



Anchorage School District

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99504-3135
(907) 742-4000

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February 28, 2013

Rep. Lynn Gattis
Capitol
State Capitol Room 420
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Rep. Gattis,

The Anchorage School District supports the intent of House Bill 120 to increase support for pupil transportation funding for school districts in Alaska. This bill would increase the annual escalation in per pupil transportation program for school districts from roughly 60% of inflation under current law to 100% of the Anchorage consumer price index.

ASD remains concerned that operating expenses are increasing for transportation and other areas without additional funding, despite our strong efforts to curb unreasonable growth. ASD also recognizes that the governor and the legislature may have to restrain spending growth to enable the state to save for years when oil revenue is smaller and that downward adjustments in statutory formulas may be necessary as oil revenues decline. In addition, it is noted that when state oil revenues declined in the 1980s, the transportation program increased and support for direct instruction declined. Increasing the transportation reimbursement rate to 100% of CPI now, while holding the base student allocation at 0% of CPI, may not yield results that are much different.

ASD would like to encourage collective consideration of how the state and school districts can work together to exercise fiscal restraint across all support functions in order to sustain direct classroom instruction over the long term. Along those lines, supporters of education may wish to consider targeting additional transportation support toward initiatives that also expand school choice and improve access for all students to high quality instruction within our existing schools.

Sincerely,

Jim Browder, Ed.D.
Superintendent