



December 9, 2019

Mr. Bryce Edgmon
State Capital Building
120 East 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Speaker Edgmon,

I am writing in regards to Tribal Compacting and the work that has been done by the Assistant Commissioner of Education, Niki Tshibaka, and the State Board of Education's Sub Committee. First off, I would like to say that I am fully supportive of such a concept however I do have some questions and concerns. As a veteran Superintendent in Alaska, I have seen many initiatives come and go but I can't recall such a potentially impactful idea being pushed forward so quickly without district involvement or due diligence. The Child Welfare Compact was 23 years in the making, we should be just as diligent with this initiative.

I have specific concerns/questions with this initiative which I will address below but I am also concerned for the health and well-being of Lake and Peninsula School District. With one of our villages being targeted for tribal compacting during these fiscally challenging times, the idea of losing 20 students and a school site out of our funding formula, is very concerning. It seems inherent that monies will have to be cut from our already bare bones budget, negatively impacting the rest of the students in our district. I would hope that this is taken into consideration as the State moves forward with this concept.

Some of my specific concerns with Tribal Compacting and items to consider are...

➤ ***The Question of Nuts and Bolts?***

What about... Financial Reporting, Federal Reporting, Special Education, Federal Requirements/Programs, Accountability/Testing Requirements, E-rate/Technology Access, Local Funding Structure, State Funding, Federal Funding, Facilities/Existing District-Owned Resources, Insurance Requirements and Involvement in Programs and Activities (District and State)? The lift will be extremely heavy and prior to a tribe, village, or association going down this road, everyone involved should be well aware of what it all entails. While, on the surface, this concept may be very appealing to our tribes and

villages, there are many, many factors that have not been presented to, or understood by, all stakeholders.

➤ ***The Question of Legality?***

After a brief conversation with legal counsel it seems that there is a long legal road ahead of compacting. Many issues were discussed with most requiring statutory and/or constitutional change. Our understanding is that the Constitution identifies the Legislature as having the responsibility of education in Alaska and this responsibility can't simply be delegated.

➤ ***The Question of Politics?***

Many believe that the push for compacting is not necessarily in the best interest of rural students but rather a back-door way to achieve an educational voucher program. Could Tribal Compacting pave the way for privatized vouchers in the State of Alaska?

For something of this magnitude to happen, it must be planned carefully with a very clear road map provided. Right now, neither of these things are happening. Jumping head first into such a transition undermines the possibility of success for our students and is, quite simply, not best practice.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Ty Mase