



Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor's Office

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March 24, 2015

Representative Steve Thompson, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Subject: HB 136 School Debt Reimbursement

Dear Representative Thompson:

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on HB 136, "An Act relating to school bond debt reimbursement". We are aware of the budgetary constraints facing Alaska and understand the actions currently being taken by state officials in addressing budget shortfalls. We very much appreciate your dedication and service during these financially difficult times.

However, the suspension of this program on May 1, 2015 eliminates the opportunity for the Fairbanks North Star Borough residents to benefit from 70/30 school bond reimbursement during 2015. It is our understanding that with the exception of the Municipality of Anchorage - who has a bond package before their voters on April 7, 2015 - most other local municipal elections are held during the month of October.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough is considering placing a school construction bond package before our voters this October (see attached). While our School Board and the borough consider advancing all or some of these projects to the 2015 ballot, it is important to note that each of these projects meet the criteria to qualify for 70/30 reimbursement and Department of Education and Early Development approval.

We are concerned that delaying construction of these major maintenance projects will cause serious further deterioration of our facilities. These schools are the oldest in our community and these mechanical and structural issues must be addressed. Barnette Magnet School was ranked by the Department of Education and Development as the fifth highest statewide priority Capital Improvement Project on the Major Maintenance list. Unfortunately, the Administration included only the top four CIP projects in their budget submitted to the legislature. Barnette Elementary was built in 1960. Our property tax payers began supporting necessary renovations in 2002 with Phase I of the project, and Phases II and III were completed in 2006 and 2011, respectively. A Phase IV bond is being considered for the October 2015 municipal election. Completion of this project under the existing reimbursement program would allow our taxpayers to have similar program benefits that have applied to this complex renovation begun in 2002.

We respectfully request that the suspension deadline of May 1 in HB 136 be changed to October 30, 2015 to allow Alaskan residents the benefit of the current 70/30 reimbursement program.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Luke Hopkins'.

Luke Hopkins, Mayor
Fairbanks North Star Borough

Cc: Interior Delegation



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The Fairbanks North Star Borough is advancing the following School District projects for ballot proposition(s) for bond this fall. These projects provide renovation and major maintenance of existing facilities and meet the current requirements for 70 /30 match reimbursement through DEED.

Barnette Magnet School Renovation Phase IV (final phase – completion)

\$11,467,095

Barnette Elementary School was completed in 1960. This final phase will complete the renovation of the original 1960's wing and demolish the 1970's addition that has severe seismic structural deficiencies. No new or replacement space will be built in this project. The scope of this project is to complete the renovation as designed, but not completed in the previous phases. This will include the building envelope, windows, doors and finishes; and the mechanical plumbing, heating and ventilation, electrical, and phone / data systems. Additionally, as detailed in the educational specifications, the building is deficient in a number of areas with regard to educational program deliverability. The scope addresses this through realignment, rearrangement, and upgrades of spaces to match the highly successful magnet school program. This project is listed as #5 on the DEED Major Maintenance Grant program list.

Districtwide Fire Sprinkler Systems Backflow Preventers

\$750,000

Many schools have been required to install double-backflow preventers in their fire sprinkler systems to meet requirements of the local water utility in order to prevent cross contamination of the community potable water system.

Woodriver Elementary School Phase III Renovation

\$9,952,321

Woodriver Elementary School was completed in 1976. This final phase will complete renovation of the facility and will improve energy efficiency including building envelope, roof replacement and increase of insulation to current standards, boiler replacement, upgrades to mechanical and electrical systems and elimination of victaulic pipe connections. Interior renovation will include hallways, restrooms, offices, common areas and other work not completed previously.

Tanana Middle School Mechanical Upgrades and Energy Efficiencies

\$9,663,173

Tanana Middle School was completed in 1975. The mechanical system has older fire-tube boilers that require expensive maintenance and are in need of replacement with newer more efficient boilers. Also included are building automation system improvements to new direct digital controls, ventilation system, plumbing and other upgrades to increase energy efficiency in the facility.

Joy Elementary School Partial Roof Replacement

\$1,102,435

Joy Elementary School was completed in 1962 and added to in 1989. This project replaces the roof and insulation of the 1989 addition. This roof is an IRMA roof system that is failing and is in need of replacement. The project will also increase insulation to current standards and improve energy efficiency.

Total

\$32,935,024

Scott Johnson, AIA
Director
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