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February 27, 2018

Representative Les Gara  
State House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Gara,

On behalf of the Cordova School District, I wanted to extend my thanks to you for introducing and co-sponsoring HB 339, which proposes an increase of \$100 to the current Base Student Allocation.

Educators across Alaska are aware of the large scope of matters under consideration in the legislature that will have a significant impact on our state as a whole, including educational programming. Considering these matters in combination with the current economic climate, I urge you to use your influence and your vote in investing in Alaska's future, namely our children and that of the public education school system.

Further, I understand and appreciate that the legislature must consider a number of ways to address Alaska's current economic situation; of equal importance is the compelling need to act with foresight in planning for a promising future, as well. As part of your considerations, the following legislative actions would provide a sense of hope to local districts as we look toward educating our students for the future:

- Developing a sound state fiscal plan that addresses costs and cultivates new revenue streams
- Implementing meaningful retirement frameworks that will reduce the unsustainable required contributions from local school districts
- Providing relief from burdensome state legislative mandates that add to school district costs
- Opposing efforts that erode a district's authority to maintain local control of programs and operations
- Investing in the one resource that we know does not ebb and flow with the times: Alaska's children

In closing, the costs of public education are great, and so are the rewards! Visit a neighborhood school, near or far, rural or urban, and you are sure to see the wonderment of what investing in public education has to offer. Cordova School District has historically done our part by meeting high levels of academic performance and achievement standards, including graduation rates, both locally and at a state level. An increase to the BSA would offer the chance to enhance current programming and to grow new opportunities for our students. If we maintain the "status quo" as the world moves ahead, we are actually falling behind.

Please show your commitment by working diligently to see that public education is funded in ways that meet the changing times and the ever-growing needs of our diverse students.

Thank you for your continued service and support of Alaska's children and communities.

Sincerely,

Alex Russin, Superintendent