

SB

289

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



Interim:
600 East Railroad Avenue
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
(907) 376-3370
(907) 376-3157 Fax

Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-6600
(907) 465-3805 Fax

SENATOR LYDA GREEN SENATE DISTRICT G

SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR SB289

"An Act extending the termination date of the special education service agency; and providing for an effective date."

The Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) in 1985 to help schools and infant learning programs provide required services for children with severe disabilities where there is no local expertise. SESA makes it possible for services to be delivered to districts that could not otherwise hire specialists; for instance small and low attendance remote areas, or in a district where there was only one disabled child.

SESA employs professionals specializing in severe disabilities such as blindness and visual impairment, deafness and hearing impairment, autism, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, deaf-blindness, and significant physical and emotional disabilities. SESA offers school-wide and district-wide consultations and support, local and regional services and workshops, statewide workshops and courses, technical assistance newsletters, and an extensive library and website. As intended by the legislature, student-specific service is targeted to small school districts, but SESA's workshops, courses, library, newsletter and website are provided to all schools.

SESA receives core funding through the Department of Education and Early Development. The appropriation for FY2005 is included in the Governor's proposed budget. SESA received positive performance reviews from the Division of Legislative Audit and was extended by the legislature in 1987, 1989, 1992, and 1995. The Division again recommends continuation. The Alaska Association of School Boards, The Alaska Association of School Administrators, The National Education Association-Alaska, The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and the Department of Education and Early Development each support the extension of SESA.

The availability of specialized personnel in Alaska has decreased at the same time the incidence of severe disabilities has increased. SESA provides important functions for Alaskan children who would otherwise have to leave their families and communities to receive services in costly residential programs. SB289 reauthorizes the Special Education Service Agency for another nine years, to June 30, 2013.

THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

Alaska Association of School Administrators

Resolution #3

SESA Reauthorization

Continuation and funding of the Special Education Service Agency

Originated by: the Alaska Association of School Administrators at the Fall Meeting in Girdwood, Alaska, October 5, 2003.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide mandated special education programs for students with low incidence disabilities, and

WHEREAS, most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and experienced personnel to design and support effective, evidenced-based educational approaches for affected students, and

WHEREAS, access to personnel with specialized training and experience is essential if local schools are to provide effective special education to these students in their home districts as required by law, and

WHEREAS, SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering significant disability program supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen years of operation, and

WHEREAS, SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipients and parents, and

WHEREAS, the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status, and

WHEREAS, the Agency has been reauthorize by the Alaska Legislature four times since 1986, with formal support from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school districts, now

THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED that the Alaska Association of School Administrators supports the continuation and full funding of the Special Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset status.

Adopted: Girdwood, October 5, 2002



June 16, 2003

Chris Robinson, Executive Director
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Rd., Suite 1
Anchorage, AK 99507

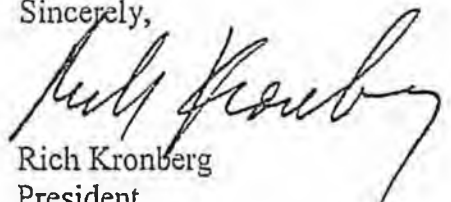
Dear Mr. Robinson:

NEA-Alaska worked for the establishment of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) in the 1980s. Since that time, our members have appreciated the support SESA has provided in educating students with low-incidence handicapping conditions. In 1993, our Delegate Assembly passed a New Business Item to support its continued existence.

Since the passage of that New Business Item, SESA has proven to be an even more critical component in the educational infrastructure of Alaska. The delegates to our Delegate Assembly have recognized this by changing the New Business Item that supported SESA to a Resolution in support of SESA. Unlike New Business Items, which are specific and time sensitive, Resolutions are statements of our core organizational beliefs and are not time limited.

The following is the relevant text of NEA-Alaska Resolution E-7:
NEA-Alaska shall continue to support the Special Education Service Agency (SESA), a statewide agency that assists rural schools serving low incident students with disabilities. NEA-Alaska shall continue to support appointment of a member of the NEA-Alaska Special Education Committee...to be on SESA's Board of Directors.

On a personal level, I have always felt that the schools and students of Alaska have always been well-served by SESA staff. I have only heard positive reports about their work in the schools around our state.

Sincerely,

Rich Kronberg
President



FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR
State of Alaska

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

P.O. Box 240249 • Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0249 • Phone: 907-269-8990 • Fax: 907-269-8995 • Toll Free 800-709-8990

A Resolution on the Continuation and Full Funding of the Special Education Service Agency

Whereas the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide mandated special education programs for students with low incidence disabilities; and,

Whereas most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and experienced personnel to design and support effective, research-based educational approaches for affected students, and,

Whereas access to personnel with specialized training and experience is essential if local schools are to provide effective special education to these students in their home districts as required by law; and,

Whereas SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering specialized supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen years of operation; and,

Whereas SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipients and parents; and,

Whereas the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status; and,

Whereas the Agency has been reauthorized by the Alaska Legislature four times since 1986, each time with formal support from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school districts, now

Therefore BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education supports the continuation and full funding of the Special Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset status.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth A. Edmands

Elizabeth Edmands, Council Chair

October 15, 2003

Unalaska City School District



Resolution 04-03

CONTINUATION and FUNDING of the SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY

Whereas the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide mandated special education programs for students with low incidence disabilities; and,

Whereas most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and experienced personnel to design and support effective, research-based educational approaches for affected students; and,

Whereas access to personnel with specialized training and experience is essential if local schools are to provide effective special education to these students in their home districts as required by law; and,

Whereas SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering significant disability program supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen years of operation; and,

Whereas SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipients and parents; and,

Whereas the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status; and,

Whereas the Agency has been reauthorized by the Alaska Legislature four times since 1986, each time with formal support from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school districts, now

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Unalaska City School Board of Education supports the continuation and full funding of the Special Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset status.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY A DULY CONSTITUTED QUORUM OF THE UNALASKA CITY SCHOOL BOARD THIS 30TH DAY OF OCTOBER 2003.

Tammy Fowler-Pound
Board President

Sonia Handforth-Kome
Clerk/Treasurer



**WRANGELL
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DISTRICT OFFICE**

P.O. BOX 2319
WRANGELL, ALASKA 99929
Telephone (907) 874-2347
Fax # (907) 874-3137

GATEWAY TO THE STIKINE

Resolution 04-01

**A Resolution of the Wrangell Public School Board Supporting Continuation
and Funding of the Special Education Service Agency**

Whereas the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide mandated special education programs for students with low incidence disabilities, and,

Whereas most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and experienced personnel to design and support effective, research-based educational approaches for affected students, and,

Whereas SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering significant disability program supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen years of operation, and,

Whereas SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipients and parents, and,

Whereas the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status, and,

Whereas the Agency has been reauthorized by the Alaska Legislature four times since 1986, each time with formal support from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school districts, now

Therefore **BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Wrangell Public Schools supports the continuation and full funding of the Special Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset status.

ENACTED THIS 20th DAY OF October, 2003.

Wrangell, Alaska

Lorrie Barlow
School Board President

October 29, 2003
Date

Penella McLachlan
School Board Secretary/Treasurer

12/1/03
Date

Kake City School District

*P.O. Box 450
Kake, Alaska 99830
(907) 785-3741*

October 21, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, AK 99507

Dear Ms. Vaile,

I have received notification that Alaska Statute 14.300.600 – 660 is scheduled to sunset at the close of this next school year and without reauthorization by the Legislature, SESA will be dissolved.

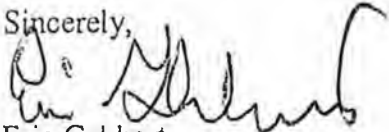
As Superintendent of the Kake City School District, I want to put my full support for the reauthorization of SESA on record. The services that SESA makes available to Kake are vital to the effectiveness of our special education programs. Students with low incidence disabilities deserve the best we can give them. The services SESA helps our district provide give us a degree of specialization and expertise that we would not be able to replace.

If SESA is not re-authorized I am concerned that we would not be able to maintain adequate services and students with severe disabilities would be forced to leave their homes and the village to receive appropriate services.

SESA has been a successful and efficient innovation for sharing scarce resources and offers an economy of scale rarely provided for districts like ours. I would encourage the Legislature to apply the SESA model to other statewide needs rather than allowing it to expire.

To this end, the Kake City School District Board of Education submits the enclosed Resolution unanimously approved at our regular board meeting on October 14, 2003. We fully support the continuation of SESA for the benefit of the students of Kake and all students in Alaska.

Sincerely,


Eric Gebhart
Superintendent

Kake City School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Kake City School District

*P.O. Box 450
Kake, Alaska 99830
(907) 785-3741*

Resolution #101403

Continuation and Funding of the Special Education Service Agency

Whereas the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide mandated special education programs for students with low incidence disabilities; and,

Whereas most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and experienced personnel to design and support effective, research-based educational approaches for affected students; and,

Whereas access to personnel with specialized training and experience is essential if local schools are to provide effective special education to these students in their home districts as required by law; and,

Whereas SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering significant disability program supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen years of operation; and,

Whereas SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipients and parents; and,

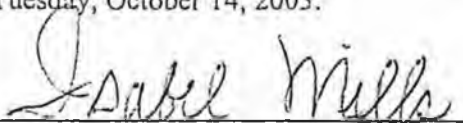
Whereas the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status; and,

Whereas the Agency has been reauthorized by the Alaska Legislature four times since 1986, each time with formal support from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school districts, now

Therefore BE IT RESOLVED THAT the school board of the Kake City School District supports the continuation and full funding of the Special Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset status.

Adopted by the Kake City School District Board of Education at a regularly scheduled meeting held on Tuesday, October 14, 2003.

Signed:


Isabel Mills, School Board President

10-14-03
Date

Kake City School District is an Equal Opportunity Employer



**Kodiak Island Borough School District
Office of the Superintendent
722 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
907-486-9220**

November 17, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

It has come to my attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600 - 660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As a school district superintendent, I want to put my support for SESA's reauthorization on the record. The services SESA makes available to the Kodiak Island Borough School District must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low incidence disabilities. We have a very difficult time finding special education and related service personnel for our district openings. Low incidence professionals would be even more difficult if not impossible to find. We cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs.

I am concerned that without the in-district and distance support SESA provides our teachers and aides, we would face new costs for special education hearings and/or litigation, or would be forced to place students in very costly out-of-district or out-of-state residential programs, at district expense.

SESA has been a successful and efficient innovation for sharing of scarce resources and offers an economy of scale rarely provided small and rural districts. If anything, the state might consider applying the SESA model to other statewide needs, rather than allow it to expire.

Sincerely,

Betty Walters
Superintendent
Kodiak Island Borough School District

VALDEZ CITY SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
P.O. Box 398 - 1112 West Klutina
Valdez, AK 99686
TEL# (907) 835-4357, FAX# (907) 835-4964
www.valdezcitieschools.org

Resolution 04-03
Of the Board of Education

Concerning: Continuation and Funding of the Special Education Service Agency

Whereas, the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide mandated special education programs for students with low incidence disabilities; and,

Whereas, most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and experienced personnel to design and support effective, researched-based educational approaches for affected students, and,

Whereas, access to personnel with specialized training and experience is essential if local schools are to provide effective special education to these students in their home districts as required by law; and,

Whereas, SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering significant disability program supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen years of operation; and,

Whereas, SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipient and parents; and,

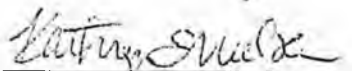
Whereas, the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status; and,

Whereas, the Agency has been reauthorized by the Alaska Legislature four times since 1986, each time with formal support from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school districts, now,

Therefore be it resolved that the Valdez City School District Board of Education supports the continuation and full funding of the Special Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset status.



Board President



Vice President

September 22, 2003

Date

VALDEZ CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent
P.O. Box 398 - 1112 West Klutina Street
Valdez, AK 99686
TEL# (907) 835-4357, FAX# (907) 835-4964
www.valdezcityschools.org

September 26, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

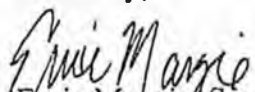
It has come to my attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600 – 660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As a school district superintendent, I want to put my support for SESA's reauthorization on the record. The services SESA makes available to my district must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low incidence disabilities. We cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs.

I am concerned that without the in-district and distance support SESA provides our teachers and aides, we would face new costs for special education hearings and/or litigation, or would be forced to place students in very costly out-of-district or out-of-state residential programs, at district expense.

SESA has been a successful and efficient innovation for sharing of scarce resources and offers an economy of scale rarely provided small and rural districts. If anything, the state might consider applying the SESA model to other statewide needs, rather than allow it to expire.

Sincerely,


Ernie Manzie, Superintendent
Valdez City School District

EM:dfs

VALDEZ CITY SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
P.O. Box 398 - 1112 West Klutina
Valdez, AK 99686
TEL# (907) 835-4357, FAX# (907) 835-4964
www.valdezcitieschools.org

Resolution 04-03
Of the Board of Education

Concerning: Continuation and Funding of the Special Education Service Agency

Whereas, the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide mandated special education programs for students with low incidence disabilities; and,

Whereas, most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and experienced personnel to design and support effective, researched-based educational approaches for affected students, and,

Whereas, access to personnel with specialized training and experience is essential if local schools are to provide effective special education to these students in their home districts as required by law; and,

Whereas, SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering significant disability program supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen years of operation; and,

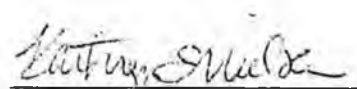
Whereas, SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipients and parents; and,

Whereas, the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status; and,

Whereas, the Agency has been reauthorized by the Alaska Legislature four times since 1986, each time with formal support from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents, and school districts, now,

Therefore be it resolved that the Valdez City School District Board of Education supports the continuation and full funding of the Special Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset status.


Board President


Vice President

September 22, 2003
Date



FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

520 Fifth Avenue

Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-4756

(907) 452-2000

October 22, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Ste 1
Anchorage, AK 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

I am writing on behalf of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District to express our support for the reauthorization of the Special Education Service Agency by the state legislature and to extend or eliminate the June 30, 2004 sunset date.

The services of SESA to our district need to be continued and enhanced if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low incidence disabilities. We are finding it to be more and more difficult to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs. Please consider increasing services, not eliminating them.

While we are trying to do more for students with less revenue, it only makes sense to keep any economical services that have been successful. SESA has been that successful and efficient model for sharing of scarce resources. They also offer an economy of scale for districts. The state must consider applying the SESA model to other statewide needs, rather than allow it to sunset in June 2004.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann E. Shortt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ann E. Shortt, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

/plh

Yupiiit School District
P.O. Box 51190
Akiachak, Alaska 99551
(907) 825-3600 phone; (907) 825-3655 fax

Ms. Gayle Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle,

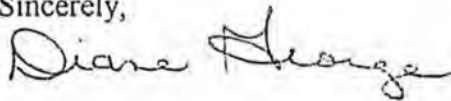
It has come to my attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600-660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As the special education director for the Yupiiit School District, I want to put my full support for SESA's reauthorization on record. The services that SESA provides to my district have proved invaluable over the last several years. Without these services it would be nearly impossible for us to meet the needs of our students with low incidence disabilities. In addition, with the continuing shortage of special educators it is becoming even more difficult to hire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement programs for students with severe disabilities.

Without the supports that SESA provides our district would be forced to consider out-of-district or out-of-state placements for some students. This is not only very costly, but in direct violation of IDEA which requires home school placement to the greatest extent possible.

SESA has been a successful model for supporting districts in their attempts to meet the educational needs of their most significantly disabled students. It would be a shame to lose this support in this time of shrinking financial resources.

Sincerely,



Diane George
Special Education Director

Cc: Representative Mary Kapsner,
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Commissioner Roger Sampson



**WRANGELL
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DISTRICT OFFICE**

GATEWAY TO THE STIKINE

P.O. BOX 2319
WRANGELL, ALASKA 99929
Telephone (907) 874-2347
Fax # (907) 874-3137

September 19, 2003
Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:


It has come to my attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600 – 660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As a school district superintendent, I want to put my support for SESA's reauthorization on the record. The services SESA makes available to my district must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low incidence disabilities. We cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs.

I am concerned that without the in-district and distance support SESA provides our teachers and aides, we would face new costs for special education hearings and/or litigation, or would be forced to place students in very costly out-of-district or out-of-state residential programs, at district expense.

SESA has been a successful and efficient innovation for sharing of scarce resources and offers an economy of scale rarely provided small and rural districts. If anything, the state might consider applying the SESA model to other statewide needs, rather than allow it to expire.

Sincerely,

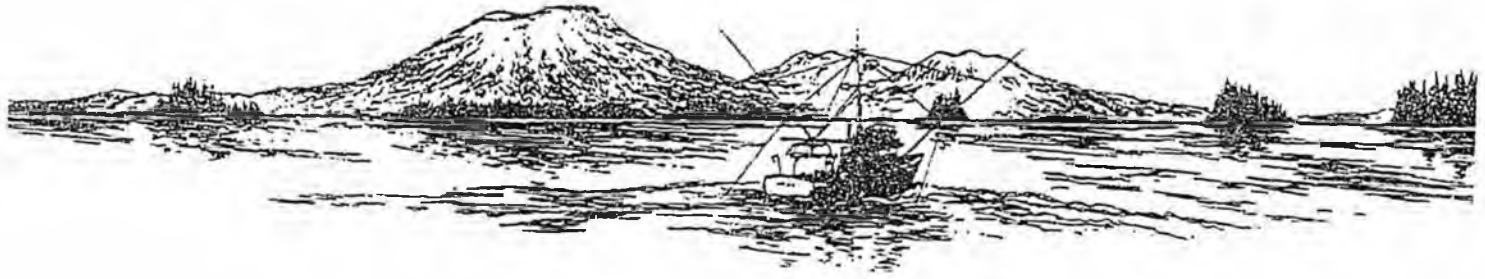

Susan J. Sciabbarrasi
Superintendent

CC. Representative Peggy Wilson
Roger Sampson, Alaska Commissioner of Education
State Board of Education

SITKA SCHOOL DISTRICT

www.ssd.k12.ak.us

300 Kostrometinoff
Sitka, Alaska 99835
Phone: (907) 747-8622
Fax: (907) 966-1260



September 19, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road Suite 1
Anchorage, AK 99507

Dear Ms. Valle,


When the Alaska Legislature established Special Education Service Agency (SESA) to help school districts provide mandated services in special education, this was a terrific decision. Now it is my understanding that Alaska Statute 14.300.600-660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, SESA will be dissolved.

With the decline in enrollment, which in turn means a decline in budget, districts are faced with difficulties in meeting the needs of all special education students. Even though the enrollment is decreasing, in many areas the percentage of students with low incidence disabilities is increasing, which creates difficulties. Besides the decrease in enrollment it is becoming increasingly difficult to find educators that have the qualifications needed to work with many of these students. SESA is a great resource for this reason.

If SESA was dissolved there would definitely be a cost increase to the district due to providing special education services to students in out of district facilities or also due to litigation. Both of which would be at district expense.

I strongly encourage you to give your highest consideration to continue and to fully fund SESA in any possible manner.

Sincerely,



Steve Bradshaw
Superintendent

NOME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Box 131, Nome, Alaska 99762 • FAX: (907) 443-5144 • Telephone (907) 443-2231



September 17, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

It has come to my attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600-660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

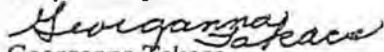
As Director of Special Education in a school district receiving SESA services, I would like my support for reauthorization noted on record. The services SESA makes available to my district and our students with low incidence disabilities must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated by law. We cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs.

I am very concerned that without the in-district and distance support SESA provides our teachers, aides and parents, we will find ourselves in costly special education hearings and/or litigations. There is also the possibility that it would become necessary to place students in out of district residential programs that would be extremely costly to the district.

In addition to the highly qualified personnel SESA provides to our districts, they also offer an array of resources through their lending library. This service alone has saved our district a huge amount of money.

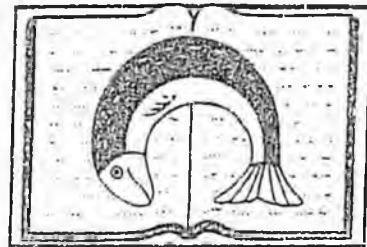
Please support the renewal of the above statute and allow us to continue receiving the support afforded us by SESA.

Respectfully,


Georganna Takacs

Director of Special Education
Nome Public Schools

Cc: Representative Richard Foster
Senator Donald Olson
Commissioner of Education Roger Sampson
State Board of Education Richard Mauer, Chair



Lower Kuskokwim School District

Special Education Department
P.O. Box 305 • Bethel, Alaska 99559-0305
907 543-4871/4872 FAX 907 543-4931

September 15, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, AK 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

It has come to our attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600-660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

We currently receive services from SESA in the specialized areas of Assistive Technology and Deaf/Hard of Hearing. These services are extremely beneficial for some of our special education students with low incidence disabilities. Given the present market, we are not always able to hire special education teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement these programs. By providing training to our teachers and paraprofessionals, SESA helps us provide the required elements of a compliant special education program for these low incidence students. Another important benefit our district receives from SESA is their participation as speakers in our regional special education inservice each fall. Professionals and parents from throughout the region benefit from the SESA staff's expertise in the areas of low incidence disabilities.

Over the years, SESA has been a successful and efficient resource for both direct services and staff development in our district. Lower Kuskokwim School District wants to emphasize the benefit of SESA's services and document our support for SESA's reauthorization.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William A. Ferguson".

William Ferguson, Superintendent

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linae Sanger".

Linae Sanger, Special Education Director

cc: YOUR DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
Alaska Commissioner of Education
State Board of Education

North Slope Borough School District



September 10, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, AK 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

It has come to my attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600 – 660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As a school district superintendent, I want to put my support for SESA's reauthorization on the record. The services SESA makes available to my district must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low-incidence disabilities. We cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement sever disability programs.

I am concerned that without the in-district and distance support SESA provides our teachers and aides, we would face new costs for special education hearings and/or litigation, or would be forced to place students in very costly out-of-district or out-of-state residential programs, at district expense.

SESA has been a successful and efficient innovation for sharing of scarce resources and offers an economy of scale rarely provided small and rural districts. If anything, the state might consider applying the SESA model to other statewide needs, rather than allow it to expire.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael M. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Michael M. Smith,
Superintendent

H:\ann\michael\letters\04-28.doc



THE LAKE AND PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT

101 Jensen Drive
P.O. Box 498
King Salmon, Alaska 99613
Phone (907) 246-4280 / Fax (907) 246-4473



Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

September 11, 2003

Dear Ms. Valle:

Recently I learned that Alaska Statute 14.300.600-600, that created the Special Education Service Agency, is scheduled to sunset at the end of June, 2004. I am writing to the SESA Board of Directors to share my observations of what SESA has provided to our school district and to express my support for the reauthorization of SESA.

The Lake and Peninsula School District serves a small number of students spread across a large number of widely separated sites. Sprinkled among our isolated school sites, each year, are children who experience intensive disabilities or severe challenging behavior. A district of our size cannot afford to hire the specialized staff who are needed to build effective programs for these children. SESA program specialists provide our district with expertise in autism, positive behavior supports, specialized instruction, specialized materials and adaptive equipment. In addition, the SESA library provides our special educators and parents with a cost-effective way to access special education materials that are too expensive for a small district or individual family to purchase.

Without the support of SESA program specialists and the SESA library, the special education programs for children with intensive needs and severe challenging behavior in our district would not be as effective as they are today. Interestingly, by providing specialized support to small districts such as ours, SESA saves Alaska money. Programs for students with intensive needs that are ineffective become targets of legal challenge. School districts embroiled in legal challenges from advocates for children with disabilities must divert significant resources to defend themselves. SESA helps even small districts offer the highest quality programs that we can to our disabled students.

The Lake and Peninsula School District supports continued funding of the Special Education Service Agency. SESA provides essential services that make a difference.

Please share this letter with legislators and other individuals involved in determining SESA's future. Thank you for the many years of high quality support that SESA has provided to students, teachers and parents in the Lake and Peninsula School District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Atwater".

Steve Atwater, Superintendent

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

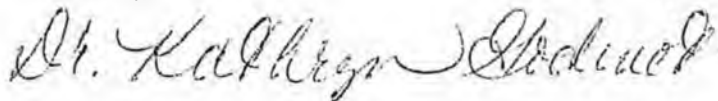
I have recently become aware that Alaska Statute 14.300.600 – 660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004. Without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be no more. This is a great concern to small and large school districts here in Alaska.

I support SESA's reauthorization. Being the school superintendent for St. Mary's City Schools, I have found that the services SESA makes available to my district must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low incidence disabilities. Here in the bush, districts cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs. We desperately need these critical services which are provided to us by SESA!

There is no doubt that without the in-district and distance support SESA provides our teachers and aides, we would face huge new costs for special education hearings and/or litigation. We could be forced to place students in very costly out-of-district or out-of-state residential programs. These are expenses that our district can ill afford.

SESA is a successful and efficient organization to share scarce resources and offers quality services provided to small and rural districts. Please assure that this critical service to bush Alaska school districts is continued.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kathryn Godinet,
Superintendent

cc: Alaska Commissioner of Education
State Board of Education



Klawock City School District

P.O. Box 9 Klawock, Alaska 99925 907-755-2220 Fax: 907-755-2913

Richard E. Carlson
Superintendent

Donald H. Busse
K -12 Principal

September 3, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

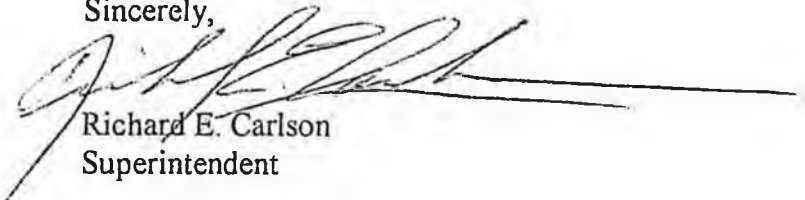
Dear Ms. Valle:

As you are aware the Alaska Statute 14.300.600 – 660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004 and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As superintendent of a small school district, I want to put my support for SESA's reauthorization on the record. The services SESA makes available to my district must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low incidence disabilities. We cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs.

SESA has been a successful and efficient innovation for sharing of scarce resources and offers an economy of scale rarely provided small and rural districts. If anything, the state might consider applying the SESA model to other statewide needs, rather than allow it to expire.

Sincerely,



Richard E. Carlson
Superintendent

Cc: Cindy Mills, Board President
Alaska Commissioner of Education



SOUTHEAST ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 19569 Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919

(907) 828-8254 Fax: (907) 828-8257 darensman@sisd.org

President Gayla Valle
Board of Directors
Southeast Education Service Agency

Dear Ms. Valle:

The Special Education Service Agency has provided excellent services to the low incidence students in Alaska. In my role as superintendent and special education director for Southeast Island School District I am writing to urge the reauthorization of Alaska Statute 14.300.600-660, which will sunset on June 30, 2004.

My district is small and has only a few low incidence students. It would seem to be impossible for small districts such as SISD to provide the high quality services now performed by SESA. Even when I was in Bering Strait School District, a large school district, we relied on SESA for services.

To pull the SESA services from districts will be an injustice to the students who benefit now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dorothy Arensman".

Dorothy Arensman, Ed.D.

Cc: Legislative delegation
Alaska Commissioner of Education
State Board of Education



BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

P. O. BOX 169
NAKNEK, ALASKA 99633

KELLY W. CASTLEBERRY
PRINCIPAL
PHONE: (907) 246-4265
FAX: (907) 246-4447
E-MAIL: kcastleberry@nnk.gcisa.net

RICHARD D. HEBHARDT
SUPERINTENDENT
PHONE: (907) 246-4225
FAX: (907) 246-6857
E-MAIL: rhebhardt@nnk.gcisa.net

October 27, 2003

Ms. Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

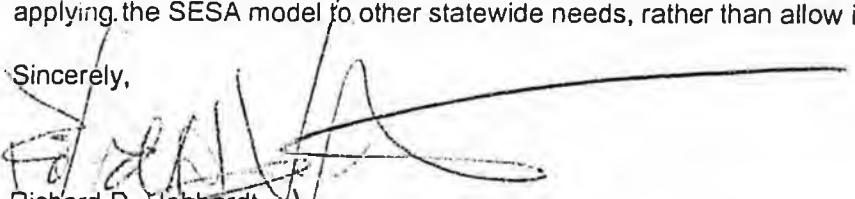
It has come to my attention that Alaska Statute 14.300.600-660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As a school district superintendent, I want to put my support for SESA's reauthorization on the record. The services SESA makes available to my district must be continued if we are to provide appropriate special education programs as mandated for our students with low incidence disabilities. We cannot be expected to acquire teachers with the specialized training and experience needed to design and implement severe disability programs.

I am concerned that without the in-district and distance support SESA provides our teachers and aides, we would face new costs for special education hearings and/or litigation, or would be forced to place students in very costly out-of-district or out-of-state residential programs, at district expense.

SESA has been a successful and efficient innovation for sharing of scarce resources and offers an economy of scale rarely provided small and rural districts. If anything, the state might consider applying the SESA model to other statewide needs, rather than allow it to expire.

Sincerely,



Richard D. Hebhardt
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Alaska Commissioner of Education



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Superintendent

Dr. Donna Peterson, Superintendent of Schools
148 North Binkley Street Soldotna, Alaska 99669-7553
Phone (907) 262-5846 Fax (907) 262-9132

September 9, 2003

Ms Gayla Valle, President
Board of Directors
Special Education Service Agency
2217 East Tudor Road, Suite 1
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Dear Ms. Valle:

I have been told that Alaska Statute 14.30.600-660 is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2004, and without reauthorization by the Legislature, the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) will be dissolved.

As a school district superintendent, I want to support SESA's reauthorization. However, that support is contingent on SESA's services being available to all school districts within the state. Currently, SESA restricts its services to small rural school districts. Many districts in this state, this one included, serve both urban and rural communities. We have children located in rural communities with low incidence special education needs who require specialized services that are not available in these communities. Because of the low incidence of these children, they are not easily served by this district, and yet, SESA's services have not been available to us.

SESA has been a successful and efficient model for sharing scarce resources and has offered an economy of scale for small and rural districts. SESA needs to expand its scope of services to include all Alaska school districts. We believe there is nothing in AS 14.30.640 which would prohibit this expansion of services. However, it will take an intentional act on the part of the Board and Administration to make this expansion happen.

In summary, KPBSD supports the concept and model represented by SESA. It offers an effective model of service for small and rural communities. We however, support its continuation only if its services are made available to all Alaskan school districts.

Sincerely,

Donna Peterson
Donna Peterson, Superintendent
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Roger Sampson, Commissioner of Education
State Board of Education
Legislative Delegation

1 **Alaska Association of School Administrators**

2
3 **Resolution #3**

4
5 **SESA Reauthorization**

6 **Continuation and funding of the Special Education Service Agency**

7
8
9 Originated by: SESA for the Alaska Association of School Administrators at the
10 Fall Meeting in Girdwood, Alaska, October 5, 2003.

11
12 **WHEREAS**, the Alaska Legislature established the Special Education Service
13 Agency (SESA) for the primary purpose of helping school districts provide
14 mandated special education programs for students with low incidence
15 disabilities; and

16
17 **WHEREAS**, most school districts in Alaska are unable to obtain qualified and
18 experienced personnel to design and support effective, evidenced-based
19 educational approaches for affected students; and

20
21 **WHEREAS**, access to personnel with specialized training and experience is
22 essential if local schools are to provide effective special education to these
23 students in their home districts as required by law; and

24
25 **WHEREAS**, SESA is the only Alaskan resource offering [specialized] significant
26 disability program supports to schools and parents, and SESA services have
27 proven to be both educationally effective and fiscally efficient during seventeen
28 years of operation; and

29
30 **WHEREAS**, SESA was cited for commendation by the U.S. Office of Education in
31 a past review of the state's special education system, and receives consistently
32 excellent ratings of satisfaction from service recipients and parents; and

33
34 **WHEREAS**, the most recent performance review of the agency by the Division of
35 Legislative Audit strongly supported its current design and operations, and
36 recommended the Legislature consider removing SESA from sunset status; and

37
38 **WHEREAS**, the Agency has been reauthorize by the Alaska Legislature four
39 times since 1986, with formal support from school boards, superintendents,
40 teachers, parents, and school districts; now

41
42 **THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED** that the Alaska Association of School
43 Administrators supports the continuation and full funding of the Special

- 1 Education Service Agency as in A.S. 14.30.600, including reporting requirements
- 2 to the Department of Education, and supports removal of the agency from sunset
- 3 status.
- 4
- 5 Adopted: Girdwood, October 5, 2003

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 289
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: EED
 Title: _____ RDU: K-12 Support
 Component: Schools for the Handicapped
 Sponsor: Senator Green
 Requester: Health, Ed., and Soc. Serv., Finance Component No. 151

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2005 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This is a zero fiscal note.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson, Director Phone 465-8727
 Division: Teaching & Learning Support Date/Time 2/6/04 9:31 AM
 Approved by: _____ Date 2/6/2004
 Agency: _____

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT First Committee of Referral

DATE: 2/2/04

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: _____
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 2.10.04

Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered

SENATE BILL NO. 289

SB 289 EXTENDING THE SPECIAL ED SERVICE AGENCY

"An Act extending the termination date of the special education service agency; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with _____ CS _____ (_____)
- adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:
 Same Title
 New Title

House Bill:
 Same Title
 Technical Title Change
 New Title w/ SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
EED	2/6			✓	

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
CHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	✓			