

Doniece Gott

From: Julia Stutzer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:26 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee

Hello Finance Committee,

I'm writing as a teacher and former student in Alaska's school systems. I ask that you please do everything possible to increase the base student allocation. .

As it is, conditions are not ideal, but they are manageable. I know there's not a lot of money laying around, **but I would support a smaller PFD or an income tax because good public education is worth fighting for!** I lived in a Latin American country for a year in high school and saw what happens when the upper-middle class and rich pay for their children to go to private schools and defund public schools. The rest of the population is served a sub-par public education that does nothing to help those kids advance in life and keeps the poor segregated and powerless. I don't want that kind of class segregation for our state or our country.

Even in our current situation, which is funding schools at 15% below the national average, we (at least in Anchorage - and test scores will support this) are serving our students a strong education that will only improve given the proper resources. But we cannot keep going like this without raises to match inflation and with more workload and less resources.

Thank you for your support and help!!

Sincerely,

Julia Stutzer

Doniece Gott

From: Rob Cushman [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:26 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Fund our public schools!

I am a Captain at Alaska Airlines, a constituent, and a lifelong Alaskan. I went through the public school system, which allowed me the education to be successful in college and return to Alaska as a productive member of the state.

I understand balancing our state budget is difficult with the current limited revenue. However, the state constitution requires access to public education and prohibits funds from going to private and religious schools. You, and the elected representatives, are required to uphold the state constitution. You have increased every other department's budget substantially since 2017, which shows your acknowledgment of the seriousness of inflation and the cost of living and operating in our state. Why have you not supported our public schools?

Charter and private schools have a positive contribution but should never be the replacement for a robust public education system. The lack of increase in BSA funding over the last eight years has handcuffed school districts across the state from attracting the best teachers and being able to keep class sizes reasonable for our children. In doing this, the state has forced parents, who have the means, to seek education, or even residence, elsewhere. This is unacceptable!

Our public schools have amazing Bilingual, Special Needs, Gifted, AP, Arts, and Career Technical programs that are at serious risk of being removed if a plan for funding does not become available. Defunding and replacing our amazing public schools by a state-run charter system or private school is unacceptable.

Pass HB69 or something better and save our school systems. Make Alaska a place where parents want to reside and raise their children.

Resident,
Charles Robert Cushman Jr

Doniece Gott

From: Joyanne Bloom [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: \$ for schools

Dear Senators,

I volunteer in the schools and am taken aback by the large class sizes.

Improving scores is not all about how we teach. We have wonderful, experienced, dedicated teachers doing their very best. It's about giving students the time and attention they need to personalize their education. Big classes don't allow for that.

Please increase funding to the schools.....by a lot!

We have significant inflation to make up for, and most of all we need to reduce class sizes by attracting and hiring more teachers.

Thank you for representing me and advocating for what I think is crucial,
Joyanne

--

Joyanne Bloom
[REDACTED]
Juneau, Alaska 99801

[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Nico Reijns [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding

Hello,

As a father of two soon to be school age children, an uncle of four more, and a pastor to dozens, I am writing to urge you to support significant, permanent funding increases to our public schools. Not only do I know all of these students and families, but also dozens of teachers, principles, and school employees. Our public schools are the greatest resource our state has, and ought to be invested in as such. And yet, we are **years** behind in keeping their funding up with inflation.

Please, fund our schools.

Nico Reijns
Anchorage, AK 99504

Doniece Gott

From: Kelly Ballantyne <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 9:59 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding

Hello,

Thanks for taking the time to consider the needs of the community. Please find the money to fund our schools. My daughter is in MS and loves the XC running and skiing team at her school. She was devastated when she heard that they may cut MS sports.

I teach in Anchorage and I would hope that we can show our youth that we value their future more than a big PFD. You can take all of my PFD and the rest of my families if that can fund education. Please raise the BSA even if it means we get a smaller PFD.

Thanks,
Kelly Ballantyne

From: [Willie Recknagle](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support for Increased State Funding for Alaska Schools
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 6:58:36 AM

Dear Honorable Members of the Alaska Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for the bill to increase state funding toward the base student allocation (BSA) for Alaska schools. As a parent of two children enrolled in the French language immersion program at O'Malley Elementary School, I have seen firsthand the tremendous impact that adequate funding can have on educational quality.

Unfortunately, our schools, including O'Malley, are facing significant challenges due to underfunding, and critical programs like the French immersion program are at risk of being severely cut or potentially even eliminated if the BSA is not increased.

The French immersion program has been an invaluable opportunity for my children to receive an education that fosters not only language skills but also a broader cultural understanding. However, without additional funding, we risk losing this opportunity for my kids and future generations. The cuts that schools are being forced to make in light of the current funding situation are deeply concerning and will have a lasting impact on the education our children receive.

In light of the challenges districts face, I respectfully request an increase of \$1,000 to the BSA, with the provision that it be tied to inflation in future years. This would ensure that our schools have adequate funding during years like the recent ones, where inflation has eroded budgets and placed a greater strain on our education system. Tying the BSA to inflation will provide districts with a more predictable and repeatable understanding of the funds they will be working with when planning their budgets, allowing them to make informed decisions about staffing, programs, and resources. This would also help prevent the need for emergency measures and cuts that disrupt students' education year after year.

I truly believe that raising the BSA is crucial to preserving essential

programs like language immersion and ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education. The increased funding will help maintain and expand these programs, support our teachers, and ensure that our schools have the resources they need to foster the success of every student.

I ask that you please consider the long-term impact on our children's futures and support this important legislation. Investing in education today is an investment in Alaska's future, and I hope you will take action to ensure that all students, including mine, can continue to benefit from the opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

William Recknagle

Anchorage, AK

From: [Sterling Huntington](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Cc: [Sterling Huntington](#)
Subject: Committee Public Testimony for Education Budgeting
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 9:53:49 PM

Strong Schools. Strong Students. Strong Economy

Alaska Dads for Economic and Student Capacity (A-DESC)

About Me:

Sterling Huntington

35+ Years in Alaska

Accounting Degree from UAA

Finance / Project Manager for a major cardiovascular clinic

Contact Info:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

My Story:

I am a proud parent of three middle to high school children, a financial manager, and an engaged member of our Alaskan community.

In my job, I regularly report to a room of company owners, discussing increases of certain revenues, decreasing expenses, and allocating dollars this way or that. No matter what is discussed, there is one expense that is never discussed... payroll.

Without payroll, staff leave the company, and revenues plummet.

In a similar vein, Alaska's education is our required expense. Of course it should be managed well, and guardrails set up to make sure the money spent is lean and efficient. The funds and the services provided, however, are vital and should be prioritized. Without it, Alaska's population exodus and brain drain will continue... and with it, our revenues.

Alaska is at a turning point, in our income, our economy, and our population... our students deserve the investment of a stable and well-supported education system that keeps families here and engaged in our state's future. It's the fiscally smart decision.

I am asking for:

- Your support for a durable education funding solution
A 2-3 year education funding plan

- Your support for a significant, affordable investment in education funding
A \$1,000 BSA increase, at the very minimum

- Your timely action
Your vote of approval for an education funding package by early March

Thank you for your time and support,

Sterling Huntington

Doniece Gott

From: Bob Shavelson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support Public Education

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members -

I'm the father of 12 and 15 year-old girls. My wife and I chose to raise them in Alaska because Alaska had a reputation for strong schools.

Now, however, that reputation is fading, because school funding has become captive to politics.

Education is not a partisan issue; our state, our communities and our families can only thrive if we have strong, predictable funding for our schools.

I hope you agree and will support substantial increases to the BSA, along with inflation-proofing.

Thank you -

--

Bob Shavelson
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Michelle [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 9:20 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

Students future success is dependent on quality education, which includes reasonable class sizes, curriculum that goes beyond reading, writing and mathematics and includes physical education, arts, support from counselors, and functioning school libraries. All of these have been or are about to be compromised due to ongoing lack of funding.

The amount of time and energy spent by your constituents in communities throughout our state on trying to figure out how to function with increasing costs of education is huge.

Please act quickly to support funding that allows schools to offer quality programs that all students deserve. Allow those in education to focus on the students, not in dealing with inadequate funding.

Thank you,

Michelle Dyakanoff
[REDACTED]
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Doniece Gott

From: Benjamin Elbow [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 9:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Lets Pay for Public Schools

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to and engage with Alaskans. I'm heartened and appreciative that when I reach out by phone or email, I often get genuine and thoughtful replies. Thank you, and keep up the good work.

I want you to know that in order to pay for a significant increase in public school funding, I would gladly support a reduced PFD. I would support an income tax to pay for our school needs. I would support a sales tax. I would absolutely support increased resource development in order to increase state revenue. I would support increased taxes on Alaskan businesses (oil companies and others).

Education is the keystone to a healthy and functioning society. As such, *every option* should be considered in order to fully fund our schools. To say that we don't have the money to adequately fund our schools -- when we continue to fund many departments (Corrections, Fish and Game, Public Safety, Office of the Governor to name a few) at levels that keep pace with inflation -- tells me that I think education funding needs to be higher on our collective priority lists.

We have an out-migration problem. We have a private sector hiring problem. We have a student test-scores problem. But we also have a class-size problem.

Increasing -- not slashing -- education funding is the solution. When you factor in the high cost of living in Alaska, we actually [spend less](#) than the national average on our public schools.

Please know that there are countless Alaskans like myself who are desperate to pay more in order to get a BSA increase of at least \$1,000. We can come together to pay for the education that our state needs.

Please feel free to call (907-947-6488) or email if you have any additional questions or would like to discuss it more.

Respectfully,
Ben Elbow
Midtown Anchorage

Doniece Gott

From: Kir Moore [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 9:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please support a BSA increase of \$1000

Hello,

My name is Kirsten Moore I have 2 children in the Anchorage School District. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increases to the BSA, our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life. As a family of business owners and professional leaders, we want to be able to stay in the state. We will be forced to leave if our public schools continue to decline. Let's invest in Alaska's future!

Thank you for your time and service!

Kirsten Moore

KIR MOORE DESIGN
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Katie Bisson, [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 9:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: URGENT - FULLY FUND THE BSA!

Hello,

I am a parent and educator in the Anchorage School District, writing to urge you to rectify the crisis happening right now in our state and district, related to education.

My husband and I moved here 20 years ago from the lower 48, where I had recently begun my teaching career, working in two districts in the Twin Cities metro area of Minnesota. Moving to Anchorage felt like a 'step back' in terms of educational models and resources, from what I saw there, and I feel like we've only gone backwards since. Leaving Minnesota, where residents were rallying against a 'slash-and-burn' Governor threatening the services that made a good quality of life there, with a slogan that said "Willing to Pay for a Better Minnesota"... I have often thought of that since moving here.

ALASKA NEEDS TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO PAY FOR A BETTER ALASKA. We cannot continue to hand out mega-PFDs, continue corporate/oil tax cuts with declining production and returns, and refuse to look at state income or sales tax, at the expense of fully funding our essential services like education that will make or break our state's future.

We are raising our 3 children here, but worry for their/our future in Alaska, based on the lack of leadership to ensure that the state's well-being comes first, before political posturing and self-serving goals. Our elected leaders need to rise up and work together across the isle, putting the well-being of our future generation and economy first. We know people who are leaving the state, due to the poor leadership and therefore declining prospects for a strong future in Alaska. We may be considering it ourselves.

Please solve this problem, not with one-time funding, but with a significant increase to the BSA (at least \$1000), with forward-funding and inflation-proofing built in, so that districts do not have to waste precious resources on guessing what is to come for the next FY. We are already desperate for teachers and support staff in ASD, and these anticipated layoffs, along with the lack of secure retirement or competitive compensation, will only make matters worse. Immediate action is needed. Secure the BSA funding needed so districts can mitigate damages, and start to try to rebuild. Constituents have spoken, and are watching. We need your leadership and your action, and we need it now.

Thank you,
Katie Bisson
Anchorage, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Maya C [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 8:53 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written Testimony

My name is Maya Curtis. I have two children in the Anchorage School District. I am writing in support of an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA my 3rd grader's school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. My 7th grader will be missing out on middle school sports, which have been a big part of her middle school experience so far. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life.

On Feb 18th, I attended the Anchorage School District School Board meeting where I listened to hours of public testimony; parents, students and staff testified to save immersion programs, teacher, nurse, and librarian positions, middle school sports, high school sports and more. During the Superintendent Update, Dr. Bryantt's [slideshow](#) included a table with the Proposed State Budgets and Change since 2017 - based on the Governor's proposed budget for FY26, dated 12/12/24. I was taken aback by the **52.3% increase** in the **Department of Corrections** compared to **DEED K-12 Support for Districts** which **fell 5.8%**; in fact Support for Districts is the only Department that showed a decrease in the Governor's proposed budget. This is unacceptable!

Please invest in schools, not prisons. We can be proactive and invest in education, or pay for incarceration on the back end. We can't afford not to invest in education. Education should be our first priority, not our last.

Thank you for thinking of our children first, the future of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Maya Curtis

Doniece Gott

From: Diana Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 8:23 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA.

Senate Finance Committee,

Take action on permanently increasing the BSA for Alaska's students by at least \$1000 as soon as possible. Alaska's families need you, the members of the Senate Finance Committee, to take action to support our education system. The future of our state is in your hands. Fund K-12 education. Without funding, our education system, and the future it provides our students and our state, will be worthless. Take the politics out of the conversations and support Alaska's families with reliable school funding now.

Sincerely,

Diana Johnson

[REDACTED]
Anchorage, Alaska
99508

Doniece Gott

From: Dean Potter [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 8:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson
Subject: \$1,000 BSA boost is essential

Dear Senator Finance Committee --

Last year, my daughter's sixth grade class at Airport Heights Elementary had 36 students in one classroom. There were not enough cubbies in the room for all the students to store their coats and boots. Educational outcomes were clearly diminished; students didn't get the attention they needed; discipline became time consuming; lessons went unfinished.

This year, at Wendler Middle School, she has over 150 kids in her PE class. It's a zoo. Fortunately, she enjoyed a different experience on the cross-country running team. The team invited all students to test themselves and build friendships and teamwork. Like all middle school sports in Anchorage, the team is scheduled for elimination next year.

Thirty kids in ASD third grades, the critical year for reading development? Cutting IGNITE, which will continue the exodus of motivated, book-smart kids from neighborhood schools? We're shooting ourselves in the foot.

It is essential to increase the BSA by \$1,000 immediately. This isn't an enhancement of education in Alaska. It is merely enough to prevent going further backwards, losing teachers to more stable funding regimes, closing more schools. We must not fail to do for our kids what the State did for us parents when we were in school. That is disgraceful.

Two things keep us in Alaska: our extended family and the outdoors. As far as education is concerned, we could leave tomorrow. Please take action to remedy this situation. Thank you for your attention!

Dean Potter
Anchorage
District 14-G

Doniece Gott

From: Kelsey Saari [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 8:07 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Help our students!!!!

My name is Kelsey Saari. I have five children in the Anchorage School District. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life. Let's invest in Alaska's future!

--

Kelsey Saari

Doniece Gott

From: Dorothy Lazar [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 7:52 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Dorothy Lazar; Jessica; Howard New Email
Subject: Funding for public education

Alaska is at a crossroads. Each year more people leave Alaska than come. Among the reasons we fail to attract enough talented people to our state is our declining public educational system. The principal cause of this decline is the failure of the legislature to properly fund our children's public education. The system is in crisis. Our principal, cultural and Economic Center,, Anchorage, is about to drastically cut staff, valued programs, and teachers. this will result in a dramatic increase in class size, significantly compromising each teacher's ability to properly teach and each child's ability to effectively learn. The state's available resources should be directed towards the good of all children, not for the benefit of any particular ideology or the privileged few. We urge you to support an increase in the basic student allotment by at least the \$1000 per student requested by the school board. It is time for you to step up for all of our children and think about their future as well as the future of our state. Thank you for your consideration.

Howard and Dorothy Lazar, residents of Anchorage since 1986 Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Anke Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 7:44 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funding

Dear Committee Members,

We have two boys, 10y and 12y. The looming cuts for schools -teacher & librarian positions & others along with sport cuts - are unacceptable from a parent perspective.

The State needs to invest into the next generation, not stifle it.

Please commit to funding the schools appropriately.

Sincerely,

Anke Kelly

Doniece Gott

From: Mindy S [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 7:27 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee

I am a highly qualified professional art educator. I hold a BFA and a M.Ed. I have taught for over 15 years in schools in Montana, Washington, and Alaska. I live in Sitka and I cannot find employment in my field because Sitka has cut art from every single school except for the SHS. Even Mt. Edgecumbe high school had to cut their art position. Without access to the arts our kids and our schools suffer. Especially in Alaska, where our suicide rate is sky high, the arts provide a safe space for kids to explore and express the many facets of being human. Not to mention it is proven that an arts education dramatically improves test scores and achievement. Please, I do not want my two daughters to go to school in a place with no art. My husband and I are both business owners and contribute to the community in multiple ways, but we are now considering our options for leaving Alaska.

I implore you to do whatever is necessary to improve the conditions our students and teachers currently face. A great start would be to increase the base student allocation by \$1000.00 to make up for the past 15 years of inflation. Vote to support education, vote to support Alaska's future.

Kind Regards,

Ms. Mindy Samman, M.Ed. (She/Her)

[REDACTED]
Fly-Right Bookkeeping, LLC
flyrightbookkeeping@gmail.com
We Clean Sitka
wecleansitka@gmail.com
FB & IG: @wecleansitka

From: [Susan A](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: SB 59
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 7:26:52 PM

Public Testimony on SB 59: Supplemental Appropriations and Fund Capitalization

Chairperson, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 59, which proposes supplemental appropriations and capitalizations for various state funds. While the bill is essential for addressing immediate fiscal needs, I urge the committee to consider the following legal and fiscal aspects to ensure its alignment with constitutional mandates and fiscal responsibility.

1. Compliance with the Alaska State Constitution

Issue:

Article IX, Section 13 of the Alaska State Constitution requires that appropriations be made by law and that the legislature cannot appropriate funds for a period longer than two years. SB 59 includes appropriations that extend beyond this constitutional limit.

Legal Problem:

Appropriations exceeding the two-year limit may be challenged as unconstitutional, potentially leading to the invalidation of those portions of the bill.

Recommendation:

Amend SB 59 to ensure that all appropriations comply with the constitutional two-year limit to avoid potential legal challenges.

2. Adherence to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)

Issue:

SB 59 proposes funding for projects that may impact federally protected lands. ANILCA requires that state projects affecting such lands undergo a thorough review process.

Legal Problem:

Failure to conduct the required reviews and obtain necessary approvals could result in federal legal challenges and delays in project implementation.

Recommendation:

Ensure that all projects funded by SB 59 that may affect federally protected lands comply with ANILCA requirements, including necessary consultations and approvals.

3. Consideration of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and Indigenous Rights

Issue:

Some appropriations in SB 59 may fund projects on lands traditionally used by Alaska Native communities.

Legal Problem:

Without proper consultation with affected communities, these projects could infringe upon rights protected under ANCSA and other federal laws.

Recommendation:

Incorporate provisions in SB 59 that mandate consultation with Alaska Native communities for projects affecting their lands and rights, ensuring compliance with ANCSA and federal trust responsibilities.

4. Alignment with the Public Trust Doctrine

Issue:

SB 59 includes appropriations for projects that may impact natural resources held in trust for the public.

Legal Problem:

Projects that fail to consider the public trust could lead to legal challenges and potential injunctions.

Recommendation:

Review all funded projects to ensure they uphold the public trust, prioritizing the protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

5. Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency

Issue:

The bill proposes significant appropriations without detailed fiscal analysis.

Fiscal Concern:

Without a comprehensive fiscal impact statement, there is a risk of overextending the state's budget, leading to future financial instability.

Recommendation:

Provide a detailed fiscal analysis for all appropriations in SB 59, including projected long-term costs and funding sources, to ensure fiscal responsibility and transparency.

Conclusion

While SB 59 is crucial for addressing immediate fiscal needs, it is imperative that the committee addresses the legal and fiscal concerns outlined above. By making the recommended amendments, the bill can better serve the public interest, comply with constitutional and legal requirements, and promote responsible fiscal management.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Resource Page:

Alaska State Constitution, Article IX, Section 13

Available at: <https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#art9>

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)

Available at: <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ANILCA.pdf>

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)

Available at: <https://www.doi.gov/tribes/ancsa>

Public Trust Doctrine in U.S. Law

Available at: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-08/documents/public-trust-doctrine.pdf>

Alaska Legislative Finance Division

Available at: <http://www.legfin.akleg.gov/>

Alaska Department of Law

Available at: <https://law.alaska.gov/>

Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Available at: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/>

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

Available at: <https://dec.alaska.gov/>

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Available at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/>

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

Available at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/>

Susan Allmeroth

Two Rivers

Myself

Doniece Gott

From: Jen Rigg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 7:24 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA by at least \$1000

My name is Jen Rigg. I have 3 children in the Anchorage School District. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life. Let's invest in Alaska's future!

Thank you.

Jen Rigg

Doniece Gott

From: Megan Schulze [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 7:17 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Budget Priorities

My name is Megan Schulze from Fairbanks, Alaska. I am a local farmer in the community and I am testifying regarding my priorities for the state budget. I would like to support the funding necessary to ensure the continued growth of our Agricultural Industry and the programs that allow our community more access to healthy, local produce. I especially support the continued funding for the Local Food Purchasing Program and for funding the Department of Health, Division of Public Assistance eligibility technicians to process applications for our most vulnerable Alaskans seeking food and health. Programs like these pay farmers as well as help distribute healthy, local produce to communities and families that might otherwise struggle to have access. I also support healthy school meals for all students in our public schools. Please include these priorities in your budget.

Thank you,

Megan Schulze

Doniece Gott

From: Anne K Freitag [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 6:58 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding - State Operating Budget

Hello:

I would strongly recommend that the State increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by \$1000 this year to make up for inflation and previous underfunding and rising costs.

A healthy educational system is needed to keep families in Alaska, to build the abilities of our students, and to serve all children. We need to protect neighborhood and village schools.

We need to fund all aspects of education: teachers, technology, and facilities.

Thank you—

Anne Freitag
[REDACTED]
Anchorage AK 99502

Doniece Gott

From: Wilson, Melany L (DOT) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 6:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written Testimony Before the Alaska Senate Finance Committee

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is **Melany Wilson**, and I am a parent of two children in the Anchorage School District and a professional working for the State of Alaska. I urge you to **increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by no less than \$1,000 per student in the FY26 budget** to address chronic underfunding that has led to **outdated resources and teacher shortages**. Without this necessary increase, schools will face deeper cuts, eliminating immersion programs, laying off teachers, reducing educational quality and driving families and professionals out of Alaska. The Anchorage School board passed an amendment on 2/25/25 to fully restore the funding for the immersion programs and all other programs that will be eliminated if you do not fund these programs in FY26 so please do your part and support our kids in Alaska public school.

Investing in education strengthens our workforce, retains talent, and fuels long-term economic growth. The current funding levels are **unsustainable**, and our students deserve better. My husband is a Nurse Practitioner, and I am a Data Analyst in Anchorage. Unfortunately, we will be forced to leave the state if our children at O'Malley Elementary do not have sustainable funding for their education.

Now is the time to act—before we lose more educators, families, and opportunities for our children. I urge you to make education a priority and commit to this essential increase in funding.

Thank you for supporting Alaska's students and future.

Melany Wilson
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Lesley Hammer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 6:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

Our state has a critical need to provide a reliable, sufficient school budget that can be counted on annually to support education. Every year the amount of effort that is wasted by having budget 'fights' and determining cannibalistic temporary plans is disgraceful. Our schools should be funded sufficiently so that families and school professionals can get on with the business of supporting the growth of our next generation of Alaskans without deciding which unfortunate group is most expendable. The environment created depresses the whole system and aligns it toward failure and collapse. All in the pursuit of political budget gamesmanship.

I have been a student, teacher, parent of students and grandparent of students in the Anchorage School District. I have watched the slow decline of our state education system over the past 20 years primarily due to monetary cuts to schools, while we continue to hand out cash to every resident annually. What do you think will make a better society in the long run? Cash to burn or educated future generations? I vote for putting money towards our kids.

This year, tragically these budget games have left a wake of losses. Programs that can not count on funding have had to throw in the towel, such as immersion programs. Unable to depend on funding to hire teachers from abroad will leave these programs no choice but to close. These programs have been shining examples of what can be achieved through exceptional volunteerism coupled with a funded program. Forcing districts to cut these programs to present a balanced budget crushes the ability of these programs to continue.

Stop the pretend annual shortfalls. Fund schools fully. Cut these dividend if necessary to do it.

Respectfully,

Lesley Hammer '24

Doniece Gott

From: Allison Mogensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 6:11 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Transportation for schools

Please fully fund transportation at our schools. This would be a huge help. Please also fund education. It's the future of our kids and has been hit very hard, students are leaving, teachers are leaving and the system is starting to crumble. Please increase the BSA.

Thank you. Signed a teacher and a parent who's school just got closed because of budget cuts. Now my kid has to go to a school with weaker academics and be shoved into a school at 94% capacity.

This needs to stop.
Allison

From: [Alexis Kaferstein](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Support a BSA Increase
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 5:59:56 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear Chair Stedman, Chair Bishop and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Alexis Kaferstein, and I am a parent of two elementary school-aged children and a 16-year early childhood educator in Alaska. I am writing to urge you to support a significant and sustained funding increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

Over my 13 years teaching in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, I have witnessed devastating cuts and the affects in our schools. We have lost music and art teachers, librarians, interventionists, secretaries, and custodians—just at our elementary school alone. Each year, more elective classes at the middle and high school levels disappear, which is what keeps students in school. Class sizes continue to increase, leading to less time for individual academic support and lower test scores. Theater programs, pools, sports, and even entire schools are constantly at risk during budget discussions. These losses leave me questioning whether Alaska is truly the best place to raise my children. It is heartbreaking to know that they do not have the same opportunities I had in public school due to declining funding. I love my job and feel deeply committed to my students despite the challenges we continue to face, but I can't help but wonder—does the state support them as much as I do?

After years of declining buying power, our schools have reached a breaking point. It is impossible to innovate when we can't balance the budget. It is difficult to attract and retain talented educators when salaries and benefits are not competitive. And it is hard to build community trust when parents, teachers, and students are forced to fight over which schools to close and which programs to cut.

No one should have to choose between feeding their family and keeping the lights on, yet that is exactly the position our school districts are in. While inflation has risen over 40% in the past 15 years, the BSA has only increased by 7%. Alaska's per-student

spending was 15% below the national average in 2023 when adjusted for geographic costs. When districts are forced to prioritize keeping the lights on and heating buildings, student programs inevitably suffer. And the ones who feel these cuts the most? **OUR STUDENTS!!**

A budget is a reflection of our values, and we have always found a way to fund what we truly prioritize. Investing in our schools should be a **FIRST** priority, not an afterthought. Strong schools strengthen communities, attract families, and build a stable workforce. An underfunded education system, on the other hand, drives families away, making it even harder to recruit and retain educators and accelerates economic decline.

Educators are among the most selfless members of our communities. We go above and beyond for our students every day and ask only for what is in their best interest. Right now, that means securing funding that keeps up with the rising cost of education. As both a parent and an educator, I wholeheartedly support our students' education, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so in Alaska. I urge you to prioritize their future as well by supporting a meaningful increase in the BSA.

Sincerely,
Alexis Kaferstein
Seward, AK
Mother
Kindergarten Teacher ☐



Doniece Gott

From: Richard Steele [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 5:55 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Operating Budget FY 2025: Increase BSA

State Operating Budget FY 2025: Increase BSA

To: Senate.Finance@akleg.gov

Dear Senators,

I'm a retired Alaskan teacher and I urge you to increase the Base Student Allocation by at least \$1,000, to begin to make up for the past 15 years of losses to inflation. If you've ever taught school, you are aware that the key to helping a child make progress in new learning is the teacher's ability to connect with each child. Relationships make all the difference and that is why the pupil-teacher ratio matters. A teacher greatly impacts student learning in a classroom of 22-24 students; not so much in a classroom of 35-40 or more. In a packed classroom, there isn't enough time in a day to observe each child's work, reinforce what is working or re-orient what is not, and move on to the next child. It's impossible to get to everyone and someone always loses out. When we starve our schools, we deprive our own future.

Public schools are the foundation of our democracy, the places where children become grounded in the basics of the subjects upon which adult decision-making is based. Adults must be able to read and comprehend text in order to make decisions, plans, and to integrate information into creative new ideas that benefit all of us. Public schools must be equipped to provide this kind of education that instills not only the basics of learning, but the processes on which our democracy rests: participation in discussions that help us to choose our leaders and the direction of our future.

We can't expect our schools to grow successful students or future leaders when we deprive them of the funds to hire enough teachers to form healthy classroom communities. Overcrowded classrooms are bad for learning.

Please show our state what strong leadership looks like. Increase the BSA by at least \$1,000 so that Alaskan districts can hire enough teachers to ensure small enough PTRs to build constructive teaching - learning relationships.

Thank you for your attention to this absolutely critical matter.

Sincerely,

Richard Steele
[REDACTED]
Douglas, Alaska. 99824

Doniece Gott

From: Greg Demers [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:40 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Priorities

Dear Senators,

I am writing this email in lieu of public testimony by myself and my wife. We would like to share with you what we feel should be priorities during this session in general, not specific terms.

Number one is education. Please fully fund our schools by committing long term, as opposed to year-by-year. Our children and students are our greatest resource. We do not support the Governor's plans for education, especially when it comes to using public funds for private education. We do support improving retirement benefits for teachers, as well as other state employees, as an incentive to attract and retain them. We are both retirees of PERS and TRS, and can speak first hand of the positive difference it has made for us.

Secondly, we strongly support measures to generate revenues, including restructuring corporate tax and re-instituting a personal income tax. It is far more important to have good schools, roads, law enforcement, resource management, public health service, judicial system, etc. than it is to provide a large PFD. Cap the PFD at \$1000. Most Alaskans don't even need it. We have a number of friends who spend 5 1/2 months living in AZ and HI, and also get large tax exemptions on their residences.

We have lived in Alaska for over 110 combined years, and will never leave (well, maybe take a short vacation!), so we have been here through good times and bad. We believe everyone should contribute, in exchange for the benefits of living in the Great Land.

Thank you for your service,
Greg and Carole Demers
Anchor Point

Doniece Gott

From: Rudy Multz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:16 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 58: Mental Health Budget

My name is Rudy Multz. I work for South Peninsula Behavioral Health in Homer Alaska. I work with youth who experience emotional and behavioral challenges. I have been employed here for the past 24 years.

During that time, I have seen many youths who have endured horrific traumatic experiences overcome their challenges with the support that we have been able to offer them through Medicaid as well as other State and Federal funded grants and programs. Since the pandemic we have seen a steady increase in cases, yet funding has failed to keep up with the burgeoning need. Compensation for services is no longer supporting wages that meet the costs of living and we are already a critically low point in staffing. If the trends continue this way much longer, we will not only be unable to keep up with the demand for our services, but we will likely not be able to stay in operation.

I urge you to act and invest in our Behavioral Health system. The rate rebasing is behind the ball and our 1115 service rates have only gone up 9% as compared to Medicaid's 24% to adjust for inflation. We would like to see a 15-million-dollar investment so that we can keep up with the times and continue to provide these critical services. Please fight for our kids and the other Alaskan individuals who experience challenges due to mental health before it is too late.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Rudy Multz
Program Manager
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



The Center
[REDACTED]

Homer, AK 99603

Disclosure statement:

This message is intended for the sole use of the individual to whom it is addressed, and may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the addressee, you are hereby notified that you may not use, copy, disclose, or distribute to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received this item in error, please notify the original sender and destroy this item, along with any attachments.

Doniece Gott

From: Michelle Harris [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:14 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA increase

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Michelle Tschida. I live in an Anchorage. I have 3 children in the Anchorage School District. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life. Let's invest in Alaska's future!

I am a nurse-midwife and if an increase doesn't come through my family will likely move away. I am work with doctors and nurses and have heard many of my coworkers say the same thing. This increase is necessary for economic prosperity of our state.

Sincerely,
Michelle Tschida

Doniece Gott

From: Amy Pocewicz [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:13 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please support \$1000 increase to BSA

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

Please support a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to make up for 15 years of losses to inflation.

Yesterday afternoon I was in my daughter's second grade classroom for a parent-teacher conference. The desks for the 26 students were smashed together tightly, forming a large circle around the classroom and consuming most of the space available in the classroom. I wondered how another four desks could even fit in the room next year if things don't change. Or maybe we'll then ask teachers to each cover two separate classrooms simultaneously? Our daughter's teacher is amazing and despite these challenges is still managing to teach our children to read and add and subtract numbers in the hundreds. I'm lucky that my daughter's teacher has many years of experience and the skills to manage through these challenging circumstances, but I fear that even our experienced teachers are being pushed to the breaking point.

When my family relocated to Alaska nine years ago one of the things that drew us here were the public schools, which at the time were well regarded. Since 2018, the decline in Alaska's schools has been striking. We had hoped to remain in Alaska long term but now we're seriously considering relocating to a state that is investing in schools and our future. I know many other families have already left.

I hope that you will consider the future and invest in our children and schools. It's time to pause or stop the PFD payments and invest in schools. It's also time for the Alaska legislature to assure that the over \$500 million in annual federal funding that Alaska receives through the Department of Education is not lost in the current chaos to dismantle vital federal agencies and funding.

I appreciate the hard work that you all do for the state and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Amy Pocewicz

South Anchorage resident and parent

Doniece Gott

From: Kim Cannamore [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:50 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding

To whom it may concern:

I strongly urge you to fund AK schools with a minimum \$1000 increase per student!

As a former teacher, parent of students in ASD, and now a parent of 2 ASD teachers, I am fully aware of the value of good education.

I have seen the quality of education continue to decline in recent years. This is evidenced in many ways, from test scores to lack of programming, teacher retention, to name just a few.

We cannot continue on a path of giving less and expecting more. Teachers are leaving in droves, as they are continually tasked with being asked to do more with less. If we don't fund schools, EVERYONE suffers!

Students will be in classrooms that are too large, teachers will be overworked, programs will be understaffed if they exist at all.

Without this funding, middle school students in ASD will have nothing provided for them outside the school day-no sports, no clubs, and no band concerts! This is not an education!!!

Please fund schools! We owe it to our children for their futures Thank you

Sincerely,
Kim Cannamore
Eagle River Alaska resident

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Leah](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Education funding
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:03:51 AM

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

I was born and raised in Alaska and have been teaching History and Civics to both rural and urban Alaskan students for 22 years. I am writing to request your support for a \$1000 permanent increase to the BSA, tied to inflation. We can no longer kick the can down the road for another year or attempt to limp along with one time funding. The consequences of inaction will ultimately negatively impact every resident in Alaska as we continue to lose families to states that do a better job supporting schools, as we are unable to attract skilled workers to our state because the word is out that Alaska doesn't prioritize school funding and as we fail to grow our own skilled workforce.

In the Anchorage School District, the 2025-26 budget, in an attempt to deal with a monumental deficit, raises the pupil-teacher-ratio (PTR) in secondary classrooms to 35. With the current PTR of 31, class sizes in general education classes are consistently at 32-36 students. The PTR isn't a class size cap. Everyone who works in a secondary school knows a PTR of 35 will translate into class sizes of around 40 students. This will not improve student learning outcomes. On Tuesday, ASD's school board amended their budget to state that if the State passes education funding, increasing the BSA by \$1000 by May 15th, then it will restore the teaching positions cut, reduce class sizes from their current levels and put money into hiring student support positions to help students who are behind in reading and math. This would be a tremendous move in the right direction for student learning outcomes.

Should the State fail to substantially increase the BSA, I expect my class sizes will jump to 36-40 students. Due to projected staffing cuts, I anticipate having roughly 200 students next year. As a result, the time I'm able to spend helping each student individually will decrease. The feedback I will be able to provide on student work will have to be generalized rather than specific. I will have to reduce the number of writing assignments or provide completion grades rather than actual feedback. The number of formal essays my students write will drop from two essays per year to one. As you might recall from your own experience, it takes repetition and individualized feedback from a teacher to learn complex skills. Next year my students will see a dramatic decrease in both because I won't have time to carefully read and provide feedback on all their written work. There will be no way to avoid the negative impact this will have on next year's student learning.

Should the State fail to substantially increase the BSA, and one third of my school's general education teaching positions are cut, I will also have to eliminate all engaging cross-curricular projects due to an inability to collaborate across content areas. Those include the Civics project "We the People: Simulated Congressional Hearings" as well as others essential to student skill development. The bottom line is the quality of education I will be able to offer my students will go down and they will be forced to move on to high school less prepared than students in previous years.

The State has the money to increase the BSA, but it requires reducing or, better yet, eliminating the PFD. As an Alaskan, I've seen the PFD itself become a barrier to sensible, forward thinking governance in Alaska. We cannot seem to see past the PFD. I have received all but a couple of PFDs since their inception and I would gladly give up all future PFDs for a state budget that funds our collective future as we reallocate those monies to fund essential services.

Finally, I leave you with a reminder from the Civics class you once took. The purpose of government is to protect fundamental rights and promote the common good – that which is in the best interest of the community as a whole. Our country's history has been an ongoing conversation about what is in the common good and once again, you as legislators ponder and debate that tremendous and weighty question in the context of our state.

Thank you for all you do to thoughtfully serve the residents of Alaska.

Thank you,
Leah Meyring, M.A., M.A.T., M.Ed.

Doniece Gott

From: Matthew Blakeslee [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:46 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 69 Written Testimony- Matt Blakeslee

Good morning Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Matt Blakeslee, I'm an Anchorage School District (ASD) parent and product of ASD myself. I urge you to prioritize investment in Alaska's public schools. It's time to end the governor's war on education now or pay the price later through people fleeing our state, economic decline, and increased incarceration.

Strong schools attract families and businesses. Underfunded schools drive them away. A well-educated workforce is critical to Alaska's future; business and labor leaders know this. Public schools serve all children, and many Alaskans rely on neighborhood schools. Our constitution requires the Legislature to provide adequate and predictable funding for public education.

Some argue increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) is "throwing money at the problem." The reality is that the decline of our education system began when Dunleavy took office and started de-funding public schools. When Alaska's schools were fully funded, our students performed above national averages, Funding Matters! We can't improve outcomes if we can't afford teachers or keep schools open.

School districts are held accountable through local elections, public meetings, and laws. Meanwhile, state leaders passed the Alaska Reads Act—then failed to fund it.

We can afford to fund education—we simply need the political will. Our future, schools, workforce, and economy depend on it.

Thank you.
-Matt Blakeslee

Doniece Gott

From: Eve Ryan [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 5:07 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written testimony: Fund education in Alaska

Hello,

Please allow for a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to begin to make up for 15 years of losses to inflation. Like many communities throughout Alaska, our local school is at risk of closing down. I write to urge you to fulfill the Alaska Legislature's constitutional obligation to adequately fund our public schools.

Thank you,

Eve Ryan

Doniece Gott

From: Erica Rose, [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 5:02 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Good Evening,

My name is Erica Rose. I have 3 children in the Anchorage School District. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life. Our children are our future, the most valuable resource we have in Alaska and all children deserve the best possible education we can offer. I can't think of anything more important that we can do with our dollars than invest in education, please do everything you can to increase the BSA.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

*Best,
Erica Rose*

--

If you are buying or selling your home (or know someone who is!), OR if you are getting in to Real Estate as an investor, please consider reaching out to Jamie!

jamesd.rose@gmail.com | <https://jamierosealaska.com/>



Doniece Gott

From: Luann McVey [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 5:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Operating Budget FY 2025: Increase BSA

Dear Senators,

I'm a retired Alaskan teacher and I urge you to increase the Base Student Allocation by at least \$1,000, to begin to make up for the past 15 years of losses to inflation. If you've ever taught school, you are aware that the key to helping a child make progress in new learning is the teacher's ability to connect with each child. Relationships make all the difference and that is why the pupil-teacher ratio matters. A teacher greatly impacts student learning in a classroom of 22-24 students; not so much in a classroom of 35-40 or more. In a packed classroom, there isn't enough time in a day to observe each child's work, reinforce what is working or re-orient what is not, and move on to the next child. It's impossible to get to everyone and someone always loses out. When we starve our schools, we deprive our own future.

Public schools are the foundation of our democracy, the places where children become grounded in the basics of the subjects upon which adult decision-making is based. Adults must be able to read and comprehend text in order to make decisions, plans, and to integrate information into creative new ideas that benefit all of us. The public schools must be equipped to provide this kind of education that instills not only the basics of learning, but the processes on which our democracy rests: participation in discussions that help us to choose our leaders and the direction of our future.

We can't expect our schools to grow successful students or future leaders when we deprive them of the funds to hire enough teachers to form healthy classroom communities. Overcrowded classrooms are bad for learning.

Please show our state what strong leadership looks like. Increase the BSA by at least \$1,000 so that Alaskan districts can hire enough teachers to ensure small enough PTRs to build constructive teaching - learning relationships.

Thank you for your attention to this absolutely critical matter.

Sincerely,

Luann McVey
[REDACTED]
Douglas, Alaska. 99824

Doniece Gott

From: jimaetjohnson@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:54 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase Base Student Allocation

Esteemed Committee Members:

As a mother of an Anchorage middle schooler and a professional who works extensively with families and schools around the state, I urge you to act on behalf of our kids and their education by **increasing the BSA by \$1000** to begin to address the impacts of so many years of flat funding.

I want my son to have a quality education in the great state of Alaska where he was born and where I have committed my life. Schools are essential to our communities and I am not willing to give them up. **I'm willing to support the legislature in exploring new revenue through both corporate and other taxes to ensure our kids and schools have a future.**

Thank you for your public service, and your willingness to do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Jimaet Johnson
Anchorage, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Mimzy Wellberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:47 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Money for schools

PLEASE put educating ALL children of critical importance in allocating Alaskan money. PUBLIC education is a fundamental value in the United States. As an Alaskan I want to pay more than asked to educate ALL children. The PFD is not important to me. The future of our children is.

Please allow a minimum of \$!,000.00 per student to each school district.

Please help build a thriving Alaska.

**Thank you,
Margaret Wellberg
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, Ak 99507**

Doniece Gott

From: LuAnne Nelson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:41 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

Greetings, I am writing to encourage you to increase the base student allocation by \$1000. It is also high time to think about forward funding of schools as the current situation is a nightmare for districts and their personnel.

The funding for schools has not kept pace with inflation.

Alaskan schools are the hubs of the community. So needed in many ways for student and community health!

As a former mentor, I know how hard it is to recruit and keep teachers. There is much to be said for longevity and well established relationships.

Please prioritize education.

--

LuAnne Nelson, former ASMP Mentor

[REDACTED]
Anchor Point, AK 99555
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Heidi Willoughby [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:40 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase in BSA

My name is Heidi Willoughby. I have one child in the Anchorage School District and next year i'll have another. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Our class size is already 26 kids per class and my kid has told me multiple times that the wait in line to talk to the teacher is so long and they often go unheard. I can't imagine more students per teacher next year and less staffing. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life. Without it we will consider living in a different state as these changes would devastate our kids' learning in such a pivotal time in their education. Let's invest in Alaska's future and keep families in ALASKA.

Heidi Willoughby

Doniece Gott

From: Karin Halpin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 56, SB 57

Dear Senate Finance Committee --

I am a retired educator and am utterly frustrated that every year that I find myself begging the AK legislature for adequate school funding. I retired because it was exhausting trying to run a school that was short staffed most days of the week. I couldn't hire paraprofessionals because the salary was too low. I had teachers leaving the state, because they could earn more money in the Lower 48 along with earning a pension plan. We didn't have necessary materials to best support student learning.

Our children and youth deserve better than they have been given these past 8 or so years. My last year as an administrator had 33 5th/6th graders in one classroom! The teacher couldn't access the white board because student desks were jammed up against it due to the lack of space in the classroom.

Please do justice for the children and youth of our state by giving the BSA a substantial funding boost. Districts aren't 'wasting' the money. Operating costs keep going up and recent funding doesn't take that into account.

I am begging you, please provide at least an increase of \$1,000 to the BSA.

Regards,

Karin Halpin
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK. 99507
[REDACTED]

Sent from [Outlook](#)

From: [Jacob \(Jake\) Horazdovsky](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Cc: [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#)
Subject: Alaska's Kids Matter - Please Increase the state's BSA.
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:34:28 AM

Hello

My Name is Jacob Horazdovsky. I live at 18432 Amonson Road in Chugiak Alaska.

My wife and I have 4 kids, 3 that are currently enrolled in the Spanish Immersion program at Chugiak Elementary.

The state has a constitutional requirement to adequately fund education. We are approximately \$2000 per student under inflation since 2017. The state needs a long-term fiscal plan for education that is tied to inflation. This should not be an issue that has to be taken up every year. The state must seek other sources of funding to fund the education of our children.

We are faces losses of critical programs such as the Spanish Immersion at Chugiak Elementary and Mirror lake Middle School.

The state doesn't recognize the importance of education and it seems to always be near the bottom of the priority list. The state is actively losing families due to the state not making education a priority. Our family friends just left Eagle River our school funding situation was part of their decision to leave.

Our Kids are our future and the state needs to make this investment in the state of Alaska's future.

Please increase the BSA by a min of \$2000 and tie it to inflation.

Having this issue come up every year creates instability in our school system and intern our kids lives.

I realize that the state does not have unlimited funds, however there are methods to raise money to fund education. No one likes taxes however cheating my kids out of a quality education is also not the answer. So, pick a method to raise additional funds and let's increase the BSA and adequately fund our schools and our kids' education.

I have lived in Alaska since 1995 and in Chugiak since 2012.

I appreciate your consideration of this matter.

Thank You for your service to the state of Alaska as a Lawmaker.

Jacob Horazdovsky [REDACTED]

Resident Chugiak Alaska

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Doniece Gott

From: Anne Biberman [mailto:annebiberman@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:47 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: House Education; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. Will Stapp
Subject: Support of funding for K-12 education

Dear Alaska Legislators,

I am writing in support of funding for education and of significant and sustained funding for K-12 education. We need a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to begin to make up for 15 years of losses to inflation.

Since 2011, the BSA has fallen behind inflation by 25%. Flat funding for our schools has resulted in school closures, loss of programs, and valuable, passionate, professional teachers. The impacts on our students of flat funding are real and harmful, not only for our students, but for our entire community. We can, and must, do better.

Education is our absolute constitutional obligation. Beyond that it is simply good policy. We can be proactive and fund schools now or pay the much higher costs of incarceration in the future. We can drive families away, making it harder to hire and retain a resident workforce and accelerating economic decline, or we can attract and keep families by supporting strong schools.

Further, while of course parents deserve a choice in how they educate their children, if that choice dictates private or home schooling, they should be responsible for the costs themselves. Funds should be entirely directed at providing the best public education possible. That is our responsibility.

I know you have a lot of tough choices to make about the state budget. But I truly believe that investing in our kids' education is the most important thing we can do for Alaska's future. When I think about where our state will be in 10 or 20 years, I want to know that we did everything we could to give our children the education they deserve.

Could you please support:

- A real increase in school funding that keeps up with inflation now and in the future
- Money for both basics (like heating, supplies and maintenance) AND programs that help kids thrive (like art, drama and music)
- Support for our teachers so we can keep good educators in Alaska

Please fund education in our state. It is the very definition of investing in our future.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I know these decisions aren't easy, but our kids are counting on you.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Biberman

Fairbanks

PS: I continue to believe the best way to fund our state is through a 2% tax on income above \$200,000 per year. Implementing a sales tax or using the PFD will hit those hardest who can least afford it. An income tax on all those earning here distributes the burden equally.

Doniece Gott

From: John Tomac [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:37 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Against Increasing School Funding

I am an increase in school funding. Unfortunately, school districts have become blind in which instead of educating children they have become employment agencies to hire and promote friends and families and Fairbanks and Anchorage are exceptional examples. Rather than laying off triple-digit managers they will cut student athletics and support which will hardly cover their shortfall. When schools start living within their means then funding should be increased

Respectfully,
Jim Samuel Tomaczinski

Doniece Gott

From: Dorothy Childers [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:43 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funding

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I urge you to support legislation to add \$1,000 to the base student allocation.

This decision is clearly about the welfare of our children but it is also about our community as a whole. Without sufficient support from the state, cuts that will have to be made to our schools are draconian. They will harm students, families, and the viability of Anchorage as a place where teachers will want to work, families will want to live, and young adults will want to stay.

Thank you,
Dorothy Childers
Indian, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Sarah Morehouse [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 1:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Hello,

I am the mother of twin girls in public school in Anchorage. I am writing to encourage the support of increasing the BSA for public school education. Inflation has raised the cost of all goods, utilities and expenses. Not increasing funding for public school education is robbing our children of an education that is a constitutional right. Coworkers, friends and family are moving out of state because of the lack of funding to public schools. We need educated professionals in our state, but without funded public schools, it is impossible to recruit outside talent and keep our current talent. Please do your job and vote to increase public school funding. Please support our children.

Sincerely,
Sarah Morehouse
Anchorage, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Seward PTA [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please increase the BSA by at least \$1,800 and inflation proof it

To Whom it May Concern

I am writing to request that you increase the student BSA by at least \$1,800 and inflation proof it. Here are a few reasons:

1. States of similar population are spending 20% of their budget on K-12 education and we are spending around 7%.
2. Without increasing the BSA by at least \$1800 and inflation proofing it, we stand to lose our local schools, swimming pool, and several teachers.
- 3 Currently, high school students often need to take core classes online/distance ed in order to fulfill their requirements. For some students this is a non-starter. If we lose teachers more classes will only be available online. We need in person teachers for these kids, and that requires adequate funding.

Thank you for your consideration,
Ben Bohart, Seward PTA President

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Seward PTA

Chartered in 1990 - Serving all Seward Schools
every child one voice

For additional information & news go to our website sewardakpta.com

Doniece Gott

From: Rachel Munger, [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:02 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA public testimony

To whom it may concern,

My name is Rachel Munger and I am a parent of a student in the Anchorage School District as well as a constituent in West Anchorage.

It has been hard to watch as my kids' class sizes increase, their teachers have to crowdsource to pay for classroom materials, and there is so much anxiety about possible school closures and the closure of the IGNITE gifted program. Our schools can't keep up with costs when their budgets have been virtually frozen. Please support a significant and sustained increase to the base student allocation. Alaska's kids and our future depend on it!

Thank you, Rachel Munger

Doniece Gott

From: Jonathan Cannon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Jon Cannon. I am a registered voter from Anchorage. I am writing to you in support of significant and sustained funding for our K-12 schools.

Education is critically important to Alaska and Alaska's future. How are our students, who are already struggling, supposed to become more successful and learn more efficiently with fewer teachers to help guide them and fewer programs to get them excited about learning?

Alaska's constitution requires the Legislature provide for a system of public schools open to all children, defined by the courts to include "adequate funding so as to accord to schools the ability to provide instruction in the standards." Schools need predictable and flexible funding to meet their mandate.

Business and labor leaders support investment in education because they understand that a strong economy requires a trained and well educated workforce.

Strong schools attract and keep families in Alaska, while an underfunded system drives families away, making it harder to hire and retain a resident workforce and accelerating economic decline.

Thank you for your time,

Jon Cannon

Doniece Gott

From: Genevieve Johnson Perreault [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:04 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Hello,

I am mother to three students in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and have witnessed firsthand how a lack of adequate funding for education has resulted in increased class sizes and the termination of impactful, wonderful programs that my kids had previously benefited from—specifically elementary orchestra and middle school ELP (Extended Learning Program).

School budgets are stretched far too thin. Our kids deserve a better education than barebones core subjects and overstuffed classrooms. Kids (and families) thrive when our neighborhood schools flourish, but we are witnessing the closure of many neighborhood schools with potentially more to be axed in the next budget cycle.

Alaskans want this investment in our future—please increase the BSA.

Genevieve Perreault
Fairbanks

Doniece Gott

From: Katie Reilly [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:06 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding Increase Support

Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Katie Reilly. I live in Anchorage Alaska. My oldest son just entered the ASD system this school year as a kindergartener.

I am writing to you to urge you to support significant and sustained K-12 education funding. It has been well documented that our schools, teachers and students need a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to start to make up for the 15 years of losses to inflation. How are we to expect improved outcomes without adequate investment and support?

Well funded education systems have a positive and lasting impact. The better the education system (which includes the wholistic educational experience, such as music and sports and other special programs that allow all students to find their place to thrive and shine), the more educated our overall society becomes, the more employable and self sufficient and prosperous our society becomes, the less crime our society experiences. Our schools provide the foundation of a healthy and productive society. Please listen to the people who know this best: those working in the system. The teachers and other staff, the school administrators, and the students. They are telling you what they need (adequate funding) and what they will lose without it. But we will all lose without it in the long-term (e.g. declined economy, increase crime, higher societal costs for social programs).

Please increase the BSA by at least \$1000 per student and support a healthy Alaska.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Katie Reilly

Doniece Gott

From: Heather Birch [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:11 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testifying on Education--Please Increase the BSA!

Hello,

My name is Heather Birch and I've been an Alaska Resident for the last 23 years, raising two kids who were or are currently enrolled in K-12 public schools. My son is now in college at Montana State and my daughter is a current 11th grader at South Anchorage High School. I have been actively involved in PTA since their early years of elementary school and am a regular volunteer in the schools so I know what goes on behind the scenes.

I'm saddened by the fact that our State has essentially and continually **reduced** its funding of public education over the last 15 years. Adjusting for inflation, the amount we are investing per student (the BSA) has declined by 25% over the last 15 years. This is not sustainable or acceptable—providing adequate funding to public education is a constitutional obligation, and our State is failing our kids by funding education at a level that is 15% below the national average (when adjusting for geographic costs), according to a study conducted in 2023 at the Institute of Economic Research at UAA.

I'm asking the Senate Finance committee to put Education tops on your list of budget priorities in 2025 and raise the BSA by \$1000 this year to make up for inflation. To sustain this level of educational support and allow for planning and retention, schools would also need \$400 per year increases the next two years and annual inflation adjustments thereafter.

If nothing is done to raise the BSA, the Anchorage School District, has already passed a budget that drastically increases classroom sizes to levels that are completely unacceptable, cuts middle school sports entirely and many high school sports, and eliminates counselors, librarians and other essential student resource positions.

Why increase funding to Public Education?

- * A strong economy requires a trained and well-educated workforce.
- * Public schools serve ALL kids--we need to protect our neighborhood schools because many Alaskan kids don't have the option to go to private school, attend charter school or be homeschooled.
- * We cannot retain or hire teachers without offering a competitive salary and benefits and the certainty that comes with State funding and inflation adjustments annually. Statewide, there were more than 598 teacher vacancies on the first day of the 2024-25 school year (up 230% since 2020).
- * Most Alaskan's WANT increased funding to public schools—77% want increased funding according to the governor's own 2024 poll.

Please help us save public education in Alaska by pushing for a \$1,000 increase to the BSA. Alaska's school system is at a breaking point and we need legislators to stand up for our kids and put education first, not last!

Thank you for your consideration.

Doniece Gott

From: chip serns [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:21 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: A voice in support of education funding...

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to help provide a voice for the urgency of need for an increase in base student allocation. Anchorage is at a tipping point for becoming an undesirable city for families and this is a direct result of the deterioration of the services provided by our schools. Why would a family want to move here or even stay here when our schools are ranked low nationally and the services they provide are continuously eroded? This is worth spending money on. We owe our children a quality education. If we fail in this endeavor, we will see our city become even less desirable for working families who want to raise children here. The consequences of undesirable schools will be catastrophic to our children and our community.

Please take action to prevent this by supporting the \$1000 increase to base student allocation.

Thank you for your service, Chip Serns Anchorage, AK, [REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Amanda Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written Testimony - Please Support School Funding

Thank you Chair, and members of the committee. I wish to submit a public testimony regarding my support of a permanent increase to the BSA, and my concerns for the KPBSD proposed budget cuts. I am a current resident of Homer, AK and a parent of two children involved with the public school system on the Kenai Peninsula. I can say first-hand how concerning this is for our children and community. Teachers are already struggling with the workload they currently have and minimal pay for such jobs, increasing PTR would only make this worse for teachers and students. Additionally, individual learning opportunities would become impossible to give to students that are really struggling.

Our small city has little resources as it is, and if the BSA is not increased the proposed budget cuts for KPBSD would be detrimental. Our pool and theatre at HHS are a very important part of our community. Not only is our pool a part of extra-curricular activities, it's the only public source for swim lessons in our community. As many parents, including myself, stated the last time our pool was at risk; it is also a safety concern for children living in a small city on the water. Knowing water safety and how to swim is extremely important in our community.

In addition, our theatre and additional extra-curricular activities/school sports are very important to our children. Often these activities are an incentive to keep students going when the school day is difficult, staying active is very important for the physical and mental health of our youth. My concern is not just for my own children, but for their peers and for generations to come. Please, strongly consider the impact to our children and our education system when making a decision regarding the BSA increase. Our children and our community need these resources.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

- Amanda Smith

Doniece Gott

From: Peter Hoepfner [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:43 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Andi Story
Subject: The Public K-12 system is in crisis due to funding issues

Dear Sen Finance committee,
Here in Cordova we are facing a \$1.5M deficit in our \$7.7M budget.
Like the AK leg finance has stated, the \$1808 increase to the BSA, taking into account the inflationary cost increases that have skipped over the funding of education only.
Dept of Public Safety has increased 82%, Dept of Corrections increased 52%... while education has LOST 5.8% funding since 2017???? Why?

In Cordova, we are looking at cutting the food services, eliminating student activities, reducing the teaching staff, cutting services to students that we KNOW increase student achievement.

I want the current students to see the same opportunities that students just 5 years ago had, or even last year. Public education cannot continue with this chronic defunding, increasing class sizes, cutting staffing, eliminating food services, eliminating student activities. People are leaving the state, no teachers are coming to Alaska due to the failed retirement system.

It is just criminal to watch Alaskans children and their education system suffer under these draconian cuts and utter lack of funding.

It just hurts so much to see Alaskans children not receive sufficient funding to even allow for a meal service... eliminating student activities hurts, cutting staff and increasing the size of the classroom, knowing FULL WELL that student achievement will suffer.

What is the intention of this state, cutting education funding?? Can someone please tell me why they think this is "good" for the future of Alaska???

Thank you for your time in reading this, and it would be nice to get a response, so that I can tell our students what the legislature is doing to fund their schools in concrete terms.

- Is education funding a legislative priority??
And how can I help...

Peter Hoepfner
Cordova School District board of director

Doniece Gott

From: Margaret Tyler [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 3:09 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Fund public education

Senators,

Please fund public education in Alaska by increasing the BSA to \$1000 per student and put in a plan for rate adjustments that inflation proof our students opportunity for a quality education.

Permanent fund dividends to residents is NOT more important than educating our children.

Sincerely,

Margaret Tyler

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: jamie shearer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 3:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Funding Education in the State Operating Budget

Good afternoon Senators,

I write to you today to encourage you to support increasing the base student allocation (BSA) by a minimum of \$1000 to begin to make up for 15 years of losses due to inflation. I am a parent of a high schooler and middle schooler in Anchorage and greatly value our public schools.

During last night's Anchorage School District special meeting the Board approved a budget with devastating cuts to hundreds of teachers, elimination of many sports programs, and a class size increase across all grades. It does not have to be this way. Funding from the state to make up for years of mostly flat funding, rising costs, and inflation could go a long way to addressing these drastic changes.

Please support significant and sustained funding for public K-12 education.
Thank you for your consideration,
Jamie Shearer

Doniece Gott

From: Tracey Burke [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 3:27 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: funding for public education

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

I have children in the Anchorage public schools and am employed in a workplace struggling to attract young employees because Anchorage and Alaska seem so unwelcoming to young families.

I urge you to support increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$1000 this year. I have watched the quality of my children's school deteriorate, and to be clear, it is not because the teachers have become less dedicated or less talented. It is because the school has been starved for resources. Ironically, their school, Polaris K-12, is the kind of school the governor says he wants to keep and have more of. Polaris is not technically a charter school, but it is an "open optional" lottery-admission school, with motivated students, involved families, a flexible structure, and excellent outcomes. But Polaris is losing its spirit and the qualities that make it so special because of the functional loss of funds due to inflation so far outpacing state expenditures. Neighborhood schools are suffering even more, and I want the families in those schools to see investment in their schools and children as well.

Budgeting always involves trade-offs. I wish to say unequivocally that funding public education has got to be the priority. If it means establishing taxes, so be it. (I favor income tax over sales tax but am open to either.) If it means a small, or even zeroed-out, PFD, so be it. Receiving money from the state was a nice idea when we were flush, but times have changed. Radically. I appreciate concerns that low-income families rely on the PFD differently than more affluent ones, but a refundable tax credit as part of an income tax system could take care of that.

My children are approaching young adulthood, and in good conscience, I cannot encourage them to stay here in this climate. Much as I love it here, and have loved it for 35 years, I do not know if I plan to stay. A stronger public education system won't fix all problems but gives us a foundation. Please, address this single issue. Vote for fully funding education, and vote to override the inevitable veto.

Thank you,
Tracey Burke
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Patricia Stark [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 3:54 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

Please increase education funding. An increase of \$680 is not enough. Alaska needs at least \$1,000. Our schools are working without enough funds. Alaska used to have schools near the top tier in the U.S. and now we are near the bottom. Please adequately fund our schools.

Sincerely,
Patricia Stark
Fairbanks

Doniece Gott

From: Larri Spengler [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:13 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: increase state education funding

Greetings:

I understand that you are considering the state operating budget.

I can think of nothing more important to include than a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to begin to make up for 15 years of losses to inflation.

Please do not give this critical area short shrift. Alaska's youth are vital to Alaska's future.

Larri Spengler

--

Larri Irene Spengler

[REDACTED]
Juneau, Alaska 99801
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Michael Clark [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:35 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding Testimony

Esteemed Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Michael Clark and I live in Anchorage. I'm writing in support of a substantial and dependable increase to the Base Student Allocation for Alaska's students.

With two children of my own attending Romig Middle School and West Anchorage High School I'm concerned about the retention of good teachers. I've seen first hand how our best teachers inspire, encourage and motivate our students. Then see these same compassionate and patient teachers uproot their lives to leave for a higher paying teaching job offer out of state.

The investment in our schools will help to build a solid foundation for the future of our great state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
-Michael Clark
Anchorage, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Jimmie Froehlich [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:32 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: More Money for Schools

Please support education in Alaska with a solid financial foundation. Increase the BSA now and inflation-proof it.

Jimmie Froehlich
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Colleen Paquette Al-Samarrie [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:17 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Budget Testimony

Thank you to the Chair person and members of the Senate Finance committee.

My name is Colleen Al-Samarrie from Wasilla. I am testifying in support of the following state budget items that aim to protect and advance food security in the state of Alaska.

I support the funding necessary to establish the Department of Agriculture that will promote continued growth for our ag industry.

I support the \$5M funding in the capital budget for the UAF Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extension needed to grow and strengthen of our agriculture industry.

I support additional staffing for the Department of Health, Division of Public Assistance eligibility technicians to process applications for our most vulnerable Alaskans seeking food and health support.

I support including funds to support healthy school meals for ALL students in our public schools.

Food is a basic human necessity and no one should EVER go hungry in Alaska. I believe that food security is an area that Alaska holds a great deal of potential as a leader amongst states if only we can 1) invest in protecting and expanding our agricultural and natural resources and 2) invest in our people to ensure state agencies can get the food to our most hunger vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your time. Please support these state budget items that aim to protect and advance food security in the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Colleen Al-Samarrie
Wasilla, AK 99623

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Doniece Gott

From: Heidi McCroskey Heimerl [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:08 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support Significant and Sustained K-12 Public Education Funding

Hello Legislators,

I am writing today to ask you to support significant and sustained funding for K-12 education. Our state, our schools, the people who work in schools and the students receiving education within the walls are on the brink of collapse. You can feel it in the air in our community and in our schools. Please support a significant increase to the BSA this year and in years to come...

Education is prevention. If you invest in our future, you will see the investment dollars years down the road. Currently, we put more funding toward crisis management methods which are more costly (hospitalizations, corrections, mental health and addiction treatment facilities).

I've heard all the claims against funding our schools:

- "Throwing more money at the BSA won't solve our problems"
 - Reality - We need funding to keep up with costs. After years of losing buying power, our schools are in dire need. It's hard to innovate when you can't balance the budget and have to cut all activities and programs that keep students connected to school. It's hard to attract and keep the best workers when you can't offer competitive salary or benefits. It's hard to build community confidence when everyone is fighting over whose school to close or what cuts to make.
- "Alaska's test scores are in the tank."
 - Reality - When Alaska's schools were well funded and teachers earned a pension, our test scores were above national averages. Funding matters.
 - Reality - In recent years, more students (especially homeschooling students) are opting out of tests, making these metrics less and less meaningful.
- "Districts want funding without accountability"
 - Reality - Local school boards are accountable to their communities through elections, public meetings, and processes for public input. State and federal law provide guardrails, reporting systems, and interventions when needed. State policy makers must also be held accountable: legislators enacted the Alaska Reads Act with multiple additional layers of accountability for districts, and then failed to fund it adding more to our stretched-thin staffing.
- "We can't afford big education funding increases."
 - Reality - We can't afford not to invest in education. Education should be our first priority, not our last. We have revenue-generating capacity, we just need political will.

Please do what is best for ALL families in Alaska before they all move out of state.

Thank you,
Heidi Heimerl

[REDACTED] 99502

From: [Logan Pitney](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Written Testimony - Operating Budget - L.Pitney
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:17:48 AM

Members of the committee, good afternoon,

While you are contemplating the operating budget for this year I ask you to consider this. Alaska is my home, where I was born and raised, where I live and teach. One of my favorite things about Alaska is that public education is enshrined in the constitution of our great state. Article VII, section I states:

The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution.

I would like to emphasize two clauses in this section, "*shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools*" and "*Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control*".

The State of Alaska did indeed establish a system of public schools, public schools in which I learned, and was inspired by great teachers. I credit several of them for my decision to go into teaching. My primary concern is that the maintenance of public schools called for in the constitution has not been honored. Since 2017 our schools have been flat funded while, according to the bureau of labor statistics, \$1.00 in 2017 had the spending power of \$1.31 today. You are intelligent people, you know what effect this has, and you know why it has happened.

Gov. Dunleavy does not support public education. The only logical conclusion I can draw from his actions through his 6 years in office is that he wishes to dismantle public education in Alaska and catalyze a shift to religious charter schools. I refer you to the second clause I pointed out above. If this is not his goal, then his veto of a BSA increase last year and his continued contempt for public education, while trying to shift funding to charter schools outside of local control is beyond my comprehension.

I am so deeply appreciative of those members who voted to override his veto last year, and supremely disappointed in those who sustained the Governor's veto. To anyone who claims that we cannot afford the cost of education, I say that we cannot afford the alternative. Education is significantly cheaper than the public costs associated with crime, houselessness, unemployment, etc. Remember that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of treatment. Education is that prevention. (Corrections account for over \$450 million in the governor's

2024 budget, ironically more than the roughly \$330 million in the university budget). Consider what it says about our state that we spend more incarcerating our citizens than we do on their higher education.

You are in a position to show the Governor that Alaskans support public education. A substantial increase in the BSA in this year's operating budget is necessary, but it is only the first step. We all know that the governor will veto any education funding that doesn't come with his strings attached. Stand together with your colleagues, and your colleagues in the House, and stand up to the Governor when the time comes. Show your constituents that you believe in the benefits of a strong public education program.

Respectfully,
Logan Pitney

Doniece Gott

From: Lin Davis [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 8:04 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

Dear Senators:

It's time. It's clear. Increase education funding \$1000. Help Alaska kids rise.

I am 34 year resident watching education funds disappear. Grow our economy with well educated youth.

Thank you.

Lin Davis
[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801

Doniece Gott

From: Brittany Overholser <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 7:43 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: I support an Increase to BSA

My name is Brittany von Lindern. While I do not have children in the Anchorage School District I do strongly believe that education is the foundation of a solid community. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Public education is important to our community and Anchorage's quality of life. Let's invest in Alaska's future!

Brittany von Lindern

Doniece Gott

From: Kayse Ericksen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 7:12 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Senate Testimony - Education Funding

My name is Kayse Hinrichsen. I have 3 children in the Anchorage School District. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. Without substantial and sustained increase to the BSA our school will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. Public education is important to my family and our quality of life. Let's invest in Alaska's future!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Kayse Hinrichsen
Parent at Chugach Optional Elementary*

Doniece Gott

From: Lili Misel [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 7:02 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support significant and sustained funding for K-12

Good morning Senate Finance Committee,

I am sorry I cannot testify this morning in person, but I hope you will take these written comments instead.

I encourage the Senate Finance Committee to increase the base student allocation by at least \$1000. This increase will make up for more than 15 years of losses to inflation. Our public schools are important to the development of Alaska and growth of our economy. The recent study by ISER presented to the Senate Education Committee in February demonstrated how Alaska is high in the nominal dollars spent per student in Alaska, but that advantage disappears the moment you factor in the cost of living in Alaska.

The BSA needs to be raised to support our schools in Alaska. I know Governor Dunleavy is against funding education without specific caveates, but please find a way to compromise so our school districts stop making larger classrooms and cutting more teaching and support positions.

Please support the increase to the BSA by at least \$1000 and find a compromise with the Governor to see it happen in this session.

Thank you for your time and work on behalf of Alaskans.

Lili Misel

Fairbanks

Doniece Gott

From: Melissa Bruesch <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 6:54 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support increased BSA for Alaska Schools

I am a mother of two in Anchorage, AK.

I am writing imploring you to consider an increase in the BSA for Alaska schools.

My children attend a school of choice in the Anchorage School District. We chose these because we believe in the education curriculum that they provide. Our school is in jeopardy with the proposed budget cuts; poised to lose 5 teachers which would significantly limit course offerings and increase class sizes.

Teachers are already stretched too thin. Class sizes are already larger enough. My child often states that he is unable to get adequate help when he has a question because teachers don't have time to stop and help him. This is a problem that should not have to happen. Our children deserve more.

Please help us save our schools and our children's education.

Melissa Bruesch

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Homer Hounds [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 6:31 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please fund Alaska's schools

> Dear Senate Finance Committee,

> I have been living in Homer, Alaska for the past 22 years, but I grew up in Massachusetts, which is a state that truly prioritizes education. Most of my classmates ended up going to college. Many left the state to learn and work in other places, but now that they have started their own families, they are moving back to Massachusetts because they want to give their children the opportunity for a great education too. Alaska used to prioritize education and many of the children who grew up here during that time went to college. The State of Alaska invested time and money into educating these students in hopes that they would use these skills to create a better quality of life for all Alaskans. Many of these students left the state to learn and work in other places, and they are now starting to settle down and start their own families. If you want them to return to Alaska to raise their children, they are going to want their children to have the opportunity to also get a great education. If that isn't available here, they will be less likely to return. Highly educated people value education. If Alaska chooses not to value education, highly educated people (such as doctors and engineers) will not choose to raise their families here. As a state, we need to prioritize public education. Private school is not available in most of the state, and homeschool is not an option for working parents. Please raise the BSA and support Alaska's students!

> Thank you,

> Tory Rockefeller - parent of a 1st grader at McNeil Canyon Elementary in Homer, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Marin Granholm <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 6:01 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for increased school funding

As a parent of a Romig Middle Schooler who will lose his baseball season with the planned cuts, thank you for your support of sustained increased funding for schools that kids and parents can rely on.

Sincerely,

Marin Granholm

Doniece Gott

From: Valerie T <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 4:08 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written testimony for 2/27 meeting

Valerie Truncali, RDH, BSDH
10230 Carlson Road
Anchorage, AK 99507

Vtruncali@gmail.com

9073888257

February 27, 2025

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
1500 W Benson Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for increased and sustained funding for K-12 education in Alaska, specifically for the proposed \$1000 increase to the base student allocation. I am pleased to see HB 69 has been advanced to the senate floor.

As a pediatric dental hygienist, a mother of two boys who attend the O'Malley French Immersion Program, and an active member of the community, I am deeply concerned about the potential loss of critical educational programs if this funding is not supported and defended.

Over the past 15 years, inflation has severely impacted the funding available for our schools, and this has resulted in programs that contribute to successful educational outcomes being at risk. As a mother, I see firsthand how programs like French immersion provide invaluable learning experiences and set my children on a path to success. If adequate funding is not approved, many of these programs could face cuts or elimination, which would significantly diminish the quality of education our children receive and be an economic loss for the Anchorage Community at large.

The timing of this decision is critical, as planning for the coming year is now underway. We need to act swiftly to ensure that schools have the resources they need to provide high-quality education and continue to offer specialized programs that are essential for student growth and development.

I respectfully urge the committee to prioritize the \$1000 increase to the base student allocation as part of the state operating budget. Education is the foundation of our future, and investing in it today will create a brighter tomorrow for all Alaskans.

Doniece Gott

From: Phyllis Rude [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:20 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Funding for Education

The Anchorage School District has just put forth a budget, which would raise class sizes in middle middle schools and high schools to 36 students per classroom. I am a retired language arts teacher who taught five classes each day. Most of my classes were 25 to 28 students, and I could barely keep up with reading their compositions and commenting on them to help the students improve their skills. Student only improve with practice. There is no way a teacher can adequately respond to 180 student's writings regularly.

With larger class sizes come more challenges in knowing the children as individuals and tailoring lessons to their needs and interests. Such individual attention helps prevent discipline problems which can increase substantially in larger classes.

Please increase the base student allocation at least \$1000 so that such large classes sizes can be avoided.

Sincerely,
Phyllis Rude

Doniece Gott

From: Candice Wood <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 11:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: RE: Operations Budget: homeschool allocations

I am a working mom (lower middle class) of three kids, I have taken time to homeschool as well as having kids in private school and did not take allocation away from the school fund. My homeschool group is requesting testimonies from parents and this is mine: Those privileged enough to have the luxury of time to homeschool should not be taking from the public school allocations to maintain services assessable to all. Thank you.

Doniece Gott

From: Sarah McWilliams <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written Testimony for 2/27/25 Meeting

My name is Sarah McWilliams. I am a Speech Pathologist, a small business owner, and the mother of two students who attend O'Malley Elementary School in Anchorage. Today I am writing in strong support of significant and sustained funding for K-12 education. We need a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to begin to make up for 15 years of losses to inflation.

Our student to teacher ratio is incredibly concerning, and O'Malley is slated to lose 5 additional teachers which is unimaginable. The loss of these teachers would impact the whole school and likely end the French Immersion program.

I understand that the 111 million dollar shortfall will need funding and Alaskans have some hard decisions ahead. I support using PFD money for the purpose of education. Right now our Alaskan kids rank 46th and 49th for test scores in the country. We can and must do better. It's unfair to demand improvement without the funding and support to do so.

Thank you,
Sarah, Sadie (9 years), & Isla (7 years) McWilliams

Doniece Gott

From: Kate Hammer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony Submittal

Good Evening,

My name is Kate Hammer, I was born and raised in Anchorage where I met my husband. We have spent the last 19 years traveling around the country for his job as an Air Force pilot and we were lucky enough to be stationed back in Anchorage at JBER 4 years ago. When we moved back, we settled in thinking we'd raise our two young children here in Anchorage where we had amazing childhoods and received excellent public educations through ASD schools. What we didn't realize was how much the State has changed since we left. Specifically we are very disappointed in the lack of sufficient and inflation-proof funding for education.

Please figure out how to pass a budget that supports reliable funding for school districts across the State. How many hours have been wasted over the last few years as we see-saw back and forth over this topic, how inefficient. How do we expect school districts to do their job with fractions of the purchasing power they had just 4 years ago. Many other budget items have received inflation increases over the last few years, why not education? Our State constitution is clear that it has to provide public education for all students in the state, you swore allegiance to that constitution and you're currently failing at that part of your job.

How can we expect our State to grow and prosper through what we know will be times of great change over the next few decades if we aren't educating today's students. I work in healthcare, how can we be assured we'll have medical assistants, nurses, physician assistants, doctors, and administrative staff to take care of us if we don't educate today's students. This is not just about today, this is about the next many decades. Alaska has an out-migration problem and I can promise you it will get worse if you continue to ignore our education system. My son is thriving in 2nd grade French Immersion and IGNITE right now, the current budget has killed IGNITE and will likely strangle French Immersion too and I hold you, my government officials, responsible.

I want to be clear that I am absolutely OK with receiving a reduced or even no PFD if that is the solution to fund education. PFD founders didn't invest that extra money so people could get an annual check while the State crumbles around them. What's the point of a little extra cash in my pocket when my kids can't learn?

Please pass a sensible budget that supports an increase in BSA by at least \$1000, take my PFD if you need to. Please invest in today's kids and tomorrow's future and the great State of Alaska.

Thank you for your time,
Kate

Kate Hammer
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]