

March 27, 2015

Senate Finance Committee

Committee Chairs

Senator Anna MacKinnon

Senator Pete Kelly

RE: Budget -Sitka School District - One time state funding

I am writing today to express my support of the Senate Finance Committee voting in favor of reinstating the onetime education funding to Alaska schools in need. Sitka School District (SSD) is in dire need of the monies for the upcoming operating budget.

Sitka is an amazing community but economically we are struggling as we transition to find alternate income sources in our beautiful town. The SSD released a budget matrix of proposed budget cuts based on potential funding. I have looked closely at the budget and I understand there are still unknown factors as far as income but the bottom line and my largest concern is making sure to show my support in case of "What If". We as a community, with the help of our state legislators, can not allow "what if" to happen.

I urge the Senate Finance Committee to reinstate the one time state funding of 32.4 million allowing Sitka to utilize its portion to help close the SSD funding shortfall.

I am sure each and every one of you have already or will be looking very closely at the spreadsheets with versions #1 thru Alternate scenarios which are presented by the district in the Budget matrix ( see attached) The scenarios presented are dire.

I have also expressed my concern to Sitka's local Assembly members, but I write today to the Senate Finance Committee because every dollar at this points counts. I urge you to help keep Sitka's quality education system intact. Help us keep our quality local educators employed, our community schools program intact & our beautiful performing arts center open for all to enjoy.

I understand it is not only Sitka's economy, but the State of Alaska's economy, that is struggling right now. However the potential loss of jobs for teachers, staff and their families is not something we as a community nor as a state, will bounce back from. Our schools must remain fully funded, with no exceptions.

For me as a very concerned citizen, parent of an incoming 9th grade student, spouse of a SSD teacher, and as an Alaska resident for thirty five years, I urge the finance committee to vote in favor of the one time state funding. This funding helps in getting Sitka one step closer to allowing the SSD to operate without any cuts to programs or loss of qualified teachers.

In the face of the funding crisis within our state, the last thing Sitka needs is to decrease the quality of our education systems. If Alaska and specifically Sitka are going to flourish, if we are going to entice new families to our communities, and grow our economy, our school systems must remain strong.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Reid

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Alaska resident since 1979

Sitka resident since 2003