



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of Superintendent

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February 27, 2014

Senator Berta Gardner
State Capitol, Room 417
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Senator Gardner,

I am writing on behalf of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District to support Senate Bill 184 that if passed, will direct the Department of Education and Early Development to develop regulations defining low performing schools for purposes of jury duty exemption for teachers.

When considering all the variables that affect a student's learning at school, it is common to conclude that quality instruction by a well-trained teacher is the most important one. We are fortunate on the Kenai to have good teachers who provide such instruction. Despite our best efforts to secure and train substitute teachers, a teacher's absence from school is one that we seek to avoid. While occasional absences by teachers are expected, a prolonged absence due to jury duty can have a negative effect on our students' learning. It is for this reason that KPBSD supports SB184. Further, the students who attend our fly-in schools, which have a smaller substitute teacher pool to draw from, are disproportionately impacted by a long absence. In sum, we need to do all that we can to ensure that we offer our students the very best experience on each and every school day. SB184 will help us do this.

Thank you for introducing SB184. Please let me know if I can provide further support for this important bill.

Sincerely,

Steve Atwater, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools