

Heikes on Education

Being educated in Illinois, Indiana, Spruce Park Alberta Canada, I was prepared to experience further education here in Alaska where I attended Clark Jr. High, East High and Dimond High. In order to enter the Alaska Air National Guard in 1970, I obtained my GED.

My view of the modern day educational system will be foreign to many. Let me explain. Roughly \$20,000 is spent per student. What do we get for that amount of expense? According to the Alaska of Education and Early Development website: “For calendar years 2016 – 2017, the Pupil to teacher Ratio was 16.65, there were 7,825 classroom teachers - including part-time and the Average Teacher Salary was \$68,768.80.” <https://education.alaska.gov/stats/facts>

“2017’s States with the Best & Worst School Systems” lists Alaska as ranking 45th in the nation. Alaska tied with Florida for the Lowest Median SAT Score, ranking at 46th.
<https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-the-best-schools/5335/>

Educating Funding in Alaska, published an article that expressed, “If more funding for K-12 education actually led to increased student achievement, every Alaskan would probably support an increase in that funding. Nat Herz in a recent article (“Here’s what three years of flat funding has meant for Alaska schools”) opined that the state has not increased funding for K-12 and this has led to pink-slipping teachers, increased class sizes and even required Sitka students to write on plain paper! So, is flat funding for the past three years true and if so, is it the cause of low student achievement?”
<http://alaskapolicyforum.org/2018/03/education-funding-in-alaska/>

The current education system in Alaska is too top heavy and too long and drawn out, by that I mean, children should not enter school until they are seven years old. When they pass the eighth grade they should start vocational training which could include a three month training course at JBER military academy.

The curriculum should be comprehensive instruction on the basics, and have a working knowledge of the Constitution and the founding of this great nation including the spiritual impact of the founding fathers. A new curriculum should be developed by the Heritage Foundation, with a heavy emphasis on Reading, Writing (including cursive writing instruction), Mathematics, History, Science and the U.S. Constitution. We should eliminate the junk science that teaches save the whale but murder the unborn. I had a woman tell me her son graduated with honors and she had to show him how to sign his first check - in cursive. Currently our graduation rates are very low, our school classes overloaded and the unions and teachers need more money to teach.

The Parnell administration had to dumb down the exit exams increase the graduation rates during his administration. The Teachers and their respective unions seem to only care about the blackmail of the Taxpayer (the unions are like a bookie making money on the juice and influencing elections to make sure they own the Democrat politicians, to make sure they have authority over the teachers and gain a voting block for the Democrats quid pro quo insuring they will always have money and a reason for their existence). You see, they think children are only a means to an end. The PRS and TRS systems have been in play in California for a while longer than Alaska. California has more than \$400 billion in unfunded liabilities. Meanwhile, Alaska’s coffers are \$2.5 billion in debt.
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/politics/article/California-s-400-billion-debt-worries-analysts-6812264.php>

According to an article published in the Alaska Journal of Commerce, April 6, 2016, "Estimates put the state's 2017 defined benefit PERS obligation at approximately \$340 million and the TRS obligation at more than \$116 million. The study acknowledges that Alaska's PERS and TRS funds are in a better position today than if the state had not closed the defined benefit plans. Anthony Randazzo said Alaska, along with Michigan, was studied because they were among the first states to close defined benefit pension programs. Through fiscal year 2014, the last year of data included in the study, the PERS plan would have been 61 percent funded without the 2005 reform based on historical state funding, the study concludes. As of the end of fiscal year 2015, the state's total PERS liability was \$13.4 billion, on a net fund position of \$8.6 billion, or 64 percent of its obligation, leaving a \$4.8 billion unfunded liability."

<http://www.alaskajournal.com/2016-04-06/study-pensions-underfunded-underperforming>

The Democrats will proudly proclaim they can balance the budget by using monies from the permanent fund and fix the monstrosity brought in by the Murkowski administration; which will sooner or later be brought down by its own weight. So, PRS and TRS do not produce the results claimed by the politicians; in fact, the opposite is occurring which is producing complacency and mounting debt.

Allison Stengel, a teacher at Begich Middle School, told the board she taught 100 students last school year. That jumped to 125 this year. Next year, she expects to have at least 150 students. "I teach my students that they will be successful in life if they work hard and live up to their potential. I encourage them to look forward to a future where their hard work will pay off. I challenge them to demand what's right in the world and never to settle for less," she said. "Yet, I stand in front of them a hypocrite. I'm overworked, underappreciated and underpaid.

My colleagues and I have learned that the burden does in fact increase even when we don't think it's possible."

<https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2018/05/08/hundreds-of-anchorage-teachers-rally-as-contract-battle-continues/>

Our kids deserve a sound, well rounded education. Cast your vote for me and I will help turn this mess around.

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