

**Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force**  
**Report to the Governor and Legislature**

**September 1, 2007**

# **Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force Report to the Governor and Legislature**

## **Table of Contents**

Members .....	1
Report to the Governor and Legislature.....	2
Draft Legislation	
School Funding Formula recommendations .....	12
University of Alaska Teacher Preparation.....	19
Draft Resolutions	
Standing Committees on Education.....	22
District Cost Factor Commission.....	24
Adequate Federal Funding for Special Education .....	26
Fiscal Note .....	29
Member Comments	
Senator Bert Stedman, Vice Chairman.....	37
Senator Johnny Ellis .....	39
Representative Mike Kelly .....	41
Representative Paul Seaton .....	43
Senator Gary Wilken.....	44
Appendix 1: Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 .....	69

# **Legislative Education Funding Task Force Report to the Governor and Legislature**

## **Members**

Representative Mike Hawker – Chairman

Senator Bert Stedman – Vice-Chairman

Senator Johnny Ellis

Senator Lyman Hoffman

Representative Reggie Joule

Representative Mike Kelly

Representative Bob Roses

Representative Paul Seaton

Senator Gary Stevens

Senator Gary Wilken

Public Member Carl Rose, Association of Alaska School Boards

Committee Aides: Juli Lucky, Paulyn Swanson, Charisse Millett

# **REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE**

## **Authority and charge**

The Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force (JLETF) was established by Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 (SCR 11) in the first session of the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature. The JLETF was established for the purpose of examining school district cost differentials and the existing formula for distributing state aid for education. The JLETF was charged with:

- Evaluating proposals that are based on available facts and conclusions pertaining to school district cost factors and the foundation formula
- Recommending improvements or additions to the laws providing for education funding
- Taking public comments on education funding and school district cost factors

The JLETF was directed to submit a report of its findings and proposed legislative changes to the governor and the legislature by September 1, 2007 and was authorized to make any additional reports it considered advisable.

This report constitutes the findings and proposed action recommended by the JLETF.

The JLETF will terminate on October 15, 2007 after completing its assigned responsibilities.

## **Methodology**

The JLETF met during the months of June, July and August, 2007. The initial meetings included a detailed analysis of the school funding formula and related statutes and regulations. The JLETF also considered the implications of the Decision and Order rendered June 21, 2007 in the case of Kristine Moore, et al vs. State of Alaska regarding the adequacy of school funding in Alaska.

The JLETF identified specific issues for further analysis and consideration. The JLETF then conducted public hearings where all school districts in the state were invited to provide testimony without a time limit. Invited testimony was followed by open public testimony. The JLETF then convened in a public work session and developed initial recommendations. The initial recommendations were subjected to a second session of open public comment and finalized into this report.

## **Alaska school funding formula**

The school funding formula is a statutorily defined calculation utilized to determine the amount of state aid paid annually to each individual school district. The formula is intended to achieve an equitable distribution of aid for education throughout the state. The current formula was adopted in 1998 and has undergone several amendments. The formula incorporates factors intended to recognize and adjust individual district funding for the financial consequences of variables in school size, geographic cost differences, special needs and intensive needs student populations, correspondence programs, federal aid, and the ability of communities to provide local contributions.

State aid to each school district is calculated annually based on student enrollment. The formula uses the term 'average daily membership' for the enrollment census. Average daily membership (ADM) is first adjusted for school size to recognize economies of scale for larger schools. School size adjusted ADM is then increased by factors for district cost differentials, special needs, and intensive services funding. Correspondence program membership is factored and added to the attending membership to achieve a final adjusted ADM. This total is multiplied by the base student allocation (BSA) to determine each district's basic need. The BSA is a dollar value established in statute.

Basic need is reduced by the amount of required local contribution for districts in organized boroughs and 90% of the eligible federal Title VIII Impact Aid received. It is also increased by a statutory Quality School Grants entitlement and, in some cases, by a funding 'floor' factor to result in the final state aid entitlement.

## **Committee determinations**

The JLETF determined at the beginning of deliberations to limit the scope of work to examining components of the existing formula rather than undertaking a reconsideration of the formula itself.

The JLETF determined that the school funding formula should be structured in such a manner that schools are fairly and adequately funded without other special grant programs such as Learning Opportunity Grants (LOGs) or School Improvement Grants (SIGs). These grants have been used in the past to provide additional funding without addressing the underlying problems with the formula.

The JLETF determined that the recommendations contained in this report are prefaced by the assumption that Senate Bill 125 (SB 125), PERS/TRS Cost Sharing, passes the legislature and becomes law substantially in the form SB 125 existed at the adjournment of the first regular session of the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature. SB 125 provides a mechanism allocating the annual payment for the cost of Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and Teachers Retirement System (TRS) contributions for school district employees between the state and the local employers. SB 125 effectively relieves school districts from financial responsibility for unfunded past

service costs in excess of levels specified in that statute. School districts are provided with a stable, predictable and limited cost environment for these obligations.

## **Immediate recommendations and further consideration of education issues:**

The JLETF recognizes that school funding policy is an ongoing constitutionally mandated responsibility of the legislature. To better meet that responsibility, the JLETF recommends immediate action, as described in this report, augmented by a long-term commitment to continue the process undertaken by the JLETF. This report identifies a number of specific policies for implementation during the second regular session of the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature and identifies other issues with provisions of the school funding formula that merit further legislative consideration.

The JLETF recommends that the legislature's further consideration of education and education funding issues merit the regular and continuing attention of dedicated committees separate and apart from the Standing Committees for Health and Social Services. Standing Committees on Education should be established during the second regular session of the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature. These education committees should be formally charged with recurring review of the foundation formula, regularly updating district cost differentials, general education policy and University of Alaska oversight.

## **Recommendations for policies to be implemented during the second regular session of the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature:**

### **District cost factors**

The school funding formula recognizes that school districts across the state face differing costs for similar goods and services including energy, supplies and labor. These geographic cost-of-living differences are accommodated in the formula by a factor that is applied to the school size adjusted ADM. Anchorage is presumed to be the base for this calculation and receives a factor of one (1.0). Other districts are individually assigned factors in excess of one to recognize their individual cost differential in relation to Anchorage.

The numerical value of the cost differential factors has been a policy issue with the formula since it was adopted in 1998. The legislature has undertaken various efforts utilizing professional economic consultants to accurately and fairly determine these factors. A controversial economic analysis was completed in 2003 by the American Institute of Research (AIR). This work was reviewed and modified in 2005 by the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). Certain aspects of the ISER differential calculation also raise questions and controversy within the legislature. However, the ISER study is

generally accepted as the most recent and reliable differential analysis available at this time.

The JLETF recognizes that legitimate concerns exist with the ISER study. SCR 11 charged the JLETF with evaluating proposals that are based on available facts and conclusions pertaining to school district cost factors and the foundation formula. Accordingly, the JLETF determined it was appropriate to utilize the ISER conclusions in making the recommendations in this report.

The JLETF recommends that the district cost factor statutes be changed to phase in the ISER proposal. 50% of the ISER factors should be implemented in fiscal year 2009, with the remaining 50% implemented over the four subsequent fiscal years. Implementation of this recommendation will require additional funds to be appropriated so that the amount received by Anchorage will not be negatively impacted by the increased factors for other school districts.

The JLETF recommends that a dedicated commission be established to address the district cost factor issue in detail. The commission should be similar in organization to the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force that prepared this report. The commission should be charged with developing a durable and dynamic (updateable) economic model that can be used to update district cost factors on a regular and recurring basis. Further, the commission should be directed to investigate the feasibility of incorporating direct reimbursement for some costs, such as energy costs. It should be provided with adequate financial resources to engage the highly qualified professional resources necessary to conduct the economic analyses needed to develop the economic model and improve the accuracy of district cost factors.

## **Intensive needs student funding**

Intensive needs students are specifically identified individuals experiencing medical or other circumstances that require dedicated services, equipment or facilities. Currently school districts receive five (5) times the BSA for each intensive needs student. The determination of students classified as intensive needs is subject to Department of Education and Early Development audit and challenge.

School districts have provided consistent testimony that the actual cost to serve these students is more than the current funding. The JLETF accepts school district testimony that these costs could average as high as fifteen times (15) the BSA.

The JLETF recommends that statute be changed to provide a nine (9) times BSA multiplier for fiscal year 2009, eleven (11) times for fiscal year 2010 and thirteen (13) times for fiscal year 2011 and beyond.

## **Declining enrollment step-down**

School districts occasionally experience abrupt declines in enrollment resulting from factors beyond the district's control or ability to predict in advance. The closing or realignment of military bases can have this effect. Under the school funding formula these abrupt enrollment declines result in an immediate and equally abrupt funding reduction.

The JLETF recommends that statute be adopted to provide a 'step-down' mechanism that buffers the effects of declining enrollment.

## **Base student allocation**

The JLETF recognizes that school districts are better able to plan and budget their programs when the amount of their student funding is known and predictable.

The JLETF recommends that the legislature commit in statute to further increasing the BSA amounts for three years. The BSA for fiscal year 2009 through fiscal year 2011 should be increased by, at a minimum, \$100 per year from fiscal year 2008 levels.

## **Pupil transportation recalibration**

The JLETF recognizes that school districts have experienced increased costs of transporting pupils and have largely completed negotiating new transportation contracts that are in excess of current funding levels.

The JLETF recommends that the current system of providing funding for pupil transportation be continued. However, the Department of Education and Early Development should recalibrate funding levels for fiscal year 2009 utilizing the most recent actual audited costs for the school districts.

## **University of Alaska teacher preparation report**

Preparing new teachers to meet the challenges of providing quality education throughout Alaska should be an important objective of the University of Alaska.

The JLETF recommends that the legislature require the University to provide an annual report to the legislature documenting their efforts and degree of success in training teachers and in assisting Alaska school districts to attract and retain qualified instructors.



## **Other recommendations:**

### **Expedite school appropriation**

The JLETF recommends that the legislature expedite school funding and pass a stand-alone appropriation to fund the statutory BSA by the 60<sup>th</sup> legislative day. This appropriation confirms the availability of the BSA and will further facilitate school districts' ability to plan and budget their programs.

### **Utilize Public Education Fund**

The Public Education Fund was established by the legislature to provide a means to set aside money in excess of the requirements of a current year's budget to fund the BSA in subsequent years.

The JLETF recommends the legislature continue to use the Public Education Fund and that the maximum possible amount of money be set aside in the fiscal year 2009 budget process for this purpose.

## **Special session call is not necessary**

The JLETF believes it has proposed a solution for school funding, including the treatment of school district cost factors, which provides stable, predictable and adequate funding for the next three fiscal years. Accordingly, the JLETF concludes it is not necessary or appropriate for the governor to call the legislature into special session in order to address school funding prior to the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature convening its second regular session.

## **Issues referred to the proposed standing committees on education for further legislative consideration:**

### **Charter and correspondence schools and home-schooling**

Charter schools, correspondence schools and home-schooling are integral to providing a broad spectrum of school alternatives in Alaska. The manner in which these alternatives are recognized in the school funding formula should be evaluated by the Standing Committees on Education to make certain they are fairly and adequately supported

## **Special needs block grant**

The special needs block grant is a 20% increase in each district's school size adjusted ADM to recognize the cost of providing a range of specialized services including special education, vocational technology, bilingual and bicultural programs, and gifted and talented programs. When the current school funding formula was adopted, it was determined that these programs were to be funded with these block grants, rather than attempting to fund each activity category individually. The JLETF did not recommend a change in the special needs block grant factor.

However, the JLETF recommends the structure of these grants be further considered by the Standing Committees on Education to evaluate whether the block grant approach continues to be the most appropriate mechanism to address these specialized programs.

## **Vocational technology programs**

Vocational technology programs are becoming a more prominent component of public school education. Various school districts have developed differing approaches to providing these programs.

The Standing Committees on Education should undertake a comprehensive examination of vocational technology programs across the state and determine if additional statutory consideration is appropriate to meet the demand for these programs and to maximize their effectiveness.

## **Required local effort and federal Title VIII Impact Aid**

School districts in organized boroughs are required to provide local funding in the amount equivalent to a 4-mill tax levy on the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in the district, not to exceed 45% of the district's basic need for the preceding fiscal year. However, beginning in fiscal year 2002, only 50% of the increase in real and personal property over the 1999 full and true value is used for the 4-mill equivalent calculation.

The JLETF considered and made no recommendations to change the required local effort provisions at this time. The Standing Committees on Education should undertake an aggressive examination of these provisions, considering both the long-term consequences of the current structure and the exemption for school districts in the unorganized boroughs from local effort requirements.

Federal Impact Aid provides funds, ostensibly in-lieu of local taxes, to school districts for children of parents living and/or working on federal property or property exempted from taxation by federal mandate.

The JLETF considered and made no recommendations to change the Federal Impact Aid provisions. The Standing Committees on Education should include consideration of these provisions in their evaluation of local effort issues.

### **Moore et. al. v. State of Alaska Decision and Order**

On June 21, 2007, the Superior Court issued a Decision and Order in the Moore et al v. State of Alaska lawsuit. The Decision and Order placed certain requirements on the legislature with regard to schools that are not performing adequately.

The JLETF recognizes the legislature's continued reliance upon authority delegated to the executive branch and the Department of Education and Early Development to continue and conclude the legal process with regard to these issues. The JLETF recommends that the legislature evaluate and determine the appropriate action, if any, to take in the second regular session of the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature based on the facts available when that session convenes in January 2008.

### **Overlapping timing for state and school district budget cycles**

The JLETF considered early or pre-funding alternatives for the annual education appropriation. In addition to the specific proposals in the report, the JLETF recommends the Standing Committees on Education further consider alternatives that can provide relief from the practical problems that arise from the overlapping state and school district budget cycles.

### **Innovative or best practices grants**

The JLETF determined that the school funding formula should be structured in such a manner that schools are fairly and adequately funded without other special grant programs. The JLETF also recognized that "innovative" and "best practices" programs outside or increasing the scope of regular public school instructional programs should be encouraged.

The JLETF recommends that the Standing Committees on Education work with the Department of Education and Early Development to evaluate the viability of a system of specialized supplemental grants that would be available to school districts which apply and meet high eligibility standards of both need and merit.

### **Voluntary pre-K programs**

The JLETF considered voluntary pre-kindergarten programs and desired this report remain neutral with regard to this issue. The JLETF recommends that the merits and costs of these programs be objectively evaluated by the Standing Committees on Education.

## **Alaska Military Youth Academy funding**

The Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) receives funding that is statutorily derived from the BSA. The recent significant increases in the BSA has resulted in statutory funding in excess of what is necessary for AMYA operations.

The JLETF recommends that the Standing Committees on Education review and adjust the AMYA funding statutes to provide adequate and appropriate, but not excessive, funding to meet their needs.

## **National Forest Receipts Program**

The National Forest Receipts Program was originally authorized under a 1908 federal law that required 25% of the annual income generated from activities within a national forest to be shared with the state and distributed to local governments located within the national forest. The decline of commercial timber harvests in the Tongass National Forest has resulted in a substantial decline in the revenue that numerous Alaska communities relied upon to fund their schools. The federal government took temporary action to subsidize increased payments to the local communities through 2008. That funding may not continue.

The JLETF recommends that the Standing Committees on Education monitor federal actions regarding the National Forest Receipts Program and determine what state response may be appropriate as a result of those actions.

## **Achieving and sustaining the commitments proposed in this report**

The JLETF recognizes that achieving and sustaining the education funding commitments proposed in this report presents significant challenges in light of the economic reality of the state's declining oil production. No matter how high the market price of oil reaches, nor how great the level of state imposed taxation, the indisputable decline in North Slope oil production inevitably results in the state having less fiscal resources available to allocate among all the competing needs for public services, including providing a system of public schools.

The determination of state revenue and appropriation policies will always entail reconciliation of differing economic and social philosophies among individual policy makers. Regardless of the dynamics inherent in the political process, the Alaska Constitution requires the legislature to establish and maintain a system of public schools and the legislature must be committed to meeting that responsibility.

The JLETF recommends the legislature adopt the proposals in this report and prioritize developing the long-range fiscal policy necessary to sustain these commitments.

## **Draft Legislation**

25-LS1048\E  
Mischel  
8/10/07

**HOUSE BILL NO.**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY**

**Introduced:**  
**Referred:**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

"An Act relating to school funding, the base student allocation, district cost factors, and the adjustments for intensive services and average daily membership calculations; and providing for an effective date."

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

\* **Section 1.** AS 14.17.410(b) is amended to read:

(b) Public school funding consists of state aid, a required local contribution, and eligible federal impact aid determined as follows:

(1) state aid equals basic need minus a required local contribution and 90 percent of eligible federal impact aid for that fiscal year; basic need equals the sum obtained under (D) of this paragraph, multiplied by the base student allocation set out in AS 14.17.470; district adjusted ADM is calculated as follows:

(A) the ADM of each school in the district is calculated by applying the school size factor to the student count as set out in AS 14.17.450;

(B) the number obtained under (A) of this paragraph is

multiplied by the district cost factor described in AS 14.17.460;

(C) the ADMs of each school in a district, as adjusted according to (A) and (B) of this paragraph, are added; the sum is then multiplied by the special needs factor set out in AS 14.17.420(a)(1);

(D) the number obtained for intensive services under AS 14.17.420(a)(2) and the number obtained for correspondence study under AS 14.17.430 are added to the number obtained under (C) of this paragraph;

**(E) notwithstanding (A) - (C) of this paragraph, if a school district's ADM adjusted for school size under (A) of this paragraph decreases by five percent or more from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year, the school district may use the last fiscal year before the decrease as a base fiscal year to offset the decrease, according to the following method:**

**(i) for the first fiscal year after the base fiscal year determined under this subparagraph, the school district's ADM adjusted for school size determined under (A) of this paragraph is calculated as the district's ADM adjusted for school size, plus 75 percent of the difference in the district's ADM adjusted for school size between the base fiscal year and the first fiscal year after the base fiscal year;**

**(ii) for the second fiscal year after the base fiscal year determined under this subparagraph, the school district's ADM adjusted for school size determined under (A) of this paragraph is calculated as the district's ADM adjusted for school size, plus 50 percent of the difference in the district's ADM adjusted for school size between the base fiscal year and the second fiscal year after the base fiscal year;**

**(iii) for the third fiscal year after the base fiscal year determined under this subparagraph, the school district's ADM adjusted for school size determined under (A) of this paragraph is calculated as the district's ADM adjusted for school size, plus 25 percent of the difference in the district's ADM adjusted for school**

size between the base fiscal year and the third fiscal year after the base fiscal year;

(F) the method established in (E) of this paragraph is available to a school district for the three fiscal years following the base fiscal year determined under (E) of this paragraph only if the district's ADM adjusted for school size determined under (A) of this paragraph for each fiscal year is less than the district's ADM adjusted for school size in the base fiscal year;

(G) the method established in (E) of this paragraph does not apply to a decrease in the district's ADM adjusted for school size resulting from a loss of enrollment that occurs as a result of a boundary change under AS 29;

(2) the required local contribution of a city or borough school district is the equivalent of a four mill tax levy on the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in the district as of January 1 of the second preceding fiscal year, as determined by the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development under AS 14.17.510 and AS 29.45.110, not to exceed 45 percent of a district's basic need for the preceding fiscal year as determined under (1) of this subsection.

\* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.17.420(a) is amended to read:

(a) As a component of public school funding, a district is eligible for special needs funding and may be eligible for intensive services funding as follows:

(1) special needs funding is available to a district to assist the district in providing special education, gifted and talented education, vocational education, and bilingual education services to its students; a special needs funding factor of 1.20 shall be applied as set out in AS 14.17.410(b)(1);

(2) in addition to the special needs funding for which a district is eligible under (1) of this subsection, a district is eligible for intensive services funding for each special education student who needs and receives intensive services and is enrolled on the last day of the count period; for each such student, intensive services funding is equal to the intensive student count multiplied by nine [FIVE].



1     \* **Sec. 3.** AS 14.17.420(a), as amended by sec. 2 of this Act, is amended to read:

2             (a) As a component of public school funding, a district is eligible for special  
3             needs funding and may be eligible for intensive services funding as follows:

4                     (1) special needs funding is available to a district to assist the district  
5             in providing special education, gifted and talented education, vocational education,  
6             and bilingual education services to its students; a special needs funding factor of 1.20  
7             shall be applied as set out in AS 14.17.410(b)(1);

8                     (2) in addition to the special needs funding for which a district is  
9             eligible under (1) of this subsection, a district is eligible for intensive services funding  
10            for each special education student who needs and receives intensive services and is  
11            enrolled on the last day of the count period; for each such student, intensive services  
12            funding is equal to the intensive student count multiplied by 11 [NINE].

13     \* **Sec. 4.** AS 14.17.420(a), as amended by secs. 2 and 3 of this Act, is amended to read:

14             (a) As a component of public school funding, a district is eligible for special  
15             needs funding and may be eligible for intensive services funding as follows:

16                     (1) special needs funding is available to a district to assist the district  
17             in providing special education, gifted and talented education, vocational education,  
18             and bilingual education services to its students; a special needs funding factor of 1.20  
19             shall be applied as set out in AS 14.17.410(b)(1);

20                     (2) in addition to the special needs funding for which a district is  
21             eligible under (1) of this subsection, a district is eligible for intensive services funding  
22             for each special education student who needs and receives intensive services and is  
23             enrolled on the last day of the count period; for each such student, intensive services  
24             funding is equal to the intensive student count multiplied by 13 [11].

25     \* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.17.460(a) is repealed and reenacted to read:

26             (a) For purposes of calculating a district's adjusted ADM under  
27             AS 14.17.410(b)(1), the district cost factor for a school district is (1) for the fiscal year  
28             ending June 30, 2009, the factor set out under column (A) of this subsection, (2) for  
29             the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, the factor set out under column (B) of this  
30             subsection, (3) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, the factor set out under  
31             column (C) of this subsection, (4) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, the factor

set out under column (D) of this subsection, and (5) for fiscal years ending on or after June 30, 2013, the factor set out under column (E) of this subsection:

## DISTRICT COST FACTOR

DISTRICT	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Alaska Gateway	1.443	1.481	1.519	1.557	1.594
Aleutians East	1.707	1.778	1.849	1.920	1.991
Aleutians Region	1.838	1.864	1.890	1.916	1.939
Anchorage	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Annette Island	1.175	1.216	1.257	1.298	1.338
Bering Strait	1.762	1.821	1.880	1.939	1.998
Bristol Bay	1.370	1.397	1.424	1.451	1.478
Chatham	1.348	1.405	1.462	1.519	1.576
Chugach	1.395	1.420	1.445	1.470	1.496
Copper River	1.246	1.264	1.282	1.300	1.316
Cordova	1.165	1.182	1.199	1.216	1.234
Craig	1.108	1.133	1.158	1.183	1.206
Delta/Greely	1.174	1.191	1.208	1.225	1.241
Denali	1.323	1.326	1.329	1.332	1.332
Dillingham	1.300	1.312	1.324	1.336	1.346
Fairbanks	1.055	1.059	1.063	1.067	1.070
Galena	1.370	1.376	1.382	1.388	1.391
Haines	1.104	1.128	1.152	1.176	1.200
Hoonah	1.227	1.270	1.313	1.356	1.399
Hydaburg	1.295	1.348	1.401	1.454	1.504
Iditarod	1.658	1.705	1.752	1.799	1.846
Juneau	1.075	1.093	1.111	1.129	1.145
Kake	1.242	1.296	1.350	1.404	1.459
Kashunamiut	1.504	1.533	1.562	1.591	1.619
Kenai Peninsula	1.088	1.109	1.130	1.151	1.171
Ketchikan	1.085	1.106	1.127	1.148	1.170
Klawock	1.160	1.196	1.232	1.268	1.302

1	Kodiak Island	1.191	1.216	1.241	1.266	1.289
2	Kuspuk	1.584	1.622	1.660	1.698	1.734
3	Lake and Peninsula	1.776	1.831	1.886	1.941	1.994
4	Lower Kuskokwim	1.577	1.599	1.621	1.643	1.663
5	Lower Yukon	1.650	1.703	1.756	1.809	1.861
6	Matanuska-Susitna	1.040	1.048	1.056	1.064	1.070
7	Mt. Edgecumbe	1.098	1.123	1.148	1.173	1.195
8	Nenana	1.304	1.313	1.322	1.331	1.338
9	Nome	1.385	1.402	1.419	1.436	1.450
10	North Slope	1.648	1.684	1.720	1.756	1.791
11	Northwest Arctic	1.686	1.720	1.754	1.788	1.823
12	Pelican	1.384	1.408	1.432	1.456	1.477
13	Petersburg	1.122	1.153	1.184	1.215	1.244
14	Pribilof	1.555	1.589	1.623	1.657	1.691
15	Sitka	1.098	1.123	1.148	1.173	1.195
16	Skagway	1.159	1.163	1.167	1.171	1.174
17	Southeast Island	1.264	1.299	1.334	1.369	1.403
18	Southwest Region	1.554	1.587	1.620	1.653	1.685
19	St. Mary's	1.488	1.522	1.556	1.590	1.624
20	Tanana	1.641	1.677	1.713	1.749	1.786
21	Unalaska	1.343	1.368	1.393	1.418	1.441
22	Valdez	1.133	1.143	1.153	1.163	1.170
23	Wrangell	1.080	1.100	1.120	1.140	1.159
24	Yakutat	1.229	1.275	1.321	1.367	1.412
25	Yukon Flats	1.892	1.948	2.004	2.060	2.116
26	Yukon/Koyukuk	1.669	1.711	1.753	1.795	1.835
27	Yupiit	1.596	1.628	1.660	1.692	1.723.

\* **Sec. 6.** AS 14.17.470 is amended to read:

**Sec. 14.17.470. Base student allocation.** The base student allocation is \$5,480 [\$5,380].

\* **Sec. 7.** AS 14.17.470, as amended by sec. 6 of this Act, is amended to read:

1                   **Sec. 14.17.470. Base student allocation.** The base student allocation is **\$5,580**  
2                   [\$5,480].

3       \* **Sec. 8.** AS 14.17.470, as amended by secs. 6 and 7 of this Act, is amended to read:

4                   **Sec. 14.17.470. Base student allocation.** The base student allocation is **\$5,680**  
5                   [\$5,580].

6       \* **Sec. 9.** Sections 1, 2, 5, and 6 of this Act take effect July 1, 2008.

7       \* **Sec. 10.** Sections 3 and 7 of this Act take effect July 1, 2009.

8       \* **Sec. 11.** Sections 4 and 8 of this Act take effect July 1, 2010.

25-LS1056\A  
Mischel  
8/28/07

**HOUSE BILL NO.**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY**

**Introduced:**  
**Referred:**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

**"An Act relating to a report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska."**

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

**\* Section 1.** AS 14.40.190 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(b) In addition to the report required under (a) of this section, the Board of Regents shall prepare and present an annual report to the legislature entitled "Alaska's University for Alaska's Schools" that describes the efforts of the university to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers. The report must include an outline of the university's past, current, and future plans to close the gap between known teacher employment vacancies in the state and the number of state residents who complete teacher training. The information reported under this subsection must also include short-term and five-year strategies with accompanying budgets.

**\* Sec. 2.** AS 14.40.250 is amended to read:

**Sec. 14.40.250. Regents to act as trustees and administer money or**

1       **property.** The Board of Regents may receive, manage, and invest money or other real,  
2       personal, or mixed property for the purpose of the University of Alaska, its  
3       improvement or adornment, or the aid or advantage of students or faculty, and, in  
4       general, may act as trustee on behalf of the University of Alaska for any of these  
5       purposes. The regents shall prepare a written report, in accordance with  
6       **AS 14.40.190(a)** [AS 14.40.190], as to the administration and disposition of money  
7       received under this section.

8       \* **Sec. 3.** AS 37.25.010(d) is amended to read:

9               (d)   The University of Alaska shall, in the report required under  
10       **AS 14.40.190(a)** [AS 14.40.190], report the amount of university receipts received in  
11       one year and expended in the succeeding fiscal year.

## **Draft Resolutions**

25-LS1041\A  
Cook  
8/15/07

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE ROSES

Introduced:

Referred:

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Proposing an amendment to the Uniform Rules of the Alaska State Legislature relating**  
2 **to standing committees.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 \* **Section 1.** Rule 20(a), Uniform Rules of the Alaska State Legislature, is amended to read:

5 (a) Each house has the following standing committees with the jurisdiction  
6 indicated:

7 **Education (the programs and activities of the Department of Education**  
8 **and Early Development and of the University of Alaska)**

9 Finance (all appropriation, revenue, capital improvement, and bonding  
10 measures, the executive budget, and the programs and activities of the Department of  
11 Revenue)

12 Health [, EDUCATION] and Social Services (the programs and activities of  
13 the Department of Health and Social Services [, THE DEPARTMENT OF  
14 EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF  
15 ALASKA])

16 Judiciary (the programs and activities of the Alaska Court System and the



1 Department of Law, and the legal and substantive review of bills referred to it for that  
2 purpose)

3 Labor and Commerce (the programs and activities of the Department of Labor  
4 and Workforce Development relating to labor-management relations, industrial safety,  
5 unemployment compensation, and workers' compensation and the programs and  
6 activities of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development  
7 that do not primarily relate to local government or to government services or functions  
8 in the unorganized borough)

9 Community and Regional Affairs (the programs and activities of the  
10 Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development that primarily  
11 relate to local government and government services or functions in the unorganized  
12 borough, and other matters relating to political subdivisions)

13 Resources (the programs and activities of the Departments of Fish and Game,  
14 Natural Resources, and Environmental Conservation)

15 Rules (interpretation of the Uniform Rules, calendar, the internal  
16 administration of the house and matters pertaining to the management of the  
17 legislature as a whole)

18 State Affairs (programs and activities of the Office of the Governor and the  
19 Departments of Administration, Military and Veterans' Affairs, Corrections, and  
20 Public Safety, and programs and activities of the Department of Transportation and  
21 Public Facilities relating to public facilities)

22 Transportation (programs and activities of the Department of Transportation  
23 and Public Facilities relating to transportation and other legislative matters relating to  
24 transportation).

25 \* **Sec. 2.** The amendment proposed by this resolution takes effect immediately.

25-LS1076\A  
Mischel  
8/29/07

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.**

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**

**TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

**BY REPRESENTATIVE HAWKER BY REQUEST OF THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION  
FUNDING TASK FORCE**

**Introduced:**

**Referred:**

**A RESOLUTION**

**Establishing and relating to the Education Funding District Cost Factor Commission.**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

**WHEREAS**, under art. VII, sec. 1, Constitution of the State of Alaska, a system of public schools is required to be established and maintained; and

**WHEREAS** the cost of providing adequate public education for children living in the state varies significantly among geographic areas of the state; and

**WHEREAS** accurately measuring relative cost differences is integral to equitable funding for education across geographic areas; and

**WHEREAS** the cost differentials have been a recurring policy issue since the current funding formula was adopted in 1998; and

**WHEREAS** the findings of economic analyses conducted in 2002 and 2004 have raised questions and controversy within the Alaska State Legislature; and

**WHEREAS** previous determinations of cost differentials have been static and, consequently, have become outdated;

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the Education Funding District Cost Factor Commission is established for the purpose of examining school district

1 cost differentials and creating a valid and durable model that can be updated to accurately  
2 reflect the costs of providing education; and be it

3 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the commission consists of 11 members as follows:

4 (1) five shall be from the senate appointed by the president of the senate;

5 (2) five shall be from the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of  
6 the house of representatives; and

7 (3) one shall be appointed by the governor; and be it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the president of the senate and the speaker of the house  
9 of representatives shall jointly appoint the chair and vice-chair of the commission; and be it

10 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that a commission member is subject to reappointment or  
11 replacement if either the president of the senate or speaker of the house of representatives is  
12 replaced and the member was appointed by the former president or speaker; a member may  
13 continue to serve even if the member is no longer a state legislator; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the commission shall submit a report of its findings  
15 and proposed legislative changes to the governor and the legislature by September 30, 2009,  
16 and may make any additional reports it considers advisable; and be it

17 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Education Funding District Cost Factor  
18 Commission is terminated on December 31, 2010.

25-LS1060\C  
Mischel  
8/24/07

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO.**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY**

**Introduced:**  
**Referred:**

**A RESOLUTION**

**Urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to fulfill the federal obligation to provide adequate funding for special education in public schools.**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

**WHEREAS** the Constitution of the State of Alaska and other laws and policies of the state require educational opportunities for all children, including children with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS** enactment of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by the United States Congress transferred from the states to the federal government decisions pertaining to the provision of education and related services to students with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS** the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires the provision of a "free appropriate public education" for students with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS** the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act authorized the federal appropriation of a sum equal to 40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure for general education students under 34 C.F.R. 300.701(a)(1); and

**WHEREAS** the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-4, March 22, 1995) provides that "the federal government should not shift certain costs to the States, and

1 States should end the practice of shifting costs to local governments"; and

2 **WHEREAS**, according to recent estimates, Alaska received approximately 16 percent  
3 of the total cost of providing a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities  
4 from the Congress for Part B services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;  
5 and

6 **WHEREAS** the lack of adequate federal funding for students with disabilities has  
7 forced states and local school districts to make up the difference through payments made for  
8 other critical education programs; and

9 **WHEREAS** the lack of adequate federal funding for federally mandated services  
10 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act places a tremendous strain on all Alaska  
11 public school districts and on the ability of the districts to provide quality education for all  
12 students; and

13 **WHEREAS** Alaska shares with every other state a chronic shortage of qualified  
14 special education teachers; and

15 **WHEREAS** teacher preparation programs would benefit from full federal funding of  
16 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by attracting prospective applicants interested  
17 in a career of teaching special education; and

18 **WHEREAS** the underfunding of special education programs affects the depth of  
19 services provided to students with disabilities; and

20 **WHEREAS**, despite significant strides made in increasing and enhancing public  
21 education for students with disabilities, many of those students still do not receive the services  
22 and assistance they need to succeed in public schools; and

23 **WHEREAS** the federal No Child Left Behind Act requires that 100 percent of  
24 students with disabilities attain proficiency in meeting state education standards by the end of  
25 the 2013 - 2014 school year; and

26 **WHEREAS** improvement in the rate of proficiency of students in meeting state  
27 education standards is a primary indicator of school success under the No Child Left Behind  
28 Act, creating the need for public school districts to provide greater access to and progress in  
29 the general curriculum for students with disabilities; and

30 **WHEREAS** the task of meeting the rising costs associated with attaining proficiency  
31 in the general curriculum for students with disabilities requires a strong partnership between

1 local, state, and federal government agencies;

2 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the President of  
3 the United States and the United States Congress to fulfill their obligation to provide adequate  
4 funding of educational services for students with disabilities by providing 40 percent of the  
5 average per-pupil expenditure for general education students in Alaska as authorized in the  
6 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

7 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President  
8 of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States  
9 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of  
10 Representatives; the Honorable Margaret Spellings, United States Secretary of Education; and  
11 the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the  
12 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

## **Fiscal Note**

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Version: \_\_\_\_\_  
( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development  
Title An Act relating to school funding, the base student RDU K-12 Support  
allocation, district cost factors, and the adjustments for ...." Component Foundation Program  
Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_  
Requester \_\_\_\_\_ Component No. 141

## Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	106,972.7	53,434.5	54,549.4	13,031.3	12,207.4	
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>106,972.7</b>	<b>53,434.5</b>	<b>54,549.4</b>	<b>13,031.3</b>	<b>12,207.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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## FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	106,972.7	53,434.5	54,549.4	13,031.3	12,207.4	
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106,972.7</b>	<b>53,434.5</b>	<b>54,549.4</b>	<b>13,031.3</b>	<b>12,207.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2008) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2009 budget proposal: ☐

## POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

## ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill would set the district cost factors in FY09 at 50% of the ISER increase over the original cost factors and implement the remaining 50% over the next 4 years; offers 9x the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for intensives plus it will increase it to 11x the BSA in FY10 and 13x the BSA in FY11; provide a hold harmless provision for those districts whose School Size adjusted ADM has decreased by more than 5% over the prior year; and increase the BSA by \$100 for FY09 to \$5,480, FY10 to \$5,580, & FY11 to \$5,680.

The Legislature funded 50% of ISER in FY08 outside the formula for approximately \$50million and the School Improvement Grant for approximately \$20million. If the \$70million provided in FY08 is taken into consideration, then the actual increase in FY09 over FY08 is approximately \$36million.

The GF capitalizes on the Public Education Fund (PEF).

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, Director  
Division: School Finance  
Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency: Education & Early Development

Phone 465-8679  
Date/Time 8/14/07 12:00 AM  
Date 8/14/2007



School Districts	50% ISER Implemented	BSA increase by \$100 to \$5,480	Intensive Multiplier from x5 to x9	5% reduction in School Size Adjustment Hold Harmless	YEAR 1 FY2009 funding
ALASKA GATEWAY	617,518	117,094	129,120		863,732
ALEUTIAN REGION	78,404	26,202	-		104,606
ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH	834,869	92,993	-		927,862
ANCHORAGE	0	6,949,643	14,633,600		21,583,243
ANNETTE ISLAND	489,902	68,645	86,080		644,627
BERING STRAIT	4,212,440	595,688	365,840		5,173,968
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	196,738	49,100	64,560		310,398
CHATHAM	512,836	59,049	64,560		636,445
CHUGACH	98,694	36,067	-		134,761
COPPER RIVER	376,208	136,939	215,200		728,347
CORDOVA CITY	247,730	82,914	129,120		459,764
CRAIG CITY	309,354	106,867	215,200		631,421
DELTA/GREELY	495,029	202,066	172,160		869,255
DENALI BOROUGH	24,767	87,565	64,560		176,892
DILLINGHAM CITY	206,234	115,208	172,160		493,602
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	1,655,169	2,280,888	5,638,240		9,574,297
GALENA CITY	48,564	328,988	21,520		399,072
HAINES BOROUGH	278,433	65,033	107,600		451,066
HOONAH CITY	259,656	37,925	86,080		383,661
HYDABURG CITY	167,061	19,991	21,520		208,572
IDITAROD AREA	603,165	106,582	-		709,747
JUNEAU BOROUGH	2,472,339	841,494	3,120,400		6,434,233
KAKE CITY	213,682	26,263	86,080	121,627	447,652
KASHUNAMIUT	364,985	92,071	86,080		543,136
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	5,801,942	1,535,937	1,786,160		9,124,039
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	1,508,776	383,262	538,000		2,430,038
KLAWOCK CITY	206,830	33,791	64,560		305,181
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	1,977,742	475,148	538,000		2,990,890
KUSPUK	706,120	138,188	-		844,308
LAKE AND PENINSULA BOROUGH	1,090,155	166,392	43,040		1,299,587
LOWER KUSKOKWIM	3,257,403	1,161,863	1,312,720		5,731,986
LOWER YUKON	4,248,108	624,434	279,760		5,152,302
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	3,202,095	2,267,036	2,690,000		8,159,131
NENANA CITY	71,767	84,920	64,560		221,247
NOME CITY	412,471	164,477	86,080		663,028
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	2,100,339	453,576	193,680		2,747,595
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	2,545,617	596,770	387,360		3,529,747
PELICAN CITY	24,120	6,577	-		30,697
PETERSBURG CITY	622,914	116,063	236,720		975,697
PRIBILOF	196,521	41,633	-		238,154
SAINT MARY'S	241,256	49,466	21,520	122,004	434,246
SITKA BOROUGH	1,091,017	261,811	774,720		2,127,548
SKAGWAY CITY	15,325	21,518	21,520		58,363
SOUTHEAST ISLAND	373,296	67,126	107,600		548,022
SOUTHWEST REGION	953,257	214,968	129,120		1,297,345
TANANA	76,192	15,976	-	75,274	167,442
UNALASKA CITY	359,049	92,984	43,040		495,073
VALDEZ CITY	235,805	140,200	236,720		612,725
WRANGELL PUBLIC	259,548	65,830	21,520		346,898
YAKUTAT	209,957	26,128	-	104,089	340,174
YUKON FLATS	716,859	116,706	107,600		941,165
YUKON/KOYUKUK	698,782	226,821	129,120		1,054,723
YUPIIT	608,183	145,244	86,080		839,507
Mt. Edgecumbe	310,918	64,562	-		375,480
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,886,141</b>	<b>22,284,682</b>	<b>35,378,880</b>	<b>422,994</b>	<b>106,972,697</b>

School Districts	1/4 increase of remaining 50% ISER	BSA increase by \$100 to \$5,580	Intensive Multiplier from x9 to x11	YEAR 2 FY2010 funding
ALASKA GATEWAY	157,296	121,156	65,760	344,212
ALEUTIAN REGION	20,390	26,573	-	46,963
ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH	212,641	96,862	-	309,503
ANCHORAGE	0	7,085,643	7,452,800	14,538,443
ANNETTE ISLAND	124,704	71,714	43,840	240,258
BERING STRAIT	1,068,094	618,522	186,320	1,872,936
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	50,014	50,610	32,880	133,504
CHATHAM	130,585	62,025	32,880	225,490
CHUGACH	24,896	36,520	-	61,416
COPPER RIVER	98,489	140,731	109,600	348,820
CORDOVA CITY	62,105	85,244	65,760	213,109
CRAIG CITY	80,406	110,330	109,600	300,336
DELTA/GREELY	126,022	205,959	87,680	419,661
DENALI BOROUGH	7,584	88,303	32,880	128,767
DILLINGHAM CITY	54,851	117,806	87,680	260,337
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	421,543	2,340,958	2,871,520	5,634,021
GALENA CITY	13,520	329,434	10,960	353,914
HAINES BOROUGH	70,899	67,323	54,800	193,022
HOONAH CITY	66,062	39,927	43,840	149,829
HYDABURG CITY	42,924	20,972	10,960	74,856
IDITAROD AREA	153,613	109,377	-	262,990
JUNEAU BOROUGH	647,539	882,276	1,589,200	3,119,015
KAKE CITY	54,136	28,048	43,840	126,024
KASHUNAMIUT	93,816	94,578	43,840	232,234
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	1,477,379	1,579,418	909,680	3,966,477
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	379,663	395,170	274,000	1,048,833
KLAWOCK CITY	53,036	35,356	32,880	121,272
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	513,931	489,499	274,000	1,277,430
KUSPUK	182,192	141,503	-	323,695
LAKE AND PENINSULA BOROUGH	280,185	171,890	21,920	473,995
LOWER KUSKOKWIM	848,748	1,189,506	668,560	2,706,814
LOWER YUKON	1,081,779	646,717	142,480	1,870,976
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	869,687	2,307,860	1,370,000	4,547,547
NENANA CITY	19,347	85,872	32,880	138,099
NOME CITY	108,161	167,245	43,840	319,246
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	534,870	465,108	98,640	1,098,618
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	643,417	612,077	197,280	1,452,774
PELICAN CITY	6,266	6,691	-	12,957
PETERSBURG CITY	161,198	121,196	120,560	402,954
PRIBILOF	49,960	42,542	-	92,502
SAINT MARY'S	61,005	50,776	10,960	122,741
SITKA BOROUGH	283,483	274,169	394,560	952,212
SKAGWAY CITY	3,902	21,789	10,960	36,651
SOUTHEAST ISLAND	95,081	69,856	54,800	219,737
SOUTHWEST REGION	244,627	220,619	65,760	531,006
TANANA	19,291	16,327	-	35,618
UNALASKA CITY	93,268	95,081	21,920	210,269
VALDEZ CITY	63,204	143,550	120,560	327,314
WRANGELL PUBLIC	66,062	67,232	10,960	144,254
YAKUTAT	53,752	27,106	-	80,858
YUKON FLATS	182,467	121,026	54,800	358,293
YUKON/KOYUKUK	179,004	231,278	65,760	476,042
YUPIIT	156,142	148,885	43,840	348,867
Mt. Edgecumbe	80,791	66,032	-	146,823
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,574,027</b>	<b>22,842,267</b>	<b>18,018,240</b>	<b>53,434,534</b>

School Districts	1/4 increase of remaining 50% ISER	BSA increase by \$100 to \$5,680	Intensive Multiplier from x11 to x13	YEAR 3 FY2011 funding
ALASKA GATEWAY	160,102	125,217	66,960	352,279
ALEUTIAN REGION	20,761	26,944	-	47,705
ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH	216,397	100,729	-	317,126
ANCHORAGE	0	7,221,643	7,588,800	14,810,443
ANNETTE ISLAND	127,029	74,784	44,640	246,453
BERING STRAIT	1,087,526	641,356	189,720	1,918,602
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	50,979	52,121	33,480	136,580
CHATHAM	132,961	65,001	33,480	231,442
CHUGACH	25,350	36,973	-	62,323
COPPER RIVER	100,336	144,524	111,600	356,460
CORDOVA CITY	63,347	87,576	66,960	217,883
CRAIG CITY	81,869	113,793	111,600	307,262
DELTA/GREELY	128,372	209,853	89,280	427,505
DENALI BOROUGH	7,724	89,041	33,480	130,245
DILLINGHAM CITY	55,736	120,402	89,280	265,418
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	429,102	2,401,026	2,923,920	5,754,048
GALENA CITY	13,767	329,880	11,160	354,807
HAINES BOROUGH	72,133	69,612	55,800	197,545
HOONAH CITY	67,376	41,931	44,640	153,947
HYDABURG CITY	43,703	21,953	11,160	76,816
IDITAROD AREA	156,409	112,172	-	268,581
JUNEAU BOROUGH	659,320	923,058	1,618,200	3,200,578
KAKE CITY	55,176	29,834	44,640	129,650
KASHUNAMIUT	95,412	97,083	44,640	237,135
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	1,504,205	1,622,898	926,280	4,053,383
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	386,628	407,079	279,000	1,072,707
KLAWOCK CITY	53,945	36,920	33,480	124,345
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	523,226	503,849	279,000	1,306,075
KUSPUK	185,508	144,818	-	330,326
LAKE AND PENINSULA BOROUGH	285,229	177,387	22,320	484,936
LOWER KUSKOKWIM	864,134	1,217,148	680,760	2,762,042
LOWER YUKON	1,101,348	668,998	145,080	1,915,426
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	885,510	2,348,684	1,395,000	4,629,194
NENANA CITY	19,753	86,825	33,480	140,058
NOME CITY	110,185	170,014	44,640	324,839
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	544,547	476,639	100,440	1,121,626
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	655,180	627,385	200,880	1,483,445
PELICAN CITY	6,379	6,805	-	13,184
PETERSBURG CITY	164,074	126,328	122,760	413,162
PRIBILOF	50,978	43,453	-	94,431
SAINT MARY'S	62,116	52,086	11,160	125,362
SITKA BOROUGH	288,586	286,526	401,760	976,872
SKAGWAY CITY	4,030	22,061	11,160	37,251
SOUTHEAST ISLAND	96,811	72,586	55,800	225,197
SOUTHWEST REGION	248,966	226,268	66,960	542,194
TANANA	19,641	16,678	-	36,319
UNALASKA CITY	95,020	97,179	22,320	214,519
VALDEZ CITY	64,354	146,900	122,760	334,014
WRANGELL PUBLIC	67,263	68,634	11,160	147,057
YAKUTAT	54,728	28,084	-	82,812
YUKON FLATS	185,899	125,348	55,800	367,047
YUKON/KOYUKUK	182,263	235,735	66,960	484,958
YUPIIT	158,870	152,524	44,640	356,034
Mt. Edgecumbe	82,261	67,502	-	149,763
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,802,524</b>	<b>23,399,847</b>	<b>18,347,040</b>	<b>54,549,411</b>

**YEAR 4 - FY2012**  
**1/4 increase of**  
**remaining 50% ISER**

**School Districts**

ALASKA GATEWAY	163,019
ALEUTIAN REGION	21,075
ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH	220,322
ANCHORAGE	0
ANNETTE ISLAND	129,300
BERING STRAIT	1,106,960
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	51,947
CHATHAM	135,337
CHUGACH	25,803
COPPER RIVER	102,073
CORDOVA CITY	64,365
CRAIG CITY	83,333
DELTA/GREELY	130,610
DENALI BOROUGH	7,860
DILLINGHAM CITY	56,789
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	436,826
GALENA CITY	13,955
HAINES BOROUGH	73,478
HOONAH CITY	68,465
HYDABURG CITY	44,486
IDITAROD AREA	159,203
JUNEAU BOROUGH	671,046
KAKE CITY	56,106
KASHUNAMIUT	97,174
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	1,531,142
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	393,480
KLAWOCK CITY	54,967
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	532,633
KUSPUK	188,879
LAKE AND PENINSULA BOROUGH	290,324
LOWER KUSKOKWIM	879,634
LOWER YUKON	1,121,087
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	901,392
NENANA CITY	19,993
NOME CITY	112,098
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	554,278
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	666,831
PELICAN CITY	6,493
PETERSBURG CITY	167,122
PRIBILOF	51,834
SAINT MARY'S	63,168
SITKA BOROUGH	293,799
SKAGWAY CITY	4,044
SOUTHEAST ISLAND	98,541
SOUTHWEST REGION	253,529
TANANA	19,936
UNALASKA CITY	96,661
VALDEZ CITY	65,504
WRANGELL PUBLIC	68,524
YAKUTAT	55,708
YUKON FLATS	189,107
YUKON/KOYUKUK	185,519
YUPIIT	161,766
Mt. Edgecumbe	83,732
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,031,257</b>

**YEAR 5 - FY2013**  
**1/4 increase of**  
**remaining 50% ISER**

**School Districts**

ALASKA GATEWAY	158,633
ALEUTIAN REGION	18,684
ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH	220,263
ANCHORAGE	0
ANNETTE ISLAND	126,109
BERING STRAIT	1,106,961
BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH	51,891
CHATHAM	135,336
CHUGACH	26,829
COPPER RIVER	90,794
CORDOVA CITY	68,238
CRAIG CITY	76,668
DELTA/GREELY	122,977
DENALI BOROUGH	0
DILLINGHAM CITY	47,334
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH	327,577
GALENA CITY	7,006
HAINES BOROUGH	73,479
HOONAH CITY	68,524
HYDABURG CITY	42,038
IDITAROD AREA	159,089
JUNEAU BOROUGH	596,599
KAKE CITY	57,188
KASHUNAMIUT	93,814
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	1,458,233
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH	412,219
KLAWOCK CITY	51,890
KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	489,970
KUSPUK	178,855
LAKE AND PENINSULA BOROUGH	279,788
LOWER KUSKOKWIM	799,661
LOWER YUKON	1,099,955
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH	676,002
NENANA CITY	15,607
NOME CITY	92,389
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH	538,842
NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH	686,538
PELICAN CITY	5,696
PETERSBURG CITY	156,298
PRIBILOF	51,891
SAINT MARY'S	63,226
SITKA BOROUGH	258,599
SKAGWAY CITY	3,076
SOUTHEAST ISLAND	95,692
SOUTHWEST REGION	245,782
TANANA	20,506
UNALASKA CITY	88,971
VALDEZ CITY	45,853
WRANGELL PUBLIC	65,048
YAKUTAT	54,453
YUKON FLATS	189,221
YUKON/KOYUKUK	176,689
YUPIIT	156,755
Mt. Edgecumbe	73,706
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,207,442</b>

## **Individual Member Editorial Comments**

These comments reflect the individual views and opinions of their authors. They are included in this report exactly as submitted by the individual members. These comments do not necessarily reflect the consensus of the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force which is contained in the body of this report.

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SESSION

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## SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

---

August 28, 2007

Representative Mike Hawker, Chair  
Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force  
716 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Representative Hawker:

The Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force has provided the Legislature with concrete recommendations that I believe will greatly improve the way our state funds K-12 education. I would like to commend you for the excellent job you've done spearheading this effort. While we all agree that educating Alaskans is one of our highest priorities, we share a variety of opinions on how best to accomplish that goal. Your leadership helped us to identify areas of common agreement and to move us quickly towards consensus.

I support the task force report and endorse the recommendations contained within. At your invitation however, I would like to include brief comments in two areas where my opinion differs slightly from that of the task force: **District Cost Factors** and **Required Local Contribution**.

### **District Cost Factors**

I would prefer to see a more aggressive implementation of the final 50% of the ISER district cost factors (DCF). While members agreed to implement 50% of ISER in FY 2009, the final task force recommendation is to phase in the final 50% over the 4 subsequent fiscal years. Four years is simply too long and I would like to see 100% implementation as quickly as possible. Several members had concern over the conclusions reached in the 2005 ISER study and consequently, the task force has recommended a commission be established to reexamine district cost factors in greater detail. However, in order for the commission to properly evaluate whether changes to the district cost factors are having the desired affect, a full implementation of the ISER study is necessary. Phasing in over four years dilutes the true impact DCF changes have on total funding provided to each district and make year-to-year performance comparisons difficult. Only after the last 50% is factored into the formula, will we be able to test the validity of the methodology and realistically evaluate the results.

### **DISTRICT A**

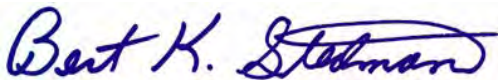
*Ketchikan • Sitka • Petersburg • Wrangell  
Pelican • Elfin Cove • Port Alexander • Saxman • Meyers Chuck • Thorne Bay • Coffman Cove • Hollis*

**Require Local Contribution**

After extensive discussion, the task force made no recommendations regarding the required local effort provision in the current funding formula. I was hoping the task force would take action to remedy the inequity of the current system. I feel very strongly that within organized communities, the required minimum local effort should be applied uniformly. It's simply unfair for the state to subsidize property owners in the fastest growing economies in the state, so that they pay a lower mill-rate than property owners in less fortunate areas of Alaska. Several possible remedies were discussed, but clearly, the 50% cap on growth since 1999 needs to be removed in favor of a more equitable approach.

I look forward to working with you in the coming year to implement the task force's recommendations and to continue improving the way we fund K-12 education in Alaska.

Best Regards,



Bert K Stedman



# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate Labor and Commerce  
Committee, Chair

•  
Legislative Budget and Audit  
Committee

•  
Senate Rules Committee

•  
Committee on Committees



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## SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS

August 22, 2007

### Education Task Force Comments

The work done by the Joint Legislative Education Task Force is an example of the good that can be done for the state of Alaska when we work together to tackle the big issues of the day. I believe the task force is sending a clear message to students, parents, and teachers, that education is one of our highest priorities.

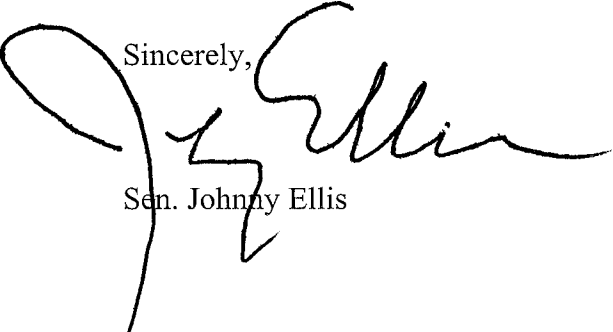
There are a few issues that we examined this summer that the task force recommends be revisited in the future. One such issue, vocational education, is especially important to me. My hope is that it is addressed in a comprehensive manner by a future education task force, or by future committees on education.

It is a common refrain that college is not for everyone, but as a state we can do a better job of preparing all our students for life after high school. Comprehensive vocational education programs will help students, who may otherwise lose interest in school, learn a trade or job skills that will allow them to play a large role in our state's economy. As we look forward to the construction of the gasline, having a talented homegrown workforce must be one of our highest priorities.

I believe we can show our commitment to vocational education programs by removing it from the 20% funding in the state formula for special education. A separate funding mechanism for vocational education would help the state of Alaska develop its own trained workforce, while also ensuring that students have good options as they work their way through high school.

A separate fund for vocational education is good both for our youth, and for the growth of our state's economy. It is an important issue that I hope the Legislature addresses in the very near future. Our economic prosperity depends on it.

Sincerely,

  
Sen. Johnny Ellis

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate Labor and Commerce  
Committee, Chair

•  
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Committee

•  
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## SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS

August 22, 2007

### Education Task Force Comments

Over the past few years there has been a large body of research into the effect of the first years of a child's life on their long-term development and educational attainment. This research is nearly unequivocal in its findings that early education programs have positive effects on children. These effects include marked improvements in math and vocabulary scores in comparison to children who are not in such programs. For these reasons, most states are initiating voluntary pre-kindergarten programs, a model I believe the state of Alaska would be well served to replicate.

A voluntary pre-K program would benefit children at every stage of their development. In the short-term, children in pre-K programs show gains in cognitive development; in the mid-term, there are education gains and decreased referrals to special education programs; and in the long-term, there is a rise in graduation rates and lower dependence on welfare programs.

In addition to the benefit to children and families from a voluntary pre-K program, the citizens and taxpayers of Alaska would benefit as well. A study by the RAND Corporation of pre-K programs around the country showed that youth who participated in a pre-K program spent less time on welfare and were less likely to pass through the criminal justice system than those who did not. The savings to the state would be in the millions of dollars.

It is my desire that a future education task force, or committees on education, make the implementation of a voluntary pre-K program one of its highest priorities. Alaska would be well-served by a voluntary program that would place children in a stimulating learning environment during the time when their cognitive development is most acute.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johnny Ellis".

Sen. Johnny Ellis

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Member

House Finance Committee  
Legislative Budget & Audit

## Representative Mike Kelly

*House District 7*

### Joint Legislative Education Task Force

#### Dissenting Member Opinion – Rep. Mike Kelly – 8/17/07

Unfortunately I cannot support the recommendations of the task force relating to our primary assignments: **District Cost Factors & Intensive Needs Funding.**

#### **District Cost Factors**

In my opinion, testimony from the Education Department and some of the School Districts, combined with a presentation concerning the Moore vs. State lawsuit, sheds more favorable light on the State's ongoing attempts to ensure reasonable adequacy and equity in education funding than some non-urban legislators would have us believe. Add ISER's inconsistent conclusions that surfaced during questioning by task force members and it is clear to me that implementation of more than 50% of the flawed ISER study is not supportable. Especially since the price tag is \$100 million compounding annually and Alaska is entering a decade of deficits with oil production declining. Keep in mind we are already paying over 3 times the average cost per student in Anchorage for a student in some of the smaller schools. The ISER increase would be added to a K-12 budget that has ballooned over 35% in the past 5 years, without even considering the multi-billion dollar PERS/TRS unfunded liability mortgage payments.

I could reluctantly support statutory implementation of 50% of the ISER study for District Cost Factors with the understanding that 50% would be the final percentage implemented by the Legislature. Some rural lawmakers have said they have some of the same concerns over the ISER study that I have and would be satisfied with 50%. I was hopeful when the task force tentatively landed on implementing 50% of ISER (with a blue ribbon committee appointed to study the matter further), but the deal changed overnight to a phased-in implementation of 100% of ISER. The blue ribbon committee proposal was retained to study the issue even though the task force had decided to recommend 100% implementation. Might make sense if you're from Bethel. None if Anchorage is home. I was told I should be satisfied because urban districts retained the current "local contribution formula." I'm not. Districts that make a local contribution to education are funding over 95% of the cost increases in education, while many of the

others pay nothing. In a time of scarcer resources, implementing 100% of ISER will simply amount to another transfer payment away from local districts that tax their residents to support education at a time when they can demonstrate significant needs and are underperforming in important accountability areas. If we are going to create a blue ribbon committee we should look at a lot more than District Cost Factors.

### **Intensive Needs Funding**

Funding for intensive needs students is currently 500% of average student funding. The task force recommended a phased-in increase to 1300%. I can't support more than a 200% increase to 700%. There are significant problems with the way intensive needs students are being assimilated into our schools (including reports of classroom disruption, less learning-time-on-task for other students, lower teacher morale, questions about the appropriateness of the classroom venue for some levels of need, questions about the appropriateness of our schools assuming parental and family roles/responsibilities/costs, etc.). Throwing money at these problems must be accompanied by creative solutions. Some folks would add even more responsibility for intensive needs students onto the teachers in our schools. As much as our hearts go out to the parents and families involved, we cannot sustain the cost growth. The wisdom of some elements of the current system (much of which is unfortunately federally mandated) is questionable.

# Alaska State Legislature

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## REPRESENTATIVE Paul Seaton

District 35

August 14, 2007

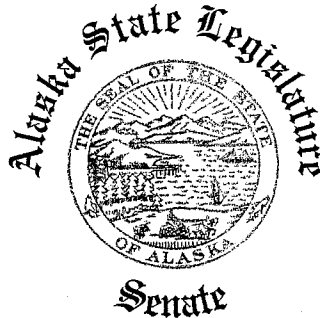
### Education Task Force Comments

I am proud of the work this task force has done and the compromises members have made in order to forward recommendations that will help give all of Alaska's children the opportunity for a quality education. However, I would like to comment on two items in particular and hope that my concerns can be included in some manner in the final report.

1. **Intensive Needs:** I would like to see the phase-in of intensive needs reflect the same time frame that we recommend for phasing in the 50% of the ISER cost differential. This could be 9x BSA in 2009 and increase by 1x until a multiplier of 13 is reached in 2013, the same year as the last 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the cost differential. My rationale for mirroring the cost differential phase-in schedule is so that for the next four years all districts will see an increase in their funding and have reason to support the proposal. Another method would be to shorten the phase-in of ISER to 1/3 in 2009, 1/3 in 2010 and the final 1/3 in 2011 so it is parallel to the proposed phase-in for intensive needs.
2. **Required Local Effort:** I propose that the department calculate the required local effort for each district and then apply the lowest calculated mil rate to all districts. This will address the problem of potentially failing a federal disparity test in only three years under the current system. It would also alleviate the concern some districts have that establishing a new floor for the tax mil rate could result in the future loss of a subsidy. An additional benefit to this approach is that as we reach the point in the future when we may need to address the amount of the subsidy, all districts will be coming to the table in an equal position. I have requested the department calculate a schedule reflecting the potential future cost to the State based on this scenario.

I am looking forward to an Education committee in the House that can address these issues and more in all the detail they deserve.

**GARY WILKEN**  
SENATOR  
Fairbanks



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## Table of Contents

### A Dissenting Opinion

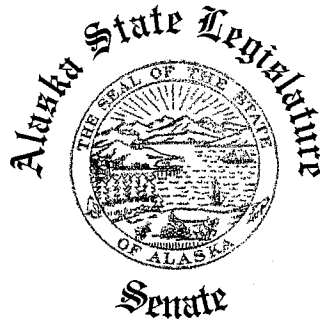
### An Open Letter of Concern

An Open Letter of Concern	44
Appendix A	50-68
Mr. Dermot Cole, <i>Fairbanks Daily News-Miner</i>	50
"State task force lacks time to compile long-term education plan"	
"School cost study proposes radical change in wage policy"	
"University report suggests teacher pay hikes everywhere but Anchorage"	
Institute of Social and Economic Research	56
Excerpts from <i>Retaining Quality Teachers for Alaska</i> , December 2002	
Proposal Offered to Strengthen Accountability	58
<i>District Cost Factor – Teacher Compensation Component</i> , August 16, 2007	
Proposal to Provide Alternative Leadership	60
<i>Governor's Select Panel on Alaska's District Cost Factors</i> , August 16, 2007	
A Historical Review of Education Funding	64
<i>District Cost Factors – not a silver bullet</i>	
<i>Public School Funding – A Historical Review – 1985-1998</i>	
<i>A Comparison of District Cost Factors</i>	

By Gary Wilken  
August 30, 2007

Proudly Representing the Golden Heart of Alaska

**GARY WILKEN**  
SENATOR  
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## **A Dissenting Opinion An Open Letter of Concern**

August 30, 2007

During the entire first legislative session of the Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature, and certainly in the waning days, many private, closed-door discussions were held between a select few legislators to set the FY08 funding level for K-12 public education. Most all legislators and the general public were entirely excluded from the backroom process. A loud, public cry for caution and a strong appeal to restore the well-known transparent and public legislative process was finally heeded on the last day of session: Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 (SCR 11) passed on adjournment night, only one day after introduction. This resolution established an 11-member task force to examine, in a public and open forum, the current K-12 public education funding formula.

The Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force held eight public and televised round-table meetings to discuss and examine Alaska's multi-faceted education funding formula. Interested educators, community officials, parents, and members of the general public attended the meetings in person or listened over the Internet. The public process was restored.

While I concur with and support many of the recommendations put forth by the Task Force, I strongly disagree with the suggestion that the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update* prepared by Mr. Bradford H. Tuck, Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), is valid and legitimate. Too many concerns have been raised and too many questions remain unanswered. Adoption of the total ISER proposal is a travesty and a sham. The State will be spending hundreds of millions of dollars based on faulty research, coupled with political power. The ISER report has provided a vehicle for a "money grab" and many held their noses, looked the other way, and jumped on board.

I strongly oppose implementing the conclusions outlined in the January 31, 2005, ISER report for the following four following reasons:

1. *Arbitrary Deadline* – Unfortunately, at its first meeting, the Task Force focused on an arbitrary deadline of September 1, 2007, established in SCR 11, and structured all its efforts to meet this target. In an effort to reach this unrealistic goal, the Task Force dismissed all long-term options, regardless of their merit. In the end, the randomly selected deadline of September 1, 2007 limited the ultimate success of the Task Force. (Please see the attached columns by Mr. Dermot Cole, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, page 50.)

With the September 1, 2007 deadline looming, the Task Force was compelled to ignore cautionary advice and counsel offered to legislators time and time again by the Department of Education and Early Development: *If statutory changes are contemplated, review the whole K-12 public education funding formula in total and not the individual components of the formula. All components of the formula are inter-related and need to be studied together.* By isolating the District Cost Factor and recommending a substantial adjustment to this multiplier which results in a 67% increase for some school districts, the Task Force places the validity and fairness of the whole formula in doubt.

2. *Questionable Report* – The Task Force acknowledged that certain aspects of the ISER differential calculation raised questions and recognized that legitimate concerns exist with the ISER study. And yet, because of the pressure of an artificial deadline, a recommendation to implement the full ISER differentials in statute over a four year time period gained enough Task Force support to be included in its final report.

I cannot accept this recommendation in good conscience. I implore the Governor and full Legislature to step back and take the time necessary to thoroughly review the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update* and question the basic assumption that led to a substantial upward adjustment of the cost factor – a hypothesis by ISER that *an increase in pay will help attract and retain qualified teachers in rural school districts.*

Will an increase in salaries actually attract teachers and administrators to remote locations? A previous ISER report, completed in December 2002, entitled,



*Retaining Quality Teachers for Alaska*, concluded otherwise. Teacher compensation was not even in the top seven reasons why rural teachers changed districts. "Better Salaries" was tied for last place on why the surveyed teachers left their position. (Please see the attached excerpt from *Retaining Quality Teachers for Alaska, Executive Summary*, page 56.) For ISER to base its proposed district cost factor on this conflicted and disputed assumption swings the door wide open for future doubt and skepticism.

In addition, a review of the methodology used by ISER to calculate its teacher compensation component of the district cost factor raises further concerns. This research arm of the university called all school districts and asked a series of subjective questions about hard to fill positions. At the conclusion of the survey, ISER writes, "The results should be interpreted with caution; answers to our questions highlighted some of the areas of concerns." (page 41, *Alaska School District Cost Study Update*)

The pressure of time with a September 2007 deadline threatening, and the dictate to evaluate proposals that are "based on available facts and conclusions pertaining to school district cost factors" (page 2, SCR 11), greatly limited the effectiveness of the Task Force. Governor Palin and the Alaska State Legislature are not constrained by these artificial restraints, nor should they be.

**3. No Accountability** – Regrettably, the Task Force elected not to require local school districts to account for the use of the generous influx of dollars as the result of the full implementation of the proposed ISER district cost factors. As mentioned countless times during the Task Force meetings, the upward adjustment of the proposed district cost factor was the result of the teacher compensation component as calculated by ISER. Using one component out of 11 different components to determine the district cost factor will result in twenty-nine school districts receiving more than \$2,000 per student and 12 districts receiving more than \$4,000 per student.

These additional dollars were calculated on a specific premise and local school districts should be held accountable for the expenditure of those funds. The added money is intended to increase salaries to attract and retain qualified educators. Accurate accounting for these dollars seems a reasonable and

prudent request. (Please see the attached proposal on *District Cost Factor – Teacher Compensation Component*, page 58.)

4. *Legislative Commission* – There is a general consensus among all stakeholders that the current factors used to compensate for regional cost differences need to be reviewed, but there is substantial disagreement among legislators on how to measure the *relative* cost differences between school districts. Since the adoption of the district cost factors developed by The McDowell Group in 1998, the legislature has conducted two studies to update the cost factors, with surprisingly disparate recommendations.

The Task Force chose to recommend the formation of a commission or task force composed mostly of legislators to develop a durable and dynamic economic model that can be used to update the district cost factors on a regular and recurring basis. I strongly support the development of a dynamic model that can stand the test of time, but sadly, I do not agree that the commission or task force should be a legislative body. (Please see the attached proposal on the *Governor’s Select Panel on Alaska School’s District Cost Factors*, page 60.)

Governor Palin (or Lt. Governor Parnell), a public official elected to represent the views of the whole state, is in the position to lead a new group of talented and dedicated Alaskans who desire to offer their expertise to help develop a long-lasting district cost factor model that can be regularly updated. A statewide perspective is needed in this endeavor and, unfortunately, it is difficult for legislators to separate themselves from their parochial view regarding the level of funding their local school district should receive from the state, and concentrate solely on a statewide view. Consequently, the governor is the appropriate person to lead this select group of individuals to success.

In summary, the Moore vs. State of Alaska decision of June 21, 2007 by Superior Court Judge Sharon Gleason determined that the funding for Alaska’s K-12 public education was adequate and that “the current formula was carefully considered and represents a rational approach to educational funding.” (page 182, paragraph 26)

The legislature and the people of Alaska can take great comfort in this strong validation of Alaska’s current funding formula. The court’s decision completely

repudiated the suggestion that the State is shirking its constitutional duty to provide a K-12 education to its young citizens. The State is doing it right and we should be proud of our efforts.

There is not an urgent need to radically alter the formula by changing an individual piece without considering its impact on the whole formula. (Please see the attached paper, *District Cost Factors – not a silver bullet*, page 64.) If we, as the Alaska State Legislature, need to adjust our education funding formula, let us do so with a collaborative, well funded, well staffed effort. To do less may serve the Legislature today, but will fail Alaskans tomorrow.

Thank you for your careful and thoughtful consideration and courage.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gary Wilken".

Gary Wilken,  
State Senator  
Fairbanks/Ft. Wainwright.

June 2, 2007

## State task force lacks time to compile long-term education plan

By Dermot Cole

**EDUCATION:** The legislative task force on education, which has yet to meet, can't possibly come up with a sensible long-term plan for education funding in Alaska by Sept. 1.

So it shouldn't even try. Instead, the group ought to focus its energies on defining the policy questions raised by previous cost studies. Then the state should find consultants to report back next year with solid research that can be acted upon.

This is more or less what Fairbanks Sen. Gary Wilken told me he plans to propose. Wilken and Rep. Mike Kelly are the two local legislators named to the task force.

It seems the leaders of the Legislature who proposed this task force at the end of the session wanted a group to cobble together a plan that can win enough votes for passage in the Legislature and call it good.

That's not the same as creating a defensible long-term plan for education spending.

Allocating money to the billion-dollar business of education in Alaska is always a political calculation, but it ought to be based on economic research and policy decisions reached through a public process.

Instead of directing 10 lawmakers and one other Alaskan to wrap this up at a time of year when people are more worried about fishing than education funding, the Legislature should have hired economists months ago for more analysis of the relative costs of running schools in Alaska's communities.

I'm afraid that if the task force does not follow Wilken's approach, the "long term" solution it produces will have more to do with who controls the Legislature than with the cost of living.

The task force should abandon the tactic of legislative leaders who are portraying education, the state retirement debt and revenue sharing as a "three-legged stool," pretending that these items are inextricably bound together in a meaningful way.

Claiming these elements should be a package is a political strategy in which one program can be played against another to win support for ideas that might otherwise fail. The combination makes it impossible to judge individual items on their merits.

The resolution creating the task force singles out a 2005 report by the Institute of Social and Economic Research that said "school district cost factors" should be "increased to more accurately reflect the cost differentials in rural school districts."

In some ways that report raises more questions than it answers.

I would guess that few legislators — if any — have digested this report. Many lawmakers from outside of Anchorage have probably looked at the final numbers and based their degree of support for the study

on how much more money their schools would get. Some may have read the four-page summary by ISER, which is much clearer than the report.

This year the Legislature said it would approve 50 percent of the ISER district cost factor increases. Other lawmakers are pushing for the full amount.

One worthy goal within the reach of the education task force this summer is to conduct a thorough review of the radical change ISER suggests in the way salaries are set for teachers and administrators who are not in Anchorage. The ISER theory on compensation seems to have no parallel in any other line of work in Alaska.

I'll have more on this Sunday.

Dermot Cole can be reached at [cole@newsminer.com](mailto:cole@newsminer.com) or 459-7530.

June 3, 2007

# School cost study proposes radical change in wage policy

By Dermot Cole

**EDUCATED GUESS:** It costs more to run schools in rural Alaska than it does in Anchorage.

No one disputes this, which is why there are "district cost factors" built into state law to allow for higher costs.

More than 60 percent of the money to run a school system goes to hire teachers and administrators, so an accurate measure of the cost of living in each district is essential.

But when it comes to determining how much teachers and administrators should be paid in areas outside of Anchorage, the Institute of Social and Economic Research contends that it's not enough to raise rural wages to compensate for the higher cost of living.

The state should provide bonus pay so that village jobs will become as attractive as those in Anchorage, ISER contends.

The extra pay should be enough so that the best applicants will compete for jobs in all areas of the state, the university agency recommended.

Once hired, the level of compensation should be sufficient to keep people in village jobs long enough so that the turnover rate is as low as Anchorage.

This proposal to restructure educational salaries is buried in a 2005 ISER report that many legislators are relying on as a guidepost to justify raising education funding for communities outside Anchorage.

This year the Legislature provided 50 percent of the money recommended by ISER for cost differentials.

Implementing the other 50 percent of the ISER increases is the main motivation behind the formation of a legislative task force on education that is supposed to come up with a plan for school spending by Sept. 1.

Before adopting the ISER report, however, legislators should read it.

As I said here Saturday, my guess is that few legislators — if any — have studied the document because it is not exactly a page-turner. Lawmakers have probably read the four-page ISER summary of the report, which suggests that teachers in some remote districts should earn two-thirds more than those in Anchorage.

The ISER summary said, "to have similar educational opportunities across Alaska, all districts need to get and keep personnel with similar qualifications."

Alaska's news media and most politicians have not asked whether this proposed radical change in state policy on educational pay is a good idea or whether it would work.

The 2005 ISER report neglected to include the results of a separate 2002 ISER survey that said teacher pay was not a significant reason for high turnover in village teaching jobs.

Teachers were more likely to leave because of family reasons, dissatisfaction with the administration, lack of community support, lack of school board support or poor housing than because of salaries.

To conclude the compensation alone is enough to change hiring and employment patterns in Alaska's educational system is an untested theory.

Also missing from the ISER report is any recognition that its pay plan would certainly lead the teachers' unions in Anchorage and other communities to immediately push for higher wages, arguing equal pay for equal work. It would also encourage teachers to spend the last few school years of their careers in high-wage districts and push up costs for the state.

The implication in the ISER report is that rural districts do not attract or retain the most qualified applicants because the pay is too low, though the sensitive topic of teacher quality is not addressed in the most direct manner.

"When you look at the price that is paid to a teacher or administrator, that doesn't necessarily reflect the market equilibrium price," Bradford Tuck, one of the report's authors, testified to a legislative committee in 2005 about the report.

"If you have several teachers applying for each available position, it's a different situation than if you simply have one or two applicants for a position," he said.

If there is a longer "queue" of applicants for jobs in Anchorage than a village, then it may be that those looking for the village job are not the most qualified, ISER said.

"The existence of that queue, at least in some instances, implies that there may be quality differences in the pool of candidates available to different school districts," Tuck said.

ISER said that "districts possessing a combination of financial resources and community quality of life" can pay more, while "districts with less money and poor perceived community quality of life may have difficulty filling positions and may have to accept staff of lesser quality."

As part of its calculations, ISER made assumptions about community characteristics so that it could produce a formula to "to estimate the relative attractiveness of different communities."

Some of the assumptions are debatable. What is too cold, too rainy, too remote or too far from Anchorage for some people may be just right for others.

The unexamined ISER pay plan is clear proof that the legislative task force on education is in no position to adopt a new formula on school funding until more research takes place.

The thrust of the ISER report is that people who don't want to live in remote areas will do so if the pay is high enough.

Perhaps we should encourage people who enjoy life in remote communities to become teachers.

July 14, 2007

# University report suggests teacher pay hikes everywhere but Anchorage

By Dermot Cole

**SCHOOL DAZE:** A legislative committee charged with overhauling education funding appears likely to accept the flawed study that suggests raises for teachers who live almost everywhere except Anchorage.

Here are three reasons why that's a bad idea.

First, the committee is operating under an unreasonable schedule in which it is supposed to have a cure-all for education by Sept. 1.

The political imperative driving the group is to accept the study because it provides political cover for a \$100 million increase in education funding for the portion of Alaska that is not Anchorage. About half of that money has already been approved by lawmakers and added to the budget.

It remains to be seen how much extra money it will take to appease lawmakers from the state's largest city as part of this deal.

The task of creating a durable funding formula requires a couple of years of work, not a couple of more meetings and a political settlement.

Second, the proposal by the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research to raise teacher pay everywhere but Anchorage is politically naive and based on questionable assumptions.

Third, the ISER report doesn't deal with the multitude of social and economic problems that hamper rural education in Alaska, such as unemployment and community support.

The University of Alaska would better serve the state with research that recognizes something in addition to money is necessary to solve the complex challenge of improving education in Alaska.

The 2005 ISER report proposing new district cost factors claims that the way to make sure that the teachers in remote villages are as competent and as likely to stay for the long term as those in Anchorage is to pay them more.

ISER researchers say salaries should be set so that the best teachers would not care whether they live in the Aleutians or Anchorage.

ISER says teachers should get bonus pay, beyond the cost of living, to make up for the lack of amenities in villages, the weather, the distance from Anchorage, the unemployment rate, the cost of flying to Anchorage, the availability of alcohol and other factors.

"Teachers and administrators prefer jobs that pay more and are located in communities that offer a better quality of life," ISER said. "We assume that it is possible to observe a tradeoff of pay for certain desirable community characteristics."

That's a big assumption.



The bonus pay in exchange for what ISER claims is a lower quality of life would be anywhere from 5 percent to 67 percent above Anchorage. The median bonus would be 39 percent, according to ISER.

I interpret this as saying it should be state policy to hire teachers in rural areas who don't want to live there and don't like living there, but will do so if the money is right.

ISER assumes that money alone will solve the teacher recruitment problem for rural Alaska. I don't buy it.

Salaries are important, but teachers and other people consider other things when they decide where to live and work. Many of those factors can not be reduced to dollars and cents.

Quality of life is a subjective matter and a fuzzy notion of this sort has no place in a mathematical formula used to determine how much is spent on education. The best teachers for rural Alaska would be those who do not consider it a hardship to be far removed from Anchorage.

As a practical matter, the ISER strategy on teacher pay won't work. The extra money supplied by the state would not necessarily go to salaries, which are negotiated in union agreements in each of the districts. The districts might want to use the money to hire more teachers or buy more supplies.

If by some chance salary increases were negotiated, the leadership of the teacher unions in Anchorage, Fairbanks and other towns would face demands from their members for equal pay for equal work.

That would eliminate the differential that is supposed to make all communities in Alaska equally attractive to the best teachers now in Anchorage.

If the biggest increases were limited to rural areas, as ISER proposes, then more teachers working under the old retirement system would be tempted to teach in the Bush for three years to raise their retirement pay. That would increase retirement costs to the state and do nothing to slow turnover.

Most of the legislators on the joint committee that held two days of hearings this week appear ready to endorse the ISER study, the complete adoption of which will add about \$50 million more to the budget. If that is approved, Anchorage legislators would naturally want to add more for their community, in part to raise salaries.

This is not a rational way to create a formula for education funding.

The two Fairbanks legislators on the committee, Sen. Gary Wilken and Rep. Mike Kelly, are clearly in the minority on this panel. But they are asking the right questions about the ISER report and pointing out its flaws.

A new study is needed before the foundation formula is revised.

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## Why Teachers Leave Jobs: Personal and Professional Reasons

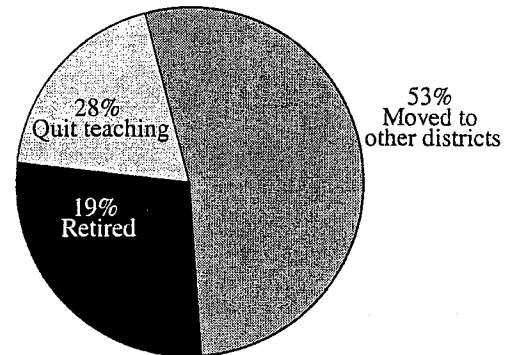
Having looked at how many teachers leave their jobs, we then looked at why they leave. We surveyed a sample of 239 teachers who left their jobs in Alaska schools at the end of the 2000-2001 school year. We had a 51 percent response rate from the urban surveys and a 59 percent response rate from the rural surveys. Figures 3 through 7 summarize what we they told us.

- More than half the teachers who left their jobs after the 2000-2001 school year moved to new districts—either in Alaska or elsewhere—while about 28 percent quit teaching and the remaining 19 percent retired (Figure 3).

- Rural teachers were more likely to leave their jobs to teach elsewhere, while urban teachers were more likely to retire. Roughly equal shares of urban and rural teachers also said they left their jobs to work outside education or to care for family members (Figure 4).

- Most teachers who retired said they did so because they became eligible for pensions. But more than half also said they were unhappy with some aspect of their jobs (Figure 5). Our sample of retiring teachers was so small that we didn't look separately at responses of urban and rural teachers.

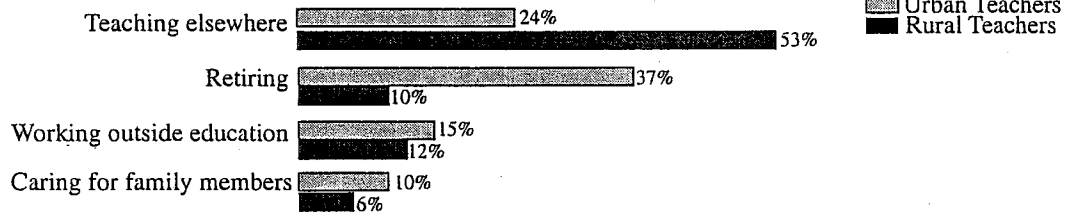
**Figure 3. Composition of Alaska Teacher Turnover**  
(Urban and Rural Teachers)



Source: ISER survey of exiting Alaska teachers, 2001-02

**Figure 4. Top Reasons Why Alaska Teachers Left Jobs, 2000-01**  
(Includes all Teachers Who Moved to Other Districts, Retired, or Quit Teaching)

### Percentages of Teachers Citing Reason



Source: ISER survey of exiting teachers, 2001-02 N=112

**Figure 5. Selected Reasons Alaska Teachers Retired, 2000-01**

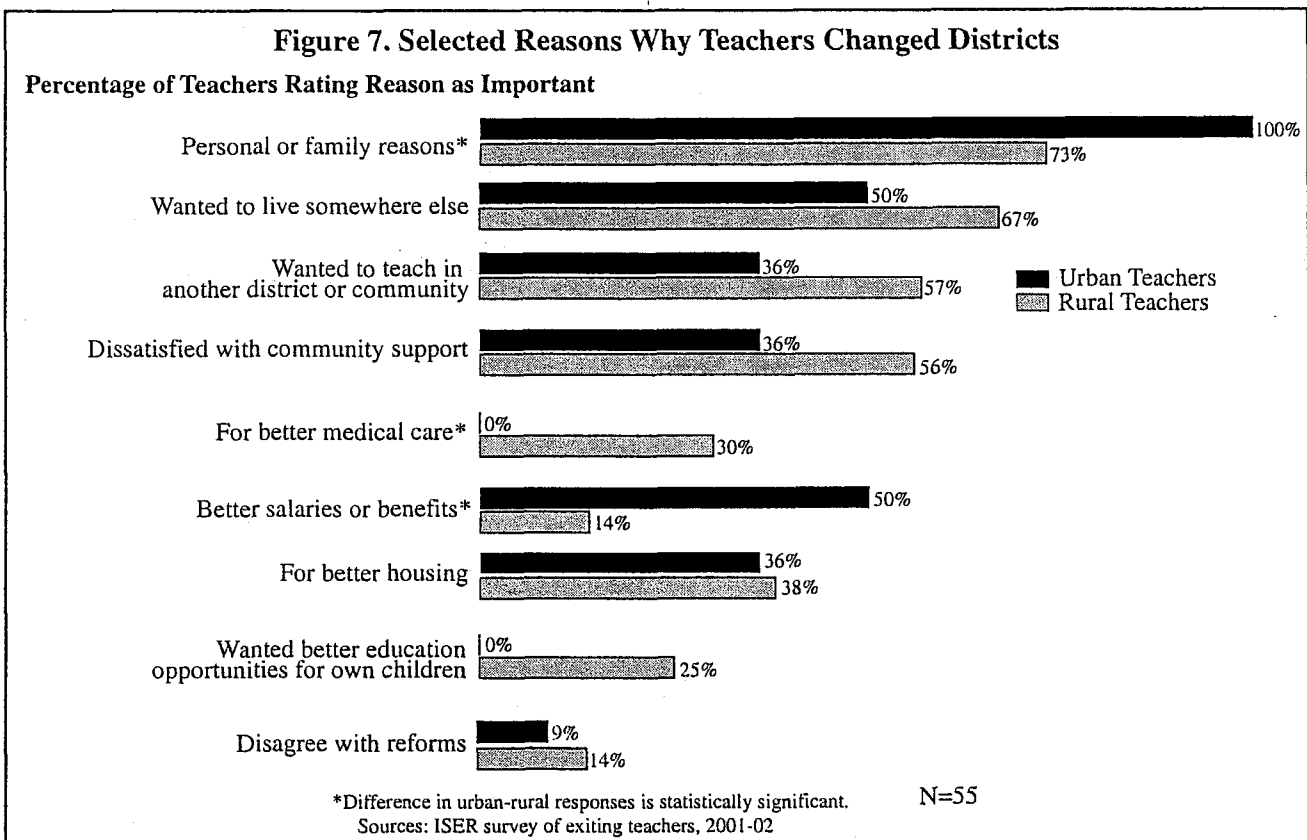
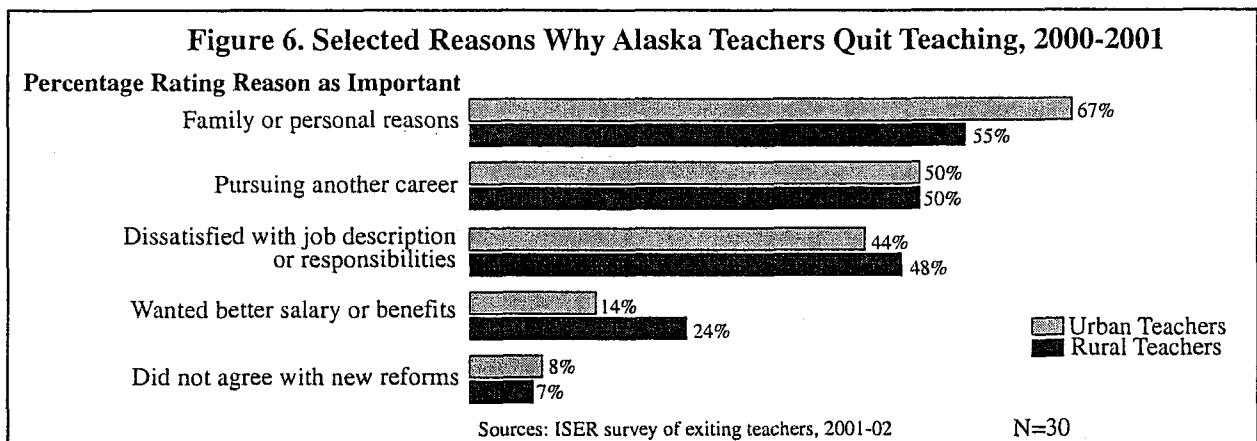
(Percentages of Retiring Teachers Citing Reason As Very Important or Important)

Urban and Rural Teachers	
Became eligible to receive full pension	71%
Dissatisfied with job description or responsibilities	59%
Dissatisfied with CHANGES in job description or responsibilities	57%
Retired for family or personal reasons	55%
Dissatisfied with teaching as a career	50%

Source: ISER survey of exiting teachers, 2001-02 N=21

- More than half those who quit teaching—including both urban and rural teachers—cited family and personal reasons or pursuing another career (Figure 6). Nearly half were also dissatisfied with their jobs. But less than one-quarter were unhappy with their pay or benefits.

- Urban and rural teachers changed districts for significantly different reasons (Figure 7). All urban teachers cited family or personal reasons, while only about three-quarters of rural movers did. A third of rural movers were looking for better medical care, while virtually no urban movers were. And half of urban movers wanted better pay or benefits, while only about 15 percent of rural movers did.



# Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force

Recommendation Proposed by Gary Wilken

August 16, 2007

## District Cost Factor – Teacher Compensation Component

**Issue Summary:** The teacher compensation component of the *Alaska School District Cost Study Update*, prepared by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), January 31, 2005 reflects “how much each school district would need to pay to recruit and keep teachers and administrators with equivalent qualifications.” (ISER Research Summary, March 2005) In other words, the teacher component of the proposed district cost factor is to provide sufficient funds so that districts could increase teacher salaries, if needed to attract and retain quality teachers.

ISER has acknowledged that the upward adjustment of the proposed district cost factor is based largely on the teacher cost component.

**Recommendation:** The Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force recognizes that the district cost factor proposed by ISER includes a teacher compensation component that provides school districts with additional dollars to increase teacher salaries to help attract and retain highly qualified teachers.

The Task Force proposes a statutory change that requires the Department of Education and Early Development to account separately, by each individual school district, the dollars generated as a result of the “teacher compensation component” of the district cost factor as identified by Ms. Lexi Hill, Institute of Social and Economic Research. The statutory change would further state that the funds in this separate account shall only be awarded as grants to the corresponding school district for the purpose of attracting and retaining qualified school teachers and administrators.

**Discussion:** At the request of the Task Force, Ms. Lexi Hill re-calculated the district cost factor proposed by ISER without the teacher compensation component. The difference between the original proposed district cost factor and the re-calculated factor highlights the dramatic impact the teacher compensation component has on ISER’s district cost factor. The effect of the salary component

on each cost factor varies remarkably among the 53 school districts. This component compromises between 29 percent to 84 percent of ISER's district cost factors.

The teacher compensation component is one of eleven components of the cost factor and is intended to provide the necessary funds to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. The dollars generated by this component should be spent only for its intended purpose. By requiring the Department of Education and Early Development to account for these funds separately and award the dollars as grants to attract and retain qualified teachers and administrators will provide a mechanism to ensure that the funds are appropriated for its designated use.

# **Governor's Select Panel**

## **Alaska Schools' District Cost Factors**

Proposed by Gary Wilken  
August 16, 2007

**Preface Statement:** In the Moore, et. al. v. State of Alaska decision of June 21, 2007, Judge Sharon Gleason, Superior Court Judge, determined that the funding for Alaska's K-12 public education was adequate and that "the current formula was carefully considered and represents a rational approach to educational funding." (page 182, paragraph 26)

However, one aspect of the funding formula has been a constant source of aggravation, discourse, and contention within the legislature and the educational community: how to measure the relative geographic cost differences between school districts. If the proposed *Governor's Select Panel on Alaska Schools' District Cost Factors* can develop a cost factor model acceptable to the governor, legislature and the general public, the panel's finished work product will remove a perennial source of frustration for many. This Select Panel will remove the district cost factors (DCFs) from manipulation, negotiation, and aggravation for the next generation, a goal worthy of attainment.

The following proposal outlines a committee structure in which this important, yet divisive aspect of our funding formula, can be addressed and resolved:

### **Who: Governor's Select Panel on Alaska Schools' District Cost Factors**

- Governor appoints panel members, based on recommendations submitted to the governor
- Governor selects the chair of the panel
- Governor informs the legislature by the 45<sup>th</sup> day of the 2008 session that the Select Panel has been appointed and has held its initial meeting
- Governor controls the panel's budget (dollars appropriated specifically for the panel's work)
- Make-up of the Select Panel shall be composed of the following:
  - One representative of Alaska Association of School Business Officials (ALASBO)
  - One representative of the Anchorage School District
  - One representative from the Governor's administration

- One representative from the Alaska State Senate
- One representative from the Alaska House of Representatives
- One professionally trained statistician
- One certified public accountant
- One member of the general public with a statistical or numbers background
- One representative of Legislative Finance, serving as a non-voting member

**What: Select Panel will develop a valid, durable model to calculate relative geographic district cost factors that are able to be accurately updated every four years**

- Panel serves as a technical, specialized team to develop a model to measure actual geographic cost differences in providing a K-12 public education throughout Alaska
- Model includes a method to accurately measure and weight several components in a school district's budget, including, but not limited to,
  - Personal Services
  - Travel
  - Services (excluding utilities)
  - Commodities and Equipment (excluding utility and energy costs)
  - Energy and Utility Costs
  - Facility Maintenance
- Panel selects at least two vendors to draft a model to measure actual educational cost differences and submit the model without calculating individual factors
- Panel works closely with the selected vendors and frequently reviews the work products of the vendors and provides specific direction throughout the process
- Panel determines the best model or combination model that measures the actual relative geographic cost differences accurately and can be updated every four years
- Panel opens a public 60-day public comment period on the recommended model
- Panel considers all comments on the chosen model and modifies the model based on the submitted comments, if deemed appropriate
- Panel requests the vendor who developed the recommended model to collect, analyze, and compute the necessary data to calculate new district cost factors

- Panel recommends the chosen model and accompanied new district cost factors to the legislature for implementation
- Current district cost factors sunset the first day of the 2011 legislative session

**Where: Select Panel serves under the Office of the Governor**

- Panel is appointed by the governor and serves at her pleasure
- A different venue with a statewide view is necessary to foster statewide cooperation
- Support by the governor is necessary to achieve a final resolution
- Department of Education and Early Development provides the necessary administrative support

**When: Select Panel exists from 2008 – 2010**






- Panel holds its initial meeting prior to the 45<sup>th</sup> day of the 2008 legislative session
- Panel opens a 60-day public comment period on the suggested model no later than September 1, 2009
- Panel submits its final report to the governor and legislature by September 1, 2010
- Panel sunsets by December 31, 2010

**Why: Select Panel's work will provide 53 school districts an assurance that the relative regional cost differences are measured correctly**

- The current district cost factors were adopted by the legislature ten years ago
- Within the last 10 years the legislature has sponsored two DCF studies with disparate results
- Uncertainty regarding the validity of two proposals exists, fostering frustration and skepticism
- Since 1998, state law has required the Department of Education and Early Development to update the district cost factor, but the current district cost factor computations cannot be updated



## Timeline for the Governor's Select Panel on DCFs

	2008	2009				2010				2011
Select Panel Tasks	Mar 1	Mar 1	June	Sep 1	Nov 1	Mar 1	June	Sep 1	Dec 31	Jan
Selects vendors & recommends model										
Opens a 60-day public comment period on model										
DCF's decided, final report to gov & legis										
Select Panel on District Cost Factors sunsets										
Repeal of the District Cost Factor statutes										

# *District Cost Factors – not a silver bullet*

## An Education Funding Review

The Legislature has long recognized the importance of adjusting state education aid for geographic cost differences, but it has proven difficult to quantify. Changing the cost factors has frequently been a convenient, and divisive, subject upon which to focus and leverage additional school funding. Given the current climate one might believe that a change in the district cost factors is a silver bullet for school funding. It is not, so it is important to take a moment to step back from the current debate and review the history leading up to the two conflicting reports which we have before us today. To accept new cost factors based on flawed data is to repeat history and undermine the foundation of our school funding formula.

**1987**

**Cost of living  
ACDs are  
adopted.**

In 1987, the Legislature, under a great deal of federal pressure, adopted a new education funding formula that included an area cost differential (ACD) multiplier to address statewide differences in costs. These ACDs were based on a 1985 Department of Administration study that compared differences

in the cost of living (not education) but in 19 of the 40 election districts of our state.

During the legislative deliberations of the funding formula, the House Finance Committee amended the original proposal and increased 29 cost differentials. *Appendix A* recaps the early history of this debate.

**1997 - 1998**

**After ten  
years, a new  
study was  
commissioned  
to review the  
cost differen-  
tials**

In 1997, answering the clamor from the Alaska public, Governor Knowles and several legislators sponsored legislation to rewrite the education funding formula. The need for an accurate and objective ACD for each school district was stressed over and over again.

So the Legislature appropriated \$275,000 for a study that compared the cost of operating schools based on size and geographical location. On March 4, 1998 the

McDowell Group submitted the *Alaska School Operating Cost Study*. This study was the first empirical review ever undertaken in Alaska to identify actual school costs. Not only did the McDowell Group review cost differences at the district level, but also at the school level. As noted above, prior cost differentials were based on the *cost of living*, while the McDowell Group report was based on the *cost of education*.

**1998**

**The Legisla-  
ture adopted  
DCF's based  
on actual  
school costs.**

On May 12, 1998 the Legislature passed Senate Bill 36, a comprehensive rewrite of the Alaska's education funding formula. The Legislature adopted the new District Cost Factors (DCF) as proposed in the McDowell Group study. The Legislature did not amend or change the proposed DCFs.

Senate Bill 36 required the Department of Education to monitor the DCFs and update the cost factors every other year, start-

ing January 15, 2001. A letter of intent that accompanied Senate Bill 36 asked the department to report on the educational adequacy in the schools of Alaska, paying particular attention to differences in cost of school operations. Unfortunately, the Department of Education reported that given the format of the current differential data, the department was unable to update the district cost factors.

**2001 - 2004**

**American  
Institute of  
Research  
(AIR)  
conducted a  
DCF study.**

**An ISER  
Peer Review is  
conducted  
on AIR study,**

With a desire to obtain more accurate cost data, in 2001 the Legislature paid \$350,000 to the American Institute for Research (AIR) to study the cost of providing K-12 education in each school district. The AIR research team collaborated closely with eight school business officials representing a diverse sample of districts across Alaska.

To determine the cost index for teachers, AIR studied the costs for *comparable levels* of experience, education, and other demographic characteristics. As reported in the January, 2003 study, the American Institute of Research noted that the highest-cost districts paid about 18 percent more than Anchorage for comparable teachers while the

lowest-cost districts paid about 6 percent less than Anchorage.

A number of questions regarding data accuracy and methodology were raised by a few legislators. At the request of the Legislative Budget and Audit (LB&A) Committee, the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) conducted a peer review of the AIR study. On January 29, 2004 ISER reported that the peer review had determined the methodology used by AIR was appropriate, but the review team raised concerns about how AIR estimated some of the components. Primarily ISER felt that AIR did not adequately address the issue of *teacher turnover rates* in its Personnel Cost Index.

**2005**

**ISER's  
conclusions  
based on  
flawed  
assumptions.**

Based on this peer review of the AIR study, ISER was asked to update data sets, adjust the index for actual energy costs, and address teacher turnover rates.

On January 31, 2005, the ISER report, *Alaska School District Cost Study*, was presented to the LB&A Committee. ISER acknowledged that the upward adjustment of the district cost factor was based largely on the teacher cost component, an increase to address the *issue of teacher turnover*

*rates*. The ISER team attempted to estimate the amount of funds needed by all districts to recruit and retain teachers of equivalent quality to teachers in Anchorage.

The 2005 ISER report concluded that the additional dollars provided to school districts would help recruit and retain teachers and, therefore, address the turnover rate in some districts. But this report directly contradicted an earlier 2002 ISER report that measured the causes of teacher turnover.

**2005**

**Report in  
conflict with a  
2002 ISER  
study, *Retain-  
ing Quality  
Teachers fo  
Alaska***

So on February 28, Senator Therriault, Chair, LB&A, sent a letter to all legislators regarding ISER's 2005 report. The letter referenced the prior ISER study completed in December 2002 entitled, *Retaining Quality Teachers for Alaska*. The report, in part, summarized why Alaska teach-

ers leave their jobs; *why there is teacher turnover*. When it came to why rural teachers changed districts (rural teachers defined as teachers from districts outside Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Mat-Su), salary was tied for last place, as shown in the following list:

1. personal or family reasons,
2. wanted to live somewhere else,
3. wanted to teach in another community,
4. dissatisfied with community support,
5. better housing,
6. better medical care,
7. better educational opportunities, and
- 8/9. better salaries & disagreement with reforms

**Conclusion:** Today if there are certain areas of our state struggling with inadequate education funding, let's have the patience and courage to fix the root causes of those particular struggles. Indeed, to simply step back and use as a proxy for repair District Cost Factors based on flawed assumptions, not only repeats the subjective, unilateral, and harmful actions taken in 1987, but jeopardizes the future of our foundation formula.

# Public School Funding

## A Historical Review

Some critics of Senate Bill 36 focus attention on the impact the legislation has on several rural school districts, specifically the loss of state revenue in comparison to the dollar amount previously received. In order to fully understand this argument, it is necessary to put the current funding formula in a historical perspective.

**1985**

**A one year stop-gap funding scheme was adopted.**

1985 marked the second year of a three year study to determine a "resource cost model" to fund schools. California consultants were asked to assess the costs involved in educating Alaskan students in three differently sized, hypothetical classrooms. During this lengthy review, school districts were anxious for a change and pressure on the Legislature mounted. For a variety

of reasons, the "resource cost model" was never implemented. Unable to decide upon the funding level, the Legislature approved a stop-gap measure.

An Alaska Geographic Differential Study was conducted in 1985 by Homan-McDowell. The study was based solely on the household cost of living and provided differential data for 19 election districts.

\* \* \* \* \*

**1986**

**A re-write proved impossible; another one year solution.**

Still under pressure to adopt a new formula, the Legislature approved SB 408, sponsored by Sen. Frank Ferguson, for one year.

• "[The ACD] has always been a tool used to . . . bring a number up or down, depending upon what a legislator was interested in."

Mike Scott, staff to Sen. Ferguson

• "... most districts generate more special ed. money than they need."

• "... noted the increased need for consolidation of school districts."

Bob Green, School Boards' Assoc.

• "... real equity between urban and rural districts cannot be achieved."

LeRoy Owens, Aleutian Schools

\* \* \* \* \*

**1987**

**After two years of different stop-gap measures, a new proposal was considered.**

The Legislature convened and found itself still in a tenuous position. The funding formula was under attack by the Southwest Region School District and the federal government. (Subsequently, the federal government required \$11 million to be repaid by the state to several school districts.)

Governor Cowper proposed a funding formula based on "instructional units" and the cost of living study conducted in 1985 by

Homan-McDowell. City and borough school districts were required to contribute 4 mills of their assessed property value or 35% of their district's basic need. A district's allocation was determined, in part, by the number of "funding communities" within the district.

The House Finance Committee amended the original bill and increased twenty-nine area cost differentials.

## 1987

As a result of several years of turmoil, the proposal was adopted even though the legislation "would be a further setback for railbelt taxpayers and students."

Sen. Joe Josephson (5/19/87)

- "[The new area cost differentials] are not based on the benefit of specific supporting data. For this reason, I do not feel these numbers should be included in the Foundation Formula." Rep. Steve Rieger (4/16/87)

- "[The new area cost differentials] presented are not based on a solid basis of school costs. I do not have confidence in their accuracy." Rep. Pat Pourchot (4/16/87)

- "[The House HESS Committee] urges that the issue of taxation in the unorganized areas be given serious consideration." Rep. Johnny Ellis (3/19/87)

- "... would like a survey of the [unorganized] areas to know the potential of the people being able to pay a percentage of the cost of education in their own areas." Rep. Dave Donley (3/18/87)

- "[I] express concern that surplus funding would be siphoned off by central offices and used to increase administrative hierarchy." Sen. Paul Fischer (5/19/87)

- "... in the rush to adjournment, the Senate Finance CS was reported out of committee without an opportunity for public testimony. [I] prevailed upon the Senate to return the bill to committee for a public hearing." Sen. John Binkley (5/19/87)

- "... if the 4 mill rate was in place ... North Slope and Valdez would be paying an unrealistic amount in relationship to [their need]." Marshal Lind, DOE Commissioner

- "... noted that [House Finance] had proposed twenty-nine [new ACDs] totaling approximately \$4.2 million for all REAAs." Sen. Paul Fischer (5/19/87)

- "I believe it is dangerous for the Legislature to adjourn without enacting a new formula. Urban members of the Senate HESS Committee acquiesced in a measure that includes area differentials less favorable to urban areas." Sen. Joe Josephson (5/19/87)

- "... there appears to be no objective definition of funding communities." Bill Berrier, small districts' lobby

\* \* \* \* \*

## 1998

SB 36 proposes a funding formula that is based on actual school costs.

During the past ten years, the Foundation Formula has remained relatively stable. However, the current distribution scheme, developed under pressure with very limited cost data, has proven to be an experiment that has failed.

Issues raised in 1987 – special education spending, administrative overhead, "funding communities," local contribution inequities, inflated area cost differentials – are

still areas of concern and are addressed in SB 36.

Senate Bill 36 is based on a school operating cost study that treats all Alaskan schools equally and fairly. This is the first review of actual school costs in the thirty-nine years of Alaskan statehood.

It is important to remember the historical perspective of the current formula when comparing SB 36 to the existing formula.

## Appendix B

### A Comparison of District Cost Factors

School District	Current Cost Factor	AIR Cost Factor	ISER Cost Factor
Alaska Gateway	1.291	1.28	1.594
Aleutian Region	1.736	1.46	1.939
Aleutians East Borough	1.423	1.49	1.991
Anchorage	1.000	1.00	1.000
Annette Island	1.011	1.03	1.338
Bering Strait	1.525	1.55	1.998
Bristol Bay Borough	1.262	1.19	1.478
Chatham	1.120	1.20	1.576
Chugach	1.294	1.29	1.496
Copper River	1.176	1.15	1.316
Cordova	1.096	1.07	1.234
Craig	1.010	1.09	1.206
Delta/Greely	1.106	1.09	1.241
Denali Borough	1.313	1.09	1.332
Dillingham	1.254	1.13	1.346
Fairbanks N. Star Borough	1.039	1.08	1.070
Galena	1.348	1.26	1.391
Haines Borough	1.008	1.03	1.200
Hoonah	1.055	1.12	1.399
Hydaburg	1.085	1.10	1.504
Iditarod Area	1.470	1.40	1.846
Juneau Borough	1.005	1.02	1.145
Kake	1.025	1.09	1.459
Kashunamiut	1.389	1.25	1.619
Kenai Peninsula Borough	1.004	1.03	1.171
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	1.000	1.01	1.170
Klawock	1.017	1.04	1.302
Kodiak Island Borough	1.093	1.12	1.289
Kuspuk	1.434	1.21	1.734
Lake & Peninsula Borough	1.558	1.46	1.994
Lower Kuskokwim	1.491	1.39	1.663
Lower Yukon	1.438	1.40	1.861
Mat-Su Borough	1.010	0.99	1.070
Nenana	1.270	1.17	1.338
Nome	1.319	1.16	1.450
North Slope Borough	1.504	1.58	1.791
Northwest Arctic Borough	1.549	1.48	1.823
Pelican	1.290	1.14	1.477
Petersburg	1.000	1.01	1.244
Pribilof	1.419	1.29	1.691
Sitka Borough	1.000	1.03	1.195
Skagway	1.143	1.00	1.174
Southeast Island	1.124	1.07	1.403
Southwest Region	1.423	1.26	1.685
St. Mary's	1.351	1.28	1.624
Tanana	1.496	1.29	1.786
Unalaska	1.245	1.19	1.441
Valdez	1.095	1.05	1.170
Wrangell	1.000	1.00	1.159
Yakutat	1.046	1.17	1.412
Yukon Flats	1.668	1.46	2.116
Yukon/Koyukuk	1.502	1.44	1.835
Yup'it	1.469	1.31	1.723
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	1.000	1.03	1.195

## **Appendix 1**

### **Senate Concurrent Resolution 11**

# STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2007

Source  
SCR 11

Legislative  
Resolve No.  
26



Establishing and relating to the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force.

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## BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

**WHEREAS** Alaskans clearly believe in the value of the quality of education for our children; and

**WHEREAS**, under art. VII, sec. 1, Constitution of the State of Alaska, a system of public schools is required to be established and maintained; and

**WHEREAS** the legislature finds that the present system of providing assistance to the public school system is a complex matter and should be studied for possible modification and improvement; and

**WHEREAS**, during the period of study, an alternative mechanism to the existing system of financial support for public schools may be desirable; and

**WHEREAS** a study conducted in the state in 2004 by the Institute of Social and Economic Research recommended that the school district cost factors under AS 14.17.460(a) be increased to more accurately reflect the cost differentials in rural school districts;

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force is established for the purpose of examining school district cost



differentials and the existing formula for distributing state aid for education; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the duties of the task force include

(1) evaluating proposals that are based on available facts and conclusions pertaining to school district cost factors and the foundation formula;

(2) recommending improvements or additions to the laws providing for education funding; and

(3) taking public comments on education funding and school district cost factors; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force consists of 11 members as follows:

(1) five shall be from the senate appointed by the president of the senate;

(2) five shall be from the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and

(3) one shall be appointed by the governor; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall jointly appoint the chair and vice-chair of the task force; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall meet during the interim between sessions; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall submit a report of its findings and proposed legislative changes to the governor and the legislature by September 1, 2007, and may make any additional reports it considers advisable; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that, if the task force is not able to propose a solution for school funding, including the treatment of school district cost factors, the governor is encouraged to call the legislature into a special session before the date the Second Regular Session of the Twenty-Fifth Legislature convenes in order to address school funding; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force is terminated on October 15, 2007.