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522

February 13, 1984

Honorable Mae Tischer  
Chairman, Health, Education and  
Social Services Committee  
Pouch V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Mrs. Tischer:

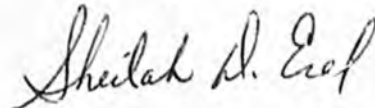
This letter is in regards to Bill 522.

I agree that kindergarten should be required in Alaska. However, the age (6 years) should not be changed. The year of growth between 5 and 6 will give the child a greater capacity to learn. He will be able to cope with social situations and pressures with better understanding than before.

I feel strongly that June should be the cut off date for entering school. With this requirement there should be no doubt whether a child may or may not enter school.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Sheilah D. Eral  
Homestead Elementary School  
Eagle River, Alaska 99577

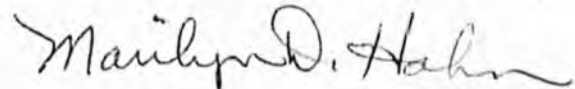
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Honorable Mae Tischer  
Chairman, Health, Education and  
Social Services Committee  
Pouch V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Mrs. Tischer:

As a first grade teacher for the past twelve years, I have become convinced that most children who do not master the skills necessary to go on to second grade simply need time for maturation. I urge you to move the entry date from November 1st to June 1st. (Many parents whose children I have had said they wished they'd given them a chance to develop both mentally, physically, and emotionally before entering their child in school. Help prevent parent failure.)

Sincerely,



Marilyn D. Hahn  
Homestead Elementary  
Eagle River, Alaska  
First Grade Teacher

February 13, 1984

Honorable Mae Tischer  
Chairman, Health, Education and  
Social Services Committee  
Pouch V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Mrs. Tischer:

As a first grade teacher and a parent of two boys ages four and five I urge you to look at changing the school entry date.

Many children often start school in September having just turned five or at four years of age turning five by November. These children are sometimes academically ready for school but not physically or emotionally. They are often immature, have coordination problems and are really not ready for the routine of the daily classroom.

In my 14 years experience as a primary teacher I have found that the children who end up in modified primary or retained in 1st grade are children with summer birthdays and early fall birthdays.

My own sons are examples: Sean turned five on June 2. He is a very capable child but I felt he was too immature to start school. I have seen a great change in him and I am confident he will do well and be able to handle everyday pressures and demands better.

One more thought on this change in entry date. Think about the outside and peer pressures a child needs to cope with once in Junior High or Senior High. If a child has experienced frustration as the youngest in a class in elementary school it gets worse in Junior High or Senior High. Why not give the children a chance to be at the top of the class instead of the bottom? A chance to have a little more maturity to cope with the influence of drugs and alcohol.

I know this isn't the answer to all school failures, but it is a step in the right direction.

If you have any questions please write or call me at any time.

Sincerely,

*Linda A Landers*

Linda Landers  
Star Route 192A  
Myrtle Drive  
Eagle River, Alaska 99577

*Please support H.B. 522 with the  
age change*