

## Responses to SB 84 from Alaskan Communities

Though we in the educational community have always been somewhat leery of categorical funding, we recognize that dollars going into the 20% Block Grant for Special ED, ESL, Gifted & Talented, & Vocational ED are being siphoned off almost exclusively by Special ED due to federal mandates and leaving Vocational Education seriously short funded; this at a time when its importance is being increasingly recognized.

*Thomas L. Conley~D.-FMP*  
*Sitka School Board Member*

As a small rural school district we are especially vulnerable to rising "fixed" costs. We are particularly concerned about the cost of energy. We have been recently told by our supplier to expect significant increases in the cost of heating fuel, propane, and gasoline. Clearly world events have a direct impact on our energy budget. In addition, insurance costs continue to increase. We realize that Klawock is not unique in this situation. However, due to the size of our budget (generally less than \$3 million) we have an especially difficult time absorbing these costs.

*Richard Carlson*  
*Superintendent Klawok School District*

Knowing the education funding outlook for the next three years will enable UCSD to plan for the implementation of additional high school courses needed to meet the eligibility requirements for the Governors Alaska Performance Scholarship (APS) program. Specifically, the District seeks to hire an additional high school teacher so that students have access to the rigorous core curriculum required for eligibility for the APS.

*John P. Conwell, Superintendent*  
*Unalaska School District*

The multi-year increases to the Base Student Allocation applied during the years FY09-FY11 had a profound effect on the focus of the budget dialogue in school districts across the state. Instead of concern primarily about budget cuts to keep our heads above water, stakeholders participating in the budget process were able to plan instructional programs over a multi-year period. Although education is a long-term project, we can see that these efforts are already beginning to bear fruit, to the benefit of Alaskan students.

*Luke D. Fulp*  
*ALASBO President*

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.

*Michael Byer, Superintendent, Haines Borough School District*

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.

*Jean L. Ellis, President*

*Petersburg School Board*

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.

*Carol Comeau*

*Anchorage School District*