



May 17, 2026

To: The Senate Finance Committee

AASB Supports CS CSHB 28(FIN)

From: Lon Garrison, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)

Chair Hoffman and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Lon Garrison, Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), representing locally elected school boards from districts across Alaska. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding CS CSHB 28(FIN).

AASB supports several provisions within this legislation because they align with our long-standing legislative priorities to provide **sufficient, sustainable, and predictable funding for public education**, improve the **recruitment and retention of educators**, and strengthen outcomes for Alaska's students.

First, AASB strongly supports the proposal to **fund school district energy costs separately from the public education funding formula**. Alaska's districts continue to experience extraordinary volatility in heating fuel and electricity costs, particularly in rural and remote communities. These fluctuations are largely outside the control of school districts yet increasingly force difficult tradeoffs between paying utility bills and preserving instructional programs, staffing, and student opportunities.

Creating a separate mechanism to reimburse energy costs is a **structurally more appropriate approach** and better aligns with AASB's advocacy for **predictable and sustainable education funding**. Energy expenditures should not continue to erode resources intended to support classroom instruction and student achievement. BSA-generated funding should remain focused on educating students rather than absorbing unpredictable external cost pressures.

AASB also supports provisions intended to address Alaska's persistent educator shortage, including targeted teacher recruitment incentives and increased flexibility to utilize experienced retired educators where shortages exist. These measures align with AASB's priorities and resolutions supporting **teacher recruitment, retention, and workforce stability**.

Regarding the proposal to limit annual increases in the **minimum required local contribution**, AASB offers **cautious support** and appreciates efforts to address concerns arising from rapidly increasing property values in some communities. However, we encourage continued monitoring and analysis of potential unintended consequences, including effects on **education funding**



equity and long-term adequacy, as well as possible interactions with federal disparity requirements. Changes to foundational funding mechanisms warrant careful evaluation to ensure they do not inadvertently create inequities or instability over time.

AASB appreciates the committee's work to address both immediate and structural challenges facing Alaska's public schools. We encourage continued investment in policies that promote stable funding, support educators, and improve outcomes for Alaska's students.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to Alaska's children and public education.

Lon Garrison

Executive Director

Association of Alaska School Boards