

Re: Letter regarding State Board of Education Appointment

It has recently come to our attention that Governor Dunleavy appointed Kimberly Bergey, a resident of Palmer, as the State Board of Education & Early Development representative from the second judicial district. The second judicial district serves Nome, North Slope, Bering Straits, the Northwest Arctic, and the school districts within those boundaries. Since March, the seat had been vacant after the term of Unalakleet resident Jeffrey Erickson expired.

Appointments to the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development are outlined in AS 14.07.085. AS 14.07.085 provides that members of the board shall be appointed by the governor subject to confirmation by a majority of the members of the legislature in a joint session. Board members oversee the state's education system. One member shall be appointed from each of the four judicial districts and three from the state at large, with at least one member representing regional education attendance areas.

Board members who are appointed to represent a specific judicial district should reside in that judicial district as required by law and to provide for adequate representation. Representation from each judicial district provides balanced representation from all school districts across the state and is important for equal and fair representation on a statewide board. Requiring board members to live in each judicial district allows the board members to hear directly from the region and its residents about each area's school funding, curriculum, cultural, language, and infrastructure needs. As one of the largest states in the USA and with a diverse mix of residents and cultures it is even more important that all school districts have regional representation.

We urge Governor Dunleavy to rescind the appointment of Kimberly Bergey and appoint a resident of the second judicial district to the State Board of Education.

Northwest Arctic Borough School District

North Slope Borough

Bering Straits School District

Nome School District