the same page, which is encouraging. Superintendents are tasked with overseeing the educational and business aspects of schools. Last year JSD spent \$240,000 on property insurance. In FY 2023, JSD will spend \$1.3 million on property insurance. Superintendents must run an audited budget that meets the basic needs of the organization outside of paying for all the initiatives. Discussions about the BSA would have been different if there had been small increases since 2017. Now, school districts are so far in the hole that it is difficult to come before the legislature and not mention the need for an increase. Whether the governor or anyone agrees is

not a superintendent's concern. Superintendents have a responsibility to run a fiscally solvent agency, which has become almost impossible. Superintendents support the legislative initiatives and are looking to partner on targeted funds with committed outcomes. Superintendents are driven, dedicated people who appreciate being able to find solutions in partnership with the legislature.

10:26:09 AM

MR. TRANI stated he supports a reading bill and accountability measures representing honest student achievement, especially if it will result in money for other school district challenges. He thrives on reaching targets, and the reading bill will benefit kids in the long run. School district staff are capable people that know how to marshal resources. He appreciated advice to focus on accountability and outcomes when seeking funding.

10:27:54 AM

SENATOR MICCICHE said the people superintendents are trying to reach are not listening to the committee meetings or attending school board meetings. Therefore, superintendents must take their message and present it so it will be heard and accepted, which is challenging for people who operate on facts, figures, and reality. He stated he agrees with the discussion, but superintendents need to get better at explaining how funding requests are tied to better outcomes.

10:29:10 AM

CHAIR HOLLAND held SB 225 in committee.

10:29:26 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Holland adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 10:29 a.m.