

Alaska Association of School Administrators
Leadership for Learning

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April 14, 2014

Senate Finance Committee Members
Senator Meyer
Senator Kelly
Senator Fairclough
Senator Bishop
Senator Dunleavy
Senator Hoffman
Senator Olsen

Dear Finance Committee Members:

The Alaska Association of School Administrators (AASA) strongly supports additional funding for PreK-12 education. We respectfully request that any funds made available for PreK-12 education be distributed through the existing foundation formula.

AASA recognizes that media outlets in rural Alaska are often unavailable, thereby limiting coverage for education. This differs from our larger districts where significant news coverage is generated daily, particularly news of funding shortfalls and the impact on teachers and classrooms. AASA understands that funding shortfalls are projected in the vast majority of Alaska public school districts – large and small, urban and rural. The projected shortfalls vary, but the fact remains that staffing and much needed programs are being negatively impacted.

As a superintendent of a small REAA school district, Alaska Gateway, I can attest that our district is experiencing a projected shortfall despite instituting major energy conservation measures to contain our high energy costs during the past few years. In FY15, with current projections, Alaska Gateway anticipates losing two teachers from our current staff of 36 (5.5%) as well as three instructional aides from our team of 38 (7.9%). Even with the elimination of staff, the shortfall to our general fund is just over \$230,000 (2.9%). State aid for our operating budget is projected at nearly \$7.8 million. Having recently spoken with other rural superintendents at the Alaska Teacher Placement Job Fair held in Anchorage, I can assure you that financial challenges are real throughout Alaska.

On behalf of AASA, we thank you for your continued effort and willingness to consider additional financial support for PreK-12 education. An infusion of much needed funds, distributed through the foundation program, is critical in order for Alaska school districts to maintain staff and programs necessary to continue our efforts to meet the needs of all students.

Respectfully,

Todd Poage
AASA President