

**FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**RESOLUTION 2026-23:**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 78, RELATING TO THE RESTORATION OF A DEFINED BENEFIT RETIREMENT PLAN FOR ALASKA EDUCATORS**

WHEREAS, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is committed to providing every student with access to a stable, qualified, and experienced teaching workforce;

WHEREAS, Alaska is facing a severe and ongoing teacher recruitment and retention crisis, with school districts across the state reporting significant first-day-of-school vacancies that force districts to rely on long-term substitutes, emergency certifications, and out-of-state recruitment programs as stop-gap measures;

WHEREAS, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District began the school year with twenty-two teacher vacancies, highlighting the urgent need for the State of Alaska to strengthen and increase its investment in sustainable teacher recruitment and retention strategies;

WHEREAS, Alaska is the only state in the nation that does not offer its public school teachers a defined benefit retirement plan, placing Alaska at a significant competitive disadvantage when recruiting and retaining educators compared to every other state in the country;

WHEREAS, since the elimination of Alaska's defined benefit pension system in 2006, the state's defined contribution plan has provided teachers with no guaranteed retirement income and has offered little structural incentive for educators to commit to long-term careers in Alaska's schools;

WHEREAS, research consistently demonstrates that defined benefit retirement plans are among the most effective tools available for long-term educator retention, particularly in rural, remote, and high-need school districts;

WHEREAS, House Bill 78, currently before the Alaska State Senate, would restore a defined benefit pension option for teachers and public employees covered by the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) and the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), with retirement eligibility at age 60 or after 30 years of service, and would allow current employees to voluntarily opt into the new plan;

WHEREAS, HB 78 passed the Alaska House of Representatives on May 12, 2025, and is now under consideration by the Alaska State Senate;

WHEREAS, a fiscal note analysis prepared by the State of Alaska's actuary (David Kershner, Division of Retirement and Benefits, March 2025) found that the HB 78 pension sub-trusts are structured to begin with zero unfunded liability as of the plan's effective date, with assets transferred on an actuarially equivalent basis to fully fund all credited service at inception; and further found that the plan includes automatic financial safeguards — including adjustable member contribution rates and conditional cost-of-living adjustments — designed to protect the funded status of the trust without requiring additional employer contributions beyond existing statutory caps; and that TRS employer contribution rates under HB 78 are projected to decrease slightly from current levels as a share of total payroll as the workforce stabilizes under higher retention assumptions, maintaining the existing 12.56% statutory employer contribution cap;

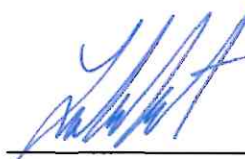
WHEREAS, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District's own vacancy data reflects the direct and ongoing harm that teacher shortages cause to students, families, and communities throughout our district; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education calls upon the Alaska State Legislature to recognize teacher recruitment and retention as a crisis of statewide urgency requiring structural, long-term solutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District hereby formally declares its support for House Bill 78 and urges the Alaska State Senate to advance and pass HB 78 without delay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education directs the Superintendent to transmit a certified copy of this Resolution to the Governor of Alaska, the presiding officers of the Alaska State Senate and House of Representatives, the members of the Alaska Senate Labor and Commerce Committee, and each member of the Alaska State Legislature representing the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

Passed and Approved April 7, 2026



Dr. Luke Meinert, Superintendent  
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District



Bobby Burgess, President  
Board of Education

ATTEST:



Carmella Richardson  
Board of Education Executive Assistant

