

February 21, 2018

House Education Committee:

Written testimony in support of HB 339

My name is Amy Jo Meiners, I am the 2016 Alaska Teacher of the Year, born and raised in Juneau, a product of the Juneau school system, mother to three daughters who also learned through the Juneau school system, and am currently in my 29th year of teaching in the Juneau school system.

I write in support of HB 339.

Schools have been told we need to improve. We have and will continue this important effort as we have committed to increase student success, cultivate safety and well-being, and support responsible and reflective learners.

As a state, we have increased learning standards and the first year of students who have benefited from this change are in 4th grade with their first state data point now available. We have collectively improved the teacher evaluation system, an effort to support and increase effective educators. Our state is working on addressing improvements at local levels with multiple stakeholders as well.

The Juneau school district (JSD) has increased graduation requirements to 23 credits, including an increase to math and science courses. Unfortunately, this came at the same time as budget cuts and in order to increase the number of math and science courses available for all students to meet this new requirement other courses were eliminated. JSD has worked to increase student attendance in multiple ways, including through small learning communities for students and professional learning communities for staff. As a district, we celebrated the tremendous increase with 100% of Alaska Native students at Thunder Mountain High School graduating last year.

Since FY2011 to FY2018, JSD has cut the budget over \$11 million dollars. (Verifiable via David Means, JSD Director of Administrative Services, as well as through public school board budget documents). Our current FY2019 budget is set for an additional cut of \$3 million dollars.

My position as a teacher of students identified as academically gifted has been on the chopping block almost annually since 2008. While you won't find me in the pink slip tally, you will find multiple versions of programs eliminated. With 29 years in, I will have a position, but someone else will not. I am no longer able to provide K-2 services. I am no longer able to serve the highest academic students within one building. Instead, I am split between two schools daily with double the case-load. Next year, the administrative recommendation is that I somehow serve six elementary schools. When we know that relationships are pivotal for student learning, it is unclear how this could function effectively.

The JSD administration is already a minimal skeleton of efficiencies to impact student learning and professional development. There is nothing left there to cut. Their only choices for budget cuts now are direct services to students.

When I think of the differences between what was offered when I taught Amy Henderson 28 years ago and what is now offered for her surviving two elementary children, I am stunned. We had full-time physical education classes so our school's 400+ students could participate at least three times a week. Similarly, we had full-time music teachers, librarians, counselors, nurses, and reading specialists. Now, we are pieced together as best as we are able with such limited resources. We had robust career-tech, social sciences, world languages, and arts options available then, too. My own high school attendance was excellent because I could participate in journalism classes working on a yearbook and publishing a newspaper. My eldest's attendance was exemplary

because she was able to take advantage of courses like engineering, underwater robotics, chemistry, physical science, and every other science course imaginable. My middle child experienced fewer course options but kept up her attendance to excel in volleyball and softball. My youngest is a senior now and her course options are minimal to fit in her 23 credit requirements. For Amy Henderson's two elementary students, I cannot fathom how much more minimalistic Alaska public education will become.

In this day and age, in all we know about Adverse Childhood Effect, I do not understand how going without counselors and nurses will serve the current needs of students. I have students who are considered medically fragile in my class. Last Friday, our school shared one nurse between three schools. By grace, when one of my student's diabetic alarms went off, the nurse happened to have just returned to the building to assist. I was teaching students how to graph and compare integers. The nurse assisted my student in a way I could not. Families need to know that schools are safe places for their children to learn and teachers need to be able to teach students to support responsible and reflective learners.

This week my students have had many opportunities to discuss little life lessons as they have worked on their independent passion projects. One student shared he believes they are learning "more life lessons in class than I can from my dad which says a lot!" Important lessons such as how tempera paint is best poured into a dish with edges rather than on to a flat table, hot glue guns remain hot even after being unplugged, and it sometimes takes effort to regulate our emotions. I trust that the impact of inflation upon school budgets is a life lesson learned repeatedly in recent times. Please, understand that those of us on the frontlines are working hard to improve Alaska schools. We are striving to increase student success. We need your help to do so and an increase to the BSA to adjust what districts realize over time would benefit students directly.

Thank you for the opportunity for public testimony. I appreciate your time and efforts.

Sincerely,
Amy Jo Meiners
2016 Alaska Teacher of the Year
12110 Cross St.
Juneau, AK 99801



February 19, 2018

Representative Les Gara
Vice Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 511
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Gara,

On behalf of NEA-Alaska's 13,000 teachers and education support professionals I am writing in support of House Bill 339 (HB339) to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

Increasing the BSA puts resources directly into classrooms to enhance student learning. Increasing classroom funding leads to smaller class sizes, more individual attention for every student, higher quality lessons, more school counselors, teacher aides, and an improved learning environment.

Since the last adjustment of the BSA, healthcare, energy, and operational costs for schools have continued to increase. Alaska's school districts have been forced to cover rising costs that have outpaced inflation by making significant cuts. Districts have raised class sizes, cut student-centered programs, reduced the time to prepare great lessons, decreased budgets for supplies and equipment, and laid off teachers and education support professionals. All of these reductions have limited the opportunities for students.

Every child in Alaska deserves an excellent public education, but they only have one chance to get it. The dedicated educators of NEA-Alaska do everything in their power to enhance student learning on a daily basis but their hands have been tied by declining budgets and increased workloads. Increasing the BSA is about making sure Alaska kids have the support, tools, and time they need to be successful. Thank you for taking this meaningful step toward improving public education for every Alaska student.

Tim Parker

President, NEA-Alaska

February 21, 2018

Representative Les Gara
Vice Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 511
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Gara,

I am writing you today to share with you my passion for teaching. My name is Winter Marshall-Allen. I am a Special Education teacher for the past 10 years. I have a visual impairment which has definitely been both a hindrance and a help to my career. I say hindrance because a disability can limit your perceived ability and a help because I have learned to self-advocate and to persevere. I am a mother of two boys; one now in Boot Camp for the Army and our youngest is a freshman at Homer High School.

I am a teacher who formerly taught native & minority students in Muskogee, Oklahoma and became frustrated with the wages for teachers and the inability to repay my student loans. I then decided to relocate to the Northwest Arctic Borough of Alaska; where I taught in the villages of Ambler and Kotzebue. Due to budget cuts I & other teachers received pink slips at the end of last school year. I must admit this broke my heart because I love rural Alaska! I have friends there and I was a part of the community. I have since relocated my family to Homer, Alaska and I am happy to report I am back in the classroom teaching. It was very scary to receive that pink slip. I have never been dismissed from a job and I didn't know quite what to do. As I say this; I wonder have you ever had an experience similar?

The longer I am in this field, I see & feel the strain that our school system is under. I see this in the behavior and attitude my students have towards testing. I see it when my students asked me if I have something that they can eat because they don't have lunch money on their account but they don't qualify for free and reduced lunch either. I feel the strain when my Intensive Needs Program needs a specialized piece of equipment for a student and it takes months to get the approval; then by the time we receive the equipment the school year is almost over. Are you successful when you don't have what you need? I teach students with severe disabilities. Some of those disabilities are cognitive delays, some of those disabilities are behavioral disorders, and some fall all across the spectrum autism. I have amazing kiddos who in spite of their perceived limitations never stop striving to be their best. So I want to advocate for the best! They and their families deserve the best we can offer.

So here is my ask; I am asking for you to support at the very least level funding for education, but full forward funding would be amazing!! I know that that budget is a mess. I understand that this takes time but our youth is deserving. Communities should not be worried about keeping teachers or programs that provide students job skills. Not everyone is college tracked. We need vocational training for the next generation of builders and electricians. Representative I'm asking you to support educational opportunities.

One more ask, can you think back to your time in school and find educators who supported your dreams? Teachers who empowered you? What are the opportunities that you received in school to be the success that you are today? Don't you want to be a part of maintaining or creating new opportunities to succeed? What will your civil servant legacy be concerning Education?

I hope that are able to reflect on your education and find ways to relate to the needs of my community and the students I serve.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

An Alaskan teacher
Winter Marshall-Allen

Homer High School
Homer, Alaska
Intensive Needs Program Director
9072364600 ex 4625

George Ascott

From: Mike Bronson <bronsonconsulting@gci.net>
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2018 8:16 AM
To: Michelle Sydeman
Cc: Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux; Rep. Geran Tarr
Subject: NAACP support for HB 339 to raise school funding

Representative Gara,

The Anchorage Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People supports your HB 339. The bill will raise the base student allocation and is expected to improve class size as well as math and reading instruction statewide.

Thank you,

-Mike Bronson
Education Committee
NAACP Anchorage





February 21, 2018

Chair Drummond and Members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Dr. Mary Wegner, and I am the superintendent of the Sitka School District. I am testifying today in support of HB 339, Increase Base Student Allocation.

Thank you for your support of public education in Alaska, and thank you for putting forward a bill to support student learning throughout the state. Sitka Schools is facing a budget deficit for FY19 that is 12% of our total general fund budget. We need timely and adequate state funding to keep our talented teachers and provide a quality education for the students of Sitka. Providing an excellent education to every student every day requires high-caliber teachers combined with a culturally responsive learning environment with targeted instruction to meet a student's individual learning needs. All of which helps us achieve the three commitments of Alaska's Education Challenge, which are increasing student success, cultivating safety and well-being, and supporting responsible and reflective learners.

Given the financial crisis in Alaska and in the community of Sitka, we have made significant cuts over the past 4 years to our non-personnel budgets in order to maintain our teaching force. However, we are now at the point where we are looking at the reality of reducing our number of teachers so much so that a conservative estimate has our class sizes increasing by up to 60% if additional revenue is not available to us. I appreciate that HB 339 has been put forward for consideration. However, even with HB 339 we will lose teachers in Sitka because it is just not enough to make up for the flat-funding of recent years. Specifically, since FY16 utilities and health care costs have gone up a combined total of 102% for a total cost to the district of \$1,091,438. If passed HB 339 is expected to bring in \$271,000 for Sitka Schools. Although this doesn't close our existing \$2.3 million deficit, it can help to save some teaching positions, and for that I am very thankful.

Thank you for taking my testimony, and thank you for your commitment to public education in Alaska. I hope you will pass HB 339 and increase the Base Student Allocation.

Sincerely,

Mary Wegner, Ed.D.

George Ascott

From: Aidan Hopson <aidanhopson2@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2018 9:46 AM
To: Michelle Sydeman
Cc: Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: In Support of HB 339

Dear Representative Gara,

I am sophomore at Juneau-Douglas High School, and I am strongly in support of HB 339. Increasing base student allocation will greatly improve the overall student happiness of our school and any other school. Investing in our students now will have a great return for the future of Alaska!

Thanks,
Aidan Hopson

George Ascott

From: Allison Smith <allisontheresa907@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 8:41 AM
To: Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Harriet Drummond;
representative.ivy.spohnholtz@akleg.gov; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep.
David Talerico
Subject: In Support of HB 339

Dear House Education Committee,

I urge you to support HB 339 which authorizes a \$100 increase to the Base Student Allocation. As an educator, I know that flat funding likely means cuts to staff and larger class sizes. I already have 26 first graders with a very diverse range of needs. Larger class sizes and cuts to support staff will make it more difficult to meet the needs of individual students, especially those who struggle with academics, behavior, or challenging home situations. An increase in the Base Student Allocation would allow us to provide a better education for all students.

Thank you for your consideration,

Allison Smith
4500 Hillcrest Ave.
Juneau, AK 98901

George Ascott

From: Alyse Galvin <alyse.galvin@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 12:16 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Geran Tarr
Cc: Rep. Les Gara; Michelle Sydeman; Michelle Sydeman
Subject: HB 339 - please save for public record

Thank you for your service and the opportunity to share my opinion in support of HB339.

I've raised four children in the public education system. Over Christmas, they compared notes about their education here in Alaska. They determined that our youngest, now a senior, will have had less opportunity during his high school years by far. His school has eliminated their only art teacher, and a counselor, and I know students in other schools have experienced even greater impacts due to the cuts over the last few years.

If were a recent graduate of college about to start a career and maybe a family, and you knew this deterioration of public education in Alaska, knowing the economy (and healthcare costs) are more attractive in other states, would you choose to live in Alaska?

I urge you to come together, invest in our schools, make a plan that brings stability in the years ahead, and keep communicating with your constituents about the difficult decisions you have to make.

I'm grateful for my legislators who continually share their struggle as they work to ensure Alaskans have a safe place to live, work and play and I hear from Alaskans all over the state who are not aware of the predicament legislators are in to preserve stability in our state. I hope all 60 legislators will spend more time talking with constituents and speaking frankly as they make these important decisions of balancing the budget while preserving a public education system where families want to stay, students are reaching their potential, and educators want to teach and stay teaching.

Again, I support HB339 as one way we can ensure we do not lose any more educators in our schools.

Thanks very much,

Alyse Galvin

George Ascott

From: Amanda Zogas <angus119@msn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 9:19 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Chris Tuck; Sen. Natasha Von Imhof
Subject: Please support education funding (HB 339)

To The Members of the House Committee on Education,

I am writing to you today to urge you to approve HB 339 so school districts around the state can continue to provide a quality education to the children of Alaska. I am an educator in our state's largest school district, and the past several years of cuts have taken a toll on my school's ability to educate our students in the way they and the public deserve.

I am part of a smaller learning community at Service High, The Seminar Program. I am proud of the work my colleagues and I do in teaching our students to think critically, listen compassionately, and act in accordance with their beliefs. Just yesterday two of our students were advocating in Juneau; our school's two National Merit Scholarship Finalists are members of The Seminar Program; one of our students has been offered a full scholarship to attend MIT next year. We have many students who are outstanding skiers, debaters, artists, and leaders in the making. This is what educators do: inspire the next generation to dream big and help them hone their skills so they can achieve those dreams.

Inspiring and shaping students takes time. Flat funding for education means I have less time every day to make connections with my students and give them individualized feedback. I have less time to get to know them and their families, less time to check in with them when they seem upset, less time to recognize them for their accomplishments, less time to reflect on best teaching practices, and less time to individualize my teaching for what each student needs. Because of flat funding, my school is projected to lose nearly 6 FTE next year. This is at least the third year of cuts to staff at my school. My smaller learning community has been directed to plan on having only a four-person teaching team next year, down from the five we currently have. I have had more responsibilities given to me, more students added to my class load, and less administrative support offered than when I began teaching ten years ago. I don't have the time I need to invest in my students to help them become the best versions of themselves.

Please approve HB 339 and reverse the flat funding trend for education. Alleviating class sizes will give me more time to spend with each of my students. Teachers, students, and the public deserve more than what our government is currently doing.

Sincerely,

Amanda Zogas

George Ascott

From: Pastorino <pastorino@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 7:31 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Subject: HB 339 - Support our Schools

My name is Barbara Pastorino, and both my children and grandchildren attended school in Juneau. I have lived in Alaska for 40 years. I'm writing to ask you to support House Bill 339, which will raise the Base Student Allocation by \$100. The proposed flat funding will mean cuts of \$3,000,000 or 5 percent of the District's budget, which will result in the loss of teachers, librarians, councilors, para professionals, and important programs. All students will be adversely affected, and those students who need the most support—those not doing well academically and those at-risk for not completing high school, of which our Alaska Native students are most at-risk, special needs students, etc., will be dramatically affected. Because a statewide fiscal plan, according to the state's fiscal analysts, will help stabilize Alaska's economy and maintain a high bond rating, supporting HB 339 is the right decision to make. Please support our most valuable resource and future of our state, our children.

Thank you for listening; I am aware of how many testimonies you are receiving and what a difficult task this is. Please take a risk and make a decision that may seem counter intuitive, but clearly will benefit our schools, communities, and State.

4935 Wren Drive Juneau, Alaska - 907-351-1481.

George Ascott

From: Rep. Harriet Drummond
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 12:30 PM
To: George Ascott
Subject: FW: Gara's HB 339

From: Bart Mwarey [mailto:bmwarey@hydaburg.k12.ak.us]
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 5:02 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond <Rep.Harriet.Drummond@akleg.gov>
Subject: Gara's HB 339

Honorable Drummond:

My name is Bart Mwarey, Superintendent/Principal of Hydaburg City School District. I am writing in support of Gara's HB 339, which would increase the base allocation (SBA) next year by \$100.00. It has been difficult to plan ahead with no increases in the SBA over the last few years. Hiring and retaining quality teachers has been difficult with the level of funding we've been getting in our District.

Your assistance in approving the \$100.00 would greatly be appreciated.

Thank you,

--
Bart Mwarey
Superintendent/Principal
Hydaburg City School District
Phone 907-285-3491 Fax: 907-285-3391
Cell: 907-401-3359
bmwarey@hydaburg.k12.ak.us

George Ascott

From: Chelsea Lindquist <chelserin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 9:11 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: Support our schools!

As a parent of a student in Alaska's school system I implore the State Legislature to support HB 339, including the increase of BSA by \$100.

Our teachers are asked to do more and more each year with less and less resources. It is not unusual for an elementary class to have 25-30 students and one teacher. No teacher's assistants or other adult in the classroom. To ask a teacher to teach and engage every student in their class while tailoring lesson plans for kids who need more help and assistance all on their own is a unrealistic and unfair.

Especially with all that we know know today about the brain, learning styles, and learning disabilities being able to have another adult to assist would be an incredible assistance to our beleaguered teachers and an enormous advantage for our children's learning.

I want my child to succeed in school. I want every child in Alaska to succeed. That only happens when our teachers are supported and respected. Please show Alaska's children and their teachers that they're success is your number one priority.

Please support HB339.

Thank you,
Chelsea Vukovich
Anchorage, Ak

George Ascott

From: Dawn Morse <dawn.morse@mac.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 9:24 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: I support HB 339

And I want you to support it as well.

Thank you.

Dawn Morse
907.444.2847
4715 Kershner Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99517

George Ascott

From: Emily Kane <dremilykane@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 18, 2018 11:19 PM
To: Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: Support HB 339 please

Our future will fade without well educated children growing up with access to skilled teachers who will train their hearts and minds to protect our resources and respect unity in diversity. Mastery of these concepts require sustained education.

Thank you
Dr Emily Kane
Juneau

www.DrEmilyKane.com
www.naturopathic.org
www.primarydoctor.org

Be good to yourself :)

George Ascott

From: Evelynn Trefon <evelynntrefon@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 12:40 PM
To: Michelle Sydeman
Cc: Rep. Les Gara; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Geran Tarr
Subject: Letter of support for HB 339

I am writing this letter today in support of HB339. Continuing to flat fund our schools cannot be a solution.

My daughter attends preschool in Newhalen. This fall, she will begin kindergarten. I am very nervous for her to make this transition. I want her to have all the opportunities that she can possibly have. If our schools are not funded to the levels they should be, then I fear her educational opportunities will be diminished and limited.

For our school district, two of the main sources of funding are from the State with SBA and from the Lake and Peninsula Borough through a fisheries tax. Last summer many fishermen across Bristol Bay felt, and saw first hand, that the fisheries management was not adequately handled. Fish were coming up the Kvichak River from Bristol Bay and ADFG had not even set up their counting towers. An unknown amount of fish escaped without being counted. Had the counting towers been in place prior to the run, the fish could have been counted and the commercial fishing season could have started sooner. That was potentially thousands of taxable dollars literally swimming away. ADFG has requested to have their budget flat funded this year. It has also been proposed to flat fund the SBA. If both of these are flat funded, it will essentially be a double cut (due to inflation) for our school district.

I have a younger sister attending school in Anchorage. She is in 8th grade and is struggling with the larger class sizes. It is unfair to her as well as her teachers. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average class size for the US High Schools is 17.7. The average class size for a high school class in Anchorage is roughly 30 for some classes. How can my sister and her peers be adequately taught? Can you imagine if the House Floor was a science classroom and you were trying to learn what a proton was along with your peers? Do you think some of them would be falling behind? Do you think some of them would be ignored because they were not able to communicate that they did not understand? I think that this would be the case. Class sizes above 20 students should not be

allowed. Adequate funding must be established in order to be able to hire more teachers and lower the class sizes.

Here in Newhalen, we do not have art class. We do not have music class. These programs were cut long ago. Our teachers teach the core standards- reading, writing, math, social studies, etc. All of these classes require at minimum a workbook, paper, pencils, and erasers, which of course cost money. In addition, our electrical utility prices recently rose from 52 cents per KWH to 60 cents per KWH. Fuel prices have only increased as well. The cost to operate a school continues to climb each year and yet the SBA has not increased.

Because of declining funds for our school district from the State, Federal, and Borough level, the Lake and Peninsula School District cut 20 school days of the 2017/2018 school year. That is 20 less days being taught to our kids. 20 less days of opportunities for field trips and other outside learning opportunities. 20 less days for students to have access to a hot meal. 20 less days of work for local employees which equates to less money for our state economy. 20 less days of the school being inhabited. Buildings that are not inhabited are more likely to have vandalism, pest infestations, mold issues, and more.

I heard public testimony last week that a \$100 increase would help, but wouldn't get to the level of funding needed to make real impacts for the school districts budgets. I would recommend amending the amount to a larger number. I do not know what that number should be, but I know \$100 is not enough.

Forward funding for school funding needs to be reenacted. As the school secretary in Newhalen, I have to order the school supplies 10 months in advance for the next school year. How can a school district know how much supplies it can approve unless it knows how much money is coming down the pipeline? It simply cannot.

Please consider passing HB339. The time is now to secure our children's futures.

--

Best regards,

Evelynn Trefon
PO Box 244
Newhalen, AK 99606
[907-444-8875](tel:907-444-8875)

George Ascott

From: Gary Miller <gmiller.juneauak@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 5:14 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Subject: Support HB 339

I have faith that all of you will support and pass HB 339 tomorrow after the hearing. The Juneau School District is facing a couple million dollars in short fall. This will affect my nine-year-old who goes to Auke Bay Elementary School. Our kids are the future of Alaska. They need good educations.

Thank you.

Gary Miller
20135 Cohen Dr
Juneau, AK 99801-8211
(907) 789-3757

George Ascott

From: Grace Newman <graceeliz01@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2018 9:46 AM
To: Michelle Sydeman; Rep. Harriet Drummond
Cc: Rep. Sam Kito
Subject: In Support of HB 339

Dear Representative Gara,

I am a junior at Juneau-Douglas High School and am writing in support of HB 339. The cuts that have already been implemented in our school district have affected me personally. I hope that more money will be put towards education because the future of our state depends on our youth. I fully support raising the base student allocation because of the benefits it will bring to the students. Thank you for listening.

Grace Newman
Juneau, AK

George Ascott

From: Grace Newman <graceeliz01@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2018 9:46 AM
To: Michelle Sydeman; Rep. Harriet Drummond
Cc: Rep. Sam Kito
Subject: In Support of HB 339

Dear Representative Gara,

I am a junior at Juneau-Douglas High School and am writing in support of HB 339. The cuts that have already been implemented in our school district have affected me personally. I hope that more money will be put towards education because the future of our state depends on our youth. I fully support raising the base student allocation because of the benefits it will bring to the students. Thank you for listening.

Grace Newman
Juneau, AK

George Ascott

From: josphie4@gmail.com on behalf of Jill Showman <jshowman@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 3:40 PM
To: Rep. Les Gara; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Subject: Support for HB 339

To House Education Committee Members,

Over the past twenty years I have seen and felt the erosion of flat funding in our schools. I believe we need to balance our state budget but it shouldn't be to the detriment of our children and future. Programs have been cut and staffing decreased in our public schools. Many of my colleagues have retired, quit or decided to go into other fields where they could make as much or more money without the same pressure. Programs were cut or absorbed into the master schedule.

I have taught at Wasilla High School since 2005, at that time we had two Spanish teachers, a Japanese teacher, two French teachers and myself, the Bilingual and Russian teacher. In 2018 we have one Spanish teacher, one section of Japanese and two sections of Russian. We no longer have a music department, instead we have a music teacher. Several years ago we offered Human Relations several times a day. Human Relations was a class in which students helped each other, as Peer Helpers, and the community as a whole. The students prepared presentations to other students and parents about Drug Abuse, Homelessness, Peer Mediation and School Spirit. We haven't been able to offer Human Relations to kids in three years because we are hobbling to teach core classes as English I, Algebra II and Biology with our current staffing.

I support HB 339 because some funding will mitigate further program and staff cuts. Passing HB 339 and increasing the BSA by \$100 will help save programs and allow students to experience more than just the core requirements in our public schools. And more importantly students will know that they are valued.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jill Showman
English/Yearbook Educator
Wasilla High School

George Ascott

From: Doepken Family <doepkenfamily@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 8:45 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Subject: HB339 Support

Hello,

I am Julie Doepken, an educator in Seward. I am fully in support of this House Bill and wanted to encourage you to support it as well.

As an educator (certified school librarian and Title I reading interventionist), I see firsthand what flat funding/underfunding can do to school districts. Among other things, it causes staffing shortages and higher pupil to teacher ratios, cuts out classes and services that help students become more well-rounded, and creates way more stress on teachers than you probably realize.

Please support this increase in the base allocation. Please support the education of Alaskan students. When we have sufficient funding, our ability to provide quality education for our students increases -- quality teachers, reasonable class sizes, librarians and library services, art and music classes, enough money for resources to support student learning, and much much more. Please support this bill.

As I understand it, the fiscal analysis done by the state shows that this increase is feasible and even beneficial to the state economy.

Do the right thing for our students and for our budget.

Thank you,
Julie Doepken
Seward, AK

George Ascott

From: Karen McBride <mcbride_karen@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 8:14 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston;
Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Cc: Sen. Kevin Meyer; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: HB 339

Dear Legislators,

As you consider HB 339, I urge you to give your support. Why? As I live in Anchorage, my focus is on what will happen in Anchorage schools, to our students, to our teaching staff and what it means to our community. It makes no sense to face yet again another potential massive layoff of teachers, increase in class sizes, and programs to support kids put on hold AGAIN. All stakeholders: the business community, families, kids, our civic leaders all want successful students. We cannot have success without funding - plain and simple. PLEASE invest in our kids even in this lean time.

Thank you for your time & for your work,
Karen McBride

George Ascott

From: Laura Stats <laurastatsdaugherty@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 13, 2018 7:24 AM
To: Michelle Sydeman; Rep. Harriet Drummond
Cc: Sen. Dennis Egan
Subject: Pass HB 339

Dear Representative Drummond and Gara,

Thank you so co- sponsoring HB 339.

There is no greater need to finance than basic education of our youth. Education is the foundation of a strong democracy. A strong democracy is the foundation of a just and healthy society.

Please do everything in your power to pass HB 339.

Thank you for your strong work for our great state of Alaska.

Kindest regards,
Laura Stats

From: L@ ~ Lauren Allen <sealaska86@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 10:12 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Geran Tarr
Subject: I support the following:

My husband and I own Allen Marine, based in Sitka. We hire local Alaskans and understand the importance of education.

HB 339 - Increase the Base Student Allocation

AASB urges the State of Alaska to provide early, adequate, equitable, and predictable funding of public education. AASB believes that adequate funding should include the following:

- **State funding of the TRS-PERS retirement liability;**
An increase to the Base Student Allocation to account for both inflation and adequate P-K through 12th grade education;
- **Recognition of the need to keep pupil-teacher ratios to a level in line with research-based best practices;**
- **Career and technical education;**
- **An early adoption timeline that allows school boards and district administration to effectively plan instruction and staffing for the upcoming year.**

AASB urges that in the years when the Alaska Legislature has not approved an education budget by April 1, the budget from the previous year shall be the legal minimum funding for the next fiscal year.

AASB urges the Legislature to review and recommend appropriate adjustments to AS 14.17.460, District Cost Factors, to ensure equity in school funding.

AASB urges the Legislature to provide stable forward funding that addresses inflation, including the use of an education endowment, to ensure funding predictability.

Lauren Allen
Sitka, AK
907.738.3285

George Ascott

From: Megan Gahl <mkgahl@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 2:22 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Subject: In favor of the HB 339

Dear Alaska House Education Committee,

I am writing in favor of the HB 339 to increase the Base Student Allocation by \$100. I am a Juneau resident with one second grader in the public schools and another preschooler soon to be in the public schools.

The Juneau School District is facing cuts to the budget that are untenable. The current solution is to cut teachers from our schools, ending up with a ratio of student to teachers that is unmanageable. This is in part due to an already too low Base Student Allocation.

We already do a lot with very little. At my son's public school it is common that parent volunteers drive to field trips (no funding for buses), parent volunteers run after school programs (no funding for those extracurriculars), parents are volunteering to paint the hallways and put in floors because the building is in disrepair. We already are streamlined including sharing a principal with 2 other schools, but this is not the way to run an educational program that will set our Alaskan children up for success. We need to actually fund the public schools at a level that cultivates and prioritizes education.

Continued education cuts or stable funding for schools that results in rewriting budgets results in loss of support from families. I know two families moving out of town at the end of this school year in part because of the lack of educational opportunity for their children in our current public schools. There is not additional funding to offer support for students who need it most and there is not enough funding to offer students who are ahead opportunities to advance.

Hence, I am writing in favor of the HB 339 to increase the Base Student Allocation by \$100.

Many Thanks,
Megan Gahl
1780 Evergreen Ave
Juneau, AK 99801
(907)500-8042
mkgahl@gmail.com

George Ascott

From: Megan Richotte <meganrichotte@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 7:35 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Geran Tarr
Cc: Sen. Mia Costello; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Les Gara
Subject: Testimony in support of HB 339 on BSA increase by \$100

Dear House Education Committee,

I would like to submit testimony in full support for HB 339 to increase the Base Student allocation by \$100.

Today the Anchorage School Board held a work meeting to discuss how to cut another \$13 Million from the Anchorage School District budget in anticipation of flat funding from the legislature. On top of MANY years of cuts I believe the district should not be cutting at all. The legislature has a constitutional responsibility to fund an adequate education for every student in this state. I believe we are now falling short of that and the State is opening itself up to lawsuits such as those taking place in Washington State.

Two weeks ago I contacted the Anchorage School Board to ask them to please not cut the highly gifted program my daughter attends in Anchorage after the school board considered a public budget with substantial cuts to this program. I include the letter I sent to them below. In spite of my contact that program is still slated for cuts at the high school level including in their highly valuable internship coordination program.

I also live a lot of my life in the Lake and Peninsula Borough. You are probably aware that that the Lake and Peninsula School District has cut their school year to 150 days of school through a waiver from the state Department of Education. While this is marketed as a subsistence calendar it has effectively cut an entire year off of every village kid's education in that district. Talk about an unequal opportunity for an adequate education! That district also had serious talks about cutting the hot lunch program as an alternative. This is a terrible state of affairs for our state.

My younger daughter's school, Denali Elementary, currently doesn't have any counselor. This is a downtown school with a Fairview catchment. As we cut more and more services that support the full capability of our children we sell their future short. That is exactly what we are doing. Further cuts are on a devastating path. I ask for your support for HB 339. And the legislature as a whole, I ask for a fiscal plan to support Alaska's future.

Thank you,
Megan Richotte
Turnagain Neighborhood

CC. Senator Costello, Representative Claman, and Representative Gara (author of the bill)

Dear ASD School Board,

I have two children in the ASD, one in the HG program at Rogers Park and one at Denali Elementary. I am writing to ask you to prioritize the core mission of the district as you look at cuts - academic education across broad disciplines and for a broad set of learning needs. Gifted education is a critical component of appropriate learning for some kids. Ignite too is a REALLY important academic resource in our curriculum. We are not talking about extras or extra curricular activities here. We are talking about core curriculum to meet the needs of exceedingly smart kids. It's essential. Without these programs these kids get board, lost, and unmotivated. I know it's not popular to talk about the needs of these kids but as parents we have to and I ask you to please not leave them behind. The current budget, even with the 6 Ignite teachers returned to the budget has a disproportionate cut to gifted education.

When my daughter was 4 years old and in preschool I was told that I was welcome to continue to bring her to preschool but that she was ready for the first grade curriculum at that school and that the preschool teacher was not able to teach at that level with 9 other kids in the classroom. When she started kindergarten I was told that how much my daughter learned was going to depend on how much she liked worksheets because she wasn't even close to the same place as any other kid in the class and the teacher wasn't able to teach a class just for her. In late September of that year our family MOVED to Anchorage from rural Alaska so that she could attend the HG program, learn with kids her own age, be challenged and love school. It has been a godsend. Her whole life we had referred to her intellectual need as "feeding the beast." It had become almost a joke in our family. Our days had begun to revolve around feeding her brain. It was crazy. I can't even imagine her being in the fantastic classroom that my child at Denali Elementary is in. There is no fit for her.

As you work through your budget cuts once again, please know that these kids NEED these programs. I ask you to PLEASE prioritize them in the same way you prioritize classroom needs, special education, and other CORE academic needs in the district.

I also want you to know that I UNDERSTAND the position you are in, the cuts the legislature is handing you each and every year. Please know that I am doing my very best to be a vocal advocate for consistent, forward funded, adequate funding for our public schools across all disciplines with the legislature as a whole, with my senators and representatives, and with my fellow parents. I know you can't make money. Please, though, make my child a priority.

Thank you for your time,
Megan Richotte
Parent to 4th and 2nd grade students

George Ascott

From: Meredith Blake <meredithlauren1986@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 7:11 PM
To: Rep. Les Gara
Cc: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Gary Knopp; Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: HB 339

Dear Representative Gara et al.,

I am writing to show my support of HB 339, with its proposed \$100 increase to BSA. I teach at Kenai Central High School in Kenai, Alaska, and this year our school has faced numerous difficulties due to personnel cuts and classroom size increases.

In an effort to stave off the worst of the budget crisis and offer our students the courses they need for graduation and that they also deserve as learners and future citizens of our state, we made massive adjustments to our school's bell schedule. To cover the loss of teaching staff, we went from six 53 minute class periods to seven 44 minute class periods; this change, while creating an incredibly difficult professional atmosphere, at least let us squeeze in the courses our students need in order to graduate. The cost of trying to create a new normal has been too high however.

Students are exhausted and grades are lower this year than in past years thanks to the shortened instructional time and additional class period students have had to shoulder. Teachers are faced with higher class sizes and reduced preparation time, while also having to choose which curriculum to keep and cut. While I have moved to a standards-based grading model and can adapt my lesson plans a bit more easily than some of my colleagues, I have still been forced to cut 2 units from my English 11 curriculum. This year, students are writing 4 fewer formal essays and 5 fewer practice mini-essays, which target specific areas of writing weakness, such as thesis statements or closing paragraphs. Students are also reading 11 fewer poems, 5 fewer short stories, and 1 entire novel less than in past years. Not only have teachers such as myself had to cut curriculum, we are losing programs critical to student success. Our French program at the high school was ended this year, leaving students with only online language options (which some students struggle with), or the opportunity to take Spanish at our brick and mortar institution. Vocational programs remain a vital part of our school, but students cannot advance through them the same way due to the new time constraints, limiting their ability to reach certifications or licensing requirements. Discussion of future elective courses driven by student agency and need has ceased completely, meaning our students are less competitive when they leave Alaska to attend school Outside.

While our school's issues are specific, similar struggles are being faced across my district due to the ongoing flat funding that has resulted in cuts over the years. I hope my story can shed some light to our state representatives on why education must be viewed as a long-term investment. If we intend for our students to find success Outside and return to us with improved skills and techniques in their career fields, we must acknowledge that increasing BSA funding can help us in that journey.

Thank you,
Meredith McCullough

George Ascott

From: Nancy Lehnhart <aklehnarts@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 5:26 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Subject: in support of HB 339

Dear members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to urge you to support education. There's no other way to do this except by allocating money. The cuts have gotten so great that we are really losing ground in the quality of our education. I spend a lot of time in elementary classrooms and I am astounded by how big our class sizes are getting. It's sad to see very good teachers not able to offer challenging and interesting curriculum, like STEM projects and not able to give individual attention to struggling students because there are simply too many kids in their class. It used to be that upwards of 28 or so was very uncommon, now it's common for there to be around 30 in intermediate classes. I was recently in a classroom of 27 Kindergarteners and found the word "inhumane" coming to my mind. Young people should not be packed into large class sizes. No one wants that for their child.

We can and should afford quality education for our young and promising Alaskans. It's the only smart and caring way forward for our next generation.

Please support this bill. We are counting on you!

Thank you,
Nancy Lehnhart
15975 Glacier Hwy.
Juneau, AK 99801

George Ascott

From: Odile Meister <omeister@wpsd.us>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 11:04 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston;
Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Cc: Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Sen. Bert Stedman
Subject: Support for HB 339

My name is Odile Meister and I'm a parent of a recent graduate and a Junior at Wrangell High School and I'm also a teacher in the Wrangell schools. I am speaking for myself. I here to express my strong support of HB 339 to avoid further budget cuts.

In the four years I have lived in Alaska, I have seen the effects of the cuts that have hit our schools. Our teachers are spread thin as retiring teachers have not been replaced. This means that teachers are sometimes asked to teach subjects for which they are not directly qualified. It means schedules in small schools like we have in Wrangell become very restricted and students more and more can't take the classes they need and want. It means more students have to take online classes which are never ideal and often are unsuccessful experiences. In addition, as salaries and benefits erode and teaching loads and stress increase, Alaska is becoming less and less attractive place to work and morale is low. Consequently, it is becoming harder and harder to hire quality staff. We are continuing to erode the quality of our schools. If we continue to flat fund our schools the cuts will further continue to erode the quality. This means more students fall through the cracks, more students drop out and more students end up becoming a burden for our social services and police force.

It frustrates me to hear testifiers who are demanding better results but aren't supporting adequate funding to do so. Please spend a day in a public school and gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by schools today. From my experience as a teacher and parent, I can assure you that everyone wants those better results, but further cutting our budgets will never lead to that.

Please invest in our schools and our students and support this bill. Thank you for your time.

Odile Meister

907-305-0479

omeister@wpsd.us

Spanish Teacher, Wrangell High School

Transition Math, Stikine Middle School

George Ascott

From: Sally Donaldson <sallyanndonaldson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 11:45 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Chuck Kopp
Subject: Testimony on HB339

Hello Chair Drummond and House Education Committee members,

Thank you for hearing public testimony today on HB339. Thank you for serving on the Education Committee, and working on behalf of Alaskan children. I am retired, and happily able to attend today's meeting to show my support to increase the Base Student Allocation effective July 1, 2018.

In my 22 years as counselor in the Juneau School District, I saw school funding wax and wane. Today, we are in more of a crisis than ever, making cuts that jeopardize the future of our state. Students struggle in classrooms where teachers do not have enough support to help them achieve grade-level expectations set forth by the Department of Education. Cuts to programs, course offerings, trainings, materials and student services force educators to stretch even further, spending their own personal time and money to meet the needs of their students and classrooms.

As we look at indicators of student success, may we also include seeing more of our graduates in Alaskan businesses and professions, more of our graduates as local and state government leaders, and as future lawmakers of our great state. HB339 will help us get there.

As many citizens, parents, students and educators across the state testified today, I heard that students are our most precious and valuable natural resource. I echo that statement, and believe it is even more critical to pass HB339 out of committee, so that it has a chance for a vote before the end of session this year, and increased funding may be sent to all Alaskan schools.

Thank you for reading,
Your fellow Alaskan,
Sally Donaldson
530 Park Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801

George Ascott

From: Sandra Daws <sdaws01@kibsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 2:20 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond
Cc: Larry Ledoux
Subject: HB 339 Testimony

Representative Drummond,

Thank you for your time this morning, I am including my written testimony since I cut it down to stay within the 2 minute time frame. Please contact me if you should have any questions.

I am Sandy Daws, Business Manager, for the Kodiak Island Borough School District. Kodiak has four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in the city of Kodiak. In addition, our district supports 7 more rural sites. Six of those can only be accessed by plane or boat. Kodiak serves approx. 2300 students.

In the past year, Kodiak School District has seen a large reduction in our staffing. FY17 to now, Kodiak had to cut 18 teaching positions, reduced hours for our classified Staff, cut staff travel, classroom supplies, curriculum supplies, maintenance supplies, and reduced our professional development for our entire staff.

These cuts from the FY17 budget to the FY18 budget resulted in a **2.1 million** cut in salaries and supplies.

With no projected new funding from the state, Kodiak School District has requested and additional 1.5 million from the Kodiak Borough. This would put KIB contribution at 96% to the cap. Then what happens next year? We need a long-term, early funding plan from the state and increasing the BSA is a start in that direction.

If we do not receive additional funding from our Borough or the State, Kodiak School District will be cutting 9 more Teachers, 7 classified positions.

Reducing Teaching positions and classroom support staff means **bigger class size and fewer options for students.**

In addition, we will have to reduce funding for renewal and replacement of our facilities and equipment. Items like gym floor refinishing and replacing a far beyond useful service life truck-mounted sander.

Deeper cuts to our supply budgets and we will have to postpone our curriculum replacement for a second year in a row.

A key to student success is access to current and high quality content. In addition, the curriculum must be diverse in learning needs and interests. .

What we have done to reduce costs:

Flat funding does not keep up with inflation, teacher/staff raises and rising costs of health insurance. Our district has been working hard to find ways to reduce costs. Example: 80% of our staff on a High Deductible Health Insurance, and by June 30, 2020 our entire district will be on a High Deductible health insurance.

We are exploring ways to stabilize our Technology purchase by leasing allowing us to spread the cost out over a four-year period.

Exploring stratifying our elementary schools as another long-term solution.

Keeping Quality Educators is the most significant variable in student success.

George Ascott

From: Scott Hayden <scotthayd@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 11:02 AM
To: Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: HB 339

My name is Scott Hayden, I am a constituent of Chuck Kopp's from Hilltop Drive, 99515.

I encourage you to vote for HB 339.

Flat education funding effectively means cuts to education as our schools age and the infrastructure needs work. Every year people get raises and inflation takes a toll. With 3% inflation, flat funding means a 3% cut to the education budget. I don't think that's acceptable, and neither should you.

Schools are having trouble dealing with these cuts. Under flat funding, many of our schools will be forced to lay off teachers, increase class sizes, and increase teacher workloads. The teachers will have to work harder with no compensation.

I used to be a teacher - I now run a business - and I know how hard teachers work. They have demanding jobs for little pay. My ex wife is a teacher -- and a good one. She is considering leaving her job at Begich middle school in the face of another round of cuts. Losing high quality, committed teachers like her would be a loss to the community.

You can't keep increasing workload on a fixed salary and not expect to lose good teachers.

You can't keep increasing class sizes and expect students to excel.

Please vote for HB 339. We need to give schools the resources they require to educate the next generation of leaders in Alaska.

Every successful person had a teacher who 'reached' them. When we increase class sizes, we make it harder for teachers to reach students, and we make it harder for students to succeed.

Thanks for your consideration. Support HB 339.

Sincerely,
Scott Hayden

George Ascott

From: Sharon Davies <sod@gci.net>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 8:17 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: School funding

One of the most important things for the health of a modern society is good schooling for all children. More important than roads, than many of the social support services the state offers, than entities of questionable value like the gas pipeline office.

Not just for the sake of the children. It's for a healthy economy, and for good workers in all the areas of skills that we want for our daily lives.

I urge you to support HB339.

Sincerely,
Sharon Davies

George Ascott

From: Simon Wigren <simonwigren@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 8:51 AM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Cc: Sen. Mia Costello; Rep. Jason Grend; Rep. Matt Claman
Subject: Please support HB 339

Good morning,

I am a resident of Anchorage in the Sand Lake area. Unfortunately I cannot provide public testimony today, but I wish to send a sincere plea to each of you to support HB 339. Our schools absolutely cannot function with flat funding from the Legislature.

A personal example: Dimond High School is set to lose 9 FTE next year with flat funding. My wife is on the chopping block even after ten years of teaching at Dimond. She is so dedicated to the kids she teaches that it just kills me to think she would have to start all over somewhere else. She might be driven from the teaching profession entirely.

Both of us were born and raised in Alaska and for the first time the thought has actually crept into our heads that there really isn't a future here for our family. I mean, what hope has the legislature given us? My company has offices in other states that seem to care about investing in themselves.

Please do the right thing for the future of this state.

Simon Wigren
Anchorage

George Ascott

From: Stella Tallmon <stellatalmon@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 9:26 PM
To: Rep. Harriet Drummond
Subject: House Bill 339- from the perspective of a student

Dear Representative Drummond,

My name is Stella Tallmon and I am a sophomore at Juneau-Douglas High School here in town. I'm writing in support of HB 339 because I know the importance of education firsthand and would like you to know what it means to me. I realize that we need to solve the budget deficit and are currently facing cuts to the state, and that you have a very difficult job trying to figure out a stable fiscal plan. However, flat funding for the Department of Education will not be enough. Operational costs have increased, making it even harder for kids like me all over the state to get a quality 21st century education.

It is imperative that we increase the Base Student Allocation because if we don't, the effects it will have on students across the state are frankly immeasurable. We need to prepare our youth to compete in a global community of learners and be ready to lead our generation in Alaska onward into whatever the future holds. Investing in education will always have benefits; and you should never doubt that we need a strong foothold to begin our adult lives as the next batch of leaders just like yourself.

Sincerely,
Stella Tallmon (Constituent of House District 33)

George Ascott

From: Tinker_Temperance <tinker_temperance@asdk12.org>
Sent: Monday, February 19, 2018 4:09 PM
To: Rep. Les Gara
Cc: Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Justin Parish; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz; Rep. Jennifer Johnston; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. David Talerico
Subject: Please pass HB 339

Dear Les Gara,

Thank you so much for sponsoring HB339 because continuing to flat-fund our schools is only hurting students.

As an English teacher at West High School for the last ten years, I have watched my classroom size increase so much that 32 high school students now feels normal and even small compared to the 34 and 35 I have had in the last two years.

As I continue to work to ensure that I connect with, read writing, give feedback, and create opportunities for growth in each of my students each day, it has become more and more difficult to reach each student with timely feedback. The number of papers I grade has gone from when I started at 125 (5 classes of 25 students) to 165 (5 classes of 33 students). The personal attention that my students receive has decreased dramatically because there are 8 more students in each of my classes each day! I don't mind working harder, but I cannot mathematically give more attention to all of my students.

With flat funding, I have watched some of the brightest teachers get pink slipped or decide to change professions. Keeping skilled teachers in our classrooms is necessary for successful schools. As a mentor teacher, I watched all three of the up and coming teachers whom I had helped get pink slipped last year.

Mostly, though, I have been so frustrated to see the opportunities for students get cut because of flat funding. These cuts often affect students at the highest risk. Our ELL students are losing tutors, being mainstreamed early because of overcrowding, and are often in classes of peers who are not proficient English speakers. This is not fair to our high school students who we send into the world with a diploma but without the skills to be job ready and successful Alaskan employees.

As the product of Alaska schools myself, the extra programs such as symphonic band with Mr. Schmidt, Quest, Future Problem Solving, art class and creative writing are all classes that changed my life for the better. These programs kept an at-risk low-income youth (me!) attending school and engaging in education. As the baton has been passed to me, I cannot remain silent when re-allocating the BSA for student funding could easily change thousands of students' lives for the better.

I appreciate your hard work and dedication to ensuring education of our students remains a priority to our legislators. I cannot be at the public hearing because I will be teaching 165 students that day. Thank you for your time!

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Temperance A. Tinker
West Anchorage High School
Tinker's Home Page<<http://www.asdk12.org/home.asp?num=104355>>**

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Anna Foster and I am a junior at Thunder Mountain High School. I am a member of student government, varsity track, varsity cross country, and NHS. I am a good student and am currently enrolled in 3 AP classes. I stand in support of HB 339.

Increasing the amount of funding that goes to schools is always a good idea. It may be next to impossible to implement sometimes due to budgeting, but it's your job to figure that out.

I care about funding our schools for three main reasons. One, because I am a student here in Alaska! Next year I want to take the cool new AP Environmental Science class being offered! I want to be on my final year in track and have enough coaches on staff! I want to be able to live my life as a normal student, and have room to grow and learn in uncrowded classrooms with new materials.

Two, I have a little sister. Her name is Alli and she's in sixth grade. She is so, so smart. Probably smarter than me. But already the effects of budget cuts are hitting her and potentially damaging her opportunities. There is no more double-advanced math, which is what I participated in when I was her age. She deserves to be challenged in school. I think last time I checked, she wanted to be a marine biologist when she grows up. When she goes to high

School, she wants to take TM's Marine Biology course. But, with budget cuts, will our school be able to afford such a "nonessential" class? I hear that JSD will be cutting 30 staff members this upcoming year.

And third, less personally, I have a firm belief that every student in every school in Alaska deserves the best education available. Giving more money to schools will help them afford new books, update technology, travel as teams, and have skilled teachers at their disposal.

Maybe, getting the funds is not a likely thing. Maybe, \$100 more per student wouldn't help some school districts. (Word on the street is that JSD would only have to cut \$2 million instead of \$3 million next year.)

Thank you for your time

Anna Frazer

To whom it may concern,

I am a student at thunder Mountain High School named Riley Lawler. I have attended school here for 4 years now and I have played Varsity soccer all 4 of those years. Our school could really use a larger budget for sports. With our current budget many student athletes have trouble paying for their sports because sometimes fundraising is not enough. Multiple students have been forced to quit soccer over my 4 years playing because they could not afford to pay the fee. With a larger budget the fee wouldn't cost as much and more students would be able to play. Thank you for your time and consideration, please vote yes on House Bill HB359!

- Sincerely,
Riley Lawler

To whom it may concern,

It would be incredibly helpful to schools if hb 339 was passed. Schools in Juneau have had their budget slashed in recent years. It is important to me that upcoming students have the same opportunities that I have had. One activity that is really important to me is DDF.

When I joined in my Freshman year the JD and TM teams had already been combined. The JD kids who wanted to participate had to go to TM after their school day was over. Not surprisingly, we had very few people from JD. No kids from JD have been part of DDF since that year. I am concerned that if schools don't get more funding, we will see this happen to other activities.

More important than our activities are our teachers. We have had our budget cut so much that we are down to the bare minimum. We will soon be forced to cut counselors and teachers and we can not let this happen. School is supposed to be a place for students to learn and grow. It makes it significantly harder to do that when the classes have 45 students we need to have more money in our budget, so please pass hb 339

Sincerely,
Alexander Wehe

To whom it may concern:

My name is Erin Abbott, I am a current senior at Thunder Mountain High school in Juneau, AK. I write in support for the House Bill 339, though I am not aware off all the details concerning this bill, from what I've been told, this could increase the state funding for schools. Although I will be graduating in a few months, I have many younger siblings who are still going to be in the Juneau School District for a while. This bill will help ensure that the opportunities in education will be set in place for them, as they go through grades K-12.

I want my 5 younger brothers and sisters to grow up with as many chances in life as possible, and with how bleak our school district looks here in Alaska, I worry. With the estimated budget cut of \$3 million for next school year, I worry. With the number of teaches that must lose their jobs to meet that budget, I worry. With the already thinning extracurricular activities and the merging of sports teams, I worry.

I worry for what education might look like 10 years from now, when my baby brother and sister enter highschool, when my baby sister begins middle school. I worry, with the direction our school district is going, that they won't have the chances to enjoy and learn from the extracurricular classes i've had the chance or taking. I'm worried that with these budget cuts, doors will close in their faces as their opportunities are taken away. So any money that could be invested into the education of our future, is greatly appreciated and needed here, in my hometown, Juneau Alaska.

Erin Abbott;

Personal email: erin_abbott21@yahoo.com

To whom it may concern:

My name is Zoe Novoa and I am a senior at Thunder Mountain High School in Juneau, Alaska. I support HB 339, which would increase the student base allocation by \$100 per student. Education funding is important to me because I can't imagine living without learning. My academic career has formed the basis of who I am; a proud, smart, hardworking woman who knows what she wants to achieve in life. Education has helped me gain a voice in my community, develop key relationships, and decide my future path in life. This money will mean the world to current and future alaskan students. For this reason, I sincerely hope you pass this bill.

Thank you for your time,
Zoe Novoa
novoa.zoe@gmail.com

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jessica Cooper. I am a senior at Thunder Mountain High School in Juneau, Alaska. I support HB 339, increasing the student base allocation by \$100 per student. I have been playing my trumpet for 8 years. I learned how to play in my 5th grade band class and it has drastically changed my life. When I entered 4th grade, I got involved in the robotic competition, FIRST. By lowering funds, the art programs and extracurriculars are in danger of getting cut. I am the captain of an all-girl FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) robotics team. Both of these activities have shaped me to be the person that I am today. By lowering our budget, these activities are at risk of being discontinued. Although I am graduating this year, I want all rising students to have the opportunities that I've had. The arts and extracurricular activities shape the lives of hundreds of students each year, if they have the funding, they will continue to do so for years to come.

To whom it may concern:

My name is Elena Lohrey. I am a freshman at Thunder Mountain High School in Juneau, AK. I support HB 339, increasing the student base allocation by 100 per student. Education is important to me because it plays a critical role in preparing me for my future careers, and going to school and educating myself has been a major part of my life since my childhood. I am passionate about taking advantage of my education to open the doors to life in adulthood, and if courses get cut, I will lose many great and honorable teachers who support me in working my way to maturity. I desire to educate myself as much as possible to prepare for a successful life ahead. I sincerely express my passion for education, which to me is worth more than a fortune. Without my education I will not be able to obtain much employment, and thus I would not have the money needed to support my payments, such as my housing and transportation and food, and other necessities of adulthood. My life depends deeply on my education, and I sincerely appreciate the teachers and do raise my hand against their loss of jobs due to budget cuts. I am also currently taking French 1, and am devoted to learning this language. The French teacher Mrs. Soltys is determined to support me in building my language skills and she shares my love for France. I would deeply regret her loss if the French classes were to get cut. Mrs. Soltys and I have a friendship that was founded through our passion about French, and also she taught my older brother here a few years ago. I would do anything to prevent the French class from being cut. I sincerely hope we can find a way to solve the budget crisis and save education.

I deeply appreciate your support for my education.

From: Elena Lohrey - lohrey@gci.net date: 2/15/18

My name is Cyrene Uddipa. I am a senior at Thunder Mountain High School in Juneau, Alaska. I support House Bill 339, increasing the student base allocation by \$100 per student. Education funding is important to me because, I care about my community and the young adults within. It saddens me as it is my senior year to leave the freshman, sophomore, and junior class having to worry about their education, scholastic extra curricular activities, and their favorite educators. Giving students the full opportunity at school in such a small community is very important when there are many different temptations and bad influences that they may partake in if there is given a less opportunity for students. When slowly taking education and the full aspect of educating students, they become less and less motivated to be involved and interact. I hope that whoever this letter may concern, takes high consideration in this House Bill and thoroughly thinks about the young adults in this important community.

Thank you for your time,
Cyrene Uddipa

To whom it may concern,

The students at Thunder Mountain High School, and every other student in the district, would greatly appreciate the money we would receive to help our school district's budget cuts. I have been going to Juneau schools since preschool and I have been granted opportunities to learn so much more than the average student in America. I have a younger brother that is currently attending Mendenhall River Community School and will be entering Floyd Dryden Middle School next school year in August. I want him to experience all the activities I got to participate in middle school and be given more knowledge to help him succeed in life.

We already lost a huge part of TMHS in our football team and us students do not want to lose anything else. This money that will be given to the district will help avoid dropping activities and teachers. Teachers work very hard in helping us learn to succeed in life and do not deserve to be let go due to budget cuts. This decision can make or break Juneau and its future.

Sincerely,
Koneal Laguidao
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February 14th, 2018

To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Annie Hagen and I am a senior at Thunder Mountain High School. Over the last four years I have seen serious budget cuts and also the loss of vital programs in my high school alone. These are just a few reasons why I am in support of HB 339. If we receive more funding from the state it could help keep programs and classes available for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Annie Hagen

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Siena Hanna, a senior at Thunder Mountain High School in the Juneau School District with two younger siblings in the district. My sister is a freshman at Thunder Mountain High School, and my brother is a 6th grader at Floyd Dryden Middle School.

I would like to express my support for House Bill 339. The rise of costs and healthcare has made flat funding into a functional cut on education. Over the past years, our district has needed to make cuts that have increased class sizes and made activities more expensive for students. In my freshman year of high school, my family needed to pay and fundraise over \$400-\$500 to play soccer. This year, the fee is about \$1500 between myself and my sister. Also this year, as NHS Treasurer, I had to collect our first ever fee, because the school district and school could no longer pay the cost of our NHS pins.

Next year, the Juneau School District will need to cut another \$3 million from the budget, again increasing class sizes and decreasing the quality of services. Every time we need to make cuts, the quality of education decreases. Education needs this increase to the Base Student Allocation. I would like my siblings to experience the same quality of education that I did.

Sincerely,

Siena Hanna, Thunder Mountain High School Student

To whom it may concern,

My name is Madison Cordle and I am a student at Thunder Mountain High School. Since my Freshman year, class sizes have only increased. Education is vital to me, however as the class sizes increase, it gets harder and harder to have one on one time with my teachers. Classes get larger because teacher get cut. By cutting the budget, I will not have as much as an opportunity to get help from my teachers if the class sizes increase. It will also disrupt the normal school environment, which will make my ability to learn harder than it needs to be. For example, in my spanish class I have stayed after school for an hour just waiting for a turn to talk to my instructor about a simple question. If you cut the budget, I will have to stay after school even longer, just to get help that should already be offered in class. Show support for our education, the education of the future. Thank you for your time.

Madison Cordle

To whom it may concern,

My name is Amber Kahlken and I am a junior at Thunder Mountain. By passing House Bill 339 you will help in keeping the class sizes reasonable this is important to be due to the fact that if we increase the class size I feel that the quality of our education will be better as well as my current AP Lang and Comp class is at a maximum, there are currently barely enough seats in the class for everybody, when everybody is there somebody ends up sitting at the desk in the corner that has the projector thing on it. There are physically not enough chair in the classroom for all the student as the only chair for the projector desk is a stool that my teacher brought in. I also want my sister to have as good an education as possible, she is coming into high school next year. Those teacher that will have to be cut also have names and those names belong to people, all people that have very much impacted students and helped them in ways you may not know. Many of those teacher are new and have brought new views and teaching styles into the school that have definitely helped certain and many students.

Amber Kahlken

To whom it may concern,

My name is Arianna Rivera and I am a senior at Thunder Mountain High School in Juneau, Alaska. I have been living and going to schools in Juneau all of my life. I have four other siblings that are/will be going to school in Juneau as well. I support HB 339, which will increase the student base allocation by \$100 per student. JSD school funding is important to me, because of my family, but most importantly my siblings. I want them to be able to have the wonderful opportunity that I had, by being able to have the same classes I have had in the past. For example, the EMT, Woodshop class, and many other amazing classes that could be greatly affected by a budget cut. I believe that children are the future, and that it is not only important to invest in the future but in the future of education.

Sincerely,
Arianna Rivera

36998@juneaustudents.org

15 February, 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

My names is Michael Pierson, acting secretary of the the Freshman Government at Thunder Mountain High School. I have two younger brothers who are very involved and my youngest brother is already wanting to take part in all of the AP classes but that might not happen if this bill, Bill 339, does not pass.

Also, this will be affecting some very some inspirational teachers that would possibly get cut next year. I want my brothers to meet these great teachers. This bill will also save the sports that myself and brothers tack part in like Student Government, Pep Band, etc. These are some of the few reasons why you should support House Bill 339.

Michael Pierson

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To whom this may concern,

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By now you've probably received many other letters from different students voicing their concerns. Also in advance please excuse any misspellings or bad grammar. My name is Carl Tufau, I am a senior at Thunder Mountain Highschool. I am a wrestler for the Falcons and recently took state for Juneau. Having gone here for three years I'd like to think that I know what activities and programs are offered here. But over the years the budget cuts have slowly chipped away at our schools programs.

This is my last year of highschool so these new cuts don't really effect me. But they will effect my younger brother who's a sophomore. His name is Maikeli, and he's a hundred times more smart and more athletically gifted than I am. And there are many other kids like him. This is why I believe house bill 339 should be passed. To give these up coming generations a fulfilling high school experience.

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Sincerely,

Carl Tufau

To Whom it May Concern-

My name is Ellie Knapp and I am a freshman student attending Thunder Mountain High School. I believe our schools should receive more money per student because it would allow students to do more activities and sports, therefore enhancing the quality of schooling in Alaska and giving students a more diverse skill set that they may not have otherwise.

Additionally, since budget cuts have been more and more frequent since 2015, schools have been losing valuable money that is used to make classroom experience better and more meaningful. I for one am an active person who appreciates everything our schools have to offer, and I do not want to lose any part of our valuable schooling that would otherwise be provided.

Thank you Sincerely,

Ellie Knapp

Thunder Mountain Student

To whom it may concern,

As a student whom has experienced several activities provided by the school district, I am in support of house bill 339: The Base Student Allocation bill.

Traveling with the cross country and track team, I was not only able to bond and connect with my own team, but connect with hundreds of kids, adults, and community members in small towns all over Alaska. These experiences have taught me to work with different people in different situations and environments, to reach out and become a bigger part of the community, and has made me a people person. I have been lucky enough to have these opportunities and would love to see the same provided for my two younger sisters.

MAHIN 2/14/18

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kaylani Tupou. I am writing in support of house bill 339, which would increase state funding for schools. I feel that the increase can only do good. I am an active student and am apart of many activities offered by the school. Without this increase a lot of these activities could be cut. This would be a major impact on my life, in school and out. One of the activities I am involved in is AVID. AVID is a big part of the reason I am doing so well. With this program I have learned new methods of studying, answering my own questions, and most importantly keeping organized in academics and time management. The sports here have also become quite the impact in my life. With them I have learned hard work and integrity. Our schools sports our a safe place for many students, including me, where we can be in a comfortable environment and thrive at something we are good at, or learn to do so. I speak not only for me but also on behalf of my younger siblings and cousins. Without school programs for them to participate in, they stay home all day. They have learned things they didn't even know they wanted to learn and have come to grow because of it. I hope you take this in consideration when deciding.

Thank you,

Kaylani Tupou

2/15/18

My name is Fischer Rago and I support
HB 339 because as a senior and active member
of many programs in our school I want incoming
freshman and new generations to have more
opportunities than I've had, not less.

Sincerely,

Fischer Rago, Senior president (TMHS)

Being involved in Interact, soccer, UHS and Stugo has
been a great way for me to get to know people and
get more involved in our school.

To whom it may concern:

My name is Matthew Edwards . I am a senior at Thunder Mountain High School in Juneau, Alaska.

I support House Bill 339, increasing the student base collection by \$100 per student

Education funding is important to me because cutting classes, makes the type of classes a school can provide go down which in turn student such as I might not find a passion in the class that was cut because we couldn't take it. The whole point of school is to educate students for the future which expands multiple generations of students. If classes are cut it lowers are education are passion for that class is just taken away because we never got to try the class. Even though I am a senior it still affects me because schools are to educate the future, to make sure we can pass on the knowledge to future generations.

Thank you for your time,

Matthew Edwards

34873@juneaustudents.org