
From: Emily Vockeroth [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2022 9:54 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 272

Hello,

I am writing in support of HB 272 to increase the base student allocation. State support of education is not meeting the current needs of school districts or students and painful cuts are being made year after year. Our students deserve opportunities to have small classes, librarians, orchestra/band, etc. Our teachers are being stretched thin and asked to do more and more while aids and special assistant positions are cut.

Please help return education funding to it's rightful place as an essential building block for our state.

Thank you,

Emily Vockeroth

[REDACTED]

Fairbanks 99712

From: Sara Dykstra [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2022 7:37 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 272 and HB273

Good morning!

I am writing in support of HB 272 and HB 273. Our SBA has been stagnant for half a decade and yet our costs at schools are increasing due to inflation, energy costs and increased student need after 2 years of a challenging pandemic. It is time to increase the Student Base Allocation and ensure that it grows with inflation. Please pass HB 272 and HB 273.

Sara Dykstra
Anchorage, AK

From: Wendy Demers [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 11:59 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 272 and HB273

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

In regards HB 272 and HB 273, I am hopeful that these bills will both pass. It has been many years since there has been an increase in the school funding formula. The current and future students of Alaska deserve to have the best opportunities within our public school system. If we want Alaskan jobs to be filled by the youth graduating from our schools, we need to prepare them to thrive as adults in our community. Without a quality education, our local job market will have to look more and more outside of Alaska to fill good jobs in our state.

Our district, FNSBSD, is now trying to expand the homeschool base to have another form of revenue for our district, but moving students out of their current school to provide a building for these alternative programs isn't what is best for the remainder of the student population. If we would have had funding that continued to increase along with inflation over the past, maybe these decisions would not be happening. We, as a state, need to make funding education a priority every year. Please support these bills and any one-time funding that can help districts around the state rebound from COVID issues. Our students deserve smaller class sizes and quality opportunities at all levels. This cannot happen without funding.

Sincerely,
Wendy Demers
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99709

From: Katrina Pekkala <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 6:15 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: School budget

Hello,

I have concerns regarding school budgets. My children attend Butte Elementary and PJMS. This year, as has happened in the past, due to budget cuts certain teachers will not have a contract for next year. This year, as well as the last time it happened, it's been simply amazing teachers that have had to been let go. This can be disrupting to students. (At Butte they typically have teachers for two years). It also leads to large classes with combined grades where students do not get the attention nor instruction the would normally get. Is there a way to get more funds allocated to education?

Thank you,

Katrina Pekkala

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

From: Jenna Hamm [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2022 7:58 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: public testimony on HB 272 and HB 273

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jenna Hamm. I live and work in the community of Denali Park and serve on the school board of the Denali Borough School District.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am writing in support of HB 272 and HB 273.

These two bills simply make good on the state's mandate to provide an effective system for K-12 education. The state's Base Student Allocation (BSA) has not seen an increase for the last five years. During this time school districts' operating expenses have inevitably increased— the cost of fuel, insurance premiums, electricity and nearly all other goods and services. Both the 2-year BSA increase and the percentage increase to tie the BSA to routine inflation are common-sense measures to make up for the last five years of flat funding and to ensure some stability to the BSA into the future.

Such funding measures would have a positive impact on student achievement in the Denali Borough. Right now efficiencies and cost savings measures have been implemented district-wide, leaving our only remaining options to begin to cut student services, increase classroom sizes and forgo student transportation. Districts cannot continue to provide an excellent education every day for every student when forced to compromise essential services.

Please fulfill your obligation to Alaska's students by supporting HB 272 and HB 273.

Thank you
Jenna Hamm

Jenna Hamm
she/her
School Board Member
Denali Borough School District, Seat B
Cell: 907-505-0534 | Work: 907-683-2290
www.dbsd.org

From: Kristin Garot [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 8:10 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: support for HB 272 and 273

Thank you for taking a few moments to let me share my support for HB 272 and 273 dealing with the Base Student Allocation funding for Alaska's students.

I am a principal of several schools in the Juneau School District. In the 20+ years I have been with the district, I have seen us become a tighter operation as funding was reduced over time.

Then funding froze -- and we could tighten the ship no more! AND a pandemic kept us from doing our work in the ways we normally had been and forced us to innovate in order to help students keep learning even from a distance.

This year we have seen students return to the classroom - it's been joyous and overwhelming.

An increase in the BSA over the next two years can help us respond to new challenges we are seeing with our students and continue to support our professionals doing that work. And inflation-proofing the BSA into the future will alleviate some yearly challenges - things cost more each year and without funding to meet those rising costs we have to cut services and supports that our students and staff need.

Thank you for support in passing HB 272 and 273 in order to help us meet the needs of all students in our schools.

Kristin Garot

From: Heidi McCroskey Heimerl <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 5:50 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Please support HB 272 and HB 273

Dear House Finance Committee,

Please support HB 272 and HB 273. Increasing the basic student allocation for FY23 and FY24 is necessary as is inflation proofing in FY25 and all years going forward. Flat funding of Alaska's schools doesn't work and paints a picture of a state that doesn't value education or the next generation. HB 272 and HB 273 are a step in the right direction toward improving the future for our children and youth.

Thank you for your consideration,
Heidi Heimerl

--

Heidi McCroskey Heimerl
[REDACTED]

"The moment we choose to love, we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love, we begin to move toward freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others." – bell hooks

From: Brian Rozell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 4:01 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support of HB 272 and HB 273

I am writing in support of HB 272 and HB 273. As a principal, I can speak very specifically to the need.

-

Brian Rozell, Principal
CyberLynx Homeschool & Correspondence Program
[REDACTED]

From: Tracey Schaeffer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 2:42 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 272 and 273

I am strongly in favor of increasing the Student Base Allocation.

Expenses all over Alaska are increasing significantly. Children's needs are also significantly higher and schools need to be able to provide additional support.

As it is, schools have already had to cut positions and preschools all over the state.

Children are an investment we cannot skimp on!

--

Tracey Schaeffer, Occupational Therapist
[REDACTED]

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From: Tanya OBrien <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 2:22 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Increasing the BSA

House Finance Committee,

I hope you will support one or both of the bills to raise student allocation FY22 and FY23 as it is time to face what are students are lacking and our horrible graduation rates in our beautiful state of Alaska. It is difficult to keep our teachers and attract the best candidates when they are overworked and under compensated. Our focus should be our students who during Covid have fallen behind in most situations and now is our chance to provide a better outlook in our student allocation.

Please look closely at these bills and VOTE to support them.

Tanya OBrien
Retired Teacher
Alaska Resident since 1970
[REDACTED]

From: Robyn Taylor [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 11:26 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 272 & HB 273

Respected members of the House of Representatives,

Thank you for the opportunity to listen to and meet with several of you this past week in Juneau during the ACSA Legislative Fly-In. This letter is written to continue to provide support for the passage of HB 272 and HB 273.

As an Alaskan educator since 1997, I have seen quite a change occur in our ability to provide students with an adequate education over the years, due to funding not keeping up with inflationary rates, and can attest to the impact on classroom size, course offerings, and program viability.

As the Hutchison High School principal for the last 7 years, with a stable enrollment of 400 full-time and 160 part-time students in our career and technical education school of choice in Fairbanks, we have ONLY experienced loss during my tenure. I have had to endure the loss of 5 full-time staff positions, which increases class sizes up to 30+ in several classes and has decreased the number of offerings we can provide to students. Additionally, our activities programs, both academic and athletic, have seen a noted decrease in funds to support programs meaning parents are being asked to pay more and more out of pocket in order for their students to participate.

The passage of HB 272 & 273 will provide districts with the much-needed stability to adequately plan for upcoming school years and allow for some fiscal recovery from our inflationary losses.

Thank you for your time and devotion to public education.

Kindest Regards,

Robyn Taylor
Hutchison High School Principal
Alaska Secondary Principal of the Year 2020

--

ROBYN TAYLOR M.ED.
PRINCIPAL
HUTCHISON HIGH SCHOOL

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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From: Faith Moeller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2022 10:34 AM
To: House Finance
Cc: Zonda Martin
Subject: Student funding

Good morning! I am totally in support of HB272 and HB273. As a teacher in the Northwest Arctic School District, I see how limited we are in the funding for our students. We stretch each and every dollar until we run out of money. This is a huge problem in villages and places in the North Slope since our costs are grossly inflated due to shipping costs for everything! I would encourage you to pass these bills since both Alaska's futures and our nation's futures depend on the students that we are teaching today. Thank you for reading my response and for your consideration of our plight. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Faith Moeller
6th Grade Math/Science instructor, KHMS
[REDACTED]

From: Katie Botz <k[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 25, 2022 9:08 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Rep. Andi Story
Subject: Written Testimony for HB272 & 273

Greetings Co-chair Merrick and Co-chair Foster and members of the House Finance committee, for the record, my name is Katie Botz and I am a constituent of district 34.

I'd like to thank each of you for holding public testimony on these very important issues regarding our student's base allocation. When I saw you were holding public testimony, I immediately called my sister-in-law whom teaches in Cordova, Alaska. It is my hope that many friends who are also teachers around the state will pitch in and testify as they please.

As you may know I am a school bus driver for Juneau School District. Most of my elementary students are from low-income families and it does concern me where they will be when they graduate from High School. During the most difficult times of COVID-19, I could tell the students which I transport were struggling even more so than normal. When COVID broke out, my concerns was and still is the student's mental health while attending school under such low funding.

With all due respect, our current students are our future leaders: Mayors, city members, Legislators, Governor, Congressional leaders, etc. if we do NOT invest in them now with more funding, what are we creating down the road 20+ years from now mentally, emotionally, and socially? Please correct me if I am not mistaken, but don't we owe it to our children to set them up for success, rather than flat funding their education for destruction?! It's frustrating when everyone knows, legislators as well as constituents, cost of funds in schools are going up, yet we are only getting a low student allocation. We need to increase our student base allocation for our students to help them succeed.

I am also an aunty of 8-12 nieces and nephews throughout Alaska, and I can honestly tell you that I feel super guilty for their future. The oldest is in High School and the youngest should be in Kindergarten next school year (unless if I am off a year, the K this year). Not only has their education been flat funded, but they've had to encounter COVID-19 in their school system. Each of their maturity levels hasn't reached its maximum capacity for they are still too young for that and they've had to endure a difficult school year that was FAR more complicated than ever experienced before!! As an aunty, I am concerned for their well-being because of the following: they were not able to have their daily/weekly play dates or sleep overs, were not able to see their grandparents whom live literally just a couple of minutes away from them.

Mr and Madam co-chairs, I respectfully request that both HB272 and HB273 pass House Finance to better assist the cost of our future leader's education. Thank you for reading this email.

Katie Botz
34

Sent from my iPhone

From: Katie Botz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 10:48 AM
To: House Finance; Rep. Kelly Merrick; Rep. Zack Fields
Cc: Rep. Andi Story
Subject: Please pass HB 272 & 273 out of House Finance

Greetings co-chair Representative Merrick and Representative Foster,

For the record, my name is Katie Botz and I'm a constituent of district 34. I'm writing to you in deepest respect to request HB 272 & 273 out of House Finance committee. I understand you are under much demands considering Legislation is about to close shortly, but our student's education should be invested in a timely matter.

As you may know I am a school bus driver for Juneau School District. Most of my elementary students are from low-income families and it does concern me where they will be when they graduate from High School. During the most difficult times of COVID-19, I could tell the students which I transport were struggling even more so than normal. Before COVID broke out, I would hear my students were hungry, and the heartbreaking ones when they had to find food for themselves because parents/guardians are passed out on the couch and can't attend to their needs. When COVID broke out, my concerns was and still is the student's mental health while attending school under such low funding.

With all due respect, our current students are our future leaders: Mayors, city members, Legislators, Governor, Congressional leaders, etc. if we do NOT invest in them now with more funding, what are we creating down the road 20+ years from now mentally, emotionally, and socially? Please correct me if I am not mistaken, but don't we owe it to our children to set them up for success, rather than flat funding their education for destruction?! It's frustrating when everyone knows, legislators as well as constituents, cost of funds in schools are going up, yet we are only getting a low student allocation. We need to increase our student base allocation for our students to help them succeed.

I am an aunty of 8 nieces and nephews throughout Alaska, and I can honestly tell you that I feel super guilty for their future. The oldest is in High School and the youngest should be in Kindergarten next school year (unless if I am off a year, the. K this year). Not only has their education been flat funded, but they've had to encounter COVID-19 in their school system. Each of their maturity levels hasn't reached its maximum capacity for they are still too young for that and they've had to endure a difficult school year that was FAR more complicated than ever experienced before!! As an aunty, I am concerned for their well-being because of the following: they were not able to have their daily/weekly play dates or sleep overs, were not able to see their grandparents whom live literally just a couple of minutes away from them.

Mr and Madam co-chairs, I respectfully request that both HB272 and HB273 pass House Finance to better assist the cost of our future leader's education. Thank you for reading this email.

Katie Botz

Sent from my iPhone

From: House Education
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 2:14 PM
To: House Finance Legislation
Subject: FW: More funding for education

From: Martha Raynolds <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2022 9:16 PM
To: House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>
Subject: More funding for education

Dear House Education Committee,

Please use the unexpected budget surplus to benefit education in Alaska. Prefunding the education budget would be a great start. Increasing the per-capita student funding would also be a good idea.

As I'm sure you know, schools in Fairbanks are suffering from Covid changes in student numbers. The talk about eliminating music programs or librarians shows how bad the budget situation is.

Thank you,

-- Martha Raynolds

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Martha Raynolds

11/11/2016

From: House Education
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 2:13 PM
To: House Finance Legislation
Subject: FW: Support for BH 273 BSA Inflation Proofing Bill

From: Melody Douglas [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2022 8:51 AM
To: House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support for BH 273 BSA Inflation Proofing Bill

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Melody Douglas, retired CFO for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, and I live near Soldotna.

Your efforts for Alaska's students are greatly appreciated.

I support HB 273 Base Student Allocation (BSA) Inflation Proofing Bill.

School Districts need to know what their funding will be in order to continue and/or plan for their student education programs. HB 273 would help stabilize funding with predictability and it would enable school districts to attract and retain high quality educators.

The BSA has not changed since FY17, which means school districts have been in reductionary mode since then unless their enrollment is increasing.

While I am grateful for one-time allocations outside the funding formula in recent years, funding needs to be stable for planning purposes which is why HB 273 would be a great help.

Please note, an education funding cliff is on the horizon when Covid relief funds, that are not available for the district operating/general fund, sunset, HB 273 will help school districts next year and will help mitigate the coming public education fiscal challenges.

Please support HB 273.

Respectfully,

Melody Douglas, SFO

From: House Education
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2022 2:12 PM
To: House Finance Legislation
Subject: FW: Hb273

From: TRACI SANDERS [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2022 7:52 AM
To: House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>
Subject: Hb273

Hello legislators,

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: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2022 9:26 AM
To: House Finance
Subject: Base Student Allocation

March 18, 2022

To The House Finance Committee:

I am writing in regard to the Base Student Allocation and the need to increase the amount. It is distressing to read about the budget shortfall in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and possible cuts. Increasing class size and cutting programs, such as the elementary instrumental music program or librarian positions is not acceptable. These programs are crucial for students in a public education. Raising the BSA is an excellent start to properly fund our schools.

When a school district has to deal with budget shortfalls it disrupts the educational process. There is a risk of losing good qualified teachers as they look for steadier job opportunities elsewhere. Students and families have added stress and worry when there is a possibility of losing educational opportunities. With proper funding, this can be avoided. We are fortunate to have excellent schools and it is imperative we fund them accordingly to keep up this high standard of excellence.

Sincerely,
Dori Olsen
Retired FBNSBSD
Music Teacher