



# LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

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**George Smith**  
Chairman

**Andrew Leavitt**  
Chief Business Officer

April 4, 2022

Co-Chair Drummond  
Co-Chair Story  
Members of the House Education Committee

## **RE: HB413 – Relating to Facilities Constituting a School.**

Good morning

My name is Gene Stone. I am the Chief School Administrator for the Lower Yukon School District (LYSD). I have worked in Lower Yukon School District for five years, three of those years as Chief of Operations and the past two years as the Chief School Administrator (Superintendent).

On behalf of the Lower Yukon School District, allow me to express our appreciation for the introduction of HB413. The district is in full support of HB413.

HB413 will remedy a funding issue that unfairly penalizes the Lower Yukon School District for opening a charter school in Hooper Bay.

The penalty within the statute for adding a charter school in Hooper Bay resulted in an annual reduction in funding of \$1,033,000 for FY 2021, and \$1,021,000 for FY 2022. Until this funding penalty is remedied, LYSD will lose approximately \$1 million each year.

The District operates two separate educational programs in the Hooper Bay School; the conventional K-12 school and a 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade charter school that features a culturally relevant, place based learning curriculum for its students. Additionally, the school has a K-3 Yupik Immersion program but is not part of the charter school and functions as part of the conventional school as a special program.

*CHILDREN FIRST*

Alakanuk Emmonak Hooper Bay Kotlik Marshall Mt. Village Pilot Station Russian Mission Scammon Bay Sheldon Point

Some may argue that HB413 has a fiscal note to the State of Alaska of \$1 million annually.

LYSD sees the opposite; to date our *loss* of foundation funding has resulted in fiscal surplus to the state of \$2 million dollars for FY 21 and FY 22.

As a result of the Hooper Bay Charter School, our district has the same number of students - the exact same students - inside of the same school building- and yet we realize a funding penalty of over \$1 million per year.

By adding the three words “*excluding charter schools*” to AS 14.17.905, the annual funding penalty is remedied and it becomes feasible to fund Hooper Bay’s Charter School. As it stands now, the statute is punitive and this unintended \$1 million annual funding penalty impacts our entire school district and effectively jeopardizes rural Alaskans’ access to school choice.

HB413 would remedy this funding problem and support charter school equity for rural Alaska school districts.

Thank you for sponsoring and scheduling this legislation, thank you for your time and consideration and I’m open for any questions.

Sincerely,

Gene Stone