

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

ALASKA PTA (2017)

TOP PRIORITY: Statewide Education Funding

The Alaska PTA supports no further cuts to K-12 public education funding. Furthermore, we advocate:

- ❖ full funding of the existing education foundation formula;
- ❖ update the cost-of-living factor to reflect the current Consumer Price Index (CPI); and
- ❖ hold harmless any school district that would otherwise have funding reduced until actual CPI is equal to or above the current inaccurate CPI.

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES:

The Alaska PTA has additional issues in no particular order:

- ❖ Lack of early learning and pre-kindergarten programs
 - We support quality early learning and family strengthening programs to ensure every child starts school ready to learn.
- ❖ High student to teacher ratio
 - We support adding teachers to improve the quality of the learning environment.
- ❖ Overwhelming mandates on teachers and support staff
 - We support legislators working with the administration to reduce mandates that force staff away from with students and their learning.
- ❖ Low teacher and staff retention
 - We support legislative words and deeds that improve education system employee morale and retention.
- ❖ Lack of after-school programs
 - We support after-school programs as opportunities for students to continue learning while parents earn a living.
- ❖ Closure of rural schools with low enrollment
 - We support equal learning opportunities for students in small, rural school districts.

- ❖ Late allocation of funds
 - We support earlier allocations to improve school planning and budgeting.
- ❖ Penalties for cost-savings
 - We support efforts to hold school districts harmless for finding efficiencies by adding a hold harmless clause to the education foundation formula.
- ❖ Address academic performance gap
 - We support efforts to help low income and minority students achieve their academic goals.

ALASKA PTA MEMBER TESTIMONIALS: In December 2016, we surveyed our members to learn their concerns. Here's a random sample of their responses:

"We as a state can pay now or pay later. Investing in pre-K, bringing class sizes down & keeping small, rural schools that serve as community hubs open will provide immeasurable benefits for Alaska. Failure to do so will result in bigger problems down the road."

"Children get out of school well before their parents get off work. There must be an after school program for those single parents who have to work when their child gets out of school."

"Many studies have shown that preschool has an exceptionally high return on investment, with increases in academic success and diminished rates of incarceration and other negative outcomes."

"Class sizes are too large. Teachers cannot possibly give students the attention they need with 26 kindergarteners or 34 6th graders in one room. Behavior issues multiply and learning time decreases."

"Teachers are getting mandated 7 additional courses which consume a HUGE amount of time to complete on their own time, on top of what they already are doing in their own time to make their jobs run smoothly day to day (grading, parent contacts, and preparing for lessons)."

"Keep strong arts and music programs. Legislature needs to preserve proper funding through new revenue, such as income tax. Alaska PTA should advocate for new revenue."