

From: [Cathy Brandt](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Base student allocation amounts
Date: Monday, March 31, 2014 9:42:49 PM

Dear Rep. Stoltze:

Please vote to increase the amount of money for the base student allocations. We support the full \$400 plus per student and then the BSA should be tied to inflation. Though many in the legislature say there is no money, there are plenty of questionable projects from which money could be reallocated. For example, any monies slated to be spent on the Knik Arm Bridge or the Susitna Dam. Why not mothball those two projects for one year and use the money that would be allocated to them to support education. Perhaps one year of no funding would give everyone an opportunity to decide whether these projects are just holes we are pouring money into or if they are indeed valuable projects for the state as a whole. Money for educational support reaches all the communities in Alaska. Another great reason to increase the BSA. It is an equitable project, all students regardless of where they live will be funded at the same amount. Education is key to a better future. Please raise the monetary support so that the debilitating cycle of cuts and rollbacks can stop and all the time and energy spent on making ends meet can instead be spent helping students receive the best education ever!
Increase the BSA!

Thanks,
Brian and Cathy Brandt

From: [Rebecca Johnson](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Base Student Allocation and Education Funding
Date: Monday, March 24, 2014 12:26:50 PM

Dear Mr. Stoltze,

I am writing to ask you to please vote to fund education in the Anchorage School District. A [recent chart](#) prepared with the help of the Department of Education, and confirmed by them as correct, details the deficits faced by six major school districts. The data from the Department was overlaid with information from a [report](#) by the non-partisan Legislative Research Division, and shows the following:

Anchorage, with a \$23 million deficit next year, needs roughly a \$315 per student increase to avoid cuts next year. They could use the \$404 we have proposed to also reverse some prior years' cuts.

Our students need their teachers. Alaska needs great schools to keep attracting people looking to relocate from the outside and to entice young people who grew up here to come back home to stay.

Please help our students succeed!

Thank you,

Rebecca Johnson

From: [Agosti-Gisler Tam](#)
To: [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. Harriet Drummond](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Neal Foster](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Lance Pruitt](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Peggy Wilson](#); [Sen. Gary Stevens](#); [Sen. Fred Dyson](#); [Sen. Hollis French](#); [Sen. Charlie Huggins](#); [Sen. Peter Micciche](#); [Sen. Bill Wielechowski](#); [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lynn Gattis](#); [Rep. Bob Herron](#); [Rep. Doug Isaacson](#); [Rep. Wes Keller](#); [Rep. Bob Lynn](#); [Sen. Berta Gardner](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Sen. Click Bishop](#); [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [Sen. Dennis Egan](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Sen. Pete Kelly](#); [Rep. Mike Chenault](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Rep. Eric Feige](#); [Sen. John Coghill](#); [Rep. Max Gruenberg](#); [Sen. Johnny Ellis](#); [Rep. Pete Higgins](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#); [Rep. Craig Johnson](#); [Sen. Lesil McGuire](#); [Rep. Sam Kito](#); [Sen. Bert Stedman](#); [Rep. Charisse Millett](#); [Sen. Mike Dunleavy](#); [Rep. Kurt Olson](#); [Sen. Anna Fairclough](#); [Rep. Paul Seaton](#); [Sen. Lyman Hoffman](#); [Rep. Chris Tuck](#); [Sen. Kevin Meyer](#); [Rep. Mike Hawker](#); [Rep. Shelley Hughes](#); [Rep. Scott Kawasaki](#); [Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux](#); [Rep. Benjamin Nageak](#); [Rep. Lora Reinbold](#); [Rep. Geran Tarr](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#)
Subject: Base Student Allocation resolution
Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 6:26:32 PM
Attachments: [BSA Resolution.pdf](#)

Honorable Governor Parnell, Honorable Senators, and Honorable Representatives,

Thank you for your focus on education this session. Please find attached a resolution from the Anchorage School Board urging your support of a significant increase in the Base Student Allocation. Your continued support of Alaska's children as well as your service to all Alaskans is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ms. Tam Agosti-Gisler
President
Anchorage School Board
5530 East Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99504-3135
(907) 742-1101 ext. 4
(907) 742-4318 fax
agosti-gisler_tam@asdk12.org

- Sign-up to receive School Board meeting agendas and email newsletter at: www.asdk12.org/school_board
- Sign up to receive the monthly ASD Connect newsletter or to join the Key Communicators Network at www.asdk12.org
- Become a fan of the ASD on Facebook.
- Join Twitter to receive ASD information and school closure announcements.

From: [Rebecca Poulson](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [LIO Sitka](#)
Cc: [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#); [Sen. Bert Stedman](#); [school board Lon Garrison](#); [Steve Bradshaw](#)
Subject: Base Student Allocation
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 10:52:01 AM

Greetings:

Having attended the Sitka School Board's budget hearings, I urge the Legislature to increase the Base Student Allocation, by at least \$400.

The Sitka School District is using most of its reserves in order to balance its budget this year.

But of more concern, district administration says that they have "unfunded mandates" from the state government, to

- Change all of their curriculum due to new State Standards, which will cost some \$500,000 or more, which is not in the budget. Not only is curriculum extremely expensive (whether electronic or paper), it now requires paying for "professional development," or training, in how to implement it.
- And, the state has now mandated teacher evaluations, which are so time consuming, they may have to add staff.

Neither one of these mandates has any evidence behind it to show it improves the education of our kids.

Even without these new mandates, the district is going into savings in order to balance the budget, which is clearly unsustainable.

The administration tells us that the only place they can cut costs is by cutting teachers and staff. Cutting teachers and staff will raise class sizes in early grades, which is proven to be detrimental to a child's entire school career, and their chances of going to college; and cutting programs at the high school level will keep kids from being eligible for the Governor's performance scholarships.

Our kids are the future, of our state, and our nation. There is no excuse for not adequately funding our schools.

Thank you for your attention.

Rebecca Poulson, Sitka parent (grades 4 and 6)

From: [Arthur Keyes](#)
To: [Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Base Student Allocation
Date: Saturday, March 22, 2014 12:02:44 PM

March 23, 2014

Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Base Student Allocation

Dear Representative: Bill Stoltze

My name is Arthur Keyes. I'm a lifelong Alaskan and a farmer in the Mat-Su Valley. Admittedly, I'm neither a strong conservative nor an ardent liberal, and typically favor a live-and-let-live approach to policymaking and laws. I'm married with children, and my kids have attended various public schools in Palmer from kindergarten through high school.

The purpose of my letter is to encourage you to raise the Base Student Allocation this session.

From my basic knowledge of process and statistics, it appears state education funding has fallen behind inflation by over 7% in the last three years. Contacting our own Mat-Su School District, and also neighboring Anchorage Kenai Peninsula School Districts, I've discovered classroom sizes are rising while efficiencies and "belt-tightening" - like we're sometimes forced to do in the agriculture industry and private sector - is becoming more difficult to accomplish.

I am aware that about five years ago the Alaska Legislature funded shortfalls in the Teacher's Retirement Fund, but that really only helps those educators on the tail-end of the journey, not necessarily new or current teachers. Undoubtedly, we need more teachers. And I recognize the fiscal debate looms heavy in your halls and the most staunch conservatives, and even progressives, will ask me where the money for raising the BSA should come from.

Candidly, I'm not sure. I don't know where you can cut, but I do know the Senate Finance Committee just proposed a \$9.1 billion state operating budget, and that is consistent in amount with the recently passed House version. That seems like an awful lot of money to me, and for programs that may or may not be as critical as budgeting for the education of our youth.

Please elevate the Base Student Allocation this session, even if to a small level, so that our classrooms can maintain, if not receive the benefit, of more teachers, counselors and nurses.

Thank you for your public service.

Respectfully,

Arthur Keyes
Palmer, Alaska

From: [Jean Miller](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: BSA Increase
Date: Monday, March 24, 2014 12:00:10 PM

Dear Representative Stoltze,

I am writing you today as a concerned life-long Alaskan. My concern is for the current inadequate funding for our public education system and the negative impacts this will have on the current and future generations of our state. I will soon have two children in the Anchorage public schools, but it is not just for them that I am concerned. My skills and experience as an Anchorage School District teacher allow me to fill in gaps and provide extra enrichment for my own children. This is often not the case for families where the parents are recent refugees, have to work multiple jobs just to scrape by or may be limited by education or language. High quality education and extra support are the tools that all of our children need to develop into constructive independent members of society.

Supporting an increase in the BSA will help strengthen our schools & students who in turn strengthen the future of our state!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jean Miller

From: [Flint and Maria](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: BSA
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 2:44:51 PM

Hi there and thank you for taking the time to read my email.

My name is Maria and my boys go to their elementary public neighborhood school. I also have a daughter who will start school next year as well. I am an involved parent. I volunteer to spend time in the classrooms anytime I can doing anything I can. I see everything our teachers do and what their support staff do. Last year, support staff was cut in avoidance of eliminating teacher positions. While I appreciate keeping the teachers, their work load still increased. Now, our teachers are going to get cut without an increase to our BSA. Have you been in our schools? Have you seen what are teachers are asking parents to supply because the school doesn't have the funds? I'm there. I send in their wish list items. I help when I can. I am fortunate, not everyone can do this. I don't want my kids to suffer. The classroom numbers are already too high. Our kids, our future, are paying the price. This has to stop. If there were enough money, why the cuts? The truth is, there isn't. Our children's education is not an option. We must raise the BSA by the asked for \$400 to avoid the cuts, not \$80, not \$150 and we must have inflation proofing.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Maria Feigner

From: [Robin Johnson](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: BSA
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 4:16:44 PM

Dear Representative Stoltze,

Please increase the The BSA for the children of Alaska. with ever increasing costs schools must be afforded the ability to keep up with ever increasing costs. The BSA has not been increased since 2011 and inflation has far surpassed the buying power of the BSA.

This is causing districts so have to cut teachers and other positions and programs that are critical to the education of Alaskan's children. While the funds that the legislature has appropriated for buildings, heating fuel and transportation are helpful and important they cannot be used to hire people to work with our kids. This does not help kids in the classroom. The BSA needs to be raised to avert cuts this coming year and restore the cuts of the past three years.

Please inflection-proof the BSA so that it increases each year without additional legislation.

Robin Johnson
Nome, Alaska

From: [Heather Wagner](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Eagle Academy Charter School and the BSA
Date: Sunday, March 30, 2014 10:59:03 AM

Dear Representative Stolze,

I am an Eagle River resident and a supporter of Eagle Academy Charter School. I am writing to encourage you to raise the Basic Student Allocation (BSA) a minimum of \$250/student for the coming budget year (2014-2015). That would bring the total up to \$9,710 per student.

This raise is not a luxury, it is a necessity. The BSA must reflect the needs of our educational system. As a tax payer and a voter I am expecting you to ease the financial crisis Eagle Academy and its students are experiencing due to flat funding over the past four years.

I would also like to point out the fact that the achievement levels at EACS are second only to Chugach Optional. The standards set by the faculty and Principal Logan are high, and the students meet those standards and prove that the methods and curriculum of Eagle Academy Charter School are outstanding and worth full budgetary support through a sufficient increase to the BSA. It is a worthy expenditure.

Sincerely,
Heather Wagner, parent

From: [Suzanne Little](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Education - Alaska's Economic Development Engine
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 11:36:57 AM

Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee -

The future of our education for our State's young people's is in your hands.

In this wealthiest of states, it makes no sense to make cuts to education. Alaska's youth and their education are the spark plugs of our future economic engine.

I write to request that you to increase the Base Student Allocation by \$400 per student to inflation-proof education funding, not just for now, but out into the future.

I also respectfully request that no state funding (or initiatives to change the constitution to allow such) be authorized for private schools, especially private religious school. The notion of public funding for private religious schools is completely contrary to the tenets upon which our country was founded.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne R. Little
Former Alaska State Senator (Soldotna)


--

Suzanne R. Little
3521 Admiralty Bay Drive
Anchorage, AK 99515
Home 907-245-2400
Cell 907-244-2417

From: [Sheila Curran](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Education BSA
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 10:32:59 AM

Rep. Stoltze --
Please support the funding for education by raising the BSA by 400 now and forward funding and inflation proofing for the future.

Thank you.

 Sheila Curran
PO Box 929
Girdwood AK 99587
223-7470

From: [Alyse Galvin](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Education Funding
Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 8:43:13 PM
Attachments: [Chart FF and Results.pdf](#)

Representative Stoltze,

First of all, thank you for all that you are already doing ensuring our Alaskan children are successful. I believe our districts overall are improving each year in paving the way for each child in Alaska to be ready to lead a happy and self-sustaining life as a contributing member of our community. I appreciate that you are giving your time and talent in furthering opportunities for each and every child in this district.

I am writing to urge you to lay the groundwork for continuing this work, by ensuring funds are available for the work districts are doing by passing a to raising the BSA significantly more than what the governor is proposing. Additionally, ask for a 3 year series of raises that brings security in your planning and also brings a sense of certainty to families, staff, teachers, and the administration, that we will not have to continuously be funding on doors asking for more.

I am a mom with four children. Two are recent graduates of public schools in Alaska. Two are still in public school. Honestly, they will do fine regardless of how much funding goes to my district. They may see that the world around them does not support something that their own parents feel is very important however, but that is not my focus. I am not a teacher, and never have been in any union. I am writing to you on behalf of many other children, parents and community members you are representing. Should the basic skills of reading and math trend downward, many children and **our economy will suffer**. As you know, many, many children whose loving parents do not have the wherewithal to dig into the weeds about education funding but if they could they would have the things to say that I am going to say. Their children will likely suffer significantly should our funding not get increased and then be spent wisely. Most of the districts have been making wise decisions with regard to helping children with a multitude of home languages different than English, helping children who need extra attention to get the aforementioned skills that will lead them to success! These are the very children (and many, many others) who whose outcomes will be deeply affected by staff cuts. And the ripple affect will reach out to every child, should our spending cuts continue, and ultimately, our entire economy.

The long term funding (at least three years) is a way of practicing good business. I understand that public education has many attributes that make it a different animal than a business, but when we know that the outcomes of the education in our community is closely tied to the success of our community economically, we need to advocate to our legislators that funding education is smart business. This also brings a sense of certainty to families, staff, teachers, and the administration, that the work itself is important and we need to focus energy on that work of education, and not continuously spending energy thinking about how to knock on doors, defending the work and asking for more funding. Accountability is very important with public dollars and that is why there are some assessments (I will not now go into how many assessments we truly need) and we also have important numbers such

as employment and crime/prison levels to help us evaluate how we are doing raising our youth. We need to think more globally and work together as we think about how to spend our dollars. We have the numbers we need right now (see attached) to show we are spending education dollars in a way that deserves at least to keep up with our level of classroom supports and not make cuts in Anchorage, and statewide. **I am sure we can do better, and I continue to ask for this, but I am also sure that means more funds, certainly not less.**

Please see the chart that helps to explain the thinking behind the position I hope you take, that by raising BSA to restore funding (\$400) , the schools can further their work of growing successful graduates. If you would like more on this, I will be happy to provide you with it. My 13 year old son and I pulled numbers also from the statewide assessments to show progress statewide, year by year, since Governor Murkowski improved support for public education. Trend lines are important as we watch whether our dollars are meeting our goals.

Districts have set wonderful goals for every child (at least 90% reading, writing and with math skills to set them with building blocks for learning job/life skills), and I for one would like educators to have the resources as they make wise decisions about how students will continue to show higher results in reaching these goals.

Sincerely,

Alyse Galvin
907-884-2299

From: [Janel Walton](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Education Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 9:59:08 AM

As the House Finance Committee is continuing to take testimony on the governor's proposal to increase the BSA by about \$200 over the next three years, I wanted to take a moment to let you know that I DO NOT support the governor's education funding proposal. It is not nearly enough to cover the high cost of medical insurance, utilities, back pay for retirement, or the basic cost of living increase. Schools, and thus children, around the state have suffered too much with these reductions in the BSA. There have been too many layoffs, which directly affects the children. I know my own daughter is in special education and she has lost three teacher's aides in the last three years. She may be losing her resource teacher this year. What does this mean for her? It means there is no one there to help her with her reading. Of course I help at home. In fact, I am an English teacher and spend a huge amount of time helping my daughter. But, her reading abilities are impacted by a language disorder, and she needs specialized assistance during the school day as well. The more cuts that are made, the more that children like my daughter will suffer in academic achievement. As a teacher, I also know the projected increased classroom sizes will heavily affect the student's abilities to have face-time with teachers, which means again, reduced academic achievement. As my son comes closer and closer to high school, I know that this is going to impact him heavily; it already does in middle school. Due to a loss of teachers in his middle school, elective teachers have been cut down turning what could be educational time into a zone for crowd control. This is exactly what his 35 student 3rd period art class is like: crowd-control. For quiet students like my son, they can just helplessly sit there and watch as their teacher tries to maintain control in the classroom. No actual art education happens. In addition to raising the BSA by at least \$400 per student, I am asking that you please ensure that there is stable funding for the future. School districts can't plan like this. Teacher's cannot live from year to year wondering if they will have a job. The result is low teacher moral (which really began last school year) and teacher's choosing to leave the state of Alaska looking for more stable jobs. Please adequately fund our school. Our children are worth it.

Thank you for your time.

Janel Walton

From: [Staci Cox](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: education funding
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 8:05:20 PM

I am writing to request that you increase the BSA by at least \$400, and plead with you to inflation proof education for the future.

I will be up front and tell you that I work for the Anchorage School District. In the past this has actually hindered me from contacting my legislators. For some reason I have always felt that testimony from professional educators is not taken as seriously as that from parents and community members, but I hope this is a misconception on my part.

My principal has scheduled a staff meeting this Friday to announce which of our school's teachers will be displaced. We already know which counselors and specialist positions have been eliminated due to budget cuts, but Friday's news will be more grim.

The class sizes at middle school are already incredibly high, and the language arts teachers are especially concerned about next year's changes. They will teach an additional class, bringing their student load to over 200 students each day. (Six class periods of teaching with an average of 35 students per class.) It is an incredible load for all teachers, but especially those who teach writing. These teachers have a 45 minute planning period in which to prepare lessons, grade papers, read and respond to essays, communicate with parents, attend meeting, and countless other tasks.

I'm sure most of you have been inside public schools recently, and would encourage you to visit often. Go see the positive things that are happening, as well as the struggles our schools face as we strive to serve students from a wide variety of cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ability levels. From the Life Skills students with extreme special needs to the Highly Gifted mentorship programs, public schools are mandated to serve every student.

I thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this important issue during the "Education Session" of the legislature.

Sincerely,

Staci Cox
Anchorage, Alaska

From: [Alison Arians](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: FW: documentation of Federal Stimulus money spending
Date: Monday, March 24, 2014 6:01:26 PM

Dear Representative Stoltze,

There seems to be a sticky and untrue rumor floating around the legislature that the Anchorage School District went against the legislature's directions, and spent its federal stimulus funds on classroom teachers. Below is an email from Mark Foster, CFO of ASD, explaining just where those funds were spent.

In addition, I've learned that Mat-Su School District spent its federal stimulus money on retirement packages to encourage teachers to retire, so they definitely didn't hire new classroom teachers with it.

In 2011, facing a \$9 million deficit and stagnant state funding, the [Mat-Su] district cut more than 70 teaching positions by using federal stimulus funds to offer early retirements. [Anchorage Daily News, March 15, 2014]

The full text of the article on Mat-Su schools is here:

<http://www.adn.com/2014/03/15/3376775/mat-sus-public-education-approach.html>

Together, Anchorage and Mat-Su represent more than half of the students in Alaska.

Thanks very much!

Alison

From: foster_mark [mailto:foster_mark@asdk12.org]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2014 12:21 PM
To: 'Alison Arians'; Graff_Ed
Cc: 'Alyse Galvin'; 'Valerie Buckendorf'
Subject: RE: documentation of Federal Stimulus money spending

Alison,

With respect to the questions around Anchorage School District use of ARRA funding.

- The Anchorage School District purposely avoided using one-time money on classroom instruction and instead invested the ARRA funding in computer network upgrades and replacements, IT projects and support and a few instructional support pilots, e.g., middle school counselors, that have subsequently been eliminated.
- The current request for an increase in the State Public School Foundation Formula Base Student Allocation (BSA) is independent of any ARRA funded positions.
- Any increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) will be targeted to the district's strategic goals, which remain focused on high value direct classroom instruction, including not only K-12 classroom instruction, but also pre-K opportunities.

-Mark

From: [michellethomas533](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Fwd: Increasing the BSA to \$400.00
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 5:52:11 PM

Sent from Samsung Mobile

----- Original message -----
From: michellethomas533 <michellethomas533@gmail.com>
Date: 03-21-2014 5:11 PM (GMT-09:00)
To: Representative.Alan.Austerman@akleg.gov
Subject: Increasing the BSA to \$400.00

As a parent, I'm urging you to please increase the BSA to \$400.00. so that classroom sizes be maintained at an adequate level, and students continue to receive an excellent education. If the BSA is significantly reduced then class sizes will increase dramatically and students will not receive individualized attention from teachers. Students should not have to suffer academically because schools aren't being fully funded. Please rally for the students and increase the BSA so that students can be academically successful and be equipped to handle the challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you,
Michelle Thomas
644 Ouida Way Apt.2
North Pole, AK 99705
(907) 385-8268

Sent from Samsung Mobile

From: [Nick Jaksic](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Governor's Education Omnibus Bill (HB 278)
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 9:12:46 AM

Dear Representative,

I am a long time Anchorage resident and with two kids scheduled to start school this fall I am bit concern with the amount of the money that are being spent on our children for their education. More we invest today in their education more we will get beck in the long run. I am requesting that you support this bill by increasing the BSA by \$400 and make our money for for our future.

Thank you,

--

Nick Jaksic
Applied Microsystems, Inc.
nick@amicro.com
Main: (907) 562-8501
Fax: (907) 562-8507
<http://www.amicro.com>

From: [Jim Elliott](#)
To: [Rep. Lynn Gattis](#); [Rep. Peggy Wilson](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Governor's Education Opportunity Act
Date: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 4:19:56 AM

Our Governor recently renamed his education initiative (HB 278/SB 139) the education opportunity act. Opportunity for whom?

In truth, it is my position, with all due respect to the Governor, that his proposed legislation achieves more educational disunity, than opportunity. That is because Governor's initiative benefits the few at the expense of the majority of Alaska's public school students by:

(1) Balkanization of school districts through creating more charter schools that actually lessen opportunities for the majority of students by eroding the efficiency of many existing schools; (2) creation of costly new demands for more staff, facilities, and busing for charter schools; (3) establishment of a new costly appeal process for charter advocates whose proposals are disapproved by locally elected school boards, substituting in place of local control and local accountability politicized second-guessing of local decision-makers by the commissioner and state board of education; (4) provision of new tax breaks to corporations at a time when state revenue is declining; thus, instead of corporations paying their full share of taxes to the state treasury, they may use would-be state tax dollars to benefit a select few at the expense of the majority of Alaska's students; (5) addition of an unfunded mandate that requires school districts to develop uniform end-of-course exams for all classes taught so that a handful of students capable of challenging a given course without taking a class can receive credit by examination; and (6) diminishment of opportunities for students who attend small village schools, draining their funding through cream skimming students away to attend residential boarding schools that must provide their students with round-trip air fare, room and board, costly supervision and care [24/7](#).

For all the aforesaid reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 278 and SB 139 as presently written.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Wendy Woolf](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Cc: [LIO Anchorage](#); [Rep. Mike Hawker](#)
Subject: HB 278 - Adequately Fund our Schools
Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 8:16:28 PM

Dear Representative Austerman, Representative Stoltze, and the entire House Financing Committee:

Thank you for extending the comment period to allow for public testimony around the state.

I am writing on behalf of myself as the parent of two children who have benefited from the Anchorage School District; one graduated in 2004 and the other will graduate in May. I am concerned that future students will not receive the same benefits my children received; a well-rounded education and the ability to excel in their areas of interest. We have excellent programs in the Anchorage School District that meet the needs of many different kinds of students. These programs cannot continue without adequate funding and I'm afraid it is those programs that are not directly related to meeting testing requirements will be cut. We have already seen the district limit and cut funding to these types of programs.

I recognize balancing the budget is a difficult job, but please do not do it on the backs of our children, our greatest resource. Please increase the base student allocation by at least \$400. Please ensure adequate state funds go into the classroom and to provide necessary counseling services to all our children, but particular those children at risk within our communities.

I am in favor of instituting a school tax for all tax payers in Alaska. I have never understood why this tax we repealed when it was such a nominal tax in comparison to the benefit it provided.

Lastly, I do not support requiring the school district to pay for transportation to charter schools. Attending a charter school or other types of specialty school (open optional schools, etc.) in the Anchorage School District is a choice. It is a choice I made for my children, and it was not easy to provide that transportation every day, but I still feel it is the parent's responsibility to get their children to school when they choose to attend a charter school. I would not like to see our precious classroom funding go towards busing students to charter schools when school funding is limited.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Wendy Woolf

Indian, Alaska

From: [Rebecca Bernard](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Mike Hawker](#)
Subject: HB 278 -- Please Increase the BSA by \$400
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 10:10:09 AM

March 19, 2014

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am submitting this written testimony on HB 278 in support of an increase to the base student allocation (BSA) of at least \$400 for next year, with forward funding for an additional two years.

My 8-year-old son is a second grader at Winterberry Charter School, one of our public charter schools. It's a wonderful school with excellent and dedicated teachers, but it is a lean operation. There is one class and one teacher per grade, with 28 students in most classes (including my sons's) and very few teacher's aides or specialty teachers. We have a lovely but compact building that has just enough room for the nine classes (K-8), with no gym and no substantial meeting and gathering space. If the BSA is not given a meaningful boost, it is difficult to see what could be cut – perhaps the kindergarten teacher's aide, leaving a class of 22 kindergarten children to be managed by a single teacher!

Our Alaska public schools are in great need of an increase to state funding. There has not been an increase to the BSA since 2011, yet inflation and costs – especially health care costs – have continued to rise during those years, leaving school districts across the state with reduced spending power. Because of this, districts have had to make cuts in their budgets for several years in a row now. In Anchorage, the school district has done a good job of keeping those cuts out of the classroom, though some of the cuts have still been painful – counselors, teacher's aides, and other positions that are critically important to supporting students' success. Now the district is at a point where in order to make budget reductions it has to cut teachers, and its budget for next year cuts 200 positions including 159 teachers. The result will be larger class sizes, with more teacher time spent on classroom management and less on instruction, and less individualized attention for each student. This is a dangerous trend.

When the state increased its investment in the public schools starting in 2004 with a series of boosts to the BSA, that investment paid off. Graduation rates rose from 66% in 2004 to 79% today. Reading, writing and math scores improved and suspension rates dropped. We cannot keep this momentum by freezing public school spending; instead, we must maintain our investment by at a minimum keeping up with inflation so that we do not have to cut staff every year. The Anchorage School District needs a \$400 increase in the BSA to avoid cutting teachers and other staff. I urge the members of this Committee to give our public schools

that increase.

To those who say that the BSA is actually higher than it would be if we had simply tracked inflation from the beginning, I would point out that all measures of public education results have dramatically improved at the higher level of state funding. If we want to continue to have strong results, we must maintain this level of funding and protect it against the erosive effects of inflation. We cannot continue producing strong results if we cut teachers and other staff for a fourth straight year. I urge this Committee to stop the public schools cuts by increasing the BSA by at least \$400.

Thank you for considering my views.

Rebecca Bernard

1210 N St.

Anchorage, AK 99501

907-244-3988

rbernard.ak@gmail.com

From: [Bob Claus](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Cc: [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Jack Walsh](#); [Dolores Owen](#); [Scott and Kim Brookshire](#); [Sarah Altland](#); [Mike Kampnich](#)
Subject: HB 278 testimony
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 9:20:45 AM

Please add this clarification to my testimony on the record on HB 278.

Thank you for your kind attention to my testimony last evening about HB278 and the proposed increase to the base student allocation.

It occurred to me that I had requested that you consider a "realistic and substantial" increase to the BSA to avoid cuts to important school functions in Craig and the other districts around the state, but I neglected to provide a suggested dollar amount that would help us avoid cuts to essential programs.

After consulting with my business office this morning, I believe that a \$500 increase to the \$5680 in the first year(\$6180), plus inflation proofing by following on with \$150 increases in the next two years(\$6330, \$6480) would prevent loss of educational programs.

I realize that there are other considerations than my district's needs as you build a budget, but I did want to clarify my testimony.

Thank you,

Bob Claus, Board Chair
Craig City School District
PO Box 986
Craig, AK 99921
(907) 401 0270

From: [Joann Mitchell](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: HB 278
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 1:13:19 PM

Hello-

My name is Joann Mitchell and I am a resident of West Anchorage. I have 3 children attending public schools in Anchorage--2 are in elementary school at Denali Montessori and the oldest is in middle school at Romig. I am very pleased with the education they are receiving but I am very concerned about the cuts that have been made in recent years and particularly the proposed cuts for next year. I urge you to raise the base student allocation by \$400 and to forward-fund the BSA by three years so that school districts can adequately plan their budgets.

Denali Montessori is a unique school because it is both a neighborhood school and an optional school combined. The neighborhood tends to be lower income and transient. Denali also serves rather high intensive need special ed kids. I truly appreciate the diversity my kids are exposed to. But I have seen the affects of budget cuts at their school. For example, last year, the school counselor became a part time position. Now the counselor "stops in the classroom sometimes"--that's according to my kids, anyhow. Their IGNITE (gifted program) teacher is now stretched very thin as she serves multiple schools due to budget cuts. And I cringe at what it will be like next year. When my oldest was in 5th grade there were 27 kids in her classroom of 4th-6th graders. The jump from 24 to 27 kids was extremely noticeable! It may not seem like much to you, but ask the teacher, ask the kids, and just look and see the difference those few extra kids make in the classroom. Besides the impact on learning and behavior issues, physically I don't think the classrooms were designed for that many students, desks, materials, etc.

It has been a joy to watch my oldest flourish as she made the transition from elementary school to middle school. I know that this would not have happened if it were not for the teachers and the middle school model that allows them to work together to meet the needs of the students. With the proposed budget cuts, the planning time for the middle school teachers will be dropped thereby gutting the middle school model and essentially going back to the junior high model where the teachers don't collaborate and don't have time to address students' progress. I realize you don't control how ASD spends their money, but this an example of the reality of the budget cuts.

Please see to it that our children's education and futures are adequately funded! I know that the budgeting process is complicated and it isn't as easy as moving money from one pot to another. But there has to be a way to adequately fund education if there is a way to build expensive bridges, ports, tennis courts, rail extensions, and other large, expensive capital projects. Alaska's children are our most important resource. Let's not leave them behind.

Joann Mitchell

2521 St. Elias Drive
Anchorage, AK 99517

From: [Suzanne Smerjac](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: HB278 - Support a real and substantial increase in the BSA
Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2014 9:08:27 PM

Dear Representatives Stoltze and Austerman -

I understand that the house finance committee was hearing public testimony on HB278 this evening. When I called in public testimony had been closed, but I wanted to contact you to implore you do everything in your power to change the funding situation for the ASD and the schools around the state. I hope that this legislative session can succeed in passing a real and meaningful increase to the BSA.

The BSA increase proposed by Governor Parnell, which will barely make a dent in the budget gap faced by districts throughout the state, is not enough.

This proposal of a 3.5 % increase total over 3 years is not an increase, it's a cut ---- inflation increases costs by an average of 3% per year. A 3.5 % increase over 3 years will not makeup for the last 4 years flat funding, which amounts to well over \$400 in cuts per student because of inflation costs in energy and healthcare paid by our school districts. Our schools are operating on bare bones budgets and still they are able to offer children pullouts of art, music, physical education plus an amazing array of curriculum choices, not to mention providing healthcare, counseling and special services to children with learning a behavioral challenges. In order to continue the great work our public schools are doing please vote to **increase the BSA by at least \$400 this year** to prevent further teacher cuts and allow for restaffing of counselors and other key staff lost last in the last years of flat funding.

Add language to the bill to support inflation proofing the BSA by tying changes in it to changes in the consumer price index for Alaska.

Please record this email as testimony.

Regards,
Suzanne Smerjac
3850 Knik Ave
Anchorage, AK 99517

From: [Andrea Lang](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: HB278
Date: Saturday, March 22, 2014 10:42:32 AM

Members of the House Finance Committee:

My principal came into my room on Tuesday and told me my choir/theatre/piano/guitar position was cut down to a .6. Since I do follow the educational issues in the state government I knew this was a possibility.

I am a veteran teacher with 16 years of teaching in the Anchorage School District and 4 years in New York State. I hold a Masters of Music in Vocal Performance from Syracuse University. I had a professional career in opera and musical theatre including performances with Anchorage Opera, Syracuse Opera, Oswego Opera and Opera Carolina. I created The Endless Mountains Theatre Company (a community theatre company in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania) and was Vice President of Development for JRT Productions (a 501(c)3 production company for stage film and news) while attempting to establish my career. I have been a member of more choirs than I have room to include. I have been the coordinator for The Anchorage Festival of Music. I have choreographed performances for the Anchorage Symphony during their combined concert with ASD swing choir students.

Eagle River High School opened in 2005 and I established the choir and theatre program. We have no auditorium, however we are one of the most respected theatre programs in the district. Our choir continues to obtain high marks world class adjudicators at large group festival and community members and parents sing our praises.

....and now I am applying for a full time elementary music position in the Anchorage School District.

Don't get me wrong. I have taught every level (K-12), and elementary music is the most important. I am an effective teacher at this level and do enjoy it. However, the skills I possess are those necessary for secondary music instruction and activities.

I am a great teacher. Arrogant? No. I see the results. I am one of the hardest working teachers in Eagle River High School. The reviews of my parents, community, colleagues and administrators reveal that I get results. Not the bubble sheet results, but results that can be seen and heard in my rehearsals and performances.

I am one of the lucky ones. I can continue with a full time job in the ASD. Many other great teachers will need to leave or be placed in positions that are not suited to their talents.

Most importantly, the students of Eagle River High School are losing arts classes.; classes that could make a big difference in their development, insight, experience, understanding, broad-based knowledge. And they are being piled into classes where teachers will be less effective due to the large number of students and the lack of contact time per student. Small class sizes have been one of the only determinants for increasing student achievement.

Starving education is not the answers to improving education. WE NEED TO IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM BEFORE WE CAN WORK ON THE SOLUTION. The problem is not the teachers. We are the solution. There are so many other variables that go unaddressed when placing blame for our education woes: poverty, neglect, substance abuse, physical abuse, mental and physical health, homelessness, improper nutrition etc...etc...

Please, do consider raising the BSA \$400 this year and forward fund our public education system for the next 3 years with increases for inflation.

Respectfully,
Andrea Lang
1351 Early View Drive
Anchorage, AK 99504

From: [Clem and Connie Clooten](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: HB278
Date: Monday, March 24, 2014 7:11:01 PM

Dear Representative Stoltze,

I am writing you today to respectfully request that you vote to increase the BSA this year. I have been a secretary in the Counseling Department at Lathrop High School for the past thirteen years and started out as a parent volunteer in 1994, when our oldest son started at Lathrop. I've seen a lot of students come and go at Lathrop and I can truthfully say that the teens today have many more serious issues facing them than the peers of our four children (who all received an excellent education at Lathrop). I have observed a gradual, tragic decline in parental/familial support. Many of our students have been kicked out of their homes and end up "couch surfing" at the homes of their friends and acquaintances. Other students have to work long hours to help support their families or help take care of younger siblings after school. As you can imagine, these are not our most successful students but they continue to come to Lathrop because that may be the only place that see a friendly, caring face or get a warm meal. Our teachers and staff go out of their way to support and nurture our students, many of whom are at the lower end of the economic spectrum. We also are a military school and these students are in need of our support, as well, as they are oftentimes, the "new kid" and may need extra support to learn the ropes of living in Alaska. In times of deployment, our staff is called upon to be even more supportive and understanding.

With the proposed cuts of an additional 7.2 teachers and one school counselor for next year, Lathrop will have taken a 26% reduction in the number of teachers in two years. This places a much greater burden on the remaining staff to maintain the relationships that have been carefully constructed over the years. But cuts to teachers brings increased class sizes; we are looking at some classes of 35-40 students next year. It will be virtually impossible to support those many students at Lathrop who do not have the support at home. I fear these children will feel neglected and end up dropping out of school. A reasonable increase to the BSA will ensure that these students will not be forgotten and fall through the cracks.

Thank you for your time and for your service to Alaska.

Warm regards,
Connie Clooten
1163 Linda Lou Lane
Fairbanks, Alaska 99712

From: [Dave Blanchet](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: House Bill 278
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 5:58:29 PM

Dear House Finance Committee,

Providing a robust public education for young Alaskans is in my view the most important service we can provide and expect from our tax dollars. Educating our next generation with skills to live and work in Alaska is incredibly important to the vitality of our Alaskan Community. Public education truly meets the definition of "common good" and should be among your highest priorities as legislators. The Legislature has let the base student allocation (BSA) languish for the last 3 years with no increases to match inflation. The result of this legislative inaction has been to create cuts in staffing and programs. Teachers, counselors, nurses as well as programs are being cut every year. Last year the Anchorage School District had to cut \$25 million from its budget, which meant cutting 215 valuable staff positions.

HB 278 proposes increasing the BSA by \$200 over a three year period. While this is a step in the right direction, it is an inadequate attempt and will not stem the loss of teachers and programs. This is the moment for you, the legislature, to do the right thing, to truly work for the common good. Please raise the BSA by \$400 and provide inflation proofing for future years. We cannot afford to lose our children's education.

Sincerely,

Dave Blanchet
2306 Douglas Drive
Anchorage, AK 99517

From: [Mike & Gretchen Stoddard](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: I support increase to the BSA of \$400
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 2:46:05 AM

Hello,

I am a working Mom, a registered Republican, I like my bonus checks that depend on a strong Alaska petroleum industry, and I am a strong supporter of neighborhood public schools. I care deeply that my son has an option to learn science, math, and other core subjects at a local school. For us that school is Goldenview Middle School and South High School in Anchorage.

I support a substantial increase to the BSA. For me, that will be the benchmark of capital spending projects this year... if we don't have money for my son's school, then what projects are funded by the state? If there is not money to increase the BSA by approx \$400, then what is the Republican majority doing to solve the problem at my son's schools and what are you doing to decrease class size?

I realize that I am not a constituent from your district. I am awake at 2:30 am because I am not reacting well to the discussion of education issues in the email sent by the Senator who represents my neighborhood. The high school in this district is South High with 91% graduation rate and 1.7% dropout rate.

I will be thinking of the petroleum industry and state education funding when people tell me how important my vote is in the coming months. These are the issues I think of when the request to pledge to vote Republican in November comes my way.

Items of the governor's education bill of grave concern to my family:

- **Increases base student allocation over the next three years**
- **First year, increase of \$85 per student**
- **Second and third year increases of \$58 each year**
- **Will raise BSA from \$5,680 per student \$5,881 in year three**

BSA increase listed is too small for my son's school, but I do like the idea of realistic planning a year or few ahead.

- **Requires districts to provide transportation for charter schools-**

I really dislike that- If anything, give the charter schools the money and have them responsible to provide transport for that cost. Can you imagine an entire massive department that has to answer calls from Moms like me everytime it snows and the bus are delayed while driving kids from Muldoon to West Anchorage? Charter schools know they can't provide transport across town and make parents happy. This is a kiss of death designed to make parents unhappy with anyone in charge of transport & it will work to make people more unhappy with ASD. I know, there are some who are excited about punishing the Anchorage School District and NEA. If you need to do that, please remember that is my family that gets caught in the middle.

- **Adds the tax credit for profit or non-profit agencies-** I will look into these closely if they pass. Is the point of this to help the for profit hedge fund education groups like the EPR Real Estate Investment Trust & Private Equity firm Apollo Group? ([://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2013/09/10/charter-school-gravy-train-runs-express-to-fat-city/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2013/09/10/charter-school-gravy-train-runs-express-to-fat-city/))
- **Allows funding of scholarships for dual-credit students attending post-secondary schools in the state or to help with tuition and associated fees for online programs**

Is the point of this to help the for-profit hedge fund education groups like EPR Real Estate Investment Trust & Private Equity firm Apollo Group?

Good luck with this mess of anger.

Thank you.
Gretchen Stoddard
3143 Seawind Drive
Anchorage AK

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

From:
"Senator Giessel" <sen.cathy.giessel@akleg.gov>

To:
mgstoddard@gci.net

Sent:
Thu, 20 Mar 2014 16:13:31 -0400 (EDT)

Subject:
Education Series Part 3 Achievement - Senator Cathy Giessel's Newsletter
Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Senator Cathy Giessel's newsletter.

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

23.jpg



[Cathy Giessel](#) | [Alaska Senate Majority](#)

In this Issue

March 20, 2014

[Education and Achievement Governor's Education Bill SB 139 From the Senate Floor Saving Generations of Alaska's Children Senate Resources Committee](#) Dear Friends and Neighbors,

With thirty days left to go in this session I am carefully watching SB 138 Alaska LNG and HB 77 LandUse/Disp/Exchanges; Water Rights as they both move through the process. These bills are vitally important to the future development of Alaska's resources.

Also, I am tracking the Governor's Education Bill SB 139, which directly affects another state resource, our children. With the Governor's bill we can start providing greater educational

[Cooper Landing Boat Launch](#)
[Girdwood 2020](#)
[Fun Facts - Alaska History and More.....](#)
[In the Office...](#)

opportunities to students and their families.

[Click Here To Email Me](#)

Contact My Staff

[Lindsay Williams](#)
[Jane Conway](#)
[Vivian Stiver](#)
[Kyle Whisenant](#)
[Forrest Wolfe](#)

Education and Achievement

60.jpg



Quick Links

[Senate Republican Majority](#)
[Alaska State Legislature](#)
[State of Alaska](#)

On the State of Alaska web site you can go to the Department of Early Education and Development (DEED) to review how students in a particular school performed on the Standards Based Assessment (SBA) test. The SBA is a test based on Alaska state standards and is compliant with state and federal statutes. You can compare schools within a district as well as schools statewide at the below web site:

Contact Congressional Delegation

[Senator Lisa Murkowski](#)
Anchorage
Office:
907-271-3735

[Report Card To The Public](#)

[Senator Mark Begich](#)
Anchorage
Office:
907-271-5915

A child in the third grade whose reading test score is below grade level is four times more likely to drop out. We know that when students drop out of high school they have limited opportunities and are at greater risk of incarceration.

[Congressman Don Young](#)
Anchorage
Office:
907-271-5978

[Study: Third Grade Reading Level Linked to Dropout Rate](#)

In 2012 Alaska's high school graduation rate was 69.6%. Alaska ranks in the bottom third of all the states for high school graduation. This is just not good enough for our students.

Even for some high school graduates that go on to attend college, they will face the first obstacle of an inadequate education: In any given semester at UA about 1,500 recent high school graduates require some form of remedial courses to become prepared for regular entry level courses at UA. There are 3 levels of developmental coursework offered: nearly college ready, some remediation needed, and significant remediation needed.

Lost Opportunities for Students

- Many students give up on post-secondary education when they find out they are placed in developmental education
- Graduation rates are lower: 10, 18, and 24 percentage points lower for those nearly college ready, some remediation, and significant remediation, respectively
- Graduation dates are lengthened by one or more years for those needing remediation
- Students placed in developmental education are typically delayed in completing their programs and are delayed in finding employment by one or more years which reduces their income because of lost time in the job market compared to students who graduated on time.

An article was published March 18, 2014 in Forbes magazine reporting on a recent study that found charter high schools have a higher graduation rate than regular public schools. The article can be found at the link below:

[Study: Charter High Schools Have 7-11% higher Graduation Rate Than Their Public School Peers](#)

Next week in the final education series, we will look at what innovative programs are currently being offered in Alaska's school system and what other states have been doing.

Governor's Education Bill SB 139

The Governor's education bill has a companion bill in the House [HB 278](#) (click to see this bill). The Education Committee adopted a committee substitute with the following changes:

- Requires districts to provide transportation for charter schools
- Requires charter school denials to be made within 60 days of application
- Requires schools to report the number of students with active-duty military parents
- Stipulates if a school board denies a charter school application, but is overridden by the commissioner of the Department of Education, the district may choose to operate the school or give control of that charter school to the state board
- Adds the tax credit for profit or non-profit agencies

Diverts some funds from the University of Alaska to the Southern Southeast Technical Education Center

- Reduces the student count for new charter schools to receive funds for the first three years of operation
- Allows funding of scholarships for dual-credit students attending post-secondary schools in the state or to help with tuition and associated fees for online programs

Currently, HB 278 is in House Finance.

The proposed [Governor's Education Bill SB 139](#) (click to see the bill) would do the following:

Increases Base Student Allocation (BSA) Funding:

- Increases base student allocation over the next three years
- First year, increase of \$85 per student
- Second and third year increases of \$58 each year
- Will raise BSA from \$5,680 per student \$5,881 in year three

Repeals Charter School Approval:

- The Governor's proposal allows the Commissioner of Education to review and issue approval for Charter Schools. The goal is to increase the number of Charter Schools. *Currently, all of them have long waiting lists, chosen by parents as the best option for their child.*

Change the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) or Exit Exam:

- Repeals the Exit Exam, HSGQE
- Uses SAT, ACT or Work-Keys assessments
- State would pay for these test which cost the state less money than HSGQE

From the Senate Floor

[SB 138 Senate Floor TransCanada](#)



Senator Giessel Speaks to Retain

TransCanada

The Senate passed historic legislation to create the framework for the State to take an equity share in the Alaska Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project. Senate Bill 138 sets a roadmap forward for building a large- diameter gasline, which would create a world-scale infrastructure investment supplying domestic gas to Alaskans and exporting Alaska gas to Asian-Pacific markets.

The bill now moves to House Resources.

Click below link for full press release:

[Senate Passes Historic Legislation to Advance Alaska LNG Project](#)

To follow the bill click on below link:

[Senate Bill 138 Alaska LNG](#)

Saving Generations of Alaska's Children

I am supporting [Senate Concurrent Resolution 13](#) (SCR 13) which urges the Governor to establish and support programs designed to eradicate the occurrence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) from our state. The financial cost to the state is tremendous, estimated cost per child born with FASD ranges from \$860,000 to \$4.2 million dollars.

Alcohol interrupts or alters the normal development of a fetus, with results that are evident at birth. Alcohol creates more damage to the brain of a fetus than cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine. Brain damage created by alcohol is irreversible.

FASD is completely preventable. Ninety-percent of women who become pregnant, who drink alcohol, want to stop drinking for the health of their child.

A greater cost is endured by Alaska's FASD children and their families. SCR 13 stands against FASD in Alaska and resolves that the leadership of our state take actions necessary to safeguard

future children from fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

92.jpg



Senate Resources Committee

Last week in Resources committee, the focus of the entire week was on House Bill 77 which refines the procedures for obtaining, issuing, and appealing permits for water rights and reservations through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Wednesday and Friday were dedicated to public testimony. Many people from around the state called in to testify. Also on Friday, the committee adopted an amended version which contained two changes:

- Removes the hydroelectric feasibility study for Chikuminuk Lake; the region has decided to move in a different direction and public testimony supported this change
- The second change to the bill requires DNR to develop a work plan which sustains sufficient water in identified rivers necessary for the abundance and productivity of Chinook salmon. DNR will work with the Department of Fish and Game, legislators, consultants, interested organizations, persons and other departments as necessary for the purpose of properly protecting Chinook salmon stocks and habitat.

The below link is to an *Updated* description of the three types of water:

[Updated Three Types of Water of Water Rights](#)

(click here to see chart)

HB 77 was the subject of an article by Petroleum News. To read the full article click on the link below:

Cooper Landing Boat Launch

The Cooper Landing State Recreation Site boat launch on the Kenai River is temporarily closed through March 31 for minor repairs and improvements to the boat launch.

The area directly across the Kenai River from the boat launch is open and provides public access to the river.

For more information, please contact the Kenai/Prince William Sound Area state parks office at 262-5581.

95.jpg



Girdwood 2020

87.jpg



During the Girdwood 2020 14th Annual Meeting and Fundraiser, I had the opportunity to honor Kerry Dorius, along with Governor Parnell, for her work at the Girdwood Clinic and for being selected as the 2014 Nurse Practitioner of the Year. We kept this a secret and Kerry was so humbled and surprised she could hardly stand

To view the citation you can click on the below link:

[Kerry Dorius Legislative Citation](#)

Fun Facts - Alaska History and More.....

On March 13, 1968, Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) and Humble Oil and Refining Company (now Exxon Company, U.S.A.) announced the discovery of a massive oil field in Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's most northern coast in the frigid Arctic Circle. Geologists at the time estimated the equivalent of nearly 10 billion barrels of crude oil is there in the ground. It is the largest oil field ever discovered in North America.



In the Office

96.jpg



Kyle Whisenhant

We took a moment, during lunch, to wish staffer Kyle Whisenhant a Happy Birthday.

101.jpg



Elle and Gee

Elle and Gee, named after Alaska "LNG" were born on March 18, as SB 138 passed the Senate. These cuties belong to staffer Jane Conway.

It's a pleasure to serve and represent the wonderful people of District N!

27.jpg



I look forward to hearing your ideas, suggestions, and comments.

Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov

<http://www.alaskasenate.org>

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907.224.5066

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State Senate Alaska | State Capitol Room 427 | Juneau | AK | 99801

From: [Debra Perala](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: I support increasing the BSA!
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 6:29:07 PM

I don't have kids but can see that schools are an incredibly important part of our community. For many kids, the adults they interact with in school are the only stable, responsible people in their lives. We need the extra support positions in the schools that an increase in the BSA will help maintain.

I see this as a pay me now, or pay me later proposition. We can help these kids to be future good citizens if we invest in their education.

Debra Perala
6212 Prominence Pt Dr
Anchorage, AK 99516
cell 907-250-8420

From: davidneesak@gmail.com
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Brad Keithley](#), (bgkeithley@gmail.com); [Rep. Lynn Gattis](#); [Rep. Lora Reinbold](#); [Rep. Charisse Millett](#)
Cc: [David Stieren](#)
Subject: In 278 additional testimony, response to leg fin report
Date: Saturday, March 22, 2014 11:14:43 AM
Attachments: [032014_BSA-needed_Avoid-Staff-Cuts.pdf](#)

Finance members,

After looking over the report requested by Rep Gara, I have to assume he is wanting HB278 to be a union Jobs insurance bill, not an education Bill.

It is education of children that should be the reason for an SBA increase, not jobs in school districts.

It is noteworthy that the report ignores the BSA is currently ahead of inflation, that the districts suffering the most have not limited increases in step and lane changes amongst non certificated staff, non teachers, in order to hold down costs.

Not one of the districts even put a pay freeze on the table.

This encourages districts to use teachers as pawns.

It is almost certain these shortages are due to inept bargaining by local boards. That would be an interesting report.

After all what business increases wages when looking at a deficit?

It is certain to me that layoffs will continue to pay for these contractual obligations.

Local control of schools is failing, because the blank check mentality ensures bad behavior.

Federal employees have not gotten cost of living increases for several years.

Inserting the word "direct" in front of instruction, guarantees these job losses, which will occur, will be in indirect costs, and to employees who are non essential in educating children.

Teachers and other personnel directly instructing children need to be protected by you.

You the legislators can set the teacher student ratio by law.

You the legislators can set the number of principals per school by law.

You the Legislators can set the the number maintenance and groundskeepers the state will pay for by law.

It is up to you.

If you define what the BSA funds may be used for by law, then local control will have to get in line.

David Nees
2542 curlew

From: [Nelli Williams](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Increase BSA by at least \$400
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 7:19:27 AM

Dear Finance Committee,

I was unable to testify at yesterday's hearing but would like to weigh in on the important topic of education funding. Please submit my written comment as part of the public record.

I respectfully ask you to increase the amount of the base student allocation in HB 278 by at least \$400, and to forward-fund the BSA by three years, to provide predictable and stable funding that will increase administrative efficiency and provide certainty for our schools and kids.

I have a 2 year old son. We are a young family that has called Anchorage home for 5 years, we love living here because of the great community, easy access to hiking, skiing and fishing, and family friendly neighborhoods. We want to raise our son here but ensuring he gets a good education is a priority for us. I've been troubled by the recent cuts to teachers and support staff. Hearing the nearly yearly news about teach layoffs creates uncertainty for our schools, increases class sizes and places an undue burden on children excited to learn. As a parent and voter who is lined up to send my kid into that school system in a few years, hearing about cuts and knowing our schools are underfunded gives me little reassurance that he will get the high-quality education I would expect from a community like Anchorage. You can change that.

By increasing the BSA in HB 278 by at least \$400, and providing certainty in the BSA going forward for the next three years you invest in our kids, and our communities. Two of our state's most valuable assets.

Respectfully,
Nelli Williams
Anchorage, AK 99502

From: [lynette dihle](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [=?utf-8?Q?=?E2=80=A8Representative=5FLe=5FGara?=@legis.state.ak.us](#); [Representative David Guttenberg@legis.state.us](#)
Subject: Increasing Educational Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 6:57:25 PM

Dear Representatives and Governor Parnell,

We urge you to increase the level of spending for public education \$400/student.

We have been Alaskans since 1975, and have a vested interest in the education system as our 3 sons attended public schools, are Alaskan residents, and now our 3 granddaughters are in the public schools. Alaska has not kept pace in education with the cost of living.

These students are Alaska's future. We see it before our eyes as we watch our sons and families who are Alaskan, and the many children who we have watched grow into adulthood and now live in Alaska.

We are believers in providing high quality education with high expectations for all.

Sincerely,

Nils and Lynnette Dihle
2454 Engineers Cutoff
Juneau, Alaska 99801

From: [Kari Gardey](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Increasing the SBA
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 8:48:27 AM

Dear House Finance Committee,

I am writing to you as a parent of two high school kids both of whom have gone to ASD schools since kindergarten. I have been so impressed with the quality of the schools and the enthusiasm of the teachers, and have worked to support them with my volunteer time. These past few years have been harder with constant staffing cuts. My son as a 7th grader spoke to the School Board requesting specific funding so he could finish his two years of language. Cutting language shouldn't even be considered, let alone some of the other cuts that have occurred or will need to.

I'm writing to ask you to work with your colleagues to please pass legislation to increase the Base Student Allocation. Please bring the level up to what it would have been if the BSA had been increased in tandem with inflation since 2011. I'm asking that the BSA be increased by at least \$400 to make our schools whole. What is being called "flat funding" by some is actually a dramatic decrease in public school funding, since costs have increased for health care, energy, technology, and insurance.

I understand that oil revenues have decreased, and you are feeling the pressure to cut spending. I also know that education funding has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. However, these increased costs are related to capital spending, legislative grants, and paying off the pension fund for retired teachers. These increased costs did not go toward funding teachers in the classrooms.

When legislators, beginning in 2004, significantly increased the BSA, we turned around our lousy graduation rates. Anchorage graduation rates were at around 66% in 2004, and now they are up to 79%. We are making great progress toward Anchorage's target "90% in 2020." In addition to improved graduation rates, reading, writing and math scores are also improving.

With school district layoffs as proposed for next year, our children and young people are really going to suffer. Please, help us put our resources into educating our young people—by targeting our base student allocation for an increase. A well-educated cohort of graduating seniors is going to be ready to take on jobs in our workforce.

Even though our oil revenue is declining, Alaska still has plenty of capital. Please, let's put some of these financial assets back into our most important resource: our children. Please, let's make funding our public schools a top priority, and pass legislation to inflation-proof the base student allocation. We will all benefit from a well-educated community.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Kari Gardey

From: [Karen Loeffler \(Quintieri\)](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Kids Not Cuts Please Fund Our Public Education System
Date: Saturday, March 22, 2014 8:31:10 PM

Dear Rep. Stoltze,

Thank you for your service to Alaska. Your dedication to the needs of the citizens of the Turnagain area have been outstanding.

I am writing to you as a parent, a PTA President and member, and as a concerned Turnagain resident. We currently have a first grade daughter at Turnagain, with 2 others that graduated from Dimond and West Anchorage High School. Those girls went on to WY and Boise State. I am a resident who believes in the value of public education.

I'm writing to ask you to work with your colleagues to please pass legislation to increase the Base Student Allocation. Please bring the level up to what it would have been if the BSA had been increased in tandem with inflation since 2011. I'm asking that the BSA be increased by at least \$400 to make our schools whole. What is being called "flat funding" by some is actually a dramatic decrease in public school funding, since costs have increased for health care, energy, technology, and insurance.

I understand that oil revenues have decreased, and you are feeling the pressure to cut spending. I also know that education funding has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. However, these increased costs are related to capital spending, legislative grants, and paying off the pension fund for retired teachers. These increased costs did not go toward funding teachers in the classrooms.

When legislators, beginning in 2004, significantly increased the BSA, we turned around our lousy graduation rates. Anchorage graduation rates were at around 66% in 2004, and now they are up to 79%. We are making great progress toward Anchorage's target "90% in 2020." In addition to improved graduation rates, reading, writing and math scores are also improving.

With school district layoffs as proposed for next year, our children and young people are really going to suffer. Please, help us put our resources into educating our young people—by targeting our base student allocation for an increase. A well-educated cohort of graduating seniors is going to be ready to take on jobs in our workforce.

Even though our oil revenue is declining, Alaska still has plenty of capital. Please, let's put some of these financial assets back into our most important resource: our children. Please, let's make funding our public schools a top priority, and pass legislation to inflation-proof the base student allocation. We will all benefit from a well-educated community.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Karen L. Loeffler (Quintieri)

3221 Shuttle Cir
Anchorage 99517

907-230-6185

From: [Jill Boyd](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Kids not cuts!
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 1:29:31 PM

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your service to Alaska. I appreciate you taking the time to read what I have to say.

I am writing to you as a parent, a PTA member and resident. I have a kindergartener at Rabbit Creek Elementary and a toddler and future student of the same school. I chose to send my kids to public school because I believe that a good education can be gained there and I love the sense of community that neighborhood schools generate. I am deeply saddened by the cuts to the teaching staff that are looming if we do not increase the BSA by a substantial amount. Our own school is at risk of losing two of our valuable teachers.

I'm writing to ask you to work with your colleagues to please pass legislation to increase the Base Student Allocation. Please bring the level up to what it would have been if the BSA had been increased in tandem with inflation since 2011. I'm asking that the BSA be increased by at least \$404 to make our schools whole. What is being called "flat funding" by some is actually a dramatic decrease in public school funding, since costs have increased for health care, energy, technology, and insurance. I understand that oil revenues have decreased, and you are feeling the pressure to cut spending. I also know that education funding has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. However, these increased costs are related to capital spending, legislative grants, and paying off the pension fund for retired teachers. These increased costs did not go toward funding teachers in the classrooms. When legislators, beginning in 2004, significantly increased the BSA, we turned around our lousy graduation rates. Anchorage graduation rates were at around 66% in 2004, and now they are up to 79%. We are making great progress toward Anchorage's target "90% in 2020." In addition to improved graduation rates, reading, writing and math scores are also improving.

With school district layoffs as proposed for next year, our children and young people are really going to suffer. Please, help us put our resources into educating our young people—by targeting our base student allocation for an increase. A well-educated cohort of graduating seniors is going to be ready to take on jobs in our workforce.

Even though our oil revenue is declining, Alaska still has plenty of capital. Please, let's put some of these financial assets back into our most important resource: our children. Please, let's make funding our public schools a top priority, and pass legislation to inflation-proof the base student allocation. We will all benefit from a well-educated community.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Jill Boyd
3100 Capstan Drive
Anchorage, AK 99516
770-3815

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Timothy Johnson](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: message from two super voters
Date: Saturday, March 22, 2014 11:07:15 AM

Dear Mr. Stoltze,

We have seen first-hand how budget cuts harms those who are least able to speak for themselves--children with special needs in public schools. These students ask us why teacher aids and teachers are being cut. They ask for help from fewer and fewer staff members. We work hard for these youngsters, and all almost 100% (where we work) go on to be independent, tax paying citizens--isn't that result worth the investment?

Public school employees are stressed out because of recent cuts, and our work load is impossible to complete in a 40-hour week. We both know of good, highly educated teachers and other staff members leaving the district because of an insane work load and the hostile bills coming out of Juneau. They say the current governor and state legislature has created a stressful situation that devalues public education, and they are voluntarily leaving the teaching profession.

You and Governor Parnell are responsible for this appalling situation.

We ask you to increase the student base allocation, at least to allow for inflation. We are super voters who will act based on those legislatures who value public education enough to fund it adequately.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Timothy and Carina Johnson, public school educators in special ed

From: [scatycaty](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Please increase the Base Student Allocation!
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 8:56:27 AM

Dear Representatives,

Please support an increase of the Base Student Allocation to \$400 or more to keep up with previous year's inflations, and please inflation proof it for the future. Our children are our most precious resource and are vital to maintain a viable community and strong economic future. We have a very good public education system in Alaska and the Anchorage school district, specifically, has made great strides towards meeting education goals set for 2020 in terms of graduation rates and test scores. We cannot continue to effectively educate our children if resources and funding are continuously chipped away. Please support a BSA increase of \$400 or more.

Thank you,
Catherine Coward
6221 Farpoint Dr,
Anchorage, AK 99507

From: [Rebecca Noblin](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Please increase the BSA by \$400
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 9:17:01 AM

Dear Representatives,

I support a greater increase to the base student allocation (BSA) so that our schools can keep up with other schools across the country. I write as a parent whose toddler will enter the Anchorage school system in a few years and as a citizen who believes that all children deserve a good education. There is no better way to provide a good future for our community than by supporting and funding our schools. Not only do good schools benefit the children who go there and who will some day be adults in our community, but they also draw businesses and other positive development to the community. Education is a good investment. Please increase the BSA by \$400 so that our schools can rehire crucial staff, and please ensure that the BSA is inflation-proof so that our schools will not face a funding crisis every year.

Thank you very much for taking the time to consider my input.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Noblin
2900 Wiley Post Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99517
907-350-4822

From: [Bonnie York](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Sen. Pete Kelly](#); [Sen. Anna Fairclough](#); [Sen. Mike Dunleavy](#); [Sen. Click Bishop](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Lyman Hoffman](#)
Subject: Please increase the BSA by at least 400
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 7:45:32 AM

Dear State Finance Committee members,

I strongly believe we need an increase in the per pupil funding of our public schools *to avoid more cuts to teachers and staff.*

I understand the way to do so is to increase the BSA by at least \$400. I am a taxpayer and will happily pay more to keep the student-teacher ratio small enough that both teachers and students can be successful, and continue with 6- period days in high school.

I was born and raised in Fairbanks, and both my husband and I attended Lathrop High School. When my husband and I decided to start a family, there was no question but that we would return to Alaska to do so. Through college and our early years working as Engineers, we were continually surprised to realize we wholly appreciated our education. It was clearly a much better experience than that of many of our classmates and colleagues.

Please continue Alaska's legacy of turning out prepared, bound-for-success graduates by continuing to fund our students in the classroom. It breaks my heart to hear about new football fields, tennis court, boarding school needs...when we have classrooms THAT ARE WORKING that simply need to be supported. Please do not overload the teachers- they are the key to helping our children master the art of continuing education. Do any of you have teenagers? The time for my influence is over; now I rely on good teachers to TEACH and excite my children's curiosity, and nurture their scholastic growth. This is very hard to do when overloaded and limited to a 45-min. class each day.

Please increase the BSA by at least \$400 to protect our children's education.

Thank you,
Bonnie York

From: [Chris and Tina Bernoski](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Please increase the BSA
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 11:15:33 AM

Dear Representatives,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to testify in regards to HB 278. Although I appreciate the increase the Governor proposed to the BSA, we are all aware this is no where close to keeping up with inflation costs.

In Anchorage, without an increase of at least \$400 to the BSA; many teachers, counselors and other valuable staff that have a meaningful impact in the lives of our kids will be gone... I am a school counselor and I will tell you , I work at one of the most at risk high schools. Many of my students come to school homeless, hungry and hopeless. I have been able to make connections with kids that were on the verge of dropping out and have been in the juvenile justice system. Many of these students will be the first in their families to graduate high school and have never dreamed of opportunities beyond. They are now looking into colleges and trade schools and excited about life. However, without an increase to the BSA my position and many others will be gone, as will a lot of our students dreams. For a lot of these kids we are the first safe adult they have ever encountered. When we flat fund education, it causes cuts to positions that are critical in the safety and success of our students and positive relationships are broken.

As I stated before pay now or pay later... Educating a child costs less than later criminal justice system. We are making great gains throughout Alaska and empowering our youth to reach their full potential, but we will lose all this if we continue to flat fund. When asked about the funding and where is it going to come from, I truly believe that fully funding our kids is the best Alaskan investment and should not even be questioned. I also strongly feel that it is not fair to add underfunded retirement pensions into the formula of what is given for education. These funds do not go directly to our students and I do not believe that our kids should be penalized for the mistakes made before them.

I am also a mother of 8 year old twins who attend public school in Anchorage and a life long Alaskan. I love Alaska and all the opportunities and truly believe that we need fully fund education and increase the BSA to at least \$400. I ask you to please listen to your constituents that overwhelmingly have asked you to increase the BSA significantly.

In conclusion, please know that I am not just asking for things, feel free to contact me anytime and let me know how I can help. I want to be part of the solution, I believe in my State and the people who help make it great. I truly believe Alaska deserves the best!

Thank you for your time and consideration

Tina Bernoski
ctbernoski@msn.com

From: [Kim Erickson](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Please Prioritize Education Funding and increase the BSA
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 2:21:47 PM

March 18, 2014

House Finance Committee

State of Alaska House of Representatives

Education Funding

Dear Representatives,

As you consider House Bill 278 I am requesting that you please **increase the base student allocation by \$400**. Class sizes are already too big and teachers are stretched to accommodate all their students. By not increasing our state funding enough to keep up with inflation, teachers will be laid off and the education of youth throughout the state will suffer. Instructors cannot possibly teach our children well if they are managing huge class sizes. Please, make it a priority to put the state's resources into educating students. A well-educated population will make a difference to the economic future of Alaska.

While I recognize resources are limited and income has declined along with oil production, we cannot afford to ignore the educational needs of our children. My own children are grown and received a good public education in the State of Alaska. I want to be certain future generations have that same opportunity.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kim Erickson

PO Box 826

Willow, AK 99688

907-223-8385

Kim.erickson@greatlandlaser.com

From: [timmyinyin](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Please raise the BSA
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 8:57:48 AM

Dear Representatives Austerman and Stoltze,

Please support an increase of the Base Student Allocation to \$400 or more to keep up with previous year's inflations, and please inflation proof it for the future. Our children are our most precious resource and are vital to maintain a viable community and strong economic future. We have a very good public education system in Alaska and the Anchorage school district, specifically, has made great strides towards meeting education goals set for 2020 in terms of graduation rates and test scores. We cannot continue to effectively educate our children if resources and funding are continuously chipped away. Please support a BSA increase of \$400 or more.

Thank you,
Tim Silbaugh
6221 Farpoint Dr,
Anchorage, AK 99507

From: [MarkusJen Doerry](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Please raise the SBA!
Date: Sunday, March 23, 2014 2:07:24 PM

Dear Representative Bill Stoltze,

I am a teacher and parent in the Chugiak/ Eagle River area. I am witness to the many and drastic cuts in the schools this Spring. Just this last week French programs across the entire Anchorage School District were detrimentally cut and are being phased out. Programs that are good for kids and a vital part of a well rounded education are being cut. Programs like the following are being cut:

Technical writing class for the college bound in areas of math and science
Physical education classes (in a world where diabetes and health related illness plague our society, PE is the last that should be cut!)
Remedial math classes for those that struggle in upper level courses
Technology classes in keyboarding, paper writing, and resume writing
Second Language classes (in a World where all other competing countries teach their students at least 2 foreign languages before graduating, how are our students supposed to compete in a world economy?)

Excess fat is not being cut from schools, programs that are necessary to education are being removed, turning our once great educational environment for kids into one that will not prepare them well for college or the working world.

Please do not link the raising of the SBA to passing of HJR 1 and SJR 9. These bills too are detrimental to public education and students. All children deserve access to good, public education that will adequately prepare them for their futures. The passing of HJR 1 and SJR 9 is not in the best interest of public education and does not best serve the majority of our state. Please help and support public education to meet the needs of all in our state.

Please, understand that those of us who are in schools, volunteering as parents and working as teachers are witnessing first hand what is happening to our schools and how it effects our children. We are best able to say that this blood letting has to stop.

Thank you,
Jen Doerry

--

Markus and Jen Doerry

From: [Diane Shellenbaum](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Please support increasing the BSA significantly - we need to catch up to inflation.
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 5:56:12 PM

Dear Representative Stoltze,

I am strongly in support of increasing our per student allocation, the BSA, by \$404 to catch up with inflation over the past several years of flat funding. I'm also in favor of forward funding for future years.

Flat funding is actually reduced funding. The legislature finds funds for football stadiums, with their increased maintenance costs, but flat funds the students learning environment. It's just wrong.

The schools were making significant and meaningful progress towards improved graduation rates, and that's completely compromised now with the loss of so many counselors, and now teachers.

Please consider the importance of this issue to not only the children in schools today, but to the future of our state and having an educated workforce. Education is important, and focusing the money towards the students is the right thing to do. Teachers and counselors are a critical piece, things like having a local football field for games is not.

Thank you for your consideration,

Diane Shellenbaum

From: [Shane Perrins](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); Representative.Mark.Neuman@akleg.gov; [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); sean.parnell@alaska.gov
Subject: Please support the \$400 increase in the BSA!
Date: Thursday, March 27, 2014 2:30:33 PM

March 27, 2014

Dear Representatives,

I am writing this letter with the intent to encourage you to please support the measure to increase the BSA funding for our public schools.

This is my first experience with the Anchorage School District as my daughter just entered Kindergarten in the Japanese Immersion program at Sand Lake Elementary last fall. I have been so impressed with the quality of her education thus far. Her teachers are incredible and have already taught her so much, both academically and socially.

Teachers deserve so much more credit that they are given. The amount of time and personal effort they devote to educating our children is absolutely priceless. They are teaching our children important skills such as reading, writing, science, mathematics, etc., but beyond that, they are teaching our children how to appropriately interact with others so that they may become respectable members of society.

Just like the Whitney Houston song, "I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way"... these children *are* our future and one of the most valuable things we can do is provide them with the best education. This education is not possible without our high quality teachers. My daughter's teachers have all shown patience, caring, dedication, as well as daily communication with the parents. My son will be entering school in 4 years so we have quite a few years ahead of us in this school district. I would hope to see this quality of education continue beyond the years my children will be in school.

Please support any and all measures to ensure the job security of these exceptional teachers, which in turn leads to exceptional human beings for the well-being of us all.

Thank you for your time and support of ensuring the best educational opportunities for all of our children,

Jana Perrins

8341 Blackberry Street

Anchorage, AK 99502

janac1113@gmail.com

From: [Deb Casello](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Public Schools
Date: Monday, March 31, 2014 3:30:46 PM

Dear Representative,

Who will choose Alaska?

We are an Air Force family. Our last base was in Hawaii. The first question everyone asks is: "Why would you *choose* to move to Alaska?" Three years ago when considering our options, the answer to this question was very clear-cut. The Rescue Squadron at JBER was a dream job opportunity for my husband and the specialized programs offered through the Anchorage School District were unparalleled, in comparison to the other states we were considering. Anchorage not only offered the employment and educational opportunities we were looking for, but also the kind of community we were interested in being a part of. Alaskans are welcoming, extremely caring, and down-to-earth. The community is interesting and diverse; people come for different reasons, many of which include military and corporate transfers. As our 7th base, Anchorage was a wonderful and exciting choice. After in-depth school research, we strategically purchased a home so that our children could walk to Romig MS and West HS. This was our 11th house! We planned to be in Anchorage for at least seven years.

Would we make the same decision today? The outlook for public education in Alaska, as stands today, is tenuous at best. Would we have chosen to relocate here, knowing that funding for public schools and programs would be a serious issue? The answer is, I really don't know. We would have had significant reservations; an easy choice would have become very difficult. This fact makes me realize that other families, considering Alaska as an option, are researching and making decisions about where to live and raise their children. Underfunding and cutting budgets in Alaska's public schools are highly detrimental to the future community's landscape. What sort of people will want to move to a state with under-supported public schools? Which families will move/transfer out of the state to give their children a better education? My husband and I grew up in Northern Virginia, right outside Washington D.C., and had the benefit of some of the best public schools in the country. The school systems there attract outstanding students with dedicated parents who move to the area excited about the educational opportunities available. Isn't that what Alaska should be working toward?

We must invest in the public education of Alaska's children to ensure a promising future. If we do not, I ask: "Who will choose Alaska?"

Please vote to increase the BSA by \$400 for the coming school year, to avoid the cuts planned and restore what has been cut since the BSA as last increased in FY2011. Further, please increase the BSA an additional \$125 to match inflation for each of the following two years to give school districts predictable and stable funding for planning purposes.

Sincerely,

Deborah Casello

Deborah Casello
Parent of two ASD students
and West HS PTSA Grants Chair

From: [Rachel Faralan-Mingo](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Raise the BSA by \$400 per student this next year!!!
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 12:55:16 PM

Hello House Finance Committee Members,
Please provide the Base Student Allocation with a \$404 increase this next year and then make sure that it rises with inflation each year after....
I live in Anchorage and have 4 kids in school with 1 more on the way. I was born, raised and educated through college here in Alaska and I had a good education! WHY? Because I was in classes that were low enough in numbers that I got the attention and education that I deserved. I want that for my children too.
OUR SCHOOLS ARE NOT DAYCARE'S!! When 1 teacher has to attempt to teach 30+ fourth graders how much teaching do you think is really happening? Not as much as there should be. Much of that teacher's time is spent managing behavior and just babysitting while the parents are at work. That is NOT what I want for my kids and I'm willing to bet money that you wouldn't want it for yours.
THIS IS more IMPORTANT than roads or oil or anything else... this is our future! One day I want my kids to take your job and they will need a good education to do that!!

Rachel Faralan-Mingo
Independent Product Consultant
doTERRA Essential Oils
www.mydoterra.com/faralanmingo
907-360-8774

From: [Jonathan Rusch](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Mike Hawker](#); [Sen. Cathy Giessel](#)
Subject: Raise the BSA!
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 10:30:37 AM

Dear Senator/Representative:

Thank you for your service to Alaska.

I am writing to you as a parent and a voter. I am a 9th year Alaskan, and my about to celebrate the birth on my our second child. As my kids grown older and attend ASD, I am worried about the public school funding. I believe our children are our most important natural resource, and I'm tired of seeing our public schools flat funded.

I'm writing to ask you to work with your colleagues to please pass legislation to increase the Base Student Allocation. Please bring the level up to what it would have been if the BSA had been increased in tandem with inflation since 2011. I'm asking that the BSA be increased by at least \$400 to make our schools whole. What is being called "flat funding" by some is actually a dramatic decrease in public school funding, since costs have increased for health care, energy, technology, and insurance.

I understand that oil revenues have decreased, and you are feeling the pressure to cut spending. I also know that education funding has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. However, these increased costs are related to capital spending, legislative grants, and paying off the pension fund for retired teachers. These increased costs did not go toward funding teachers in the classrooms.

When legislators, beginning in 2004, significantly increased the BSA, we turned around our lousy graduation rates. Anchorage graduation rates were at around 66% in 2004, and now they are up to 79%. We are making great progress toward Anchorage's target "90% in 2020." In addition to improved graduation rates, reading, writing and math scores are also improving.

With school district layoffs as proposed for next year, our children and young people are really going to suffer. Please, help us put our resources into educating our young people—by targeting our base student allocation for an increase. A well-educated cohort of graduating seniors is going to be ready to take on jobs in our workforce.

Even though our oil revenue is declining, Alaska still has plenty of capital. Please, let's put some of these financial assets back into our most important resource: our children. Please, let's make funding our public schools a top priority, and pass legislation to inflation-proof the base student allocation. We will all benefit from a well-educated community.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Jonathan Rusch
3930 Patricia Lane

Anchorage, AK 99504

From: [Marti Pausbeck](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: Save our schools increase the BSA
Date: Friday, March 21, 2014 10:18:57 AM

March 21, 2014

Dear Bill Stoltze

Please vote on House bill 278 and increase student's BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION.

House Bill 278 (the Governor's only increases the BSA by \$200 over three years. (\$85/58/58) and that's not nearly enough to retain our teachers. We need \$400 this year, and increases based on inflation after that.

Please increase the BSA by \$400 to keep our teachers in the classrooms, and to inflation-proof it for the future. We've had to cut staff for three years, and we need to replace the funds in order to keep our schools strong.

I am a member of the Goldenview PTSA and I have a son in Middle school and a daughter at South High school. Currently my kids are doing well in school but I worry about the future. With the pending budget cuts to schools and a schedule that will continue to cut school funds over the next several years. I worry about the quality of education that my children will receive. Currently teacher salaries are not even keeping up with inflation!

School funding is structured in a way that parents, teachers and administrators spend most of the year putting energy into fighting budget cuts instead of teaching kids and providing a quality education for our young people. Please provide sustainable and adequate funding for our children and increase the BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION.

Thank you for all that you do for our community

Sincerely

Marti Pausback

3220 Beamreach Ct.

Anchorage AK 99516

From: [kraig.berg](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: School funding
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014 9:10:45 AM

The funding for public school students needs to go up.

The lack of funding over the years has created major setbacks to the education of our youth. My children have great teachers who work very hard to give them a top education and they are forced to do more for less each year.

The governors proposal to also fund private schools is a very bad idea. Private school students already receive state funds through their enrollment in home school programs. They should not be given anymore money to support their religious beliefs or cultural beliefs.

Thank you
Kraig Berg

From: [Chris Bacon](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Subject: School Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 5:40:07 PM

Dear Representative Stoltze,
Thank you for your service to Alaska.

I am writing to you as a parent. I have two children in the Anchorage School District who have benefitted greatly from "out of the box" programs such as sixth grade online pre-algebra, Ignite, and other activities that may have never happened without necessary funding. I have seen the benefit firsthand as a school volunteer. Both advanced placement and other kids seem to get their individual needs fulfilled to a higher degree by this more individual attention. The bottom line equals better education for all. I personally attended a small private school my last two years of high school and can attest to the value of personal attention that results from smaller classes and/or classes filled with kids that have a common interest. While it is not possible to fund a private education for everyone, I believe it is in the best interests of our society to give all children the best chance to get an education that will serve them well as adults.

I'm writing to ask you to work with your colleagues to please pass legislation to increase the Base Student Allocation. Please bring the level up to what it would have been if the BSA had been increased in tandem with inflation since 2011. I'm asking that the BSA be increased by at least \$400 to make our schools whole. What is being called "flat funding" by some is actually a dramatic decrease in public school funding, since costs have increased for health care, energy, technology, and insurance.

I understand that oil revenues have decreased, and you are feeling the pressure to cut spending. I also know that education funding has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. However, these increased costs are related to capital spending, legislative grants, and paying off the pension fund for retired teachers. These increased costs did not go toward funding teachers in the classrooms.

When legislators, beginning in 2004, significantly increased the BSA, we turned around our lousy graduation rates. Anchorage graduation rates were at around 66% in 2004, and now they are up to 79%. We are making great progress toward Anchorage's target "90% in 2020." In addition to improved graduation rates, reading, writing and math scores are also improving.

With school district layoffs as proposed for next year, our children and young people are really going to suffer. Please, help us put our resources into educating our young people—by targeting our base student allocation for an increase. A well-educated cohort of graduating seniors is going to be ready to take on jobs in our workforce.

Even though our oil revenue is declining, Alaska still has plenty of capital. Please, let's put some of these financial assets back into our most important resource: our children. Please, let's make funding our public schools a top priority, and pass legislation to inflation-proof the base student allocation. We will all benefit from a well-educated community.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Christy Bacon

6640 Marquez Circle

Anchorage, AK 99516

From: [Lauren Blanchett](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Support Education Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 2:18:59 PM

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

I wholeheartedly agree with the letter from Mark Wiggin below. Please support an increase to the BSA of \$400.

Lauren Blanchett
2611 Sprucewood Street
Anchorage, AK 99508

I might not be able to stay long enough to testify tonight from the Anchorage LIO, so I want to send my comments to your committee members via Email. My wife and I and every friend and acquaintance we have in Alaska are strong advocates of public schools. Our children started off their education in a private school in Anchorage. Along with many -- if not all- of those with whom they started school at that private school, most are now in public schools.

My son is at the middle school level and my daughter is in high school. They love their programs, their teachers, their schools. They find the work challenging. Contrary to the preposterous claims that "Alaska public education is failing" made by vouchers proponents or during anti-education funding debates, my kids, their classmates, and all the parents we know would stridently disagree. We would all state there is no failure in public education, merely a failure of some Alaska legislators and the governor to appreciate the importance of a robust public education system, a failure to fund schools adequately. Public education in Alaska deserves our full support.

Please **support an increase to the BSA of \$400, not the paltry sum offered by the governor.**

Thank you much for your service and your time,

Mark C. Wiggin
2213 Douglas Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99517
[907-245-2213](tel:907-245-2213)(h)
[907-339-6373](tel:907-339-6373)(w)
[907-244-5041](tel:907-244-5041) (cell)
EMail: mwiggin@yahoo.com

From: [Ben Arians](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Support for Increased School Funding
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 3:52:19 PM

Dear members of the Alaska House Finance Committee,

I am writing to you as a parent of a child who will begin attending Anchorage School District public schools in the next few years. I myself, as well as my wife, am a product of the ASD schools, and I consider myself to have benefited greatly through the high quality of education that I received during that time. Therefore, it disturbs me when I find that spending on education (and when I mean education, I mean the Base Student Allocation, I don't mean capital projects or paying off pension plans) has not kept pace with the basic rate of inflation since 2011. It doesn't take an economics whiz to know that means that state funding of education has actually decreased. What will that mean when my son starts Kindergarten at our local elementary school in a few years time? What will the teacher to student ratio be then? Can I expect my son to receive the same high quality education from talented, skilled educators who are happy with their jobs and feel like they are being treated fairly and held in regard? Or will he be in an overcrowded classroom in which the teacher spends all day doing crowd control?

I'm writing to ask you to work with your colleagues to please pass legislation to increase the Base Student Allocation. Please bring the level up to what it would have been if the BSA had been increased in tandem with inflation since 2011. I'm asking that the BSA be increased by at least \$400 to make our schools whole. What is being called "flat funding" by some is actually a dramatic decrease in public school funding, since costs have increased for health care, energy, technology, and insurance.

I understand that oil revenues have decreased, and you are feeling the pressure to cut spending. I also know that education funding has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. However, as I alluded to earlier, these increased costs are related to capital spending, legislative grants, and paying off the pension fund for retired teachers. These increased costs did not go toward funding teachers in the classrooms.

A quality public education is one of the cornerstones of our society, and in a state with as many resources as ours, it is unconscionable to imagine that our children and our future will not be afforded the same quality of education as those of us that came before. Good schools are one of the reasons that people move to an area, and if Alaska education is not funded properly, that could be a reason for people to choose not to come to our state if we don't allow our BSA funding to even keep pace with the rate of inflation.

I thank you for your time and attention to this matter,

Regards,

Ben Arians

Anchorage, AK

House District N

From: [Meghan Stapleton Steenburgh](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Alan Austerman](#)
Subject: Testimony for HB278
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 10:39:47 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the House Finance Committee Tuesday. Please accept my testimony, in written form as well, and attach it to HB 278. Thank you.

House Finance

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Meghan Steenburgh.

Thank you for this opportunity and thank you for your support of the state's public charter school system. We understand that you don't want to throw money at education. But we have been doing a lot more with a lot less for more than a decade.

My motivation for speaking to you today is six years old; Isabella is a first grader at Aquarian Charter School.

Committee Members wondered aloud, earlier today, why charter schools think they are not treated equitably: charter schools have been operating with roughly half the dollars of the neighborhood schools, **and**, from that one academic budget, also paying rent, maintenance, utilities, and insurance. Simply put – no other school must do that.

There is nowhere else to cut. Our math blocking naturally creates efficiencies because our art teacher, librarian, gym, and music teachers all teach math. This year, we did cut technology; unfortunately it's the one area the entire world is strengthening. The district would not let us cut day-side janitorial service to save even more.

We certainly don't waste money. For those who have not visited Aquarian, we don't have a shiny building. Our classrooms are portables connected by ramps. The fully-depreciated building has already been condemned once by the district. But we pay

hundreds of thousands of dollars in rent and maintenance each year – instead of using that money in the classroom.

That is why we cannot emphasize enough that the single greatest barrier for charter schools is the facility's expense. We propose a state-funded per pupil facilities allowance because it is a successful model in other states.

Many charter schools are at the breaking point now. *Inaction* with regard to a facilities allowance will lead to the dissolution of many charter schools sooner rather than later.

And **that** would be a burden on neighborhood schools - for those who carry that concern.

Charter schools truly provide common ground for politicians. For Democrats, charter schools strengthen *public* schools with union teachers; for Republicans, charter schools provide *choice* in education at a *fraction* of the cost. Charter schools are for fiscal conservatives as these schools do so much more with much less and with great results. But it's just not sustainable to the same degree anymore.

Please don't take charter school opportunities away from our children - because a lack of state-funded per pupil facilities allowance will do exactly that – at least in Anchorage.

Thank you for your time today and your thoughtful consideration of our children's academic future.

Thank you,
Meghan

From: [David Boyle](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#)
Subject: Testimony on HB278, BSA Increase
Date: Monday, March 24, 2014 1:44:54 PM

Honorable Legislators of the House Finance Committee,

I submit the following testimony regarding increasing the Base Student Allocation in HB278. I ask that this testimony be made a part of the official record.

To begin with, we should assume that discussions on the BSA should focus on how increasing the BSA will increase student achievement and not on maintaining a workforce. This should be about educating our students so they can get jobs in their future endeavors, not keeping employees on a school district payroll.

As you know, there has been plenty of talk about Alaska not funding public education adequately. We have heard from many who support more money for the public education system and stand to gain financially. Most of these mention that the "BSA has been flat funded for four years", a phrase that has been repeated so much that many in the general public are beginning to believe it. But this same general public is not aware of the details of the Foundation Formula funding for public schools.

Over the past 10 years, the BSA has increased 36% while inflation has only gone up 27.2% during the same period. So the BSA has actually outpaced inflation over the last decade. The fact is the BSA is \$377 more than needed to keep up with the past 10 years of inflation. The media has not reported this story.

You well know that the BSA is one of several factors in the Foundation Formula which is used to calculate the per student funding each school district receives. You also know that the BSA may remain the same, yet some of the other factors may increase, which is what has occurred since 2007. Since FY2007, the Foundation Formula for Anchorage has increased from \$273,280,566 to \$326,182,426, an increase of 19%. Meanwhile, the student population has remained virtually the same. Thus the real per student funding has increased 19% or \$1,061 since FY2007.

In the Anchorage School District about 88% of the operating budget goes toward salaries and benefits. The Anchorage School Board approved a new teacher (AEA) contract beginning this school year which has the following cost increases:

- There is a 1% salary increase for each of the 3 years of the contract; there is a \$1,500 bonus for year 1 and year 3; step increases each year of duty. These equate to a 5 to 7% pay increase for years 1 and 3 for an employee with less than 10 years service.
-
- The District pays the NEA Alaska Health Trust Fund for those union members who do NOT enroll in the health insurance. This is about 700 people at about \$18,000 each per year (total of \$12,600,000). There is no accountability for any of the funds the District pays to the NEA Health Trust Fund. The District could have saved more than \$12,000,000 by negotiating harder. Of course, the easy way is to ask the Legislature for more money.
-
- The Anchorage Education Association states that because members must work at .75 FTE or more to receive health insurance benefits in years 2 and 3, that "ASD will work to place any member currently working below .75 FTE to .75 FTE or above." This is an added cost to the District. This is to comply with the Affordable Care Act.

It is unfortunate that the Anchorage School Board has not abided by its fiduciary responsibility. Now ASD is coming to the Legislature to fix the problem ASD created. If the Legislature bails them out, it incentivizes this behavior. Suppose an Alaskan decides to remodel his home and gets a second mortgage. Upon completion of the remodel, this same person discovers that he cannot make the mortgage payments. Should the neighbors then be required to kick in to help that neighbor pay the second mortgage? This is the position the Anchorage School Board has put legislators in. Unfortunately, some good teachers may have to be let go because the ASD did not exercise due diligence.

Finally, this is not a jobs program, this is an educational program to benefit all Alaskan students. Thank you for the opportunity to comment

Sincerely,

David Boyle



This email is free from viruses and malware because [avast! Antivirus](#) protection is active.

From: rpbrooks12@gmail.com on behalf of [Regan Brooks](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#); [Rep. Mark Neuman](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#); [Rep. Lindsey Holmes](#); [Rep. Cathy Munoz](#); [Rep. Steve Thompson](#); [Rep. Tammie Wilson](#); [Rep. Bryce Edgmon](#); [Rep. Les Gara](#); [Rep. David Guttenberg](#)
Subject: Testimony/Commentary regarding HB 278
Date: Saturday, March 22, 2014 11:34:30 AM

Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for all the time you have been taking to listen to the public. I realize it must become tiresome to hear so many voices and I am grateful for your patience.

I am writing to urge you to raise the BSA enough that our schools will be able to avoid cutting teachers and rehire counselors and other key staff lost last year. I agree that our school budgets should not be ballooning. But the BSA is not the place to make cuts. Insufficient funding of the BSA means that Teachers and counselors have been and will continue to be cut.

We need to keep those teachers and counselors in the schools. We can make cuts on facilities and other fat. But not on teachers and counselors and effective administrators. They are the muscle and bone. They are what makes our schools strong.

Please remember that much of the air in the education spending balloon is made of stadiums and TRS spending. The BSA is the only money that schools can spend on hiring teachers. And teachers are really (really!) important to student learning. (As are counselors and effective administrators.)

I also realize it will be hard to find the money to make this increase happen but please remember that there are grave economic consequences to cutting education funding.

Please remember that these cuts can have negative economic consequences for our state in the following ways:

- decreased teacher:student ratios are linked to increased drop out rates which, in turn, are linked to increased incarceration rates. I know, this sounds melodramatic but it is also simply practical: but keeping graduation rates high will help prevent (much more pricey) prison spending down the road.
- as our schools lose teachers and other staff due to cuts, our state will have more trouble attracting and keeping a highly educated work force. My husband and I are both college graduates with advanced degrees. We care about education and we chose to live here in part because of the quality of the schools. If they continue to face cuts, will future professionals make the same choice or will AK have more and more trouble recruiting and keeping an educated workers from outside?

Please help prevent these problems for out state by amending HB 278. Specifically, I ask that you amend HB278 to include an increase to the BSA of \$400 this year and adjustment for inflation for future years.

Please be visionary and keep our schools strong.

Sincerely,
Regan Brooks
2316 Douglas Drive
Anchorage, AK
99517

From: [Michelle Coombs](#)
To: [Rep. Alan Austerman](#); [Rep. Bill Stoltze](#)
Cc: [LIO Anchorage](#)
Subject: Today's public hearing on HB278
Date: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 11:33:48 AM

Dear Representatives,

While I can't attend today's hearing in person, I am writing because public education in Alaska is very important to me. I have been alarmed in recent years to see that the base student allocation has barely kept up with inflation. **I support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more**, instead of the \$85 (\$201 over three years) that is currently proposed in the Governor's education bill. It is very shortsighted to shortchange Alaska's students by not providing them with the quality education they deserve. As a parent with a child in an Anchorage public school, I see a lot of hard work by the school's teachers and staff, already doing the same (or more!) with less. The cuts that the Anchorage School District are proposing to accommodate the budget shortfalls are just going to make things tougher.

Please do the right thing and increase the BSA by a reasonable amount!

Thank you,
Michelle Coombs
1434 West 11th Ave
Anchorage

From: [Frankie Shillington](#)
To: [Rep. Bill Stoltz](#)
Subject: We need quality teachers in the classroom
Date: Friday, March 28, 2014 7:02:00 PM

Dear Representative Stoltz -

Due to the lack of funding for education, the principal at Chugiak High School, Mr. David Legg, was required by the ASD Board and HR Office to displace a math teacher (1.0) position at our school, among others.

The math teachers at Chugiak High School are experienced and have been there many years. Unfortunately, I am the least senior member of the math faculty, even though I have been teaching at Chugiak High School for 11 years. Yes, that means that I was hired by the ASD later than my peers, who all have more than 11 years experience. We are not novice educators and we need to be valued for our experience.

I am devastated and frustrated that I am being displaced from the school I love to teach at. I believe my students and parents will be quite shocked, as I was, when they hear this news.

I am writing to thank you for your part in proposing to increase funding for education in Alaska. Would you PLEASE provide us with the fiscal certainty and forward-funding that we need in order to have a stability in our budget process. We cannot proceed without your support and your help in making this come true.

Please raise the BSA and stop the budget cuts. Our school districts have had to cut their budgets for four years. This means laying off educators that work hard every day for our children, raising our class sizes which makes it difficult to teach to individuals, and cutting significant programs. These cuts have affected our students' learning and morale.

Thank you again. I really appreciate your effort on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Frankie Shillington
19944 Second St.
Eagle River, AK 99577

907-632-1970