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**From:** Weiss, Bridget <bridget.weiss@juneauschools.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2022 7:21 AM  
**To:** Rep. Kelly Merrick  
**Subject:** HB273

Representative Kelly Merrick,

HB273 has my FULL support. We can't continue to support students and families while ignoring the cost of educating them. Our initiatives and support structures have eroded over the past decade as a result of flat funding and fighting inflation.

This year we are, again, negotiating with all three unions. This is on a 3 year cycle. When people are experiencing inflation in their personal homes and have extraordinary changes in working conditions, it is impossible to settle contracts with no increased cost to the district. Between flat funding of BSA and no acknowledgment of inflation over two recent negotiations and almost a total of 3, we are hamstrung with only options of cutting programs and support positions.

Thank you for supporting HB 273. I have been in education for 38 years and it is heartbreaking to see the lack of opportunity we have to innovate for the children of Alaska.

With sincere respect. Bridget Weiss, 2021 AK Supt of the Year; ASA President Elect  
Bridget Weiss, Ed. D.  
Superintendent  
Juneau School District  
907-523-1701

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**From:** TRACI SANDERS <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2022 7:53 AM  
**To:** Rep. Kelly Merrick  
**Subject:** Hb273

Hello Rep. Merrick

I am writing in support of hb273. The BSA has been status quo for several years and has put a greater burden on local areas over that time period as costs continue to rise. We see the increases in labor, gas at the pumps, food, and other goods. Please help us more appropriately fund education in Alaska.

Thank you,

Traci Sanders

Mat-Su resident, parent, educator

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**From:** TRACI SANDERS <Traci.Sanders@matsuk12.us>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2022 7:53 AM  
**To:** Rep. Kelly Merrick  
**Subject:** Hb273

Hello Rep. Merrick

I am writing in support of hb273. The BSA has been status quo for several years and has put a greater burden on local areas over that time period as costs continue to rise. We see the increases in labor, gas at the pumps, food, and other goods. Please help us more appropriately fund education in Alaska.

Thank you,

Traci Sanders

Mat-Su resident, parent, educator

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**From:** Jimmy Love [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2022 8:35 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** SB 273

Good morning,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide to testimony for SB 273.

I am product of Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD), a father of children that also went through KPBSD, an employee of KPBSD, and Past-President of ALASBO. I am asking for your support of this bill from multiple positions I hold or have held during my career.

SB 273 would assist districts in planning for staffing and budgeting. Staffing is a huge component of districts and knowing what we are looking at receiving earlier in the budgeting process allows us to retain teachers if we know the funding is there or coming. Currently, that is not happening. Most districts are going to be faced with a fiscal cliff at the end of FY23 due to Federal funds expiring. Passing this would help reduce, if not, clear the fiscal cliff many face.

The Base Student Allocation (BSA) has been status quo since FY17, yet almost everything around us has increased. There has been a lot of discussion that education funding has not been cut, but I would disagree. If the funding we continue to receive from the state is flat for 6 years and costs around us continue to rise, is that not kind of a cut. The funding is not covering the costs associated with educating children of our state.

I would to thank you for your service to the residents of Alaska and for the opportunity today to share my support of SB 273.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Love

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**From:** M M <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2022 8:59 AM  
**To:** House Finance  
**Subject:** HB273 testimony

Hi Senators,

I am Matthew Morse and I live in Kenai, AK. This testimony is mine and I am speaking for myself.

HB273 is a critical piece of legislation to address inflation that we are seeing at a tremendous level (highest level in 4 decades) and increasing rate in the past year. Ideally it would serve school districts best if HB272 is passed to make up for the fact that there has been no BSA increase since 2017 and then HB273 is passed to inflation proof funding going forward. If HB272 is not passed and HB273 is then you would be inflation proofing a funding level that is 5 years out dated. I am sure you have all noticed recent inflation, I filled up my Subaru Impreza Sunday and put \$50 of gas in it, prior the highest I had ever paid to completely fill the almost empty tank was under \$40.

Thank you for the work you do for Alaskans, I am sure you will do the right thing for education going forward.

Regards,

Matthew Morse

Alaska House Finance Committee  
Re: HB 273 written testimony

March 17, 2022

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Ted Wilson. I am the director of teaching and learning support for Juneau School District. I have lived in Juneau since 1995, and have worked as a substitute teacher, paraeducator, teacher, principal, and director for the district since my arrival 27 years ago. I have been an administrator for the last 19 years, a length of time that has seen a lot of change in the education profession.

One of the most profound changes I have witnessed over the last two decades has been in the area of educator recruitment and retention. When I first became principal at Glacier Valley Elementary in 2003, I had the opportunity to hire four classroom teachers. I went down to HR to look at the applicant files and was greeted with nearly 30 folders, each representing a different applicant. By the time I moved to my current position in 2014, I would be presented with five or six files. More recently, elementary principals I supervise have been presented with only a few files per position. It is difficult to maintain the high educator standards you want for your students when you don't have a deep pool to draw from.

Then there is retention. Just this week a young teacher turned in her resignation. In her page-long explanation of why she is leaving, she stated that, even after several years in Juneau as a teacher, she is barely able to make ends meet. She has been working other jobs outside of teaching, and is now in a position where she believes she can do better outside education than within it.

This is a sad commentary on the situation we as educators find ourselves. We are dependent on the state legislature for the resources needed to provide a high quality education guaranteed to our students and families. It has always been a daunting task – as evidenced by scores on statewide assessments. In Juneau, we have fared better than some in this regard. Much effort has gone into providing teachers the professional development, supervision, and resources needed to provide an education that will help students become highly productive members of our community. This is an important goal to us – our students are likely to remain in Juneau – we want them to be able to contribute to our economy, and to take care of us as live and get older in Juneau.

But there are strong headwinds we are combatting. Among them is having the funding available to adequately compensate teachers. Our budgets are being ravaged by inflation – soaring insurance and fuel costs, increased rates for any manner of service or resource (paper, pencils, computers, etc.) are all taking an increasing percentage of our budget, leaving little to use in providing a wage that is going to attract high level educators (or any educators, really) to our district.

Among the solutions to this problem is HB 273. While there are a myriad of fixes I could suggest to our current recruitment and retention situation, inflation-proofing the BSA is one that seems to be a no-brainer. Costs rise. Inflation is real and has profound effects on everyone. In the business arena, increased costs are passed on through increased rates and prices, or by decreasing the quality of the product or service. None of us appreciates declining quality. This is what we face in education if we don't provide an adequate answer to the increasing cost side of our budget.

The problem is real. It is intensifying. It needs to be addressed. Among the actions needing to be taken is to inflation-proof the BSA. Please provide us with the tools we need to provide a high quality education to our students.

Ted Wilson  
Director of Teaching and Learning  
Juneau School District

Personal information:

[REDACTED]

Juneau, AK 99801

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
AGENDA STATEMENT

No 11 c

MEETING OF March 9, 2022

Item Title

Reviewed By

**NEW BUSINESS**

Motion to approve a joint resolution with the Ketchikan Gateway Borough advocating for an increase in the base student allocation (BSA)

☒ Superintendent

☒ Finance

SUBMITTED BY Board of Education

Contact Person/Telephone

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL

Melissa Johnson, Superintendent

Name

Phone

**SUMMARY STATEMENT:**

The Board of Education is being asked to approve Resolution No. 22-02, a joint resolution with Ketchikan Gateway Borough regarding public education funding.

**ISSUE:**

The Base Student Allocation (BSA) was last adjusted for FY2017, and the foundation formula does not currently have any mechanisms to adjust for inflation. Flat state funding to public education is unsustainable for school districts who are experiencing record setting fixed cost increases and a recruitment and retention crisis for qualified teachers and para-educators. Flat funding has resulted in a loss of \$1,385 per ADM enrollment since 2007 when adjusted for inflation, which would equal almost \$7.5 million in FY22 had funding matched inflation rates. In order to maintain our educational programming, the State of Alaska must provide adequate and timely funding to schools. Legislative advocacy is required to make this happen.

**BACKGROUND:**

Board Members Mattson, Gubatayao and Sanderson volunteered for an ad hoc Board committee to advocate for school funding and to work on a joint resolution with the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. The resolution idea was proposed at the Assembly/School Board Liaison meeting of February 23, 2022.

The Borough Assembly is scheduled to consider the joint resolution at its March 7, 2022 meeting.

**EXHIBITS ATTACHED**

- Assembly Resolution No. 2929/School Board Resolution No. 22-02

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

"I move that the Board of Education approve Resolution No. 22-02, a joint resolution with the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly, calling on the governor and the legislature of the State of Alaska to increase the base student allocation (BSA)."



**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH  
AND  
KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD**

**ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION NO. 2929  
SCHOOL BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 22-02**

**A Resolution of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School Board Calling on the Governor and Legislature of the State of Alaska to Increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA)**

**RECITALS**

- A. WHEREAS**, Article VII, §1 of the Alaska Constitution commands that the Legislature “shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the state”, a provision that obligates the legislature in equal measure to provide for all 53 school districts in the State of Alaska; and
- B. WHEREAS**, in support of this mandate of the Constitution, the Legislature enacted AS 14.17.410 which provides the formula based on a base student allocation (“BSA”) by which the adequate funding for each school district is calculated; and
- C. WHEREAS**, established data show that seven years of flat funding of the BSA has resulted in Alaska school districts losing \$1,385 per enrollment since 2007 due to inflation, equaling a total loss of \$7,479,325 in FY2022 for Ketchikan schools and reduced spending power at pre-2009 levels; and
- D. WHEREAS**, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District has experienced record increases in property and liability insurance costs of double-digit percentages; and
- E. WHEREAS**, district health insurance costs have doubled in ten years, exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, amounting to 15% of the district’s operating budget in FY2022; and
- F. WHEREAS**, Ketchikan’s critical revenue source derived from the tourism industry, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough has suffered two years of deep revenue loss due to the pandemic, the Borough capacity to compensate for inadequate state education funding is severely impacted; and
- G. WHEREAS**, Alaska is facing a teacher shortage and hiring crisis, with the KGBSD currently trying to fill over 40 open positions district-wide, and Alaska school districts’ wages and benefits are no longer competitive compared to prevailing wages provided in other neighboring states; and
- H. WHEREAS**, continued flat funding will require the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District to cut instructional positions that would equal approximately 10 teaching positions, 30 classified positions, and/or elimination of entire programs in FY2023; and

- I. **WHEREAS**, in FY 2022, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough expects to collect \$7,791,933 in property taxes dedicated to education, but because of flat funding of the BSA, the Borough cannot make up the erosion of funding without raising the local mill levy from 5.2 mills to 10.2 mills; and Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District operates with the lowest administration costs of any district in Alaska at 3% of total expenditures in FY2021 such that flat funding would directly impact the classroom since cuts to administrative costs are no longer feasible; and
- J. **WHEREAS**, in recent years, supplemental appropriations to public education have often been provided and later vetoed, a phenomenon that frustrates district needs for timely, reliable and predictable funding that enables districts to ability to conduct necessary long-term educational planning; and
- K. **WHEREAS**, these challenges persist in spite of the large need for districts to enhance programs designed to address the achievement gap and an upcoming fiscal cliff due to exhausted COVID relief funds the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District utilized to pay down \$2 million in COVID-specific health insurance costs and to operate on-site instruction at 100% capacity throughout the pandemic.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS JOINTLY RESOLVED BY THE KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH AND THE KETCHIKAN SCHOOL DISTRICT**, as follows:

**Section 1.** The Assembly and the School Board find the multi-year failure to increase the base student allocation to be a failure of the State to meet its constitutional obligation by undermining the ability of districts statewide to provide the level of funding required to operate a comprehensive K-12 educational system; and

**Section 2.** The Assembly and the School Board strongly urge the Alaska Legislature and the Governor to significantly increase the Base Student Allocation to adequately fund education for all Alaska students, and to support districts with long term stable and predictable funding.

**Section 3.** Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption by the Assembly and the School Board, whichever occurs later.

ADOPTED by the Assembly this 7<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2022.

ADOPTED by the School Board this 9<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2022.

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Stephen Bradford, Board President

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Bridget Mattson, Board Clerk-Treasurer

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Rodney Dial, Borough Mayor

*ATTEST:*

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Kacie Paxton, Borough Clerk

*APPROVED AS TO FORM:*

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Glenn Brown, Borough Attorney