



HAINES BOROUGH SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 1289

Haines, Alaska 99827-1289

March 11, 2011

Senator Kevin Meyer
Majority Leader
State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Joe Thomas
State Capitol, Room 514
Juneau, AK
99801

Dear Senators Meyer and Thomas:

Thank you for coauthoring SB84. The provisions of this bill would insure our school district's ability to continue building our capacity to provide a higher quality and more relevant education for our students. The recommendations of the Joint Education Funding Task Force (JEFTF) that met in 2007 and were incorporated into law made a huge contribution to our ability to do our jobs. We have had three years in which we've been able to more accurately budget.

Consequently, we spend more time dealing with educational issues rather than trying to anticipate different funding scenarios. This has been huge for us. We have been able to work our strategic plan. We've focused on improving our reading and math curriculum and instruction. We've added additions to our Career and Technical/Vocational Education program. We've improved services to our "high needs" students.

We know that keeping kids in school so they don't drop-out, but continue through and graduate, includes several crucial factors. First they need to have high quality, highly skilled teachers who care about them. Second, they need a strong core curriculum. Third, they need immediate and effective interventions to help them catch-up and keep-up when they are behind. And forth, they need options and relevance in their classes. All these things help them connect to school and experience the success they need that will result in their graduating.

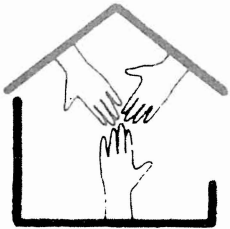
With the rising cost of energy and the consequent increase in goods and services, being able to continue our efforts for our children depends on the provisions SB84 encompasses. We thank you for leading the way in addressing the important issues we face and offering what we feel is a good solution that will allow us to continue our important work in partnership with the legislature, our local government and our immediate community.

Thank you,



Michael Byer

Superintendent, Haines Borough School District



HAINES BOROUGH SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 1289

Haines, Alaska 99827

A Resolution Supporting the Passage of Senate Bill No. 84 Submitted by the Senate Education Committee on 2/4/11

“An Act relating to funding for high school vocational education as a component of funding for public schools; increasing the base student allocation used in the public school funding formula; and providing for an effective date.”

Whereas, The Alaska Legislature in 2008 passed HB 273 that put into effect the recommendations of its own Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force that were based on a reasoned and deliberate discussion of important issues to public education in the state; and

Whereas, these recommendations included 1) forward funding of districts with yearly additions to the BSA, 2) funding the actual costs of “intensive needs students,” 3) providing a “hold harmless” provision for districts with dramatic enrollment decreases, and 4) implementation of the “District Cost Factor;” and

Whereas, this legislative support has greatly assisted districts to do early forward planning and provide better educational services to students; and

Whereas, the need for forward funding, vocational education and the other provisions within HB 273 continues on; and

Whereas, Senate Bill No. 84 addresses these important concerns and continues the crucial support already begun by the legislature for the next three years; and

Whereas, flat funding will cause reductions in educational services and further constrain our district’s capacity to meet the diverse needs of all students, each of whom are essential for Alaska’s future;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, we respectfully request that Senate Bill No. 84 be passed by the Alaska State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Sean Parnell.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 16th day of March 2011.

HAINES BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD

Carol Kelly, President

Brian Clay
Sean Cone
Nelle Jurgeleit-Greene

Anne Marie Palmieri
Sarah Swinton
Stacie Turner

Royal Henderson, Student Representative
Michael Byer, Superintendent

SEA LEVEL B & B

Jean L. Ellis
P.O. Box 1068
913 N. Nordic Drive
Petersburg, Alaska 99833
(907) 772-3240
jrellis@gci.net

March 17, 2011

Senator Joe Thomas
Co-Chair Senate Education Committee
Alaska State Legislature

Dear Senator Thomas,

I am writing in support of SB 84 Vocational Education Funding / Base Student Allocation. We in Petersburg have been experiencing declining student enrollment. Our school has stepped up to the challenge and is reducing staff and making fiscally sound changes to our program.

However two items that continue to increase are heating fuel costs and health insurance costs. Through contract negotiations we have significantly increased the medical deductible which lowered our insurance costs however they are increasing again for next year and continue to be a large portion of our budget. Our elementary school (Stedman Elementary) built in the late 60's has single pane windows and uninsulated walls. It is on the DEED CIP list however energy needs receive a low ranking under the current system so it remains far down the list. The high heating fuel costs are hitting us hard.

We are currently projecting a budget shortfall for 2012 of \$177,000. An increase to the Base Student Allocation as proposed in SB 84 would not eliminate our shortfall but would be a significant help. Forward funding is extremely beneficial as it allows the School District to make decisions on staffing (job or no job) and programs in a timely manner.

The Vocational Education Funding portion of SB 84 is particularly important. In Petersburg we need more electricians, plumbers, cooks, welders, and the list goes on. We are shortchanging our community and our students by not offering more training in the vocational trades.

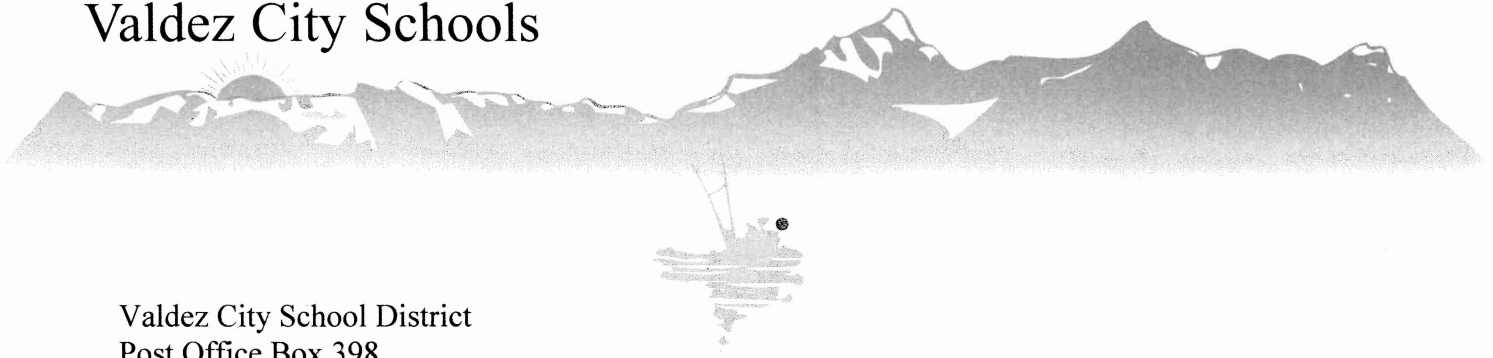
Petersburg is a great school with a very low drop out rate, high graduation rate, and high rate of students passing the HSGQE. However funding continues to be a real challenge, passage of SB 84 would greatly benefit our school district and community.

Thanks,

Jean L. Ellis

Jean L. Ellis, President
Petersburg School Board

Valdez City Schools



Valdez City School District
Post Office Box 398
Valdez, AK, 99686

March 10, 2011

Senator Joe Thomas
Mail Stop 3100
State Capitol, Room 514
Juneau, AK, 99801

Re: Support of Senate Bill 84

Dear Senator Thomas:

On behalf of the Valdez City School District Administration, Board of Education, and Staff Members we wish to thank you for your sponsorship of Senate Bill 84. This funding is helpful to our school district in many ways: 1. It allows us to strategically plan for the next three years; 2. It allows the continuation of many new and innovative programs for students; 3. It allows the VCSD to consider the expansion of current highly desired programs.

Over the last few years the VCSD has worked hard to expand and create additional learning opportunities for students. We currently have many programs that are unique to Valdez and we would like to be able to expand on those successes. We have forged a very strong collaboration with Prince William Sound Community College and we are able to offer many concurrent enrollment options for our students. We also are working together with industry professionals to not only prepare our students for college, but also prepare them of the workplace upon graduation.

The VCSD strongly supports Senate Bill 84 and we encourage swift passage to allow us to plan for the future.

Thank you,

Jacob Jensen, Superintendent
Valdez City School District

Daniel Walker, President
Valdez Board of Education

Murray Richmond

From: Ty Mase [tmase@lpsd.com]
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 7:32 AM
To: Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: SB 84
Attachments: 0clip_image002.png; 0clip_image004.png

[Image]

THE

LAKE AND PENINSULA

SCHOOL DISTRICT

101 Jensen Drive

P.O. Box 498

King Salmon, Alaska 99613

Phone (907) 246-4280 / Fax (907) 246-4473

[Image]

March 11, 2011

Alaska State Senate Education Committee

The Honorable Joe Thomas and the Honorable Kevin Meyer, Co-Chairs

Senators,

On behalf of the Lake and Peninsula School District I am writing in support of Senate Bill 84 – Base Allocation Increase and High School Vocational Education Funding. The multi-year increases applied during the past several years were very helpful in our strategic planning process. SB 84 proposes a similar multi-year plan.

Along with the ability to plan ahead financially, SB 84 also gives districts much needed funding increases that allow us to better respond to rising costs. In the past several years LPSD has experienced dramatic increases in medical insurance and utility costs. The yearly increase to the base allocation formula allows us to respond to such increases without cutting educational programs.

While the rest of the country is cutting teachers and educational systems are faltering, this is a positive step for Alaska. A sustainable, stronger education system is sure to be the result. On behalf of my Board and School District, I urge your support for multi-year funding of schools.

Sincerely,

Ty Mase
Superintendent

Ty Mase, Superintendent
Lake and Peninsula Borough School District P.O. Box 498 King Salmon, AK 99613
(907) 246-4280
(907) 246-4473 -fax

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Murray Richmond

From: Sen. Joe Thomas
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 11:36 AM
To: Murray Richmond
Subject: FW: SB 84 and CSSB 84

Importance: High

From: Comeau_Carol [mailto:Comeau_Carol@asdk12.org]
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2011 11:19 AM
To: Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Gary Stevens
Cc: School Board; Bruce Johnson (bjohnson@alaskaacsa.org)
Subject: SB 84 and CSSB 84
Importance: High

Dear Senators Meyer and Thomas and Senate Education Committee members:
I was unable to testify on SB 84 and CSSB 84 this morning due to an emergency death of one of our staff over the weekend. I did want to comment on this important proposed legislation.

First, and foremost, I want to thank all of you for your long-time support for public education; our students, staff, and families have truly benefitted from the past three years of increased funding in the Base Student Allocation, the Intensive Needs factor, and in Pupil Transportation. The increased funding has allowed us to fully pay for our over 900 Intensive Needs students from the increased funding, and not to have to divert other general education funding to provide these required intensive services. In addition, it has allowed us to keep up with the inflationary costs of education. By knowing our funding levels for three years, we were able to more effectively plan to our instructional programs and student needs, as well as negotiate reasonable collective bargaining agreements.

I urge you to support either SB 84 or CSSB 84 with the three years of incremental increases to the Base Student Allocation as well as the increase of a specific factor for career and technical education. For too long, our funding in the block grant which assists us with our bilingual education, special needs, gifted, and career and technical/vocational education funding has been used up with the needs of our bilingual (English Language Learners) and special needs students with little left to enhance our career and technical education. Our school board has prioritized career and technical education for the past three years, and we are seeing significant increases in student interest and participation in these courses. We have elements of C and TE in all three bond propositions on our April 5 ballot. We have added C and TE opportunities in our after school and summer school programs due to student interest. We believe that more funding in this vital area will assist us in providing more classes for our students, and thus increasing the graduation rate, and decreasing the drop out rate.

Again, we urge you to support SB 84 or the CSSB 84 in this legislative session. It will make a significant difference in the quality of education for our students.

Thank you,
Carol Comeau
Superintendent

Murray Richmond

From: Sen. Joe Thomas
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2011 11:29 AM
To: Murray Richmond
Subject: FW: Support for SB 84

From: Wendy Jacobsen [<mailto:wjacobsen@cordovasd.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2011 9:29 AM
To: Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Joe Thomas
Subject: Support for SB 84

Senator Meyer and Senator Thomas,

Thank you for taking the time to consider support for SB 84. As a secondary special education teacher, I urge you to support SB 84. Often times the students I work with thrive in vocational educational programs and having specific funding for such programs would ensure that students who don't always thrive in traditional classes, can feel success and build employability skills through vocational education programs. I also urge you to support the increase in base allocation for student funding. Being able to anticipate student allocations for the next few years, will help administrators in the budget process. Please continue to support districts throughout Alaska by providing the funding that we need to continue to build and maintain successful programs for our students.

Thank You,
Wendy Jacobsen
Cordova

Murray Richmond

From: Sen. Joe Thomas
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2011 4:54 PM
To: Murray Richmond
Subject: FW: SB 84-BSA increase is needed for improvement to education

-----Original Message-----

From: Shelagh Sands [<mailto:shelaghsands@gmail.com>]
Sent: Sunday, March 13, 2011 10:51 AM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. Kevin Meyer
Subject: SB 84-BSA increase is needed for improvement to education

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent of three children in Juneau. One is in college at Dartmouth College and two are in high school. I am also the President of the Arts For Kids board, which has tirelessly fought to keep the arts education in place in the Juneau School District. Our non-profit was instrumental in getting an elementary art program into our school district, after 25 years of having no elementary art across our district.

In looking at our school district, I see success. My son has gone to a very competitive college from Juneau Douglas Highschool. My children are doing well at this school also. This is because the parents, businesses and legislators have also fought tirelessly to keep funding education with inflation considered and cost of fuel considered.

To say that an increase in education money is not showing higher graduation rates, so why fund more money is foolhardy.

Our state must keep up with inflation rates and the rising cost of fuel alone, let alone the cost of drug counselors, high school counselors, art, physical fitness, and the four main core area of study,

If the legislators choose not to do this, then you will pay for incarceration rates, and adults that do not function in this society that is changing at a overwhelming rate. We want our kids to run the government in the future and we must continue to fund them to have this happen. Schools are continuing to look at ways to get test scores up. But you cannot go on test scores and graduation rates alone. You must look at the students that have succeeded and ask yourself why??? I feel it is because the legislature has continued to forward fund education, so our rates of success are not going down.

Simply put, you can feed a kid fruits and vegetables, which cost more than an unhealthy diet of cheerios and Mcdonalds. It simply cost alot to keep up with technology, abuse in the families, fitness and serving our children, that encompasses educating the whole child.

Please see that an increase to our district will keep all the programs that make a child happy and succeed. If this BSA is not increased our district will lose an art elementary specialist that services 2,000 children. This program alone is amazingly sucessful and creates learning with both sides of the brain. I could send lots of info that proves this. We will also loose a high school counselor. My son would never have made it to Dartmouth without a counselor that had time to help him in his high school carreer, but also help him get through the rigorous college application process. We will also loose our elementary EL program. You may think "oh, these smart kids will do fine without this," but studies show

that kids drop out of school that do not have their needs met with EL. These kids are considered special education because they have many needs to survive making it to adult life. I have raised three of these kids, and they have developed in a positive way due to this program.

Please make the right choice and forward fund education. We should have the best schools in the nation; since we don't, we need to let the educators try and still find success with a population base that is so diverse and facing so many issues.

Thank you for your work on this and continued effort on the part of our citizens.

Whenever I write to people I say that I am representing 200 voices because most people are afraid to contact the legislators. The average person on the street thinks that their voice is not heard and actually not worthwhile. They don't see that it matters. I have listened to 200 voices on my own that have relayed what I have said to you in this email.

Sincerely

Shelagh Sands a concerned parent.

Murray Richmond

From: Sen. Joe Thomas
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2011 4:54 PM
To: Murray Richmond
Subject: FW: SB 84 CTE support!

-----Original Message-----

From: Neel_Julye [mailto:Neel_Julye@asdk12.org]
Sent: Sunday, March 13, 2011 9:35 AM
To: Sen. Joe Thomas
Subject: SB 84 CTE support!

Dear Senator Thomas,

My name is Julye Neel and I am the Principal at Hanshew Middle School in Anchorage. I've learned that the Senate Education Committee is preparing to take public testimony on SB 84 increasing the Base Student Allocation and funding for vocational/career and technical-education. I'm so pleased to hear that.

This funding would support the work of educators with students through expanded CTE programs such as programs that currently exist successfully at Hanshew and our local Service High School. Currently, Hanshew offers Applied Technology, directly preparing students for high school and the construction trades, Family Consumer Science directly preparing middle school students for Service High's Pro Start program, Business Education that prepares students for business courses such as accounting and marketing at the high school. We working on offering a course next year that prepares students for Service High's Bio Medical Academy. This purpose and goal would be to prepare students for the many career opportunities in the health field.

The increase in funding will support professional development for educators so that we can continue to support student and community interest. I believe that the CTE programs are relevant to students and their future more than ever before.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please consider this an invitation to visit our school and learn more about the opportunities we are currently providing for students.

Sincerely,
Julye Neel
Hanshew Principal
Hanshew Middle School
Home of the HAWKS!

907-267-0203

Murray Richmond

From: Sen. Joe Thomas
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 7:14 AM
To: Murray Richmond
Subject: FW: SB84 K-12 funding

From: Anne Kilkenney [<mailto:annekilkenney@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 10:14 PM

To: Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Linda Menard; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Joe Paskvan; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Albert Kookesh; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Tom Wagoner; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. John Coghill

Subject: SB84 K-12 funding

Senators,

I support SB84 but think that it needs to be amended to provide increases in the BSA of \$170, 175 and 180 in FY2012, 13, and 14.

My reasons are:

- 1) The increase you are proposing doesn't even cover the increase the MatSu Borough District has incurred in health insurance expense this year.
- 2) Our schools need to do a better job of educating students in order to be competitive on the world market. You can't expect better performance without better funding.
- 3) The increase you are proposing (1.9%) is less than the 10 yr average for inflation of 2.8%. With the price of oil going up, expenses will increase, especially for rural districts which are disproportionately impacted by increases in the cost of diesel and transportation expenses.
- 4) We can afford it. House Finance passed a budget with a 5.2% increase in spending. A 5.2% increase in the BSA would be \$295. Certainly, under those circumstances we can afford a 3% increase for k-12 education.
- 5) Due to borough ordinance which confiscates 50% of the year-end fund balance of the MSB School District, the MatSu Boro SD has no reserves into which it can dip to cover budget shortfalls.
- 6) If you can consider giving TWO BILLION DOLLARS to the oil companies with nothing in return, you can give \$50 million more to our children who will be supporting more seniors than any other generation of Americans.
- 7) This is starvation funding. Our children deserve more than a 1.9% increase.
- 8) Without an increase the MatSu Boro Sch Distr will have to lay off about 35 teachers and class sizes will go up 4 to 6 students.

Thank you for consideration of my concerns,
Anne Kilkenney

Anne Kilkenney
P. O. Box 870163
Wasilla, Alaska USA
99687-0163

907-376-6225

Live Simply. Love Generously. Care Deeply. Speak Kindly. Leave the rest to God.