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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to reassert my position on the discussion of teacher positions in Aniak.

The combination 1-2 classroom run by Mrs. Morgan in AMNES currently has 23 students. With staff, that equals 26 humans in a room not built to house that many. There is limited room to for centers for students to move between and studies show that children need physical movement in order for long term learning to take place. Sitting too long in one spot is not conducive to the learning environment that educators know is necessary. To move students to a space where more movement is possible (like the gym for instance) requires lining students up and moving them as a group. This loses class time and also forces movement to be a scheduled activity as opposed to one that is embedded in the lessons themselves. Mrs. Morgan has previously practiced Yupik dancing with each grade level. This year, due to time constraints from the combined classroom Mrs. Morgan has been assigned, she has not been able to do so. Integrating Yupik culture has been a directive of the schoolboard, and I would like to see this opportunity offered again to all AMNES students.

At the middle and high school Mr. Peacock is forced to teach 11 sections of both language arts courses as well as social studies courses. This is due to State requirements that students have 3 years of social studies to graduate and 4 years of English to graduate. Eleven different curricula in a six-period day is outside the expectations that any teacher could handle. Focusing on increasing English skills is in integral part of improving all over academic performance for students. In science, social studies, and even in math, students who can read and understand the material presented tend to do better. Mr. Peacock was hired to teach social studies, and although he is experienced in teaching English as well, I am afraid that strain of the course load as well as the behavior challenges inherent in this age group may cause Mr. Peacock to resign. I fear this specifically as he has voiced those very concerns to me directly.

At the schoolboard meeting, I asked very passionately that both the 1st grade teacher and the English teacher positions be reopened for hiring. Freezing those positions was prudent at the time with expected enrollment numbers as well as the looming fear regarding the Governor's budget. I believe strongly however, that those fears have not materialized, and that the schoolboard has the opportunity to dutifully reassess both situations.

I am the principal in both Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School as well as the Aniak Junior Senior High School. In my position as principal, I feel a parental and professional responsibility to both sets of students and a duty to all the parents as well. Like the mother in the book *Winter Walk: A Century Old Survival Story from the Arctic* by Loretta Outwater Cox, I find myself faced with the idea of choosing one child over another- in this case one school's educational priority over another. I refuse to choose. Please, fund both positions.

I received an email today that stated that the budget meeting would be discussing the 1st grade teacher position at AMNES, but no line item was listed to discuss the English teacher at the middle and high school. I fear that if the English teacher position is not addressed at the board level, that Mr. Peacock will resign and then Aniak students will be missing not just two teachers, but three. I have been in Alaskan education over 18 years. I am a first-year principal, however. If this situation should occur, I would need a lot of guidance from the schoolboard as to how to proceed with Aniak students' education.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Gretchen Kelly, MAT, M.Ed. Principal