



Anchorage School District

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Carol Comeau

February 16, 2011

Honorable Bill Wielechowski
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Comments Regarding ASD Support of SB3

Bill
Dear Senator Wielechowski,

The Anchorage School District Student Nutrition Department has been able to weather the difficult financial challenges over the last five years thanks to the support of the Anchorage School Board.

In 2005-2006 the School Board approved a ten cent increase in all meal prices and a twenty-five cent increase in 2007-2008 and in 2008-2009. The sixty cent increase in that short period of time made it difficult for many families to pay for meals for their children.

In May of 2008 the School Board approved the transfer of \$1.123 million from the general fund to the Student Nutrition fund to cover losses from previous years and help the department for the next few years from increasing meal costs for parents/students.

The Student Nutrition Department has reduced staff to the point that further reductions are no longer possible. Truck and equipment replacement purchases have been severely reduced since 2007. Some equipment parts were taken from units to keep other equipment operational. That only worked until there were no more units available for parts. The School Board has approved use of the Student Nutrition fund balance to offset the need for replacement trucks and equipment. That only works until the fund balance is gone.

Since 2005 food costs have escalated as shown below and it is predicted that food costs will go up another three to ten percent over the next few years. The new dietary guideline will require ever higher costs especially in Alaska because most fresh fruits and vegetables are not grown in colder climates. According to our records annual expenditures for food products since 2005-2006 are as follows:

2005-2006	\$4,379,194
2005-2007	\$5,076,974
2005-2008	\$4,991,302
2005-2009	\$5,152,219
2005-2010	\$5,328,019

Student Nutrition has done everything possible to control food costs but much of that effort is lost through increases in employee benefits, salaries, and retirement costs.

State reimbursement will help offset increased food costs associated with the new dietary guidelines. Every district in the state will be impacted. The addition of breakfast reimbursement will allow Anchorage School District to evaluate schools not currently served. The additional state funding for breakfast may allow the ASD to provide meals at schools for which it was not previously economically possible.

Sincerely,



Carol Comeau
Superintendent