



Anchorage School District

Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • www.asdk12.org

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY OF DEENA BISHOP, SUPERINTENDENT
before the
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
March 28, 2017**

Hello. I am Deena Bishop, superintendent of Anchorage School District. Thank you for allowing me to testify on SB96. The present bill has many provisions, of which I will only speak to a couple today.

Please know that the Anchorage School District is highly troubled with the Senate's actions to fulfill its mission to take care of Alaska's future. In reality and in every business model for which I know that has shown success, one must invest in what one values. We plan ahead to experience a delayed gratification in our future. Young Alaskans are our future Alaskans.

This bill places them at the bottom of your collective priority. The changes proposed to the 80% capacity provision and subsequent decrease in funding inequitably penalize the educational concerns and goals of Anchorage and some other communities. ASD will be greatly disadvantaged in this scenario given the 5% reduction in enrollment needed for the *HOLD HARMLESS* statute.

ASD calculates a loss of an additional 15 million dollars in revenue due to this bill, given that we do not qualify for hold harmless. The decision to impact a small portion of the BSA formula impacts other areas of revenue. You have asked for a 5% reduction statewide in education - yet only 20 of the 53 school districts may be affected by this provision.

The Anchorage community pays its bills; we take care of our schools to the maximum allowable contribution. While SB96 includes innovative thinking in regard to instruction, this single bill in the middle of a session **will not** protect Alaska's future.

ASD is already reducing over 100 full time employees next year. The highest percentage being reduced is in administration (I know you are concerned with administration by the bill's authoring).

Please know that all levels of our organization will be negatively impacted by this bill. Reductions will continue to hit our schools given that 79% of our funds support instruction and less than 5% support administration - a fact that you can easily review on our state's education department's website.

Thank you for listening.



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PUBLIC TESTIMONY OF JAMES ANDERSON, CFO
before the
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
March 28, 2017

Good afternoon. My name is Jim Anderson. I am the Chief Financial Officer for the Anchorage School District. I want to briefly describe the effect of Senate Bill 96 as it significantly impacts ASD's ability to sustain operations.

This past year, as a result of the Governor's reduction in bond debt reimbursement by 25%, ASD was able to shift funds from our internal savings account to cover the nearly 10.8-million-dollar shortfall. Hence, we do not have the funds to cover a large shortfall for next year.

Anchorage historically provides 100% of the max local contribution. Depending on how the cuts are made within the formula, it is likely that ASD would see lower state and local funds.

The 2 minutes we're given for public testimony are not sufficient to articulate the full impact of this legislation, but it is all we have to counter last week's invited testimony by Mr. Mark Foster that our District could easily absorb 3% cuts for three years – approximately 54 million dollars - and somehow end up with more teachers in each classroom. The math simply doesn't work for this assessment to hold true.

Currently the "hold harmless" provision in the foundation formula only applies to districts that have had a 5% reduction in average daily membership. Anchorage and many other districts do not fit the current definition. Unless the "hold harmless" provision applies to all districts affected by Senate Bill 96, there will be hidden and unexpected funding shortfalls to many of the state's districts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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TESTIMONY OF STARR MARSETT, SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

before the

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

March 16, 2017

Good afternoon. My name is Starr Marsett. I am an Anchorage School District Board member. I could speak to each one of the Sections in Senate Bill 96, but 2 minutes does not allow for that kind of honest input to a bill that will cripple education.

Great idea lets raise the score needed to pass the Praxis exam so Alaska has the highest quality teachers. Because teachers will travel from all over the world to teach here, teachers will have a great retirement plan and not receive pink slips at the end of each school year. And of course, there is no teacher shortage: Publication "ED Source" Feb 8, 2017 states that the teacher shortage is worsening. Some 25% of school districts are reporting an "extreme shortage" of job seekers for key teaching positions. Supply and Demand, simple economics. If you want the cream of the crop you give them a reason to come here and you develop a plan to grow your own.

Yes, you have let the cat out of the bag, you are cutting education by 5%. How you plan to do that is not clear and will not be made clear until after the Senate Votes not allowing any public testimony.

Section 11.AS14.17.450 is amended by adding a new subsection.

If there are two schools in the same district that are under 80% capacity and within 25 road miles of each other, then their school size adjustment is the average daily membership (ADM) submitted for each of those schools rather than going through the school size table. In effect, it changes the "size factor" to a "1" for all affected schools. This would result in a loss of \$15 Million for ASD unless the criteria in the "hold harmless" provision eliminates the need to have a 5% reduction in ADM across the district.

What will save the education of Alaska Children to ensure that Alaska continues to have a future for our children and theirs. I urge all Alaskans to reach out to your district representatives and tell them to stop cutting education. This is about the young faces that show up every morning at our schools expecting us to prepare them for success and trusting in all of us to secure their future.

Educating All Students for Success in Life

Anchorage School Board Tam Agosti-Gisler, President

Elisa Snelling, Vice President

Starr Marsett, Clerk

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Superintendent Dr. Deena Bishop