

## 09 Position Statements

### Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals **Position Statements**

#### **09-01 Increase to Base Student Allocation**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals request that the Legislature establish and fund a base student allocation beyond the amount currently in law.

- Increased energy costs, increases in health care costs, general labor expenses and other costs continue to result in funding pressures in school districts.

- Many districts project FY11 staff and program cuts; the negative effects on student education would be mitigated by this additional funding.

- Additional funding provides adequate and equitable funding to all districts.

#### **09-02 Full Funding of the ISER Cost Study Recommendations and Intensive Funding**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals fully support the immediate implementation of the ISER district and intensive cost factors.

- Inequities in the foundation formula have been validated through numerous studies.

- Adjustment to a formula which more accurately reflects costs is long overdue.

#### **09-03 Early Childhood Education**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals believe early childhood education should be a priority for all Alaskans who desire to improve the educational opportunities for all children, and support the funding of programs that will offer early education opportunities.

- Research is clear and consistent that the benefits of early childhood education are significant and important to the educational development of young people.

- The children most impacted by the lack of funding for early childhood education programs are the least likely to find alternate educational programs.

- Currently, a reliable system of funding for early childhood education programs is not available for Alaska's schools and families.

#### **09-04 Funding Formula Hold Harmless**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals encourage the Legislature to reduce the hold harmless funding formula trigger from five percent (5%) of Average Daily Membership (ADM) to two and one-half percent (2.5%).

- Districts do not know their actual state revenue until late fall, after the student count.
- District budgets and contracts must be finalized by the spring of the prior school year.
- The loss of a school and/or an enrollment decrease can have significant negative effects on school funding, seriously impacting student education.

#### **09-05 Funding Bond Debt Reimbursement and the Capital Improvement Program**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals support the continuation of the current level of 60% and 70% debt reimbursement of voter-approved bonds, and support the development of a process to equitably address the needs of school districts unable to bond locally.

- A reduction in the payment schedule from the State of Alaska will adversely affect budgets and promises made to taxpayers at an extremely challenging economic time.
- The planning of construction projects and major maintenance efforts were carefully considered with anticipated budget information secured from a variety of sources, including the State of Alaska.
- The public was informed that local and statewide bond efforts would receive state repayment support.

#### **09-06 Comprehensive Fiscal Plan**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals support a long-term, planned approach to increase available state funding from a variety of sources. Funding should be prioritized to meet the essential services and obligations of the State of Alaska, as provided in the State Constitution.

- The economic vitality of the State depends on the delivery of quality education to our youth.
- The delivery of quality education from year-to-year depends on consistent funding and planning time to absorb change.

## **09-07 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Funding (I.D.E.A.)**

In 1976 the federal government promised to increase funding for special education students. The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals petition the Alaska State Legislature, the Governor's Office and the Alaska Congressional Delegation to support full federal funding of IDEA to fulfill the promise made over three decades ago.

- According to the Council for Exceptional Children, the federal government has provided only 17.2% of the money needed to meet the legal requirements for educational services (Stimulus funds are not included in these calculations).

- Schools in Alaska have significantly higher costs than other states in providing services especially in rural and remote areas.

- Schools are required to provide a full compendium of medical services to students covered under this law.

## **09-08 Pupil Transportation Funding**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals are pleased that the State of Alaska has recalibrated the current formula for funding pupil transportation and has included an annual inflation factor. However, further support for transportation is still necessary.

- Pupil transportation is an important part of overall school funding and the costs are continuing to increase.

- School districts need adequate funds to address increased pupil transportation costs to ensure that funds allocated for instruction are not used to meet the costs of transportation obligations.

## **09-09 Workforce Development**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals support adequate and equitable funding for career development opportunities for students at all grade levels.

- Workforce development is a lifelong process of preparing and placing Alaskans into Alaska's jobs.

- Workforce development opportunities and trainings are an integral part of education and critical to Alaska's economic stability and growth.

- Workforce development and economic development require quality and relevant education from preschool through technical training or college, and educators need to be

involved in the process of identifying existing rural and urban programs for improving and expanding workforce development opportunities.

### **09-10 Preparing, Attracting and Retaining Qualified Teachers and Administrators**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals encourage the development of a comprehensive statewide program to prepare, attract and retain quality educators in our schools.

- Living conditions related to life in remote areas and the higher cost of living in many Alaskan communities present challenges for teachers and administrators.

- Teacher salaries in other states are approaching, and even exceeding, Alaska's salaries for teachers and administrators, especially when factoring in Alaska's higher cost of living.

- Alaska's Teacher Retirement System is no longer a competitive draw for teachers and administrators from other states.

- School districts in Alaska are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers and administrators.

- The Alaska university system does not graduate enough students in teacher education, administration, and related services areas to meet school districts' staffing needs.

### **09-11 Retire/Rehire Provision Sunset**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals support reinstatement of the Retire/Rehire provisions that have been in place in prior years.

- The education of our students depends on accessing the full range of all available candidates in order to provide the best possible educators for our children.

- Salaries in other states are approaching, and in many instances exceeding, Alaska's salaries for teachers and administrators.

- Alaska's Teacher Retirement System is no longer a competitive draw for teachers and administrators from other states.

- Alaska currently allows the hire of teachers and administrators who are retired from other states. Alaska's retired professionals have comparable skills and strengths and the additional knowledge of our Alaska schools, communities, and culture.

## **09-12 Work Ready College Ready Program Mandate**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals recognize the importance of building pre-vocational and vocational trainings and awareness statewide, but oppose the mandatory implementation of the Work Ready College Ready and Work Keys programs.

- There is no accountability mechanism built into the implementation plans for districts, schools, or students to gauge effectiveness or growth over time for students acquiring the critical work ready skills.

- The lack of appropriate infrastructure supporting the use of the program hinders the effectiveness of the program for our students.

- The Work Ready College Ready and Work Keys programs create another layer of “testing” for students that are not relevant for all students and are not directly aligned with our statewide model for improving student achievement and learning.

## **09-13 Early Childhood Coursework Requirements**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals recognize the unique needs of early childhood instruction, but oppose mandating a requirement for additional Early Childhood coursework beyond requirements for state licensure.

- Administrators need flexibility in placing teachers to ensure continuity with a teaching staff.

- Specific requirements in early childhood further reduce the pool of qualified teacher applicants at a time when retaining and recruiting qualified teachers is problematic.

- Teaching a variety of grade levels enhances a teacher’s professional scope and strengthens knowledge of childhood development.

- Current licensure by the State of Alaska for k-6 teachers, combined with existing staff development and district improvement plans, is sufficient to address the specific challenges of early childhood instruction.

## **09-14 DEED Audit of All Alaskan School Buildings**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals urges the Legislature to fund a statewide audit of all school facilities to accurately assess which school buildings must be replaced or renovated in three, five and ten years.

- A building audit would provide the Legislature and Governor with accurate data on the state of school buildings throughout Alaska, including anticipated and immediate needs.

- The audit should focus on the expectation that all school facilities in Alaska are maximally energy-efficient and provide safe, healthy learning environments.

## **09-15 Career and Technical Education**

The Alaska Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals supports the reestablishment of categorical Career and Technical Education funding to ensure our K-12 schools have the tools to prepare a workforce trained in 21st Century work skills and to provide a viable mechanism to increase graduation rates by reengaging disenfranchised students in their high school education.

- Increased funding in Career and Technical Education professional development opportunities is critical to ensure CTE teachers can meet the wide array of learning needs of our students while also demonstrating content mastery through methods appropriate to their areas of expertise, utilizing industry-based credentials.

- All students need a strong array of reading, comprehension, reasoning, problem solving and personal skills to be ready to enter the world of meaningful postsecondary education and training or enter the high-skilled workplace.

- A strong and well-articulated Career and Technical Education model is critical to supporting high K-12 educational standards and Alaska's economic stability and growth.