



January 26, 2022

Honorable Representative Ivy Spohnholz  
State Capitol Room 406  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

Thank you for your support of Alaska educators and public education. I am writing today on behalf of NEA-Alaska's 11,000 members in support of House Bill 259.

We are excited about the potential impact of HB 259 on Alaska students and public schools. HB 259 represents a real acknowledgement that we can, and need to do better for our students. This legislation is a proactive approach which will create a sustainable stream of investment in our education system and begin to resolve the fiscal crisis which has plagued our state for far too long.

For years, flat-funding of public education, coupled with inflation, have significantly eroded the value of Alaska's investment in public education. The fiscal crisis has created legislative gridlock resulting in little progress or consideration of the many pressing issues our educators and students are facing on a daily basis. Fortunately, HB 259 represents a real opportunity for Alaskans to come together, put a big part of the fiscal crisis behind us, and to make an enduring investment in our state's future.

Thank you, Representative Spohnholz for bringing this proposal forward, your leadership, and steadfast support for public education.

Thank you,

Tom Klaameyer, President, NEA-Alaska

4100 Spenard Road • Anchorage, AK 99517 • (907) 274-0536  
201 Main Street, Suite 300 • Juneau, AK 99801 • (907) 586-3090  
2118 S. Cushman Street • Fairbanks, AK 99701 • (907) 456-4435

[www.neaalaska.org](http://www.neaalaska.org)



To: House Education Committee

From: Norman Wooten, Director of Advocacy

RE: Letter of Support for HB 259 – PFD; 25/75/POMV Split

The Association of Alaska School Boards is in support of HB 259. AASB's Delegate Assembly has several long-standing resolutions supporting the elements of this legislation. These include:

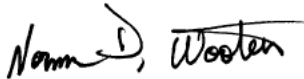
- **Belief Statement #B.7 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FUNDING AS TOP PRIORITY,**
- **Resolution #2.1 SUSTAINED, RELIABLE AND ADEQUATE STATE FISCAL PLAN AND EDUCATIONAL FUNDING FOR ALASKA'S STUDENTS THROUGH A NON-VOLATILE FUNDING SOURCE**
- **Resolution #2.2 URGING EARLY, ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**
- **Resolution #2.14 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**
- **Resolution #2.23 FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS BY ESTABLISHING THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION IN ADVANCE**
- **Resolution #2.50 INFLATION-PROOFED BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION (BSA) INVESTMENTS**

Each year school board members and education advocates plead for education funding. And you routinely remind yourselves and the public of your constitutional responsibility contained in Alaska's constitution. *Article 7, Section 1* requires your support and funding of a public school system. And you have never failed to fund education, however, the Base Student Allocation has not been increased from the current \$5,930 since FY 17. Six years with no increase seems disingenuous to expect constant improvement in instruction and increasing standardized test scores. Utilities, supplies, transportation, fuel, salaries, maintenance, freight, food, instructional materials, communications, internet, and a myriad of other supplies and services necessary for operating a school system have all increased. It seems as if the cost for everything has increased. About the only thing that hasn't increased is the BSA. The proposed new language in HB 259 has provisions that address those times when the formula draw does not meet the BSA and also when the formula draw goes beyond the BSA need. This seems to be a responsible solution.

The proposed language in HB 259 would remove education from competition with all other appropriations and fulfill the responsibility of *Article 7, Section 1* of Alaska's Constitution. The legislature could then concentrate on the remainder of other services that provide for Alaska's citizens and make our state such a wonderful place to live and raise families.

HB 259 directly addresses several recommendations of the Legislative Fiscal Work Group. Creating a workable and reasonable solution to funding the PFD will remove that ongoing debate and allow the legislature to focus on public policy affecting all Alaskans. Additionally, it would provide that stable funding source for education and allow districts to concentrate on educational innovation to improve student outcomes rather than continually reducing programs due to erosion of the buying power of a flat funded Base Student Allocation.

AASB encourages your support of HB 259 as a way of further support Alaska's public school system and Alaska's future through the education of its young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Norman D. Wooten". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Norman" is followed by a middle initial "D." and the last name "Wooten".

Norman D, Wooten

Members of the House Education Committee,

Alaska has long needed a stable, consistent, predictable, and adequate funding source for public education. Great Alaska Schools supports legislative bills that move the state closer to a stable, consistent, predictable, and adequate funding for education. Bill HB 259 does just that.

Throughout our advocacy efforts we've learned that Alaskan families really want our children to be prepared for the workforce or for further learning when they leave Alaska's public schools as young adults. A strong education system is really the only viable means for the majority of students to succeed. Research clearly shows that high-quality teachers lead to the greatest education outcomes. Yet, there is a national shortage of quality educators, and Alaska is losing those educators to other states. Alaska must prioritize creating an attractive work environment to retain the educators we have and attract future impassioned educators.

When we ask our education leaders why there are so many vacant positions, we hear time and again that recruitment and retention are the greatest challenges. Other states have shown that by prioritizing education with consistent funding they can draw quality teachers through solid retirement benefits, attractive healthcare options, and by incentivizing or compensating for higher learning in the profession.

The teacher turnover rate in Alaska is high and getting higher. This is incredibly costly to all districts, both financially and emotionally for students. Per Jim Anderson, CFO of ASD, it costs ASD approx. \$108,000 to onboard a single teacher. That's money that does not make it to the classroom. Further, the connection that students have with teachers through their K-12 years and those teachers remaining connected to their communities has an incalculable benefit for students. This has been underscored by the pandemic. During a time of dramatic uncertainty for children, the relationships students have with their educator can all too often be the only solid relationship that they have with an adult outside their home. When that adult is forced to relocate, it can be very destabilizing for a student.

Furthermore, since the BSA has been flat and the cost of operations have compounded over the last 8 years, ASD has worked carefully to equally allocate teachers in their schools, so when budgets are continually squeezed, it has led to teachers being moved to other schools, the result of those moves are losses of continuity and colleague relationships for educators, and significant disruption for students.

This pandemic has certainly shown just how critical it is to have a safe and nurturing place for our children to learn so parents are able to continue to work.

We believe that there is a greater appreciation for our educators now, so this is the perfect opportunity to show them that they are valued by enacting legislation to support them.

Great Alaska Schools sees HB 259 as a sincere effort by legislators to set up stable, consistent, predictable, and adequate funding for public education, per the state's constitution. We fully support this Bill and the % of the POMV being specifically allocated for public education.

Sincerely,  
**Great Alaska Schools**  
*Anchorage Leadership Team*



**From:** [Grant Guy](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Thank You  
**Date:** Monday, February 7, 2022 10:49:18 AM

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Representative Spohnholz,

I just wanted to send a quick thank you for your creation of HB 259 and also for taking the time to present it to the Alaska Council of School Administrators. While I regret I couldn't attend your live presentation, I was able to watch the recording. It was very well done and you made many excellent points about the need for consistent revenue for our state.

Here in Fairbanks our school board just voted to close three elementary schools next year. This decision was made in order to save approximately 3 million dollars. One board member also made mention of more school closures next year. We currently face an approximate 19 million dollar budget shortfall. We have seen a decline in enrollment over the last 10 years and have had budget cuts each of those years. Inflation is also a massive issue in our district. Using data from <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/inflation/current-inflation-rates/> the United States has seen inflation of about 18% over the past 9 years, not including any extra costs associated with living in Alaska. I appreciate that you recognize that inflation is slowly making it impossible to provide quality education to our students. Since over 85% of our costs are personnel, the only effective way to reduce our budget is to cut positions. This in turn leads to larger class sizes, decreased tutoring, and a lack of academic intervention.

Here is a quick breakdown of how class sizes have increased since 2013 here in Fairbanks.

Kindergarten- Was 22 with half-day instruction, it is now 25 with full-day instruction.  
1-2 grade- Was 23.5, it is now 25  
3-6 grade- Was 25.5 it is now 26  
Middle School- Was 25, it is now 29.  
High School- Was 26.5, it is now 32.

Each bargaining unit has known there is "no money" and so has taken less in pay increases over those same years. Our teacher group has effectively lost 8% due to their wages not keeping up with inflation. Our ESSA group has effectively lost 5%. Our principal group has lost 10% due to increases in inflation.

I have traveled to Juneau in years past during the legislative fly-in, to ask for increases to the BSA and forward funding. Many of the legislators I met with were open to those ideas, but we all knew that without a consistent revenue stream it wasn't economically feasible. Thankfully, your plan addresses that issue and could be a huge benefit to schools across our state.

One more issue that is becoming untenable is the constant and considerable increases in health care costs to everyone here in Alaska. All three of our bargaining units are currently negotiating with our district and they are seeking each of the bargaining units to pay thousands in health care contributions to offset those rising prices. These contributions are in addition to pay freezes, meaning each member of every bargaining unit could potentially face a pay cut. Additionally, over the past several years educators have been forced to move from health care with low deductibles to high deductible plans to offset costs. Ever rising healthcare and a lack

of transparency over costs is a real problem and will continue to be until it is addressed at a state level.

Thank you for your time, your hard work, and for communicating with educators across our state!

Sincerely,

--

Grant L. Guy

Principal

Woodriver Elementary

907 479-4211 ext. 47510

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# Anchorage School District

## Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • [www.asdk12.org](http://www.asdk12.org)

February 23, 2022

Representative Ivy Spohnholz  
Alaska State Legislature  
120 Fourth Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

As superintendent of your local school district and Alaska's largest, I am writing to share ASD's strong support for HB 259 Permanent Fund Dividend, 25/75 POMV Split. This legislation will provide timely, reliable, and predictable funding for school districts across Alaska. This bill is future thinking and is a vehicle that would allow strong policy in support of education to come to fruition in our state.

Years of uncertain funding are taking a toll on Anchorage School District's (as well as other districts') ability to retain talented employees, implement programmatic changes, and focus on our students' learning and well-being needs.

Over the last six years as the superintendent, Anchorage has implemented many cost-saving initiatives. This consisted of closing two elementary schools, merging four schools and programs to create efficiency and strong outcomes, as well as staff reductions.

ASD has been fortunate to receive one-time funds from the State in fiscal years 19 & 20, and we relied heavily on federal relief funds in fiscal years 22 and 23. However, we are living on borrowed time. Inflation is real, and it is time to implement a method for education funding that will ensure the future academic success of our children.

There exist many comments about the cost of education in Alaska, leaving some to wonder why education should not receive additional funding until improvements in student achievement are seen. While it is true that education is costly, it also costs more to move to, and live in, Alaska than many of the lower 48 states. This is true in every sector in our state. Just a few simple examples of higher costs for Alaska employees include:

### *Educating All Students for Success in Life*

Anchorage School Board Margo Bellamy, President  
Andy Holleman, Vice President Kelly Lessens, Treasurer  
Carl Jacobs, Clerk Dave Donley

Pat Higgins  
Dora Wilson

Superintendent Dr. Deena Bishop

- A new employee relocating from the lower 48 would pay \$4,256 to ship their vehicle from Lubbock, Texas to Anchorage.
- Average Anchorage gas prices are approximately \$3.89 per gallon today, compared to \$3.25 in Topeka or \$3.39 in Miami.
- Grocery costs in Minneapolis are 21 percent less than Anchorage, with utilities 24 percent less.

Health care costs in Alaska are also higher than the lower 48. For example, ASD pays approximately \$20,000 per year for each employee to receive health insurance, while the Oklahoma City School District pays \$7,391 per employee and the Minneapolis School District pays \$5,650 per employee.

Alaska's school districts need three things to improve educational outcomes—high quality teachers, support for teachers in high quality professional development, and accountability at all levels. To that point, I recently testified in support of Senate Bill 111, a reading bill that will provide high quality instruction and cultural engagement that shares accountability across the State. The present bill, HB 259 will support our efforts to better attract and retain excellent educators.

There is a strong, overdue need for timely, reliable, and predictable funding for Alaska's school districts. Our children are, have always been, and will always be, Alaska's most precious resource. Their future will drive our state's future. It is time to give them every possible chance to learn, grow, and live successful lives here in Alaska.

ASD takes pride in our accountability for student success; nevertheless, we need the resources to accomplish this no-fail mission. Please feel free to reach out to me if I may be of assistance. And, thank you again for this bold, forward-thinking bill.

Respectfully,



Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



*ASD would have had PTRs of 25 for Kindergarten, 29 for third grade, and 34.25 for high school students.*

As we look ahead, the Anchorage School Board is currently assessing a FY 23 budget that reflects another year of an unchanged BSA even as inflationary drivers increase, as we aim for substantial catch-up growth with respect to student reading and math proficiency, and as we face an unprecedented crisis of educator turnover and retention in Anchorage and across the nation.

Overall, ASD will use \$78 million in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds in FY 23 to assist in efforts to keep schools open, maintain class sizes, and recover from impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes:

- Allocating over \$56.5 million dollars of ESSER III funds to offset *what would otherwise be a PTR increase of 10 across all grade levels* in our neighborhood schools. In other words, without relief funding, we would be looking at a PTR of 31 for Kindergarten, 35 for third grade, and 40.25 for grades 9-12 next year.
- An overall reduction of 60.9 FTE, to correspond to declining enrollment, for a savings of \$7.1 million. This includes losses of 18 teacher FTE at middle schools and 46.5 teacher FTE at elementary schools, paired with a slight increase of 3.4 FTE for high school teachers.
- Although ASD is budgeting nearly \$153 million for Special Education, English Language Learners, Gifted students and Career and Technical Education in our FY 23 budget, we project a deficit of more than \$13 million when it comes to what we actually receive for those items from the Foundation Formula and its adjustments. Addressing that deficit will require taking money from other key areas (or temporary relief funds), or underfunding these crucial functions.

Although ASD has gone to great lengths to live within its means and produce balanced budgets, it has not been adequately or predictably funded for some time. Indeed, a 2016 executive summary of the Evidence Based model, which looked at staffing ratios, found that ASD was only able to staff its schools at 70% of what the model suggested.<sup>1</sup>

Without state-level changes to the way education is funded, ASD's most recent ProForma budget projects a \$67 million shortfall in FY 25, once the last of our Federal Funds has been spent and current hold harmless provisions sunset. Although we could cut our way to a balanced budget, doing so will undoubtedly (and dramatically) increase our PTR. If we know that every increase of the PTR by 1, across all grade levels, saves more than \$7 million, we can reason that if ASD chooses to do this ten times over to balance the budget, we will actively undermine our prospects for attaining the improved student outcomes we seek.

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<sup>1</sup> See ASD Memorandum #223, April 4, 2016.

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/board.nsf/files/A8PTHE71FBF4/\\$file/M223\\_Evidence%20Based%20Staffing%20Model%20Executive%20Summary%20with%20Attachments.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/board.nsf/files/A8PTHE71FBF4/$file/M223_Evidence%20Based%20Staffing%20Model%20Executive%20Summary%20with%20Attachments.pdf)

HB 259, however, would change ASD's reliance on unpredictably-funded and inadequate PTR by offering predictable, proactive funding that addresses the State of Alaska's Constitutional obligations to fund and maintain education. This bill helps adequately fund education by creating a statutory framework for education to coexist with the PFD. Over time, it is predicted that the new framework would generate additional funds for education. By removing the question of how the state funds education, and by providing a way to direct additional funding beyond the BSA to districts over time, the bill stands to benefit students, teachers, families, and community members in Anchorage and across the state.

Thank you for supporting HB 259.

Sincerely,  
Kelly Lessens  
Anchorage School Board

**From:** [Barbara Rath](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 12:19:32 PM  
**Importance:** High

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Representative Spohnholz,

I am writing to express support for HB 259 to reinvest critical funding into public education in Alaska. The continued reduction of options, increasing size of classes, and mounting impacts of budgetary shortfalls across the state create a less desirable education journey for our young students. HB 259 creates a means by which to create sustainable appropriations for the purposes of further supporting public education in Alaska. I believe that the percentage appropriation formulae from the Permanent Fund earnings for distribution to the public education fund as established under AS 14.17.300 as outlined in HB 259 creates ways to increase distributed fund for statewide public education needs. This bill further addresses appropriations above the subsection percentages calculated for state aid under AS 14.09.010 and AS 14.17 with remaining amount to be appropriated to school districts.

Please vote to pass HB 259 in support of our Alaskan students who will populate our workforce and drive our economic development in the future. Our collective support for our students now will create greater opportunities for successful career paths and retention of Alaskan residents who will further invest their own work and support of education here in our state.

Respectfully,

**Barbara Rath, MSW**

ED/Chief Executive Officer

[The Arc of Anchorage](#) | 2211 Arca Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508



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# KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: [Kenai\\_LIO@akleg.gov](mailto:Kenai_LIO@akleg.gov)

Phone: 907-283-2030 / Fax: 907-283-3075

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Cathy Carrow  
REPRESENTING: Self  
BILL # or SUBJECT: HB 259  
COMMITTEE: HWAM DATE: 02-17-2022

Dear Representatives,

First, I want thank each of you for your public service. I appreciate the work done on this bill and the work to solve the issue of uncertain funding for public education.

The Permanent Fund was established in order to save a windfall of money to be used into the future, to the best benefit of the people. What could more benefit the people of the State of Alaska than stable, forward funding of our public education system? Public education, which is an integral cornerstone of a strong, healthy democracy best benefits the people. In fact, the Alaska Constitution spells out the State's responsibility to fund public education.

Our schools need adequate funding, rather than the fluctuating and deteriorating funding as has been the case over the decades that I've been following education funding.

Our schools need early funding, the financial costs due of attrition of known, trained employees to districts across the state has been well documented. Additionally, entire programs can be in jeopardy when districts find themselves in precarious funding situations each year.

Year after year, stakeholders in public education come before the legislature looking for a long term solution to funding. I believe HB 259 will provide that long term solution and I urge you to support it. Again, thank you for your work and thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion today.

Sincerely,

Cathy Carrow

Soldotna, Alaska

Speaking in support of HB 259

**From:** [Laura Bonner](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Cc:** [Laura Bonner](#)  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Support HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 9:12:27 PM

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Representative Spohnholz,

I support HB259. It provides for a reasonable and sustainable amount for PFDs. It repeals the old statutory formula that Alaska can no longer afford. The 50/50 split is not sustainable for future PFDs.

HB259 provides for a predictable and sustainable way to fund public education. Flat funding for the past few years were, in reality, cuts. Predictable funding means school districts can plan and focus on educating our future leaders, medical providers and tradespeople.

HB259 also provides funding for services Alaskans need like public safety, the court system and snow plowing.

For these reasons, I support HB29. Thank you for proposing this bill..

Respectfully,  
Laura Bonner  
Anchorage, AK 99516

**From:** [Joan Diamond](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259 Investment in education k -12  
**Date:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 5:21:32 PM

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Rep. Spohnholz,

My mother told me that public education is the best investment one can make. Our son and daughter attended k-12 here in Anchorage from 1990-2003. They are both productive young people who contribute to the greater good. Without quality education of all children regardless of color, region or ethnic status, we will never have a capable population of young people to grow our economy. Quality education available to every Alaskan child will make the difference as to whether young families want to settle here and Companies will move here because we have an educated workforce facing tomorrow's challenges. We are going backwards ! Do you really want people to leave Alaska because the opportunity for quality education is being trashed? Do not hesitate to pass HB 259 this session. In fact, all legislators should "burn rubber on the bottom of their tennis shoes" to pass this bill now!

Thank you,

Joan Diamond  
Anchorage

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,

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Maggie Price](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 7:33:53 AM

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I support HB 259 to stabilize our education system in Alaska and to help protect the education of our most valuable resource... our children.

Margaret Price



Anchorage AK. 99507

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Russell Marilyn](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 2:15:46 PM

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Hello Representative Spohnholz,

As a retired teacher, I am writing to ask that all possible support be aimed toward the passage of HB 259.

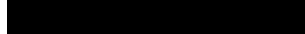
Education is the KEY. The key to all of our lives, and the positive future of Alaska.

We need to be sure that all things related to the education of Alaska citizens, particularly our next generation, be Just and Strong.

Thank you for your efforts.

Best,  
Marilyn

Marilyn Russell



Anchorage, AK 99507



**From:** [Emily Youcha](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Grier Hopkins](#); [Sen. Robert Myers](#); [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259 support  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 11:23:57 AM

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I am writing to express my support for public education funding through HB259 and increasing the base student allocation, which has not been increased for years. I previously wrote in a similar comment to my legislators also supportive of HB272 and HB273. The current State government refuses to establish a state income tax or restructure the oil taxation scheme to help pay for public services like education. So, it is unfortunate that the PFD will have to fund these public services, but what other options remain if the State refuses to tax its citizens or the oil/mining industry?

Please increase funding for my child's education. Our schools across the nation are currently in severe financial trouble - attributed to declined enrollment during the pandemic and losing funding due to low enrollment numbers. Some parents continue to homeschool due to pandemic fears and the federal related pandemic funds have been used up. It is likely that school enrollment may increase in the future as the pandemic eases. However, the pandemic enrollment decline is now causing major budget shortfalls at all school districts. Three elementary schools will close in Fairbanks, and large numbers of teachers will be cut. The school board is threatening to close more schools next year. The budget shortfall is that huge.

The quality of our children's education has been negatively affected by the pandemic. Due to "learning losses" associated with the pandemic, many students need additional educational support after 1) being out of school for lengthy periods (sickness, quarantines, year of remote school) and 2) inadequate remote learning / online teaching methods for a year or more. The schools cannot afford to provide additional educational support for these children, they simply don't have the money to decrease class sizes by adding additional teachers and teaching assistants that are necessary to improve educational outcomes.

I am a parent of a 2nd grader who has had to spend nearly half of her school career in remote learning (which was inadequate despite her teacher's best efforts). I am very concerned about the quality of her education and increasingly large class sizes for the next decade. The current state of public education, especially in Alaska, seems very dire. In fall 2021, my child came back to a full 2nd grade classroom with nearly 30 students in her class - most other classes in her grade level were also very large (the school could not afford to hire another teacher to bring class sizes down). These students are at highly variable educational levels due to inconsistent/inadequate remote education and pandemic issues affecting families. My child's 2nd grade teacher said it was the largest class size she had ever had at this school. They should be decreasing class sizes after the pandemic, not increasing class sizes, so that students can have more one-on-one instruction and additional help from their teachers!

Additionally, it seems that every year so many teachers are given "pink slips". This job instability, combined with decreasing teacher benefits (i.e. increased health care

costs, defined contribution retirement plans, and lack of social security benefits for public employees), likely causes low teacher morale and the loss of good teachers to out-of-state schools or other industries.

Please increase the base student allocation and provide stable funding to public education to improve the quality of education for Alaskan children. Most parents cannot afford to send their kids to private school and the vast majority of parents do not want to or cannot homeschool. One thing all parents want is for our children to be well-educated at their public schools, and right now, that won't happen due to each school's budget crisis and the continued loss of many good teachers.

Thank you for listening to my comment.

Sincerely,  
Emily Youcha, parent  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

To: Ways & Means Committee, Chair Sponholtz, Vice Chair Wool, and Members Josephson, Schrage, Story, Prax, Eastman  
From: Jamie Rodriguez  
Re: Testimony in support of HB259 and support of fully funding public education

Good morning to all members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I write to you today as a mom who has raised two children, both graduates of the Anchorage School District (ASD), and as a proud, now retired, 30-year teacher for the ASD. Thus, I feel more than a bit qualified to discuss the state of education in Alaska. I've experienced a fair amount of what I address today over the my years of teaching, however, never as drastically as what's going on in these most recent few years.

It's time to get back to fully funding education and doing so in a timely manner, from bottom to top. It's time to value education and put a stop to the strangulation of our public schools, school personnel, and the very futures of our children.

School districts across the state have been suffering extreme cuts for years and, as if that's not bad enough, it's become absolutely draconian in the most recent few years.

The situation has gotten so bad that districts across the state have been forced to close schools, five and counting in just Anchorage and Fairbanks alone. There's also been discussion about villages sending students out to centralized, consolidated locations. That's moving backwards and completely unacceptable.

Drastic cuts result in fewer personnel. Fewer teachers and support positions (Special Ed, teacher aides, other education specialists, school nurses, office and custodial staff to name but a few) With all of these cuts, students are forced into packed classrooms, staff workloads increase, and quality education quickly erodes due to too much stress put upon a now too delicate system.

Crowded conditions mean individualized attention is spread too thin. With teacher aides and other support positions eliminated, specialized programs cut, classrooms, essentially, become holding tanks. Warehousing. Crowd management. The time required to focus on crowd management, draws from the time available to give students individualized attention. It only takes a few extra students per classroom to tip the balance. When classrooms grow by even greater numbers quality learning environments erode.

Additionally, if this is not bad enough, on top of everything else, with smaller staff across the board, school buildings deteriorate. With the lack of proper upkeep, buildings are cleaned and repaired less frequently and deterioration sets in. When this happens, building inhabitants are at risk of becoming ill or injured, and, again, learning is impaired. ALSO, keep in mind that any repair following neglect is ALWAYS more expensive.

Is this what we really want, especially in a state that professes to want improved test scores? We can't have it both ways. We can do better than this. We either invest in our kids and Alaska's future, or collectively throw ourselves under the proverbial bus. Draconian cuts send the message that education, teachers, teacher aides, specialists, school staff, and families don't matter. Our kids are our future and education is the foundation to reach a positive outcome.

To any legislator who stands ready to slash and burn school funding year in and year out, are you really ready to throw an entire generation of kids and an entire infrastructure that's supports education to the side of the road like trash? Don't have kids? It will affect you, too. I hold out hope you have more sense, and heart, than that. If you really don't, you probably shouldn't be here. Perhaps legislative life is not a good fit.

Thank you for your consideration.

**From:** [Lili Misel](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Cc:** [Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov](mailto:Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov); [Sen. Robert Myers](#)  
**Subject:** I support HB 259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 7:11:26 PM

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Dear Ivy Spohnholtz,

I am writing to voice my support of HB 259 which provides support to a stable and drawing designated fund source for public education.

I live in Fairbanks where we are facing the closure of three elementary schools. The student allocation has not changed in 6 years and it's affecting the quality of education in our city. I believe that HB will help in fixing this situation. The education of Alaskan children should be one of the most important investments we make and I urge you to continue your support of this bill.

Thank you for supporting HB 259 and thank you for your work on behalf of Alaskans.

Lili Misel  
Fairbanks, AK

**From:** [Mary Corcoran](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony HB 259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 11:19:48 AM

---

To the House Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 259.

I Do Support this bill. I defines fair and consistent treatment of various financial needs that the State is obligated to. Most importantly education funding presents more predictable funding for school districts and the students they serve. Secondly this will remove some of the political manipulations of the PFD.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Mary Corcoran

**From:** [Luke Boles](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Grier Hopkins](#); [Sen. Robert Myers](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Re: HB259 support  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 12:07:45 PM

---

Representative Hopkins and Senator Myers,

First off: thank you for your service to Alaska!

I am writing to express my support for public education funding through HB259 and increasing the base student allocation, which has not been increased for years.

Please increase funding for my child's education. The pandemic enrollment decline is causing major budget shortfalls at all school districts. Three elementary schools will close in Fairbanks, and teachers will be laid off. The school board is threatening to close more schools next year.

The quality of our children's education has been negatively affected by the pandemic. Due to "learning losses" associated with the pandemic, many students need additional educational support after 1) being out of school for lengthy periods (sickness, quarantines, year of remote school) and 2) inadequate remote learning / online teaching methods for a year or more. The schools cannot afford to provide additional educational support for these children, they simply don't have the money to decrease class sizes by adding additional teachers and teaching assistants that are necessary to improve educational outcomes.

I am a parent of a 2nd grader who has had to spend nearly half of her school career in remote learning (which was inadequate despite her teacher's best efforts). I am very concerned about the quality of her education and increasingly large class sizes for the next decade. The current state of public education, especially in Alaska, seems very dire. In fall 2021, my child came back to a full 2nd grade classroom with nearly 30 students in her class - most other classes in her grade level were also very large (the school could not afford to hire another teacher to bring class sizes down). These students are at highly variable educational levels due to inconsistent/inadequate remote education and pandemic issues affecting families. My child's 2nd grade teacher said it was the largest class size she had ever had at this school. They should be decreasing class sizes after the pandemic, not increasing class sizes, so that students can have more one-on-one instruction and additional help from their teachers!

Additionally, it seems that every year many teachers are given "pink slips". This job instability, combined with decreasing teacher benefits (i.e. increased health care costs, defined contribution retirement plans, and lack of social security benefits for public employees), likely causes low teacher morale and the loss of good teachers to out-of-state schools or other industries.

Please increase the base student allocation and provide stable funding to public

education to improve the quality of education for Alaskan children. Most parents cannot afford to send their kids to private school and the vast majority of parents do not want to or cannot homeschool. One thing all parents want is for our children to be well-educated at their public schools, and right now, that won't happen due to each school's budget crisis and the continued loss of many good teachers.

The current State government refuses to establish a state income tax and/or establish other taxes/fees to users of public services. So, it is unfortunate that the PFD will have to fund these public services, but what other options remain if the State refuses to tax its citizens and/or other users of its services?

Thank you for considering to my comment.

Sincerely,  
Luke Boles, parent  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

**From:** [Barbara Rath](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 12:19:32 PM  
**Importance:** High

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Representative Spohnholz,

I am writing to express support for HB 259 to reinvest critical funding into public education in Alaska. The continued reduction of options, increasing size of classes, and mounting impacts of budgetary shortfalls across the state create a less desirable education journey for our young students. HB 259 creates a means by which to create sustainable appropriations for the purposes of further supporting public education in Alaska. I believe that the percentage appropriation formulae from the Permanent Fund earnings for distribution to the public education fund as established under AS 14.17.300 as outlined in HB 259 creates ways to increase distributed fund for statewide public education needs. This bill further addresses appropriations above the subsection percentages calculated for state aid under AS 14.09.010 and AS 14.17 with remaining amount to be appropriated to school districts.

Please vote to pass HB 259 in support of our Alaskan students who will populate our workforce and drive our economic development in the future. Our collective support for our students now will create greater opportunities for successful career paths and retention of Alaskan residents who will further invest their own work and support of education here in our state.

Respectfully,

**Barbara Rath, MSW**

ED/Chief Executive Officer

[The Arc of Anchorage](#) | 2211 Arca Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508




**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:** The contents of this email, including attachments, are intended for the use of the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient of the transmitted information, you are hereby notified that any disclosing, copying, distributing or taking action in reliance on the contents of this information is strictly prohibited. If you have received this transmission in error, notify the sender that you have received this information in error and then delete the information transmitted.



**From:** [Leon J.](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB259  
**Date:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 5:49:45 PM

---

Hello Representative Spohnholz,

I am writing to encourage you and other representatives to pass HB259. Funding for education is incredibly important. Our education system is under incredible stress, and especially teachers. We need to be able to keep class sizes at a level where it is optimized for educational success. That's not happening when class sizes are pushing up into the 30s and 40s.

As an entrepreneur that provides services to other businesses, I recognize the importance of having a highly skilled workforce pipeline available to bolster the economy. The shortage of talent in Cybersecurity is a magnification of that. The lack of local talent makes it more expensive for businesses to start in or relocate to Alaska. That talent pipeline starts with things like food security, housing security, early childhood education, and great public schools. Alaska cannot afford not to pass HB259.

Warm regards,

Leon Jaimes [mobile]

**From:** [Felisa Wilson](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#); [Rep. Adam Wool](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Calvin Schrage](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Mike Prax](#); [Rep. David Eastman](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 9:07:40 AM

---

I am writing to express my support for HB259. It is a good bill that will benefit our education program in Alaska.

Please pass HB259.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Felisa Wilson

**From:** [Sandra Murray](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#); [Rep. Adam Wool](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Calvin Schrage](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Mike Prax](#); [Rep. David Eastman](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB259 K-12 Education  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 9:31:34 AM

---

I am in support of HB259 for K-12 Education.

Sincerely,  
Sandra Murray

**From:** [Merri Rowe](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support HB259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 10:37:29 PM

---

Representative Spohnholz,

Please support HB259. Supporting and funding public education is the most important investment that can be made for future Alaskans. Educating our children and ensuring funding for schools and educators will encourage them to stay in Alaska and contribute to our state. By not supporting education we are driving talented students and educators out of the state. We cannot remain competitive with the lower 48 states. Please support HB259.

Thank you,  
Merri Rowe

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Laura Bonner](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Cc:** [Laura Bonner](#)  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Support HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 9:12:27 PM

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Representative Spohnholz,

I support HB259. It provides for a reasonable and sustainable amount for PFDs. It repeals the old statutory formula that Alaska can no longer afford. The 50/50 split is not sustainable for future PFDs.

HB259 provides for a predictable and sustainable way to fund public education. Flat funding for the past few years were, in reality, cuts. Predictable funding means school districts can plan and focus on educating our future leaders, medical providers and tradespeople.

HB259 also provides funding for services Alaskans need like public safety, the court system and snow plowing.

For these reasons, I support HB29. Thank you for proposing this bill..

Respectfully,  
Laura Bonner  
Anchorage, AK 99516

**From:** [Joan Diamond](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259 Investment in education k -12  
**Date:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 5:21:32 PM

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Rep. Spohnholz,

My mother told me that public education is the best investment one can make. Our son and daughter attended k-12 here in Anchorage from 1990-2003. They are both productive young people who contribute to the greater good. Without quality education of all children regardless of color, region or ethnic status, we will never have a capable population of young people to grow our economy. Quality education available to every Alaskan child will make the difference as to whether young families want to settle here and Companies will move here because we have an educated workforce facing tomorrow's challenges. We are going backwards ! Do you really want people to leave Alaska because the opportunity for quality education is being trashed? Do not hesitate to pass HB 259 this session. In fact, all legislators should "burn rubber on the bottom of their tennis shoes" to pass this bill now!

Thank you,

Joan Diamond  
Anchorage

.

,

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Maggie Price](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 7:33:53 AM

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I support HB 259 to stabilize our education system in Alaska and to help protect the education of our most valuable resource... our children.

Margaret Price



Anchorage AK. 99507

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Russell Marilyn](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 2:15:46 PM

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Hello Representative Spohnholz,

As a retired teacher, I am writing to ask that all possible support be aimed toward the passage of HB 259.

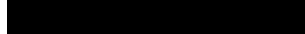
Education is the KEY. The key to all of our lives, and the positive future of Alaska.

We need to be sure that all things related to the education of Alaska citizens, particularly our next generation, be Just and Strong.

Thank you for your efforts.

Best,  
Marilyn

Marilyn Russell



Anchorage, AK 99507



**From:** [Emily Youcha](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Grier Hopkins](#); [Sen. Robert Myers](#); [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259 support  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 11:23:57 AM

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I am writing to express my support for public education funding through HB259 and increasing the base student allocation, which has not been increased for years. I previously wrote in a similar comment to my legislators also supportive of HB272 and HB273. The current State government refuses to establish a state income tax or restructure the oil taxation scheme to help pay for public services like education. So, it is unfortunate that the PFD will have to fund these public services, but what other options remain if the State refuses to tax its citizens or the oil/mining industry?

Please increase funding for my child's education. Our schools across the nation are currently in severe financial trouble - attributed to declined enrollment during the pandemic and losing funding due to low enrollment numbers. Some parents continue to homeschool due to pandemic fears and the federal related pandemic funds have been used up. It is likely that school enrollment may increase in the future as the pandemic eases. However, the pandemic enrollment decline is now causing major budget shortfalls at all school districts. Three elementary schools will close in Fairbanks, and large numbers of teachers will be cut. The school board is threatening to close more schools next year. The budget shortfall is that huge.

The quality of our children's education has been negatively affected by the pandemic. Due to "learning losses" associated with the pandemic, many students need additional educational support after 1) being out of school for lengthy periods (sickness, quarantines, year of remote school) and 2) inadequate remote learning / online teaching methods for a year or more. The schools cannot afford to provide additional educational support for these children, they simply don't have the money to decrease class sizes by adding additional teachers and teaching assistants that are necessary to improve educational outcomes.

I am a parent of a 2nd grader who has had to spend nearly half of her school career in remote learning (which was inadequate despite her teacher's best efforts). I am very concerned about the quality of her education and increasingly large class sizes for the next decade. The current state of public education, especially in Alaska, seems very dire. In fall 2021, my child came back to a full 2nd grade classroom with nearly 30 students in her class - most other classes in her grade level were also very large (the school could not afford to hire another teacher to bring class sizes down). These students are at highly variable educational levels due to inconsistent/inadequate remote education and pandemic issues affecting families. My child's 2nd grade teacher said it was the largest class size she had ever had at this school. They should be decreasing class sizes after the pandemic, not increasing class sizes, so that students can have more one-on-one instruction and additional help from their teachers!

Additionally, it seems that every year so many teachers are given "pink slips". This job instability, combined with decreasing teacher benefits (i.e. increased health care

costs, defined contribution retirement plans, and lack of social security benefits for public employees), likely causes low teacher morale and the loss of good teachers to out-of-state schools or other industries.

Please increase the base student allocation and provide stable funding to public education to improve the quality of education for Alaskan children. Most parents cannot afford to send their kids to private school and the vast majority of parents do not want to or cannot homeschool. One thing all parents want is for our children to be well-educated at their public schools, and right now, that won't happen due to each school's budget crisis and the continued loss of many good teachers.

Thank you for listening to my comment.

Sincerely,  
Emily Youcha, parent  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

To: Ways & Means Committee, Chair Sponholtz, Vice Chair Wool, and Members  
Josephson, Schrage, Story, Prax, Eastman  
From: Jamie Rodriguez  
Re: Testimony in support of HB259 and support of fully funding public education

Good morning to all members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I write to you today as a mom who has raised two children, both graduates of the Anchorage School District (ASD), and as a proud, now retired, 30-year teacher for the ASD. Thus, I feel more than a bit qualified to discuss the state of education in Alaska. I've experienced a fair amount of what I address today over the my years of teaching, however, never as drastically as what's going on in these most recent few years.

It's time to get back to fully funding education and doing so in a timely manner, from bottom to top. It's time to value education and put a stop to the strangulation of our public schools, school personnel, and the very futures of our children.

School districts across the state have been suffering extreme cuts for years and, as if that's not bad enough, it's become absolutely draconian in the most recent few years.

The situation has gotten so bad that districts across the state have been forced to close schools, five and counting in just Anchorage and Fairbanks alone. There's also been discussion about villages sending students out to centralized, consolidated locations. That's moving backwards and completely unacceptable.

Drastic cuts result in fewer personnel. Fewer teachers and support positions (Special Ed, teacher aides, other education specialists, school nurses, office and custodial staff to name but a few) With all of these cuts, students are forced into packed classrooms, staff workloads increase, and quality education quickly erodes due to too much stress put upon a now too delicate system.

Crowded conditions mean individualized attention is spread too thin. With teacher aides and other support positions eliminated, specialized programs cut, classrooms, essentially, become holding tanks. Warehousing. Crowd management. The time required to focus on crowd management, draws from the time available to give students individualized attention. It only takes a few extra students per classroom to tip the balance. When classrooms grow by even greater numbers quality learning environments erode.

Additionally, if this is not bad enough, on top of everything else, with smaller staff across the board, school buildings deteriorate. With the lack of proper upkeep, buildings are cleaned and repaired less frequently and deterioration sets in. When this happens, building inhabitants are at risk of becoming ill or injured, and, again, learning is impaired. ALSO, keep in mind that any repair following neglect is ALWAYS more expensive.

Is this what we really want, especially in a state that professes to want improved test scores? We can't have it both ways. We can do better than this. We either invest in our kids and Alaska's future, or collectively throw ourselves under the proverbial bus. Draconian cuts send the message that education, teachers, teacher aides, specialists, school staff, and families don't matter. Our kids are our future and education is the foundation to reach a positive outcome.

To any legislator who stands ready to slash and burn school funding year in and year out, are you really ready to throw an entire generation of kids and an entire infrastructure that's supports education to the side of the road like trash? Don't have kids? It will affect you, too. I hold out hope you have more sense, and heart, than that. If you really don't, you probably shouldn't be here. Perhaps legislative life is not a good fit.

Thank you for your consideration.

**From:** [Lili Misel](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Cc:** [Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov](mailto:Grier.Hopkins@akleg.gov); [Sen. Robert Myers](#)  
**Subject:** I support HB 259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 7:11:26 PM

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Dear Ivy Spohnholtz,

I am writing to voice my support of HB 259 which provides support to a stable and drawing designated fund source for public education.

I live in Fairbanks where we are facing the closure of three elementary schools. The student allocation has not changed in 6 years and it's affecting the quality of education in our city. I believe that HB will help in fixing this situation. The education of Alaskan children should be one of the most important investments we make and I urge you to continue your support of this bill.

Thank you for supporting HB 259 and thank you for your work on behalf of Alaskans.

Lili Misel  
Fairbanks, AK

**From:** [Mary Corcoran](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony HB 259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 11:19:48 AM

---

To the House Ways and Means Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 259.

I Do Support this bill. I defines fair and consistent treatment of various financial needs that the State is obligated to. Most importantly education funding presents more predictable funding for school districts and the students they serve. Secondly this will remove some of the political manipulations of the PFD.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,  
Mary Corcoran

**From:** [Luke Boles](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Grier Hopkins](#); [Sen. Robert Myers](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Re: HB259 support  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 12:07:45 PM

---

Representative Hopkins and Senator Myers,

First off: thank you for your service to Alaska!

I am writing to express my support for public education funding through HB259 and increasing the base student allocation, which has not been increased for years.

Please increase funding for my child's education. The pandemic enrollment decline is causing major budget shortfalls at all school districts. Three elementary schools will close in Fairbanks, and teachers will be laid off. The school board is threatening to close more schools next year.

The quality of our children's education has been negatively affected by the pandemic. Due to "learning losses" associated with the pandemic, many students need additional educational support after 1) being out of school for lengthy periods (sickness, quarantines, year of remote school) and 2) inadequate remote learning / online teaching methods for a year or more. The schools cannot afford to provide additional educational support for these children, they simply don't have the money to decrease class sizes by adding additional teachers and teaching assistants that are necessary to improve educational outcomes.

I am a parent of a 2nd grader who has had to spend nearly half of her school career in remote learning (which was inadequate despite her teacher's best efforts). I am very concerned about the quality of her education and increasingly large class sizes for the next decade. The current state of public education, especially in Alaska, seems very dire. In fall 2021, my child came back to a full 2nd grade classroom with nearly 30 students in her class - most other classes in her grade level were also very large (the school could not afford to hire another teacher to bring class sizes down). These students are at highly variable educational levels due to inconsistent/inadequate remote education and pandemic issues affecting families. My child's 2nd grade teacher said it was the largest class size she had ever had at this school. They should be decreasing class sizes after the pandemic, not increasing class sizes, so that students can have more one-on-one instruction and additional help from their teachers!

Additionally, it seems that every year many teachers are given "pink slips". This job instability, combined with decreasing teacher benefits (i.e. increased health care costs, defined contribution retirement plans, and lack of social security benefits for public employees), likely causes low teacher morale and the loss of good teachers to out-of-state schools or other industries.

Please increase the base student allocation and provide stable funding to public

education to improve the quality of education for Alaskan children. Most parents cannot afford to send their kids to private school and the vast majority of parents do not want to or cannot homeschool. One thing all parents want is for our children to be well-educated at their public schools, and right now, that won't happen due to each school's budget crisis and the continued loss of many good teachers.

The current State government refuses to establish a state income tax and/or establish other taxes/fees to users of public services. So, it is unfortunate that the PFD will have to fund these public services, but what other options remain if the State refuses to tax its citizens and/or other users of its services?

Thank you for considering to my comment.

Sincerely,  
Luke Boles, parent  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

**From:** [Leon J.](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB259  
**Date:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 5:49:45 PM

---

Hello Representative Spohnholz,

I am writing to encourage you and other representatives to pass HB259. Funding for education is incredibly important. Our education system is under incredible stress, and especially teachers. We need to be able to keep class sizes at a level where it is optimized for educational success. That's not happening when class sizes are pushing up into the 30s and 40s.

As an entrepreneur that provides services to other businesses, I recognize the importance of having a highly skilled workforce pipeline available to bolster the economy. The shortage of talent in Cybersecurity is a magnification of that. The lack of local talent makes it more expensive for businesses to start in or relocate to Alaska. That talent pipeline starts with things like food security, housing security, early childhood education, and great public schools. Alaska cannot afford not to pass HB259.

Warm regards,

Leon Jaimes [mobile]



**From:** [Felisa Wilson](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#); [Rep. Adam Wool](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Calvin Schrage](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Mike Prax](#); [Rep. David Eastman](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 9:07:40 AM

---

I am writing to express my support for HB259. It is a good bill that will benefit our education program in Alaska.

Please pass HB259.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Felisa Wilson

**From:** [Sandra Murray](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#); [Rep. Adam Wool](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Calvin Schrage](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Mike Prax](#); [Rep. David Eastman](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB259 K-12 Education  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 9:31:34 AM

---

I am in support of HB259 for K-12 Education.

Sincerely,  
Sandra Murray

**From:** [Merri Rowe](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support HB259  
**Date:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 10:37:29 PM

---

Representative Spohnholz,

Please support HB259. Supporting and funding public education is the most important investment that can be made for future Alaskans. Educating our children and ensuring funding for schools and educators will encourage them to stay in Alaska and contribute to our state. By not supporting education we are driving talented students and educators out of the state. We cannot remain competitive with the lower 48 states. Please support HB259.

Thank you,  
Merri Rowe

Sent from my iPhone

February 16, 2022

Dear members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

Predictable, proactive funding is one of the Anchorage School Board's top legislative priorities this year. As a member of the Board, this letter reflects my personal support for HB 259, which offers predictability and the prospect of additional education funding beyond the statutory minimum to students, families, and communities across Alaska. It achieves predictability by directing a dedicated portion of the POMV from the Permanent Fund, which has a more predictable and stable rate of return than other forms of state revenue, toward school districts, centralized correspondence, and pupil transportation. Although some may question the dedication of a state funding stream entirely to education when the Alaska State Legislature confronts many competing interests on an annual basis, the State of Alaska has a Constitutional obligation to adequately fund and maintain education.

Since FY 2017, the Anchorage School District has dealt with an unadjusted BSA—coupled with multiple inflationary drivers and decreased student enrollment—by relying on efficiencies, new revenues, the fund balance, and doses of one-time funding.

Here's an overview of what ASD has done to live within its means since FY 17. Please note that "PTR" is a budget staffing formula standing for Pupil to Teacher Ratio. It creates a baseline to establish the total number of teachers allocated per school. "FTE" stands for Full Time Equivalent staff.

- *Efficiencies:*
  - Since FY 2017, ASD has closed two schools (Mt. Iliamna and Mt. Spurr), combined several programs (Crossroads, AVAIL, PAIDEA), merged two schools into one facility (King Tech High School and Alaska Middle College School), and reduced staff to achieve balanced budgets.
  - General Fund FTE for Instruction has dropped from 2,441.18 in FY 19 to a projected 1,751.87 for FY 23, a 28.2% decrease.
- *New Revenues:*
  - ASD has increased both revenue and educational opportunities c/o the Alaska Middle College School and a CTE-focused partnership with the Lower Yukon School District.
- *ASD has also made ends meet by relying on:*
  - A portion of the fund balance in every fiscal year between FY 2017 and FY 2021.
  - One-time funds from the State in FY 19 and FY 20.
  - Roughly \$12 million in Federal relief funds to pay for Health Teachers, information technology, and summer school in FY 21.
  - Nearly \$29 million in federal relief funds to retain PTR at pre-pandemic levels for FY 22, at levels ranging from 21 in Kindergarten and 25 in third grade to 30.25 in grades 9-12. *Without those Federal Relief dollars, PTR would have increased by 4 across every grade level during this recovery-focused academic year such that*

**From:** [Annette Kittleson](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Education support  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:36:35 PM

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It is unacceptable to have so many children per class/teacher. As a former teacher I can attest to losing teachers under those conditions.

Thanks, Ivy, for doing a great job supporting education!!

Annette Kittleson

Your old neighbor up on Alpine Dr.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Don May](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#); [Rep. Adam Wool](#); [Rep. Andy Josephson](#); [Rep. Calvin Schrage](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Mike Prax](#); [Rep. David Eastman](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259 re split of pomv  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 12:11:40 AM

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Please support this important and fiscally responsible bill. It is a rational approach to sustaining a good level of PFD's while also providing important funding to the constitutionally mandated functions of Alaskan government.

We must all pull together to keep Alaska as the land of promise that it was when I came here in 1970.

Don May



Anchorage, AK 99516

**From:** [aktomn@gci.net](mailto:aktomn@gci.net)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:22:34 PM

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This is a bill that should be passed; it's been needed for years. I visited a few of my grandson's 10th grade classes 4 or 5 years ago. As a retired teacher, I was shocked at the size of the classes compared to the 90's when I retired. And in view of the damage Governor Dunleavy has done to public education at all levels, our state is in dire need of some semi-sufficient funding. Furthermore, expecting a school board or any public body, to prepare a budget without advance knowledge of funding levels is just idiocy. Our state's education funding really needs some continuity.

And anybody who has lived in Alaska any length of time knows why the pfd level needs to be set - and at a realistic level. The constant battle between the socialists (who want the state to give them money) and others who want the state to use more money for the general public welfare, is an ugly thing to see year after year.

Tom Nelson  
Anchorage 99507

**From:** [Kevin Klott](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB 259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 9:14:04 PM

---

Hello Ivy,

My name is Kevin Klott and I am a 7th-grade language arts teacher at Goldenview Middle School in Anchorage. I am writing in support of HB 259 and more funding for education.

At Goldenview, we are budgeted to lose five full-time teaching positions. Two will be absorbed with attrition but three will be teachers who expect to return next year. If this actually happens, it would be devastating to those teachers and their families. It would also be a crushing blow to a school that employed 45 full-time teachers when I started in 2014 and is now down to 30.

Thank you for all the work you do for our state, especially in the area of education. We need more legislators like you — and more educators, not fewer.

Thank you,  
Kevin Klott



**From:** [Diana Lingle](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 7:25:36 AM

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The education of Alaskan children should be a top priority of this state, yet funding of public education has been slashed repeatedly over the past years. That is inexcusable. Please support HB259 and reverse this appalling trend.

Diana Lingle

[REDACTED]

Ester, AK 99725

[REDACTED]

**From:** [Arthur Harmon](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 6:54:13 AM

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Our children are our future! Thank you for supporting HB259 to fund education!

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Wendy Robbins](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 10:52:24 PM

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Representative Spohnholz:

I am in favor of HB259.

Fiscal stability is imperative for a functioning state government.

Having a known PFD/government services split will allow families to better manage their finances.

I wholeheartedly support a stable and growing designated fund source to support education. Alaska needs and deserves an educated population. Businesses need educated employees! Having a strong education system will encourage businesses to operate in Alaska and college graduates to remain in-state.

HB259 appears to be a good step toward creating a sustainable financial plan for Alaska!

Thank you.

Wendy Robbins

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Robert Auer](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:40:36 PM

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This is Robert Auer I am a resident of East Anchorage, I have two school-age children, one with special needs. I'm graduate of Dimond high school I believe we need to do something with the funding for schools. It seems like every year the teachers are without a contract or there is something in the news about schools needing funding. It seems to me that this bill will fix the problem with that.

Thank you,  
Robert Auer

**From:** [Amy Lujan](#)  
**To:** [House Ways and Means](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Rep. Sara Hannan](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#)  
**Subject:** HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:27:32 PM

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Legislators,

Thank you for your time and attention to this bill. I am hopeful that after quite a bit of discussion over the past year in the House Ways and Means Committee, the Comprehensive Fiscal Plan Working Group and in many other venues I'm sure, we may finally break the logjam to formulate a fiscal plan for our state and to settle on a workable formula for the PFD.

As many of you know, I've been involved with K-12 advocacy for nearly thirty years. However, I'm now retired and representing only myself, as a concerned citizen of Alaska.

Here's what I've observed over the years, relevant to this discussion:

- 1) Strong, general support for K-12, but a lack of willingness to provide enough funding to provide adequate resources! Most recent examples: lack of increase to the BSA since FY07 (HB 272; HB 273); struggle to pass the reading bill (SB8, HB164)
- 2) The can is constantly kicked down the road, when policy makers are saved from making hard choices. Usually, it's oil prices that have saved us; this year, it's federal money.
- 3) Inability to resolve long-term funding issues. The POMV law was a good step, but the conflicting statutes involving the dividend were never cleaned up, and this issue has become a thorn in the side of legislators wanting to move forward toward a sensible fiscal plan.

HB259 seems to be a step in the right direction. Since K-12 is one of the only constitutionally-mandated programs the legislature must fund, it makes sense to allocate a consistent funding stream to K-12. This will provide greater certainty for K-12 leaders to plan, which will yield better results! It's not rocket science.

Furthermore, a dedicated funding stream to dividends will provide a consistent formula, like we had in the past. It will be essential that associated statutes are revised as well.

In the long term, the Permanent Fund can be Alaska's next renewable resource, supporting our state for years to come. I encourage all legislators to support this bill, so that we can move toward that future.

Amy Lujan  
Juneau

**From:** [Kelly Auer](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:11:04 PM

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Good afternoon -

I am an East Anchorage resident and I fully support finding a sustainable way to fund our schools. Alaska schools have been flat-funded for far too long and, despite stretching every nickel, are still in financial crisis. Using part of the permanent fund earnings each year to fund education is sustainable, responsible, and prioritizes our children, who are the future of our state. Thank you for your work to find solutions to the tough fiscal problems facing Alaska!

Sincerely,  
Kelly Auer

**From:** [b farris](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** HB259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 9:01:17 AM

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Good morning,

I am writing in support of HP 259.

Education is crucial to the future of our children and of our democracy. We cannot shortchange our children and their futures by being stingy with funding now.

Best wishes,  
Barbara Farris

**From:** [Shane Inch](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** House Bill 259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 9:45:29 PM

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Please keep supporting this bill. Part of my reason for retiring early as an administrator was the difficulty of finding and keeping teachers and support staff. This coupled with a lack of funding for things such as keeping buildings repaired are not only a challenge but unfair to children. Education must have reliable and consistent funding!

Thanks for fighting the fight!

Shane Inch





**From:** [Connie Markis](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** I support HB 259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 3:48:40 PM

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Dear Representative Ivy,

Given the unfortunate financial circumstances our schools all across Alaska are having with the closing of schools, need for quality positions and giving an environment that allows for effective learning, I think having a stable and growing designated fund source for public education is a great idea. Our children's education is one of the first building blocks for a thriving and successful Alaska. I'm in favor of this 75/25 split of the PMOV draw with designated funding for K-12 education.

Thank you,  
Connie Markis  
Anchorage, Alaska

**From:** [Summer Koester](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** in support of education funding  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 12:36:21 PM

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Hi, I just wanted to email my support for HB 259 on education spending. Please forward my support to the powers that be so we can pass K-12 education funding!

Thanks,

Summer Koester



Juneau, AK 99801

Summer Koester | Writer  
[summerkoester.com](https://summerkoester.com)  
Sign up for my [newsletter](#)

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**From:** [Deborah Ward](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#); [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Public Education Funding  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:36:06 PM

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Dear Representative Spohnholz -

I am writing to you as a retired school psychologist who served rural and urban schools in Alaska for 38 years. Having experienced the highs and lows in the quality of education in our state, I fully support a designated funding source for public education. Alaska's children, particularly in rural regions and Title I schools need and deserve top notch educators. Special needs children are especially vulnerable, as there are national shortages of special education teachers and related service providers such as speech pathologists, occupational/physical therapists and school psychologists. Repeated budget cuts have taken a toll on Alaskan schools and on our ability to educate and prepare students for the future. Public education is the best vehicle to provide free and appropriate education for ALL children. It is shameful that the wealthiest state in the USA has abandoned its children. Teaching has never been more challenging than it is today. Alaska is no longer competitive with other states in salaries and retirement benefits, and these factors are contributing to difficulties in attracting and retaining the best and the brightest teachers. Thank you for sponsoring legislation that will promote sound educational practices in Alaska by providing a stable, predictable funding source for public schools.

Sincerely,  
Deborah Ward, Ed.S., NCSP

**From:** [Whitney J Neibaur](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 5:22:40 PM

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As a lifelong Alaskan now raising my own children here, the drastic cut in education funding has me deeply concerned for the futures of my three children currently enrolled in Fairbanks schools. I personally benefitted from a good education in the 90s and to see the support for our teachers and school districts getting reduced and cut back year after year worries me that we will have to look at going out of state to ensure our children's educational futures with the options they would like to make school enjoyable and challenging. All three of my students love their music programs, often that being the motivating force getting them out the door in the morning. They have all had excellent teachers, but simultaneously have watched the departure of fantastic teachers in the wake of diminishing support. The face of unprecedented challenges. Any bill that propels up our educational system and helps our students succeed and further the future of Alaska should be supported as soon as possible.

Whitney Neibaur

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**From:** [Arthur Peterson](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 12:28:42 AM

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Hi Ivy, et al.,

As a 55-year Alaskan, I want to express my support for HB 259. We surely do not want to have Alaska be a pathetic collection of uneducated or poorly educated people. Further cuts of education funding would be disastrous for the state.

I am currently out of the country, and cannot testify in person.

Art Peterson

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**From:** [Sophia Armstrong](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 4:33:08 PM

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To Whom it may concern,

I am an elementary teacher in Haines, Alaska. I was educated within the Anchorage School District and the local universities. We have some fabulous school districts in our state, but we can't run on fumes. Good teachers give more than expected, try harder than is reasonable, and care more than one could imagine. Yet we are supported less and less when it comes to the BSA. If you want the best teachers to come to Alaska, and stay in Alaska, they must feel supported. Please pass HB259 to solidify our school funding and send the message that the education of our students is fundamental to our state's health and growth. Thank you.

--

**Sophia Armstrong**  
1st Grade Teacher  
Haines Elementary School



"Empowering Excellence Everyday"

**From:** [Eduardo Wilner](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** support for HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:43:39 PM

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Please defend our duty to a future where Alaskans are fully educated. Even those interested only in cash rewards should know that the surest way to reduce them in the future is cutting our education.

Thank you!

Eduardo Wilner



**From:** [Brooke Itter](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** Support HB259  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 3:45:55 PM

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It's imperative that our schools have proper funding if we want our children to receive the education they all deserve.

Brooke Itter  
Alaskan, parent, and public educator



**From:** [Douglas Hope](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** SUPPORT  
**Date:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 8:33:48 AM

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I support HB 259 and universal pre-K for the Alaska School System

Douglas Hope

[REDACTED]

Anchorage AK  
99504

**From:** [House Education](#)  
**To:** [House Ways and Means](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 24, 2022 12:29:45 PM

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**From:** Kevin Shove <kshove@hbsd.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 17, 2022 9:24 AM  
**To:** House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 259

House Ways and Means Special Committee,  
Distinguished Representatives

For the record my name is Kevin Shove, I am a School board member for the Haines Borough School District.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important bill, HB 259. I wish I could have testified via phone as with HB 272 and HB 273 but had business obligations.  
We, the Haines Borough School Board, Strongly support HB 259. In conjunction with Bills HB 272 and HB 273 would give stable funding to our education system. Stable and sufficient funding enables School Boards to plan and set goals for their districts. Also properly funded Education attracts qualified Educators to the state and retains Alaskans that want to seek employment in Education.

With the uncertainty of the economy and rising costs, inflation is at forty year highs as you know, these Bills help stabilize the funding for Education. As store manager for Howsers IGA I have seen first hand the absolutely unbelievable increase in costs across the board. As I stated in my testimony on HB 272 and HB 273 we are receiving on average over one thousand price increases a week.

I think most Alaskans would agree if we are going to use the PFD funds Education is something most can get behind.

Thank you for your time and consideration  
Kevin Shove  
Haines Borough School District Board Member  
Store manager Howsers IGA Supermarket

**From:** [House Education](#)  
**To:** [House Ways and Means](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Support HB 259  
**Date:** Thursday, February 24, 2022 12:29:33 PM

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**From:** Tracy Wirak <twirak@hbsd.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 6:18 PM  
**To:** House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Support HB 259

Good afternoon,

Reliable, predictable and generous funding that address the rising costs of educating our students is essential.

Receiving appropriated funding in a timely fashion supports the importance of staff retention and allows for a responsible and well planned budgeting process that supports the best interest of our students.

Ensuring the long term protection of the foundation formula is key to the success of our students, our schools and our future. Education should be a funding priority.

I support HB 259 that uses a percentage of the PFD to ensure schools continue to receive reliable and adequate funding.

Sincerely,

Theresa Wirak  
School Board Member  
Haines Borough School District

**From:** [mike kenny](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Ivy Spohnholz](#)  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Supportive Of HB259  
**Date:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 7:49:34 PM

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Rep. Spohnholz,

I am writing you to express our deep support of HB259. It is beyond the pale to force our schools to suffer reductions year after year and face now a \$67 million hole while a State agency will contribute \$60 million to develop a hundred mile road to mine minerals for the benefit of billionaires in Canada. Develop our children in a well funded school system built for the future.

Our future in the knowledge and information era depends upon a strong educational system able to prepare for the future in a data/digital world.

Both of our children attended school in the Anchorage School District from pre- school through high school with a daughter attaining her degree from APU while our son earned his masters degree out of state.

Those were the years that our educational system ranked near the top of our Country, it is painful to now be in league with the Mississippi and West Virginias.

HB 259 lights the path towards prosperity and stability for generations to come. Just as corporate developers demand stability from the State our citizenry deserve stability in funding from a designated source.

Mike & Val Kenny

[mvk@bearvalleyak.net](mailto:mvk@bearvalleyak.net)

Anchorage, 99516