

Doniece Gott

From: Matt Hemmer <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:34 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase Funding For Alaska Schools - A Fiscally Responsible Investment

Dear Finance Committee Members -

My Name is Matt Hemmer, I'm a dad with a son in the Anchorage School District, and I urge you to increase funding for Alaska's public schools as a matter of fiscal responsibility and public safety. Underfunding education now will cost us dearly later. I ask that you consider these key points:

- **Pay Now or Pay Later:** It costs far less to educate a child than to imprison an adult. Yet, Alaska's Base Student Allocation funding is about 25% behind inflation, while expensive incarceration rates continue to climb. Investing in education today will reduce future crime, and prison costs.
- **Workforce Crisis:** Alaska faces a serious workforce shortage. Teacher vacancies are rising, and 24% of our workforce is now filled by nonresidents. Without strong schools to produce skilled local graduates, businesses struggle to hire in state talent. Fully funding education strengthens our homegrown workforce, and the economy.
- **Keeping Families and the Economy Strong:** Good schools attract and retain families. If our schools suffer, families will move away, shrinking our population and killing small communities. Well funded schools ensure stable communities, which means a stronger economy and safer neighborhoods for everyone.
- **Constitutional Duty and Public Support:** The Alaska constitution requires us to maintain an adequate public school system, and we have a responsibility to fulfill this mandate. The public is behind us - 77% of Alaskans support increased school funding, including business and labor leaders who need a well educated workforce.

Boosting education funding now is a fiscally responsible, and conservative minded investment in Alaska's future. It will save money, bolster the economy, and uphold our values. I ask that you please act this session to significantly increase funding to our public schools.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you,
Matt Hemmer
Anchorage, Alaska
[REDACTED]

Public Opinion Message

PLEASE MAIL TO YOUR LOCAL LIO

From: Please **PRINT** the information below. This form must be signed by the sender.

Mr. / Ms. / Mrs. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	First name <u>Janet</u>	M. I. <u>B</u>	Last name <u>Clark</u>	Jr. / Sr. / III
Group affiliation (if applicable)				Daytime telephone number
Mailing address <u>P.O. Box 954 Ketchikan, AK.</u>				Zip code <u>99901</u>
Residence (if not same as mailing address) <u>225 Tongass Ave</u>				Zip code <u>99901</u>
Email address				Signature <u>Janet B. Clark</u> Date <u>2/27/25</u>

To: Put a ☒ in the appropriate box(es).

Standing Committees		House members		Senate members	
<input type="checkbox"/> H or S	Community & Regional Affairs (CRA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Allard (ALR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Josephson (JOS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bjorkman (BJK)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education (EDC)	<input type="checkbox"/> Burke (BUR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kopp (KOP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Claman (CLA)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance (FIN)	<input type="checkbox"/> Bynum (BNY)	<input type="checkbox"/> McCabe (MCA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cronk (CRN)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health & Social Services (HSS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Carrick (CAI)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mears (MEA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Dunbar (DNB)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Judiciary (JUD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Costello (COS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mina (MNA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Giessel (GIE)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Labor & Commerce (L&C)	<input type="checkbox"/> Coulombe (COU)	<input type="checkbox"/> Moore (MOO)	<input type="checkbox"/> Gray-Jackson (GRA)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resources (RES)	<input type="checkbox"/> Dibert (DIB)	<input type="checkbox"/> Nelson (NED)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hoffman (HOF)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rules (RLS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Edgmon (EDG)	<input type="checkbox"/> Prax (PRA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hughes (HUS)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	State Affairs (STA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Eischeid (EIS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Rauscher (RAU)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kaufman (KAU)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation (TRA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Elam (ELA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruffridge (RUF)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kawasaki (KAW)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Joint Committee</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Fields (FIE)	<input type="checkbox"/> Saddler (SAD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Kiehl (KIE)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legislative Council (LEC)	<input type="checkbox"/> Foster (FON)	<input type="checkbox"/> Schrage (SCG)	<input type="checkbox"/> Merrick (MRR)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Special Committees</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Galvin (GAL)	<input type="checkbox"/> Schwanke (SCW)	<input type="checkbox"/> Myers (MYE)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Energy (ENE)	<input type="checkbox"/> Gray (GRY)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stapp (SPP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Olson (OLS)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Fisheries (FSH)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hall (HLL)	<input type="checkbox"/> Story (STO)	<input type="checkbox"/> Shower (SHO)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Military & Veterans' Affairs (MLV)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hannan (HNN)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stutes (STS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stedman (SMN)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	House Tribal Affairs (TRB)	<input type="checkbox"/> Himschoot (HMS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tilton (TLT)	<input type="checkbox"/> Stevens (STG)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senate Arctic Affairs (AAF)	<input type="checkbox"/> Holland (HLA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tomaszewski (TMZ)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tobin (TOB)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senate World Trade (WTR)	<input type="checkbox"/> Jimmie (JIM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Underwood (UND)	<input type="checkbox"/> Wielechowski (WIE)	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Johnson (JHS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Vance (VAN)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yundt (YUN)	

Subject: Fill out the boxes below **OR** enter a Subject.

HB or SB	Bill number	and check one:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support	OR enter a general subject (LIO staff may modify):
		<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose	<input type="checkbox"/> Amend	

Message: Your **PRINTED** message cannot exceed 50 words or contain any vulgar language.

Support	increase	funding	for	Infant	5
Learning	Program.	There	has	not	10
been	an	increase	for	over	15
ten	years		Thank	you	20
for	your	Support			25
					30
					35
					40
					45
					50

Public Opinion Message

PLEASE MAIL TO YOUR LOCAL LIO

From: Please **PRINT** the information below. This form must be signed by the sender.

Mr. / Ms. / Mrs.	First name	M.I.	Last name	Jr. / Sr. / III
	Brynn		Bolling	
Group affiliation (if applicable)				Daytime telephone number
Mailing address				Zip code
Craig, AK 99921				99921
Residence (street) address if different from mailing address				Zip code
Craig, AK 99921				99921
Email address		Signature		Date

To: Put a ☒ in the appropriate box(es).

Standing Committees		House members		Senate members	
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		<input type="checkbox"/>	Johnson (JHS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vance (VAN)
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				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OR	
enter a general subject (LIO staff may modify):					

Message: Your **PRINTED** message cannot exceed 50 words or contain any vulgar language.

Support	Infant	Learning	Program	Funding	5
NO	increase	since	2014.	I + J	10
is	time	to	stop	ignoring	15
our	babies.	Increase	funding	and	20
decrease	the	eligibility	percentage.	Support	25
our	young	families	to	Support	30
or our	future	employers,	employees	and	35
leaders.					40
					45
					50

Doniece Gott

From: kyra harty [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:02 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony re: AK Senate Finance Committee on State Budget

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the State Budget,

My name is Kyra Harty and I live in Homer. I am coordinating the Beginning and Young AK Farmers Network, hosted by Alaska Farmers Market Association, and I am a new farmer. I am writing today regarding my priorities for the state budget and would like to show my support, echoed by the network's [number one priority](#), for funding that prioritizes equitable land access near viable markets. I encourage land granting, strengthening conservation funds and trusts, and increasing capital to administer cooperative agreements for producers to hold long-term leases on state owned land.

Thank you,
Kyra Harty
[REDACTED]

Please enter into the record my
WRITTEN TESTIMONY

TO:

Committee:

SFIN

Date of Hearing:

2/27/25

RE:

Bill No./Subject

Homer Alaska Spit Erosion

Today's Date

2/27/25

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Shawn Grimes owner of the Tackle Shack, where my wife and I have operated for four years. We strongly support the \$300,000 request for erosion mitigation planning of Homer Spit Rd. We've seen the budget drop by four feet, with \$50,000 in damages from the Nov 24th storm. Our \$70,000 investment in armor rock is the only barrier protecting this section of the road. Without action, ongoing erosion threatens businesses, public access, and the local economy. Please prioritize this funding to protect our community's future.

Sincerely,
Shawn Grimes

[Redacted]

shawngrimes@ypha.com

Signed

[Signature]

Printed Name

Shawn Grimes

Representing (self/organization)

Tackle Shack Co. Homer AK

Community of Residence

Homer AK

Doniece Gott

From: Nina Faust [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:03 AM
To: Sen. Bert Stedman; Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Mike Cronk
Cc: Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: Senior Services funding

P.O. Box 2994
Homer AK 99603

February 26, 2025

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Senate

Dear Senators:

I support the efforts of AARP to increase funding for grants for senior services. So many of our NGO agencies like Hospice, Meals on Wheels, and more are experiencing difficulties in providing adequate services in our communities to serve seniors, particularly those who want to stay in their homes. Supporting seniors in remaining independent as long as possible helps keep costs down.

I would like to see the proposed 15% increase for Senior services across Alaska as proposed by AARP added into the Operating Capital and Mental Health budgets.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Nina Faust

Senate Finance Committee

Testimony of Lon Garrison, Executive Director

Association of Alaska School Boards



February 27, 2025

Chair Stedman, and members of the Committee. My name is Lon Garrison, and I am the Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB). AASB is a statewide association that represents the interests of 53 school boards across Alaska. I am here today to urge you to increase support for public education.

One of AASB's three legislative priorities for the 2025 is Sufficient and Sustained Public Education Funding.

At Senator Tobin's request last fall, Legislative Finance estimated that the inflation-adjusted BSA for 2025, indexed to FY 2017, would be \$1,808 higher. AASB acknowledges this is significantly more than is likely to be considered. Last year's benchmark of a \$680 BSA equivalent outside the formula only preserves the status quo. We urge the Senate to explore ways to significantly increase education funding above the \$680 BSA equivalent for FY25. However, we stress that increasing funding must prioritize an increase of the BSA.

There is a clear connection between school funding and student outcomes. When schools have adequate resources, students have greater opportunities to learn and succeed. Unfortunately, Alaska has been underfunding public education for many years. As a result, our students are falling behind their peers in other states.

A recent report by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage found that Alaska's per-pupil education spending has fallen below the national average. This is due, in part, to the fact that Alaska's education spending has not kept pace with inflation. In other words, the state is spending more money on education, but that money is not going as far as it used to.

The ISER report also found that Alaska's education spending is not keeping up with other states. Since 2017, Alaska's per-pupil education spending has increased by only 13%. In contrast, the national average has increased by 26%. This means that Alaska is falling further and further behind the rest of the country.

The lack of adequate public education funding has had several negative consequences for Alaska's students. For example, many school districts have been forced to cut programs and services. This has led to larger class sizes, fewer teachers, and fewer opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities.

School boards and administrators continually struggle with funding shortages, which make it difficult for schools to attract and retain qualified teachers. As a result, many students are taught by teachers who are not fully qualified, which negatively impacts student achievement.

Ultimately, the absence of funding has hindered schools' ability to provide students with the necessary support for success. This encompasses services such as counseling, tutoring, and special education. Consequently, many students miss out on the assistance they require to fulfill their potential.

Sufficient and sustained funding of public education permits the realization of opportunities for students to succeed. When students succeed, parents and the community succeed. Through this accomplishment, an excellent education for every student every day creates and supports the opportunity for communities to thrive.

Education is a necessary and constitutionally required investment in our future and the posterity of our state.

Sincerely,

Lon Garrison, Executive Director, AASB



AASB's 2025 Legislative Priorities

On behalf of our member school districts statewide, the AASB Board of Directors has adopted three legislative priorities: **Funding, Educators and Students.**

Our Mission: The Association of Alaska School Boards advocates for children and youth by assisting school boards in providing quality public education, focused on student achievement, through effective local governance.

Sufficient and Sustainable Public Education Funding

Sufficient, sustainable and stable funding is required to meet Alaska's obligation to provide quality, public education for every Alaska student. Educating Alaska's youth is the best strategy for successfully meeting and safeguarding Alaska's prosperity.

- ▶ **Increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA)** – AASB strongly advocates for the necessity of increasing the BSA as calculated by Legislative Finance to reflect inflation based on the Alaska-Urban CPI since the last major increase to the BSA in FY2011. From 2011 to 2025, the BSA increased by only \$280 per student (4.9%), while inflation rose by at least 34%. This discrepancy has resulted in severe staff shortages, school closures, and program eliminations.
- ▶ **Incorporate an annual increase in the BSA to account for inflation** – Provide by statute, for an annual increase in the BSA that provides some accounting for annual inflation and drives a philosophy of long-term investment in public education.
- ▶ **Increase funding for student transportation** – Student transportation funding continues to be inadequate. Transportation costs have dramatically increased due to inflation and labor shortages. Transportation funding must increase regularly to keep up with inflation and prevent the use of school district general funds.

Retention and Recruitment of Teachers, Administrators & Staff

School districts face an unprecedented crisis of retaining and recruiting qualified, effective teachers, administrators, and support staff which seriously hinders providing Alaska students with a quality education.

- ▶ **Implement recommendations** - of the Teacher Recruitment & Retention Task Force.
- ▶ **Reinstitute a competitive retirement program** - including both defined benefits and defined contributions.
- ▶ **Invest in teacher housing** - required for nearly all rural school districts.
- ▶ **Grow Alaska teachers and administrators** - work with partners, universities, and apprenticeship programs to improve and expand teacher training programs, teacher-mentor programs, and alternative certification pathways.

Student Wellness and School Safety

Alaska's public school students face a range of challenges that impact their wellness and safety, including academic stress, mental health issues, bullying, violence, sexual abuse, and lack of access to resources like counseling and social services. Violence, neglect, and sexual abuse have increased, resulting in reduced social-emotional well-being and academic achievement.

- ▶ **Address student mental health - Support and fund** mental health services for all Alaskan students, including trauma-engaged practices in Alaska schools.
- ▶ **Prevent student sexual abuse by school staff** - Support the implementation of policies and training regarding professional boundaries between staff and students.
- ▶ **Reduce school and student violence. Support and fund** the needed programs and services that work to improve relationships, communication, respect, and dignity as a few examples.





AASB 2025

Legislative Priorities and Supporting Resolutions

Sufficient and Sustainable Public Education Funding

- ▶ B.7 – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FUNDING AS TOP PRIORITY
- ▶ B.9 – MEETING SCHOOL FACILITY NEEDS FOR ALASKA STUDENTS
- ▶ B.10 – FUNDING FOR EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS IN ALASKA
- ▶ 1.4 – OPPOSE SCHOOL VOUCHERS
- ▶ 2.1 – URGING THE TIMELY, PREDICTABILITY, EQUITABLE, AND ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
- ▶ 2.2 – ENSURING EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR ALASKA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- ▶ 2.4 – URGING THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE TO FUND A GRANT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES
- ▶ 2.6 – RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE ALASKA READS ACT
- ▶ 2.8 – BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION INCREASE
- ▶ 2.10 – EDUCATION ENDOWMENT
- ▶ 2.12 – SCHOOL DISTRICT CAPITAL PROJECTS
- ▶ 2.20 – ENERGY COST RELIEF
- ▶ 2.27 – URGING THE CONTINUATION OF FUNDING FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL (VOCATIONAL) EDUCATION
- ▶ 2.40 – INFLATION-PROOFED BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION (BSA) INVESTMENTS

Retention and Recruitment of Teachers, Administrators & Staff

- ▶ B.19 – ALASKA NATIVE TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SCHOOL STAFF HIRE AND RETENTION
- ▶ 2.19 – LEGISLATIVE FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR ONGOING TRS AND PERS EMPLOYER INCREASES
- ▶ 2.45 – TEACHER EDUCATION LOAN EXPANSION
- ▶ 4.1 – SUPPORTS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT
- ▶ 4.2 – ESTABLISHING A NEW TEACHER INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR ALASKA
- ▶ 4.3 – ALASKA STATEWIDE EDUCATOR MENTORING
- ▶ 4.5 – ADDRESSING THE TEACHER, ADMINISTRATOR, AND SCHOOL STAFF SHORTAGE
- ▶ 4.6 – REPEAL THE SOCIAL SECURITY GOVERNMENT PENSION OFFSET AND WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATORS
- ▶ 4.7 – RELATING TO DEFINED BENEFIT RETIREMENT
- ▶ 4.10 – ADDRESSING THE PARAPROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE
- ▶ 4.11 – ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO CERTIFY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS
- ▶ 4.14 – TEACHER CERTIFICATION DELAY

Student Wellness and School Safety

- ▶ B.11 – CHILD ADVOCACY MISSION STATEMENT
- ▶ B.15 – PREVENTION/EARLY INTERVENTION
- ▶ B.17 – DECLARING CHILDREN THE TOP PRIORITY OF ALASKA
- ▶ 2.37 – RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE ALASKA SAFE CHILDREN'S ACT
- ▶ 2.44 – URGING DEDICATED FUNDING OUTSIDE THE FOUNDATION FORMULA
- ▶ 3.1 – DECLARING CHILDREN OF ALASKA OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE
- ▶ 3.2 – PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT
- ▶ 3.3 – FETAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG EXPOSED STUDENTS
- ▶ 3.4 – SUPPORTING SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT
- ▶ 3.5 – EDUCATION ON THE DANGERS OF TOBACCO, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS MARIJUANA USE, AND SECONDHAND SMOKE
- ▶ 3.6 – VIOLENCE (AND PORNOGRAPHY) IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT
- ▶ 3.7 – COOPERATION AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS SERVING CHILDREN
- ▶ 3.8 – SUICIDE PREVENTION EDUCATION AND TREATMENT EFFORTS
- ▶ 3.9 – SAFE, CARING, CONNECTED SCHOOLS
- ▶ 3.10 – SUPPORT OF STATE FUNDING FOR STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES IN ALASKA
- ▶ 3.11 – HIV/AIDS AND OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STI) EDUCATION
- ▶ 3.12 – EDUCATION OF STUDENTS IN RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIORS RELATING TO HUMAN SEXUALITY
- ▶ 3.13 – IN SUPPORT OF ALASKA CHILDREN'S TRUST
- ▶ 3.15 – SUPPORTING THE ADOPTION OF TRAUMA-INFORMED AND CULTURALLY AFFIRMING PRACTICES
- ▶ 3.16 – REVISE PARENTAL PERMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS ADMINISTERED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- ▶ 3.17 – STUDENT WELLNESS
- ▶ 3.21 – EXPANSION OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE
- ▶ 3.23 – SUPPORT OF FULL STATE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS
- ▶ 3.24 – SUPPORTING SEX ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION
- ▶ 3.26 – SAFE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS
- ▶ 3.29 – POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

2.1 URGING THE TIMELY, PREDICTABLE, EQUITABLE, AND ADEQUATE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

The timely, predictable, equitable, and adequate funding of public education is of the highest concern to Alaska's citizenry, the parents of its public school students, and its current, past, and future students. To align with the intent of [Article VII, Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution](#), which states that the Legislature "shall maintain a system of public schools open to all the children of the State," and because the last increase to the Base Student Allocation to account for inflation occurred in FY 11 (effective July 1, 2010), the Association of Alaska School Boards strongly supports the following:

- Enact annual legislation establishing the BSA within 45 days of the start of the legislative session so that school districts are able to effectively and efficiently utilize funding for the subsequent school year.
- Enact legislation that adjusts and maintains the BSA for inflation since FY 11, based on analysis by the Legislative Finance Division.
- Enact legislation which provides an adequate level of resources to all students, in which all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the state's curriculum and performance standards.
- Require that the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development complies with [AS 14.17.460](#) by monitoring the District Cost Factor and preparing and submitting proposed district cost factors to the Legislature by January 15 of every other fiscal year.
- Fully fund the Public Education Fund ([AS 14.17.300](#)) for the subsequent year to ensure education funding will be in place prior to the school district date required for submittal of district budgets to DEED.

Rationale. To comply with the [Alaska State Constitution, Article 7, Section 1](#), the Alaska State legislature is required to fund public schools in accordance with [AS 14.17](#). Alaska's 131,000 public school students in 502 schools are dependent on this funding to provide them with an education that prepares graduates to sustain the future of the 49th state. When there is confusion, delay, and doubts over the amount of funding, it places undue stress on the 7,500 teachers responsible for the instruction of Alaska's public school students exacerbating the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff. Today's educational requirements are many, including traditional core subjects, career & technical education, technology, cultural understanding, physical and mental health, extracurricular activities, music, creative arts, and a myriad of other topics. A quality education requires highly qualified teachers and a robust instructional program to deliver the education that will prepare students to propel Alaska into the future. That education is only obtainable through sustained, early, adequate, equitable, and predictable funding.

Adopted 2024

(Sunsets 2029)

Association of Alaska School Boards

How legislators short-changed students out of reading and math instruction

Mike Bronson, NAACP Anchorage education committee

December 14, 2024

"There are schools in which children are not being accorded an adequate opportunity to learn the very basic fundamentals as tested by the state." -Judge Gleason in Moore v Alaska, 2007

Summary

Twenty years of data show how budget cut-backs for K-12 schools starting in 2007 predict both the loss of teachers and plunging student proficiencies in Alaska. For example, fourth graders' math and reading proficiency fell one full year of learning as the Legislature reduced its real-dollar base student allocation to schools. At the same time, eighth graders fell behind by more than a year of math learning and by almost a year of reading learning.

As the state lost many teachers but not many students in that period, the pupil-to-teacher ratio, an index of class size, increased more than 20 percent.

Introduction

Alaskans are asking what's behind the recent decline in reading and math proficiency. More and more students no longer meet the state's reading and math standards. Parents know that many things affect the opportunity to learn. School funding expressed in recent dollars underwent dramatic reductions at the hand of the Legislature after 2006 and may have contributed to the big loss of learning.

This paper looks at how the base student allocation (BSA) and the numbers of teachers correlate with the drop in student proficiency over recent years.

Methods

Reading and math scores of fourth and eighth graders were compiled from the federal government's national assessment of educational progress (NAEP). The test is given every two years except during covid. Although the federal scores do not make geographic comparisons within the state, they are comparable year-to-year. Roughly one year's worth of learning is indicated by a 10-point change in test scores.

The Alaska education foundation formula BSAs are published by the Legislature. My method for adjusting past BSAs for inflation was adopted from a report by Painter (2023) for the Legislature. It accounted for the distinction between calendar year inflation and fiscal year funding. Annual average inflation rates were taken from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics for urban Alaska. Adjusting for inflation involved multiplying the statutory, nominal BSA by the inflation factor to 2023. The resulting adjusted BSA reflects how many 2023 dollars could have bought the same thing in the earlier year. Alternative methods showed similar changes in BSAs expressed in 2023 dollars. See the Supplemental Data file.

School funding involves more than the BSA, of course, and other funding indexes could be calculated. However, BSA is a commonly used, central, consistent indicator that allows ready comparisons of funding over more than twenty years. This paper ignores the occasional one-time appropriations outside the BSA, costs of buses, capital and some other school items beyond instruction.

Numbers of K-12 students and teachers, including those in charter and correspondence programs, are listed in enrollment tables provided online by the state's education department. Pupil-to-teacher ratio is always smaller than class size but is a common proxy because it tracks with class size. Classroom size data were not available.

How much the recent expansion of correspondence schools and homeschooling might affect the relationship between funding levels and student proficiency at a statewide scale is not addressed because the data are not adequate to indicate effects. See the Supplemental Data file accompanying this report.

Non-parametric Spearman correlations between were calculated after ranking. Correlation indicates statistical association rather than cause and effect. I made no AI queries for this report.

Results

BSA peaked and fell.

Base student allocations adjusted for inflation to 2023 peaked in 2006 and 2007, followed with a lesser bump in 2010, and then fell. By 2023, the BSA had reached its lowest in 20 years after equalizing a dollar's purchasing power to adjust for inflation. For example, in Anchorage you would need \$1,420 in 2023 for the same thing priced \$1,000 in 2006. See the falling adjusted BSA dollars shown in Figures 1 through 5. See the Supplemental Data file for tables of the data underlying the charts.

Scores and BSA declined together.

About one year's loss of learning followed the plunging BSA values.

Reading score averages for fourth graders peaked in 2007 with the inflation-adjusted BSA's peak. Since then, the federal test scores have fallen to among the lowest in the US. Alaskan fourth graders in 2022 scored about one year behind the 2007 fourth graders. In those 15 years, the Legislature reduced the inflation-adjusted BSA by one-fifth. The fastest drop of reading scores occurred in the last seven years when the BSA shrank by 15 percent. See Fig. 1. The Spearman rank correlation between BSA and reading score is 0.6.

Math score averages for fourth graders peaked in 2007 and 2015 as the adjusted BSA peaked. Since then, scores have fallen with the shrinking adjusted BSA after some lag but tracking more closely than reading. Fourth graders now are about one year behind their earlier cohorts, as the adjusted BSA shrank 15 percent in seven years. See Figure 2. The Spearman rank correlation between adjusted BSA and math score is about 0.75.

Reading score averages for eighth graders peaked in 2011 and 2013, and lagged the BSA peak, starting about four years after the fourth graders' peak. Eighth graders' scores then dropped sharply, showing more than a half year loss of learning in less than 10 years. See Figure 3. The Spearman rank correlation between adjusted BSA and score is about 0.5.

Math score averages for eighth graders sustained a peak from 2007 to 2011, and then dropped very steadily. In 11 years, the scores suggested the students had fallen more than a year behind their earlier cohorts. The adjusted BSA shrank 17 percent in that period. See Figure 4. The Spearman rank correlation is 0.9, suggesting that most of the variation in math scores is statistically explained by the BSA changes.

Teachers and BSA declined together.

The pupil-to-teacher ratio rose with the drop of inflation adjusted BSA. See Figure 5. Many teachers disappeared with the cuts. The ratio was lowest in 2009 when the number of K-12 teachers topped-out at 9,047. However, teacher numbers then fell 19 percent to 7,218 by 2023. Consequently, Alaska schools reached an all-time average high of 17.5 pupils per teacher last year, the education department reported, when the national average was 15.3. By contrast, over that same period, K-12 student numbers fell by only one-half percent, from 128,761 to 128,088.

Proficiency and teachers declined together.

Reading and math scores fell to new lows as pupil-to-teacher ratios rose. See Figures 6 A, B, C and D. The Spearman rank correlation coefficients between the ratios and reading scores are 0.5, and for math scores are about 0.8. Those coefficients suggest the close associations between scores and the class size index.

Conclusions

An index of school funding emerged as a predictor of student learning loss. Calculating inflation-adjusted versions of the Legislature's BSA funding for schools made a large contribution to statistical predictions of statewide declines in reading and math proficiency.

Twenty years of data show that when the inflation-adjusted BSA fell by more than one-fifth, two things happened:

- pupil numbers per teacher rose, and
- reading and math proficiency fell behind by about a year's worth of learning.

The data suggest that the BSA's decline in value is tied to the loss of learning. The relation between funding and proficiency appears mediated by the numbers of teachers.

The Legislature has likely short-changed thousands of students per year who've aged out of school without the opportunity to learn reading and math to state standards.

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DEED <https://education.alaska.gov/data-center>

DLWD <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cpi/calculator>

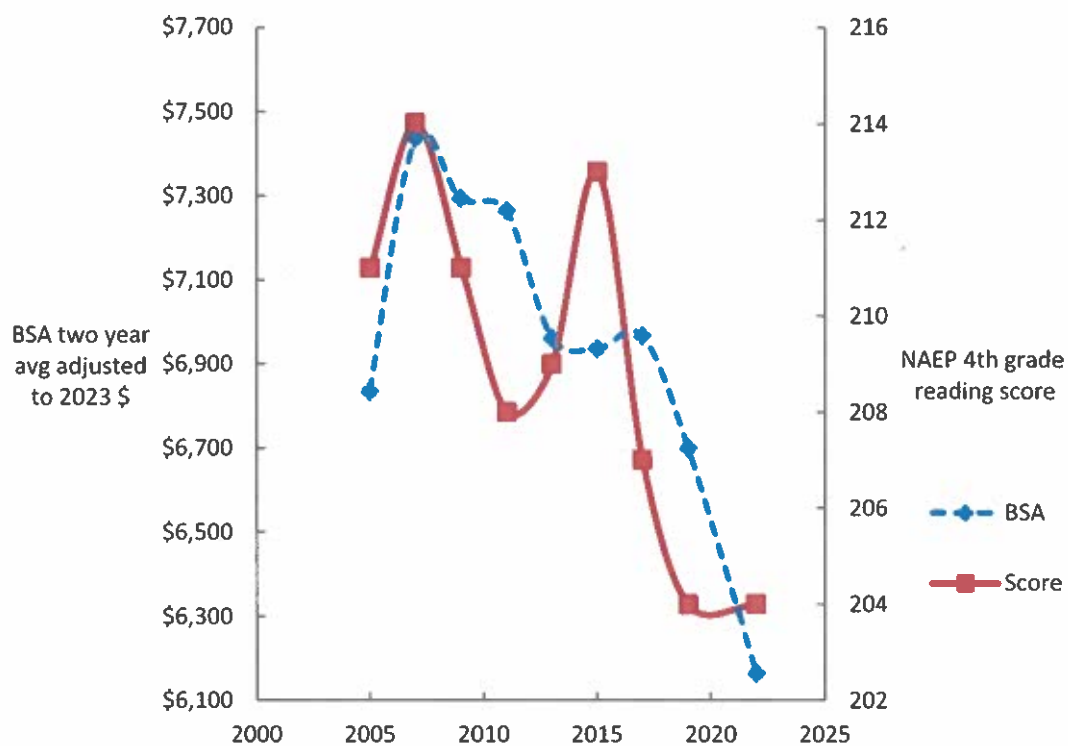


Figure 1. Alaska 4th graders' average reading scores (red —) declined with school funding (blue — •). Scores are from the biannual national assessments of educational progress (NAEP) for Alaska statewide. Funding is indicated by the Legislature's statewide base student allocation (BSA) adjusted to 2023 dollars and averaged over two years. Each blue point represents the average adjusted BSA in the year of the test and the year before.

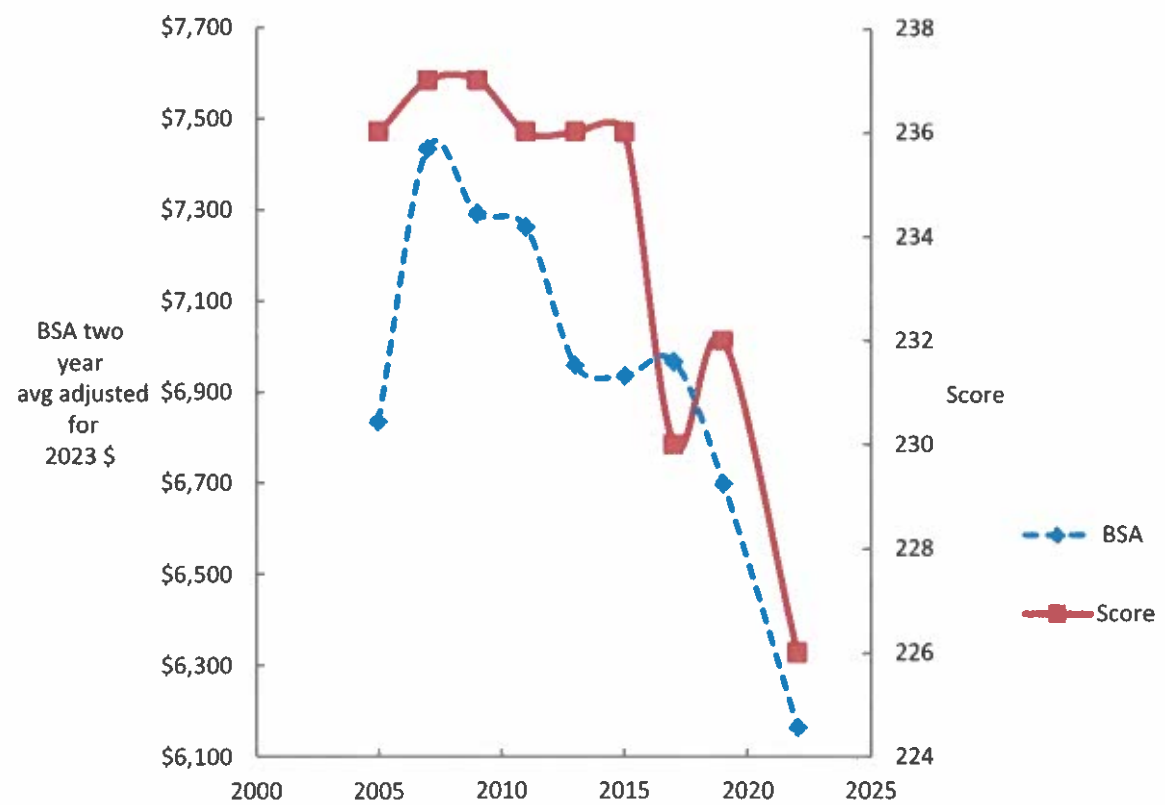


Figure 2. Math scores of 4th graders (red line) fell with the real base student allocation (blue dashes).

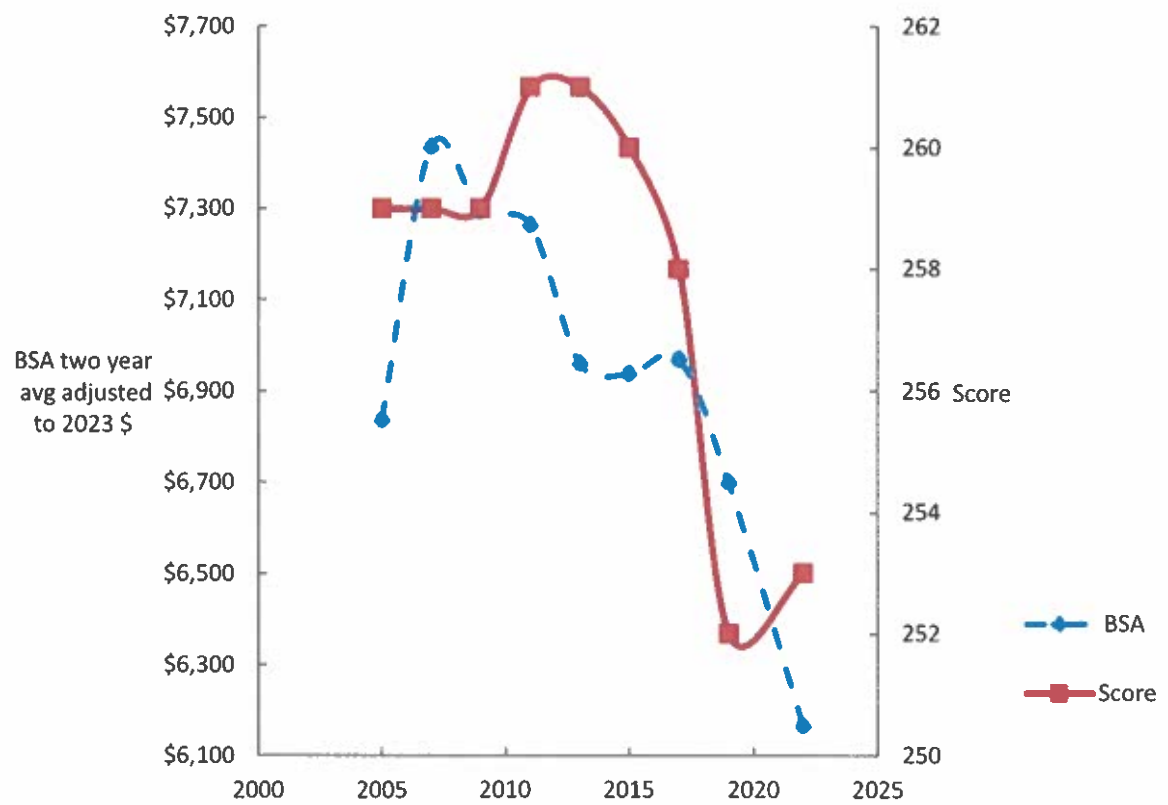


Figure 3. Reading scores of 8th graders (red line) fell with the real base student allocation (blue dashes).

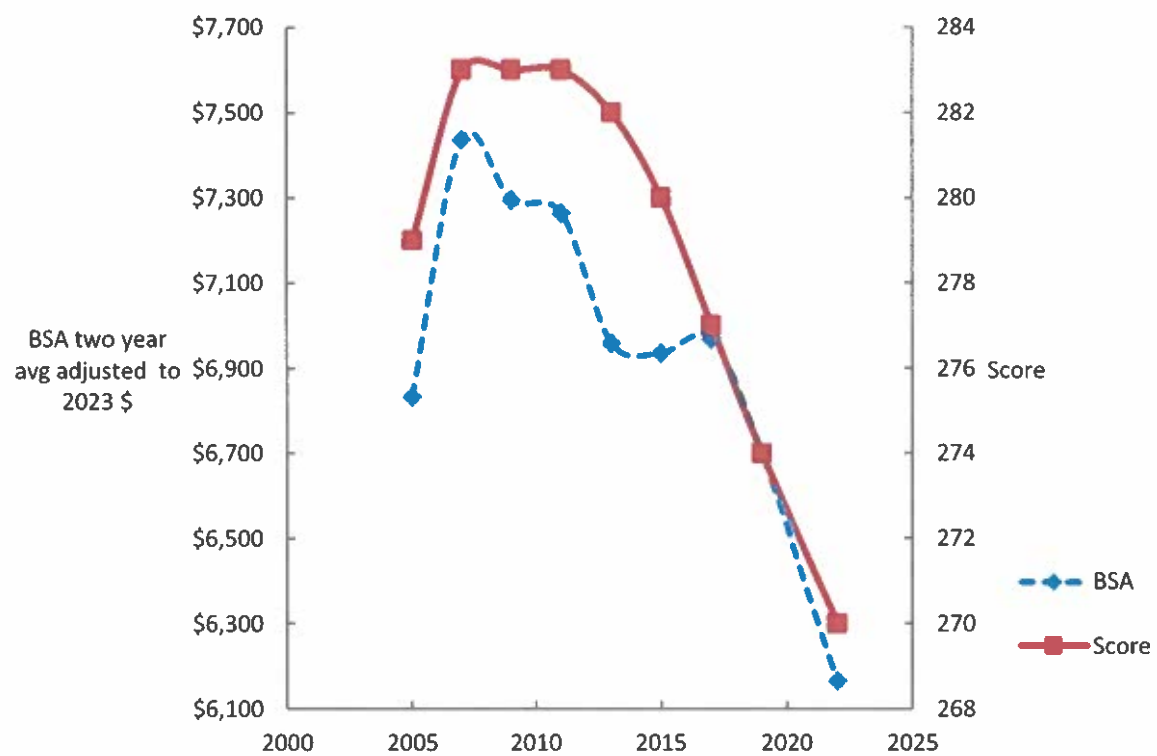


Figure 4. Math scores of 8th graders (red line) fell with the real base student allocation (blue dashes).

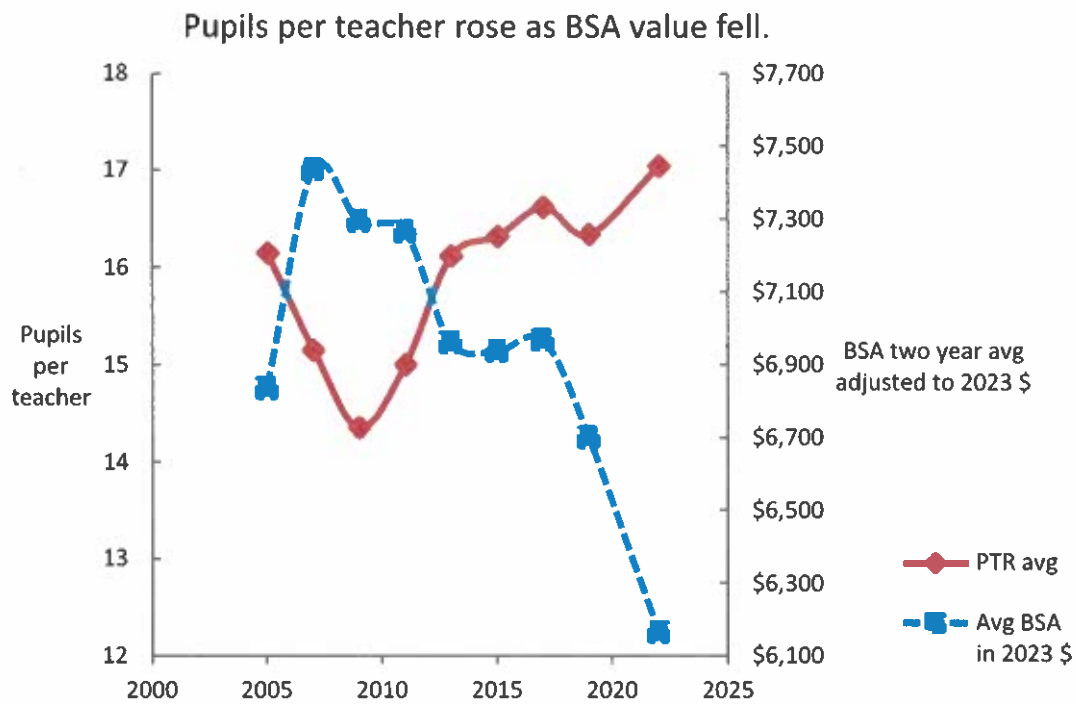


Figure 5. The statewide K-12 pupils-to-teacher ratio (blue dashes) rose as the value of the Legislature's base student allocation (red line) fell. Two-year averages are illustrated.

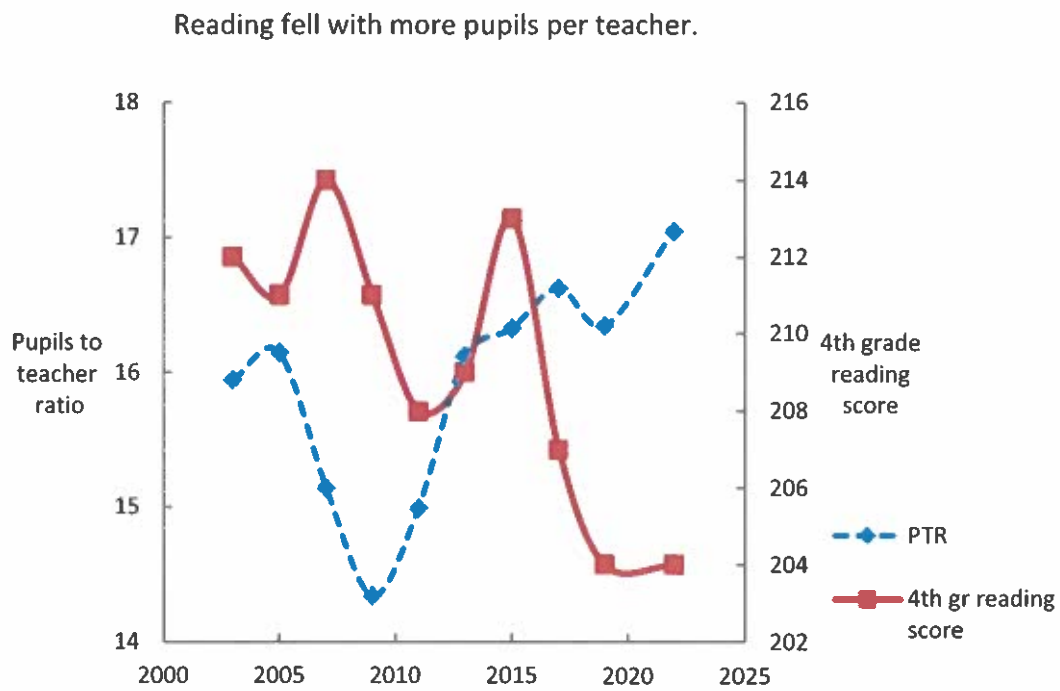


Figure 6 A. Reading scores of fourth graders (red line) fell as the statewide K-12 pupils-to-teacher ratio (blue line) rose after 2009.

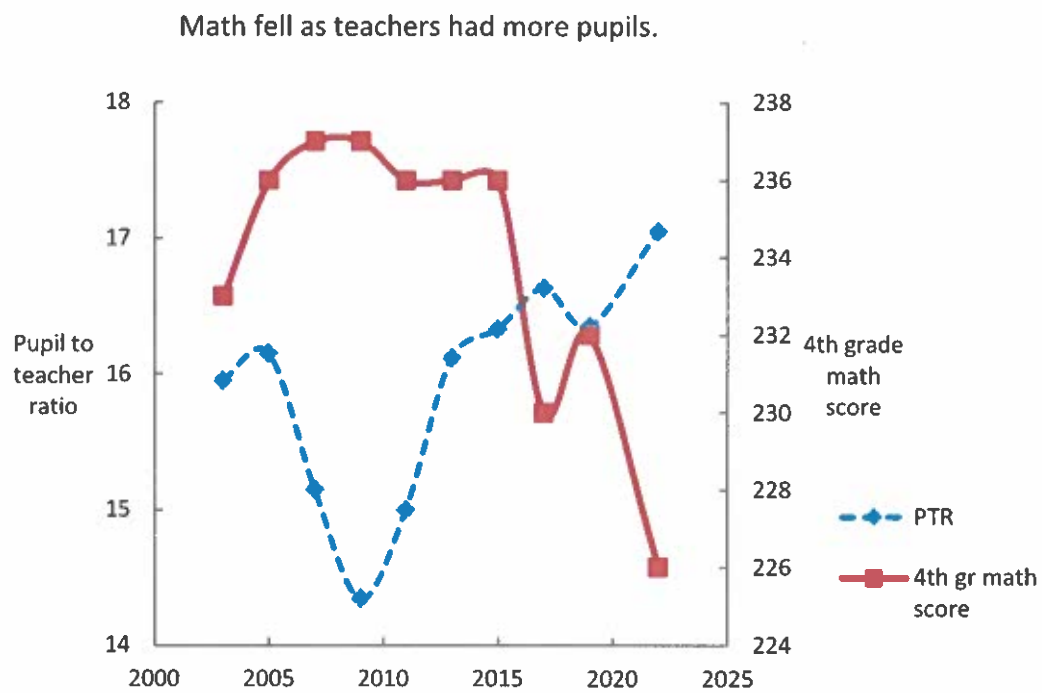


Figure 6 B. Math scores of fourth graders (red line) fell as the statewide K-12 pupils-to-teacher ratio (blue line) increased after 2009.

Reading scores fell as pupils-per-teacher rose.

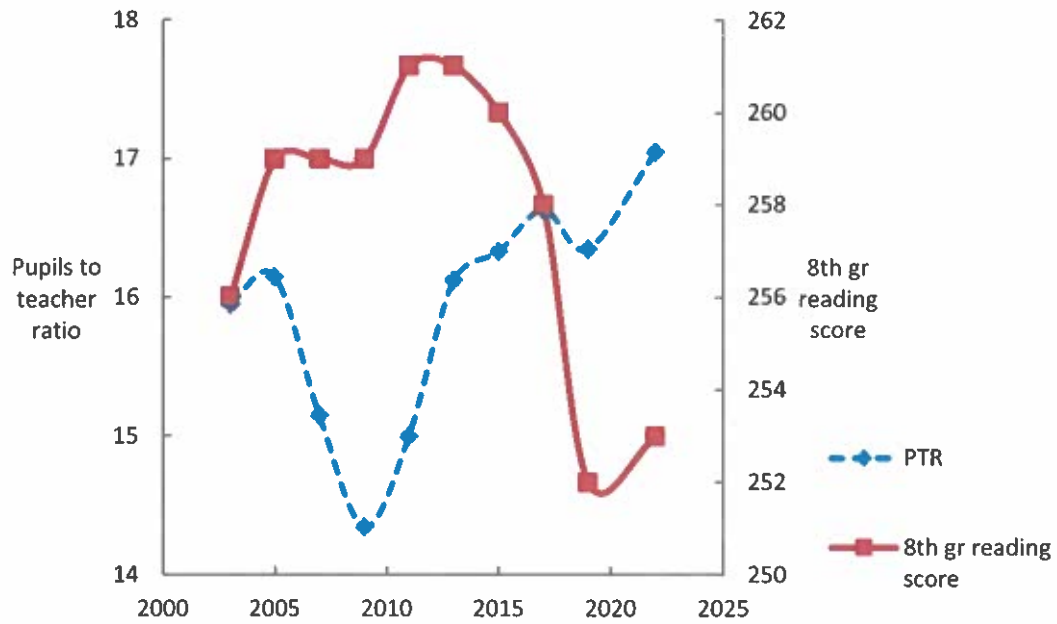


Figure 6 C. Eighth graders' reading scores (red line) fell as K-12 teachers gained more and more pupils (blue line) statewide after 2009.

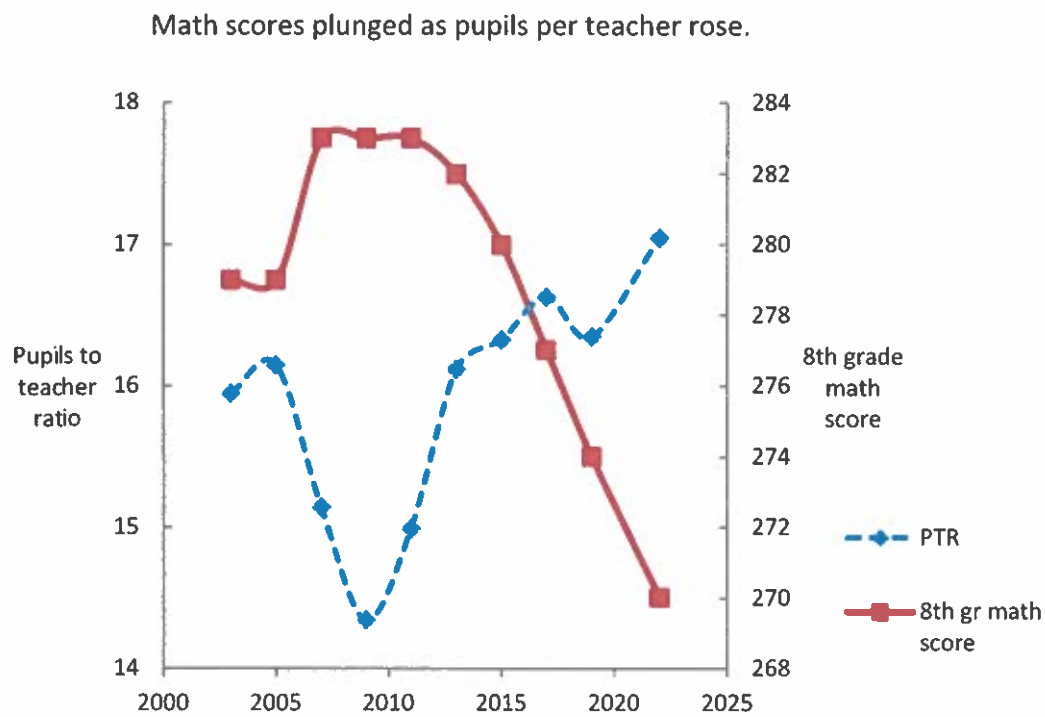


Figure 6 D. Eighth grade math scores (red line) plunged as individual K-12 teachers statewide took on more and more students (blue line) after 2009.



How has Alaska's K-12 education spending changed? Trends from 2017-2023

Matthew Berman & Dayna Jean DeFeo

Education funding in Alaska, as in most states, is one of the largest allocations in the state operating budget. In 2022, K-12 schools in Alaska spent \$20,191 per student for current operations, which was 29% more than the national average of \$15,633. However, many things are more expensive in Alaska than they are in other parts of the nation, and this is also true for operating schools. After adjusting Alaska's spending for its higher relative costs, we find that Alaska's per-pupil current expenditures fall below the national average by 15%. In the five years between 2017 and 2022 (the first year we conducted this analysis and the most recent year with full data available, respectively), per pupil current spending in other US states increased by 26%, whereas Alaska's spending increased by only 13%.¹

Where does school funding come from?

Funding for K-12 schools includes education investments from state, federal, and local sources. The largest portion of Alaska state spending is determined by the *School Foundation Formula*, which starts with the base student allocation (BSA). The BSA is a fixed per student amount that is set annually by the legislature. The foundation formula then adjusts the BSA account for different costs associated with delivering education, including:

- **School size** - because smaller schools cost more to operate at the per-pupil level
- **District cost factor** - because some Alaska communities have higher costs of living and operating costs than others
- **Special programs like special education, vocational education, and correspondence programs** – because these programs operate differently from other instructional activities, and have different operating costs

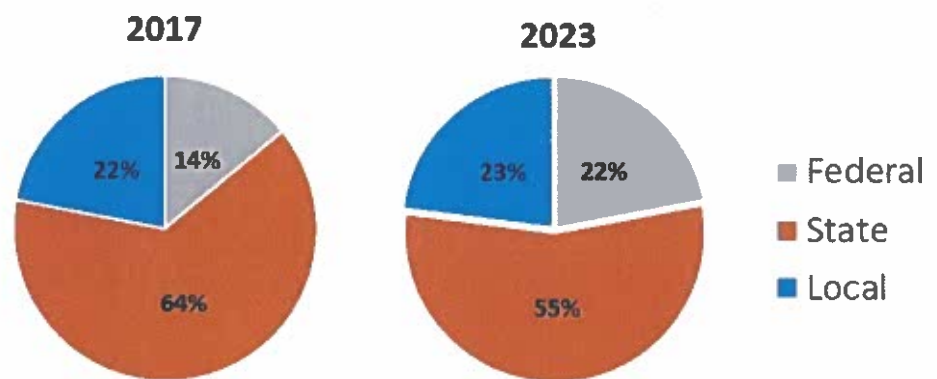
In addition to the funding determined by the foundation formula, the state pays all the costs of pupil transportation.

Although the state pays for more than half of school spending in Alaska, not all education funding comes from the state, and the state's proportional contribution has been declining. In 2023, 55% of Alaska's K-12 spending came from state general funds, 22% came from federal streams, and 23% came from local contributions. In 2017, 64% of Alaska's funding came from the state, indicating that over the past 6 years, federal and local revenues have increased by more than state contributions (see Figure 1). The 2023 spending also included some residual funds from increased federal investments during the COVID pandemic, meaning that the federal proportion of spending should decrease in 2024 when these funds are no longer available.

Figure 1

Distribution of funding sources in Alaska K-12 schools, 2017 & 2023

Source: US Census Bureau, Annual Survey of School System Finances



This figure depicts how the proportion of Alaska's current per-pupil spending changed between 2017 and 2023, with larger proportions coming from federal and local streams, and less from the state.

¹ Figures represent school (academic) years, which are the same as Alaska's fiscal years. Figures and tables for 2017, 2022, and 2023 reflect school years 2016-17 2021-22, and 2022-2023 respectively.

Proportionally, Alaska has larger state and federal contributions and lower local contributions than the average US state. One reason why the percentage of local contributions is relatively low is that 11 percent of Alaska K-12 students live in rural areas that do not collect local property taxes that can be used to support schools. Schools in these areas are run by one of the state’s 19 Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAs). Meanwhile, Alaska permits boroughs and cities with a significant tax base – such as Anchorage, the North Slope Borough, and Valdez – to contribute more than the required equivalent of 2.65 mils (0.265%) of taxable property value (up to a point), but limits the local contribution to avoid losing federal funds.²

How much does Alaska spend on public education, and how does that compare to other states?

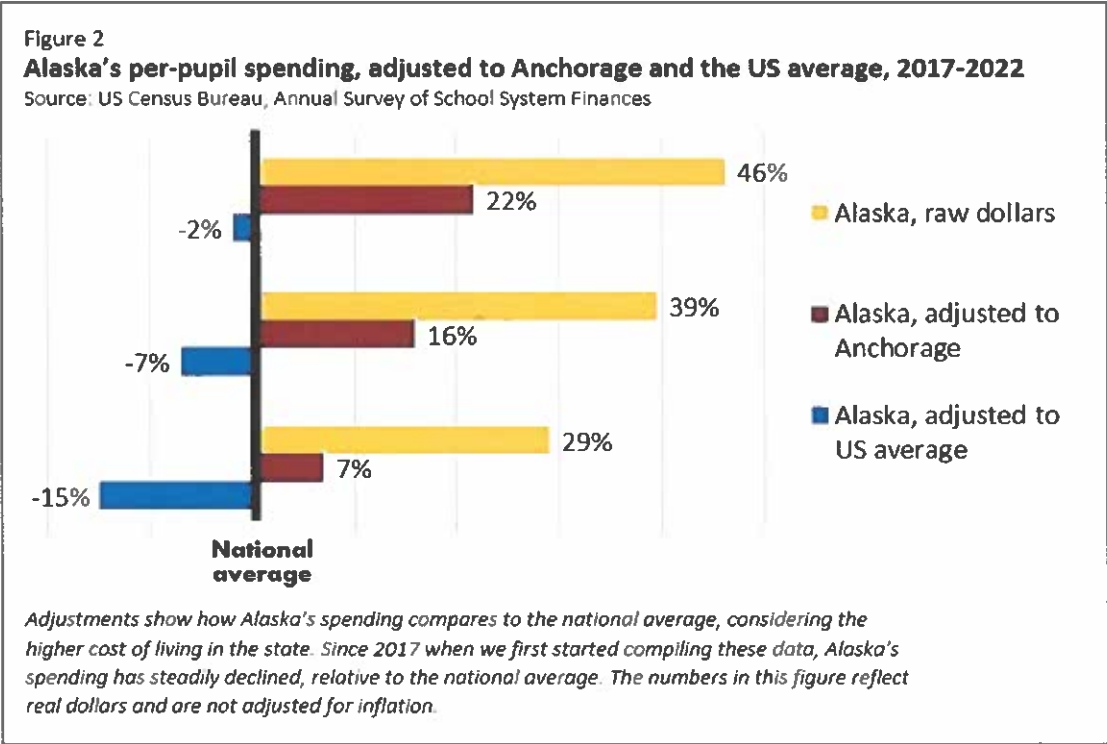
In 2022, Alaska’s average per pupil spending was \$20,191 (US Census Bureau, 2025) which is 27% higher than the national average of \$15,633. At the time of this report, 41 states, including Alaska, had reported 2023 spending. Alaska’s 2023 per-pupil spending was \$20,340; however, we cannot calculate how Alaska “measured up” to the national average without data from all states. Thus, in this analysis, when we compare to national averages, we use 2022 data. To give the most up-to-date information, we also compare Alaska to the average of the 41 states with available 2023 data.

Spending adjustments: Alaska to Anchorage

Within Alaska, costs differ significantly between communities, so the first step of our analysis adjusts Alaska’s education spending to account for the higher costs that districts face relative to Anchorage. To do this, we used the district cost factor (DCF) that the Foundation Formula uses to adjust funds for school districts. We calculated an average district cost factor, weighted by the adjusted enrollment, and used that average cost factor – about 120 percent of Anchorage – to calculate an Anchorage-adjusted average per pupil 2022 spending of \$16,784. This figure is 7% more per pupil than the national average.

Spending adjustments: Anchorage to US average

Even after adjusting Alaska communities to Anchorage, we still cannot directly compare to the national average, because Anchorage’s cost of living is higher than most other communities in the US. To adjust for these differences, we applied the most widely used cost of living index (COLI), published by the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER), to our statewide calculations. This index placed Anchorage at 124% of the average US community in 2022. Adjusted nationally, Alaska’s 2022 per-pupil spending was \$13,247, or 15% below the national average. Table 1 reports the spending adjustments, and Figure 2 compares the percentage differences.

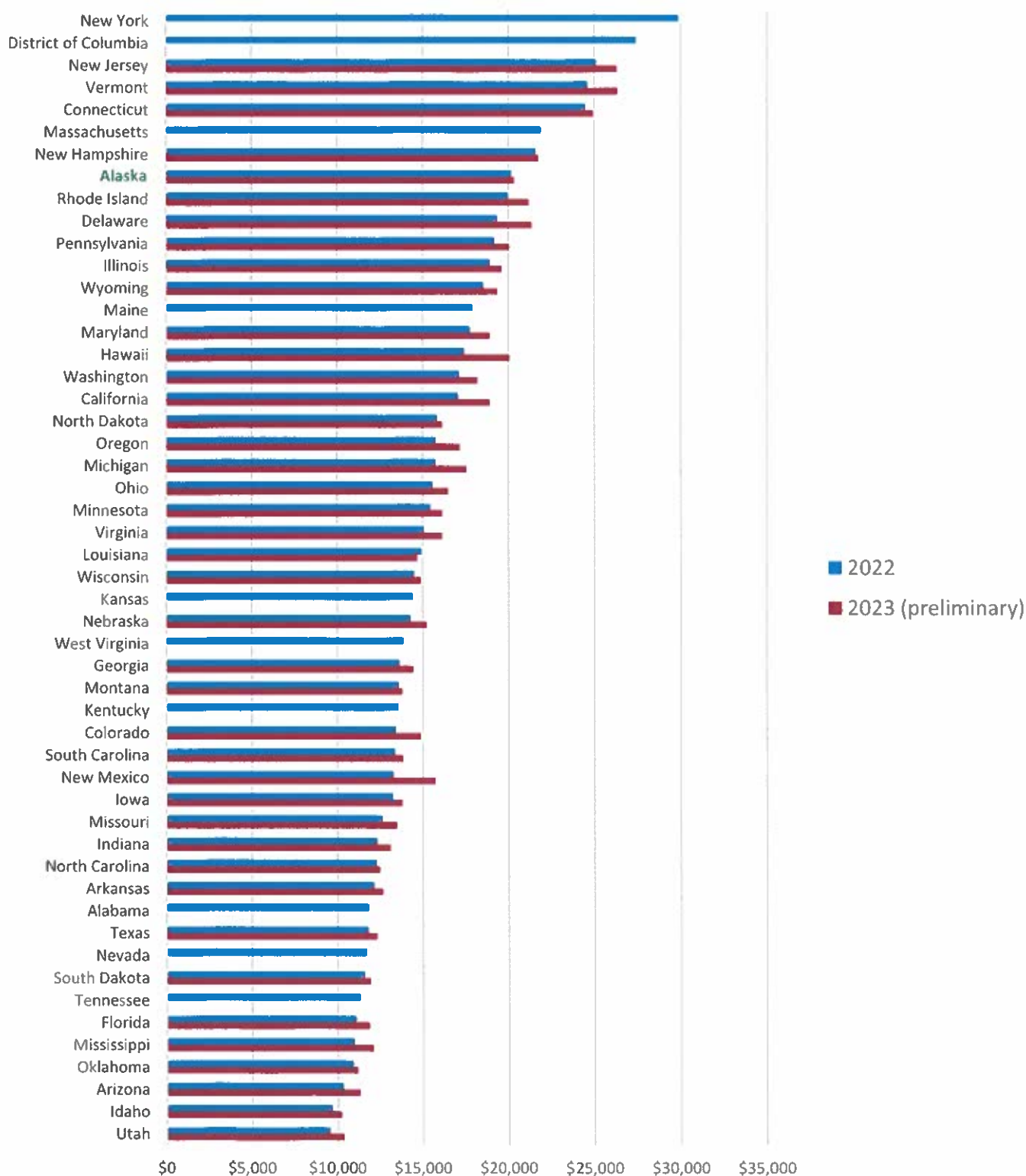


² Alaska Statute 14.17, State Aid to Public Schools; Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (2024). [Public School Funding Program Overview 2024](https://education.alaska.gov/SchoolFinance/pdf/ADA%20Funding%20Program%20Overview%202025_eff1-2024.pdf). https://education.alaska.gov/SchoolFinance/pdf/ADA%20Funding%20Program%20Overview%202025_eff1-2024.pdf.

Figure 3

Average current spending per student, 2022 & 2023

Source: US Census Bureau, Annual Survey of School System Finances



In 2022, Alaska ranked 8th in the nation for unadjusted per-pupil current spending on education. At the time of this report, 41 states had reported 2023 figures. In 2023, Rhode Island and Delaware moved ahead of Alaska, which means that Alaska's 2023 ranking will likely be 10th highest in per-pupil current spending, before adjusting for relative costs.

What do we know about 2023?

At the time of this analysis, Alaska and 40 other states had reported 2023 spending. We cannot calculate a national average without data for all states; however, we can compare Alaska's spending over time to the states for which we have data. Figure 3 lists states in their rank order of 2022 spending, and depicts 2023 data for states that have reported it.

Table 1

Alaska's per-pupil spending between 2017 and 2023, adjusted to state and national indices

	2017	2019	2022	2023
US average	\$12,201	\$13,187	\$15,633	
Alaska	\$17,838	\$18,394	\$20,191	\$20,340
Alaska, adjusted to Anchorage	\$14,853	\$15,290	\$16,784	\$16,893
Alaska, adjusted to US average	\$11,997	\$12,281	\$13,247	\$13,657

Within Alaska, costs differ significantly between communities, so our analysis first adjusted Alaska's education spending using the School Foundation Formula's geographic cost differential to calculate an Anchorage-adjusted average per-pupil spending. Then we applied the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER) cost of living index (COLI) to adjust for higher Anchorage living costs.

Where does the money go?

Figure 4 shows how Alaska school districts allocated spending among expense categories in 2022. Salaries and wages account for the highest proportion of Alaska's current education spending. That's true for other states, too, but while Alaska spent 45.5% of current spending on wages in 2022, the national average was 54.0%. Spending on salaries in Figure 4 includes all salaries, but instructional salaries (teachers and in-class supports) comprise the lion's share of those dollars. Prior work from ISER (Berman & DeFeo, 2024a) and the Alaska Department of Labor (Warren, 2023) noted that Alaska teacher salaries are not competitive, relative to national averages.

Alaska spent a larger percentage (27.1%) on employee benefits, compared to a national average of 23.4%. Alaska's benefit packages (i.e., the types of benefits provided to teachers as part of their contracts) differ between districts, but generally cover the same categories of expenditures as other US states (Bel Hadj Amor et al., 2023). The largest cost in employee benefit packages is healthcare coverage. While the proportion of healthcare premiums paid by employees versus the school districts varies considerably in Alaska (Berman & DeFeo, 2024b), Alaska has the highest per capita healthcare costs in the US (Passini et al., 2018; Kopriva, 2023) which negatively affects all sectors of the state economy. While the challenge of high healthcare costs is not unique to education, in a fixed budget scenario these costs put downward pressure on wages.

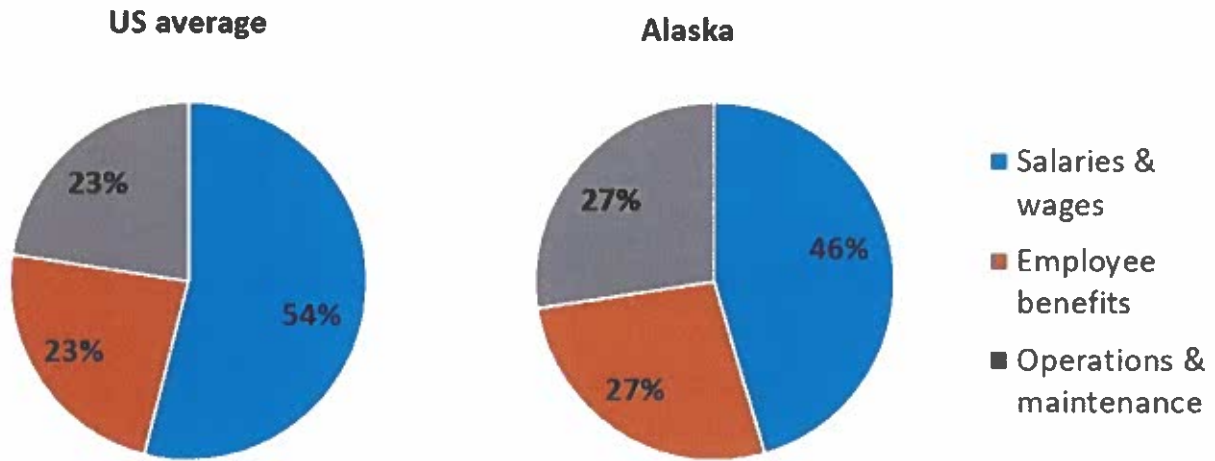
Alaska also spends a higher proportion of its per-pupil dollars on operations and maintenance; much of this can be attributed to higher energy costs required to operate Alaska's schools. Rural schools in particular face higher fuel costs and are not eligible to participate in the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) program that reduces electricity rates for rural households (Alaska Energy Authority, 2017). In addition to *current* per-pupil revenues and spending (which is the focus of this analysis and represented in figure 4), it is important to note that schools benefit from additional spending on capital outlays and bond debt reimbursements, which are mostly applied to building new facilities or renovating old ones. In recent years, Alaska has spent less per student on facilities than the national average, \$1,858 in Alaska compared to a national average of \$2,309 in 2022,³ despite having higher building costs. When we look at *total* expenditures in 2022 – that is, including spending on facilities – Alaska ranked 8th relative to other states. However, by 2023 at least four more states – Delaware, Rhode Island, Illinois, and Pennsylvania – had moved ahead of Alaska in total spending per student.

³Calculated from total spending minus current spending, divided by enrollment used for current spending per pupil. Data source: US Census Bureau, *Annual Survey of School System Finances*.

Figure 4

Percentage of current spending, 2022

Source: US Census Bureau Annual Survey of School System Finances



Relative to other states, Alaska spends proportionally more on employee benefits and operations, and less on salaries and wages.

How does inflation affect education spending?

Inflation represents a general increase in the prices of

goods and services over time, and as prices increase, dollars have less buying power. We measure inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which tracks changes in prices of a “market basket” of goods and services. The items in the basket do not change over time, but their costs do. Nationally, the CPI increased by 18.6% between 2017 and 2022, and

Anchorage’s change in CPI was similar at 17.1%. Table 2 shows that, while inflation increased by 18.6% between 2017 and 2022 and the US average per pupil spending increased by 26%, Alaska’s spending increased by only 14%. The CPI increased by 4.1% between 2022 and 2023. While the average spending increase since 2022 in the 41 states that had reported their 2023 per-pupil spending those states was 5.7%, Alaska’s increase in the same one-year timeframe was only 0.7%. Figure 5 depicts how spending in Alaska and other states differed from inflation rates in the same time period. It shows that since 2017, Alaska spending has lagged inflation, while other states’ spending exceeded it.

Table 2

Changes in per pupil current spending during three periods of analysis, compared to the US Consumer Price Index (CPI)

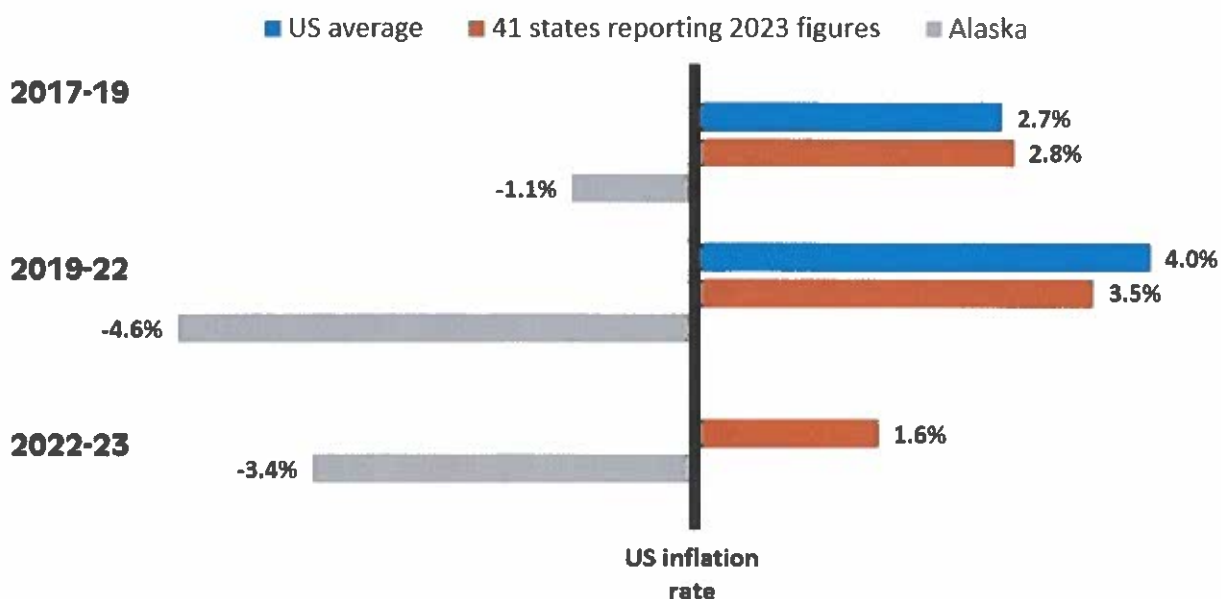
Change in per pupil spending	2017-2019	2019-2022	2022-2023
US average	6.9%	18.4%	
41 states reporting 2023 figures	7.0%	17.9%	5.7%
Alaska	3.1%	9.8%	0.7%
US CPI	4.2%	14.4%	4.1%

Alaska increased its per-pupil spending by 12.8% between 2017 and 2022; but the US inflation rate in that same time period was 18.6%. Between 2022 and 2023, the inflation rate was 4.1% but Alaska’s current per-pupil spending increased by only 0.7%.

Figure 5

Changes in per pupil spending relative to inflation in the same time period

Source: US Census Bureau Annual Survey of School System Finances



This chart reflects changes in spending relative to inflation. Positive percentages indicate spending increased by more than inflation, and negative percentages indicate spending did not keep up with the rate of inflation. While other states, on average, invested in education at a rate higher than inflation, Alaska's per-pupil spending increases have been less than inflation in the same time period.

Implications & opportunities

After adjustments to account for higher costs of operating schools in Alaska, Alaska's per-pupil education spending has fallen below the national average since at least 2017, and has slipped further behind each year since then. Although the state has increased its spending, those increases have been less than inflation; meanwhile other states have, on average, increased investments by more than inflation. With the phase-out of special federal COVID relief funds, the state will face pressure to make up the difference.

Higher costs for fuel and electricity, higher healthcare costs, and cost of living differentials significantly affect Alaska schools – particularly in remote, rural communities – but are beyond the control of school districts. As state support lags behind inflation, school districts are left with few options to cut besides instructional expenditures. Education finance decisions must therefore consider the tradeoffs involved with fixed and flexible costs in district budgets, noting that while the most flexibility lies in instructional expenditures, these are simultaneously the most critical component to achieving education outcomes.

Alaska hires teachers in a national market, so to recruit and retain a workforce of good teachers, the state needs to offer competitive salaries. If Alaska teacher salaries do not keep up with national trends, the state's existing retention and turnover challenges will be exacerbated, especially in remote and high-poverty schools that have the greatest difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers (Berman & DeFeo, 2024b; DeFeo et al., 2018; DeFeo & Tran, 2019).

How much Alaska *should* spend is a question of education inputs, rather than dollars. Though we have put per-pupil spending into national context, we are not able to answer the question of how much Alaska *should* spend on education. Our analysis does not make a connection between student achievement and funding. There is an opportunity for evidence-based analyses that can help Alaska determine the inputs to the education system that are needed for the state to meet its education outcomes.

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- Berman, M., & DeFeo, D. J. (2022). *How much does Alaska spend on K-12 education? (2022 update)*. (Report No. 1857). Institute of Social and Economic Research. <http://hdl.handle.net/11122/12960>
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About the authors

The authors of this report are solely responsible for its analysis and findings, which do not represent the Institute of Social and Economic Research, the University of Alaska Anchorage, or research sponsors.

The authors would like to thank the Senate Education Committee and the House Education Committee of the Alaska State Legislature and for the opportunity to present these preliminary analyses in testimony.

MATTHEW BERMAN, *Professor of Economics*. Matthew has been on ISER's faculty since 1981. His research includes studies of economic organization, political economy, and social change, especially in Alaska and Arctic communities. A current focus of his research is measuring indicators of community adaptive capacity, well-being, and resilience. His recent publications examine, among other things, the effects of universal basic income. He teaches UAA economics and interdisciplinary social science courses.

DAYNA JEAN DEFE0, *Research Associate Professor of Education Policy and Director of the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research*. Dayna has worked at ISER's Center for Alaska Education Policy Research since 2014 and became the director in 2017. Her current research interests include college and postsecondary transitions, particularly in the career and technical fields and for underrepresented populations; teacher turnover, supply, and demand; STEM education; and representation and equity in the curriculum and institutional systems.

Doniece Gott

From: Tanya Roust [REDACTED] >
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:16 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Urgent Need for BSA Increase

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for a significant and sustained increase to Alaska's K-12 education funding. Specifically, I urge you to approve at least a \$1,000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) this session. This increase is critical to addressing the 15 years of flat funding (which really equates to cuts) due to inflation, which has placed immense strain on our schools. I teach kindergarten in Juneau, Alaska, and have for the last 12 years. I can say first-hand that the situation has become dire for my students, me, and my family.

Alaska's students deserve a high-quality education, but without adequate and reliable funding, districts are being forced to make painful cuts that directly impact learning. Across the state, schools are struggling with larger class sizes, fewer support staff, outdated materials, and difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers and paraprofessionals. These challenges ultimately hurt our students and our communities.

A one-time funding boost is not enough—our schools need a sustained commitment to predictable and adequate funding. The \$1,000+ BSA increase is a necessary first step toward ensuring that Alaska's public education system remains strong and that every student has access to the resources they need to succeed. Investing in education is an investment in Alaska's future, and I urge you to prioritize this essential funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your service to our state and your commitment to Alaska's students.

Sincerely,

--Tanya Roust
Juneau, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Rachel Munger [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:17 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public testimony day 2

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. We do not agree with the Governor diverting funds from public schools! Alaska's kids and our future depend on it!

Rachel Munger

Doniece Gott

From: Bonnie Moore [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:23 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education finance testimony

Hello,

I am writing as a parent, new educator, and concerned Alaskan in support of increased funding for our public schools.

As you are aware, funding for our public schools has not kept up with inflation which has increased significantly over the past few years. In order for our teachers to do their job well they need adequate funding. An increase in the BSA allows teachers to more effectively teach their students. When we see low scores in reading and math that is the time to give schools more funding and to enable more focused instruction to a smaller group of students.

As a new educator I am on the short list to be displaced at my Montessori school. So in theory, I know I will have a job, the question is where. Montessori philosophy highlights the learning benefits of a three age group classroom. My students are expecting to be with me for all three years. At parent conferences this week I had to tell their families that I don't know if that will be the case.

Please raise the BSA to allow teachers to provide high quality learning for Alaskan children. Anything less is not in the best interest of our state.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Moore

Denali Montessori Elementary

Doniece Gott

From: Kristin Chandler [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:29 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: HB 69

Hello,

I am a born and raised Alaskan who is now raising 2 teens in Chugiak going to the same schools I did but are about to be at a much more disadvantaged position than I was 25 years ago.

Middle school sports were a cornerstone for my 16 year old, it is where he discovered his love of basketball and continues to play to this day at CHS. Without middle school sports, I don't think he would be where he is today. He is a shy kid who plays too many video games most days, but the sports got him out of that long winter funk that many Alaskan kids suffer from. He played basketball, Wrestling, track, and cross country running. All things that will not be possible next year for these middle school students who desperately need something to do after school.

I have a middle school daughter who attends MLMS and will be an 8th grader next year. She just played her first middle school sport and has signed up for her second one this spring and planned on adding a third next school year, but that opportunity is being taken from her.

These two kids are/were also in the immersion program and have learned an entire second language because of it. My daughter is getting the opportunity to go to Spain next year, which might also not be happening because of these cuts.

The only ones who are going to suffer because of these drastic cuts are our children, **State funding for education has not kept pace with costs.** Since 2011, the base student allocation has fallen behind inflation by 25%. It is about time that we change this gross oversight.

According to the Institute of Social and Economic Research at UAA, Alaska's per-student spending was 15% below the national average in 2023 when adjusted for geographic costs.

We are spending more and more on incarceration and less on education. Since 2017, state spending on the Department of Corrections rose 44% while spending on the Department of Education and Early Development, which includes aid to districts, fell 4% *without accounting for inflation*.

It is passed time that we start investing in our children and the future of this great community and that starts with passing HB 69.

Thank you,

Kristin Chandler

Doniece Gott

From: Amber Chapin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:38 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please increase the BSA

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Amber Chapin. I have 2 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. Please invest in Alaska's future!

Amber Chapin

Doniece Gott

From: Emily Bena [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA increase

To whom it may concern,

My name is Emily Bena, and I am writing in support of a significant BSA increase. States of similar population are spending 20% of their budget on K-12 education and we are spending around 7%. Without increasing the BSA by at least \$1800 and inflation proofing it, we stand to lose our local schools, swimming pool, and several teachers. 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,

--

Emily Bena

[REDACTED]

Seward, AK 99664

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Maura Wharton [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please increase student funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

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 family, our community, and our opportunities as Alaskans.

Thank you!

Maura E. Wharton
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Savannah Courtright [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:08 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education Funding

I have written in support of increasing funding for public education several times in the past decade. Our state has a constitutional obligation to fund public education and the state has failed, time and time again, to increase the BSA to keep up with inflation. You are well aware of Alaskan's support for public education. Your responsibility is to ensure that our schools have the funding needed to keep our public schools and programs functional.

Strong schools are good for businesses and good for job growth. They keep families in the state and attract families as well.

Public schools serve all kids. We must ensure that kids in all of our communities have access to an education that will foster their futures, ensuring a stable future for our communities.

Anchorage School District recently announced proposed cuts to several programs that will impact thousands of children and hundreds of jobs. This is a direct result of your failure to allocate funding appropriately over more than a decade. It is time to stop playing political games with our children's' futures.

Savannah Courtright
Eagle River, AK
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Maggie Gray [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:08 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase to the BSA!

My name is Maggie Gray. I have two 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!

Please keep Alaska's future bright!

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Asa Chandler [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:02 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation increase request

Dear members of the Alaska Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Asa Chandler,

I am a local business owner, GarageExperts, resident of Chugiak, and a Chugiak High School graduate with my children Xander at Chugiak High and Davi at Mirror Lake Middle Schools.

My kids have enjoyed the Spanish Emersion program throughout their education journey as well as several school sports programs, of which my business is a sponsor.

I am writing to you in support of HB69. As a small business owner I am fully aware that inflation exists and costs are much higher today for results than anytime in the past to provide the same results.

Please consider increasing the Base Student Allocation so our community's children can continue to thrive in their journey to adulthood. Education opportunities play a huge role in shaping the adults these students will become.

"Discount education" will only create "Discount adults." "Invested education" will create "invested adults," who may go on to be high quality lifelong Alaskans, and certainly high quality Americans. Widespread education is fundamental in democracy and our way of life.

Please support HB69, thank you very much for taking the time to read and consider my testimony.

Doniece Gott

From: Melanie Iverson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:58 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Constituent Support for BSA Increase

My name is Melanie Iverson Kaufman. I have two 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 schools will lose valuable teachers, see increased class sizes, and lose half of our nurse and librarian's time. This will dramatically decrease the quality of education and care for all students at the schools. Public education is important to my family and to our society as a whole. I implore you to invest in Alaska's future by increasing the BSA. Thank you.

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Doniece Gott

From: Megan McBride [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:52 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: budget testimony- education funding

Senate finance committee,

My name is Megan McBride. I live in West Anchorage. I am a parent of two kids and a former high school teacher at Betty Davis East Anchorage High School. I am testifying to urge you to increase the BSA by a minimum of \$1000 and to inflation-proof it for the future.

I applaud many of your past efforts to adequately fund public education. I urge you to continue to prioritize investing in our people, our youth, and the future of our state. Public education is in crisis, but it is not fundamentally broken. With appropriate resources, our public schools in Alaska can continue to provide world class education for our youth. Every child deserves a free, high quality education. Our schools have been underfunded for over a decade. High inflation coupled with increases in other costs like health care and technology have left classrooms in dire need. We used to be known for paying teachers well, not anymore. Our education spending is below average for the U.S., and our costs are inherently higher. You get what you pay for. If this goes on, we are bankrupting our schools and our children's futures.

We need a minimum of \$1000 increase in the BSA and to inflation-proof education funding for the future.

Thank you.

Megan McBride
[REDACTED] Anchorage 99517
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Christine Niemi [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:17 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public School Funding

Senate Finance Committee Members:

Please support our PUBLIC SCHOOLS & the funding proposed in HB 69. My 2 daughters were both born in Alaska. One has a child in kindergarten in an Alaska school district. My other daughter & her husband, who was also born in Alaska, were both teachers in Alaska. After another stressful spring of budget uncertainty with their school district last year, they moved out of state with their soon to be school aged children (twins), in hopes of a more secure future. The class that my daughter was assigned has 35 students this year! This is unacceptable to students & teachers alike. As a former retired Alaska teacher, I thank all legislators who are working in a bipartisan manner for public school funding that provides education for the majority of our children.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Niemi
Douglas Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Jennifer Flanagan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:25 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education

Do Not Throw the baby out with the bathwater!

My name is Jennifer Flanagan, from Eagle River.

I support public school education and have four children, ages 13-20 who thrive(d) in the Alaska Public School system.

My spouse, an Optometrist, and I, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, were educated in public schools. We are professionals, Christians AND believe in supporting Alaska's future with our tax dollars. We want our kids to want to come back to Alaska. Strong public schools attract and keep good families, like us, in Alaska.

We are happy to pay taxes to fund public services, for ALL living in Alaska.

***Increase the BSA.**

***Provide competitive pay to our amazing teachers.**

***Offer retirement benefits to our teachers and staff who work hard for Alaska's children!**

I wish you could see what is happening at Eagle River, Chugiak and West High Schools. My kids have connections to all three. The theater department, Art department, Music department and Sports are excellent! If you checked in personally, you'd see that we cannot afford to lose these precious teachers, programs and education. Thank you to Kirby Kaufman, Kody Trombley, Jacob Bera-to name just a few.

My 7th grader at Mirror Lake Middle School, took the opportunity to "try out" wrestling this year. He took first in his weight class at the finals! He loves zero-hour Jazz Band, while keeping straight As! He just told me all funds are cut for middle school programs next year. He's devastated.

Don't cut off your nose to spite your face. Alaska will suffer without a strong public education system.

Thank you for your support!!

Jennifer

--

Jennifer W. Flanagan, LCSW, LLC (She/Her)

*[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99508
[REDACTED]*

Doniece Gott

From: Ann Rappoport [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:31 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Mike Cronk
Subject: Please pass

Dear Senate Finance Committee -

I'm excited that you are having hearings about proposed supplemental funding for education, specifically, that you are considering an increase of \$1000 in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) Program. I urge you to support this increase!! My support is echoed by so many others as you can see as this is the one issue that most people are addressing in letters and opinion pieces in the Anchorage Daily News and was a major concern in last year's election and election results!

This increase in the BSA will begin to make up for 15 years of losses due to inflation. You've seen the headlines that the Anchorage School District and so many other school districts around our state are having to make drastic cuts to their budgets. The resulting increases in class sizes and loss of many programs will have tremendous negative effects on our students around the state. This is unconscionable! Yes we need to improve our student's scores in the basics of reading and math, but maintaining the current low level of funding for education will not do it! Nor will pouring more money into homeschooling and charter schools that only benefit a small segment of our kids - and only the ones whose parents have the time, transportation, and usually money to provide those options. Too many parents have jobs, disabilities, or other situations that mean their kids need strong neighborhood schools. Moreover, those issues the governor is arguing about can be separately settled, later. NOW, your duty is to swiftly approve this \$1000 increase in the BSA for this year, with increases of \$400 in each of the following 2 years to get our schools back to where they should be.

Please support this significant and sustained funding for K-12 education! Our children are our future!!

Thank you for your attention to these concerns which are echoed by the vast majority of our state's residents!

Sincerely,

Ann Rappoport
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99516

From: [Sharon Hansen](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Finance testimony
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:26:39 PM

My name is Sharon Hansen. I've lived in Fairbanks for 25 years. I came here to get my master's degree in geophysics, I've worked for the state and the university. I am currently a stay at home mom.

I have:

-1 kid at a neighborhood school

-1 kid at a charter

While I am grateful that I have the privilege of choosing what educational model best fits each of my children, it comes down to this:

my "choice" REALLY is between either

- Me or
- My community

I am harming my community by making this "choice".

As parents "Choose" other educational options such as charters on top of not increasing funding to education, we end up closing 9 neighborhood schools overall and gutting them to the point that we can't even recognize their former glory.

My community is being torn apart. My community that I rely on. My community that I need, that my kids need to thrive; the community that keeps me here in Alaska. The community is pointing fingers at the school board, the school district, the superintendent's office furniture, even the PTA for crying out loud. It is ugly.

And guess what? Charters experience inflation too! It's not all flowers and sunshine just because it's a charter school. Outside the BSA funds aren't guaranteed to go to charters

and charters need inflation proofing too.

Please do not make me choose between me and my community, charter versus neighborhood, and whether or not I choose to have Alaska remain my home. Increase and inflation proof education funding. Also, please figure out a better more equitable way to get Impact Aid dollars to education.

Thank you.

Sharon Hansen

Doniece Gott

From: Laura Stats [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:24 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pass HB 69 & Fund it

School funding

Dear Chairs Hoffman, Olson and Stedman and Members of the finance committee,

I am in favor of HB 69.

A strong democracy is populated by educated citizens who are able to think critically and make bold decisions when needed.

I am looking to this body to increase the BSA by \$1000 mark. More importantly this body also needs to take bold action to fund it or it will undoubtedly be lined out by the Governor.


Thinking outside of the box, is an amendment to SB 109 include a directive to education fund education through a percentage of PFD's? Can the finance committee as a whole bring up an income tax? It is overdue to consider it as a remedy.

Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,
Laura Stats
Juneau, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Meghan Hall [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:20 PM
To: John Hall
Cc: Sen. James Kaufman; Rep. Julie Coulombe; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Re: Funding

Love it but Dunleavy is from Scranton Pennsylvania. 
Guessing he got a great education there.
Meghan

On Thu, Feb 27, 2025 at 2:16 PM John Hall [REDACTED] wrote:

My thoughts: the greatest under- served resource in our State are the futures of our children
For forty some years the Legislature/Governors have spent wildly on frivolous projects and not made an
endowment with some of the permanent fund monies for public education.
Instead the citizens have reaped benefits of no state taxes and annual PFD: no return to the State had to
be made .

It is now our time to make hard choices and fund the public -good by providing good education for all
children of this state. This will take money . How to get it? No dividends of PFD for a short
time? Starting a tax revenue system in the state (income or sales tax)

Please, Gov Dunlevy, sign the education bills purposed by the Legislature as a start.
You grew up and did well by the education you received in AK (in its glory, rich days). Provide the same
experience for these young students.
Make this a start to your legacy as an educator - governor.

I have lived in Anchorage for 48 years. Our Four children were well served by the public education they
received.

We have 7 grandchildren in Anchorage going to public schools. I worry for their future
education. Please help our schools.

Thank you
John Hall

Doniece Gott

From: Joshua Vantrease [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:20 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA in Alaska

Hello,

My name is Josh Vantrease. I am a lifelong Alaskan currently living in Anchorage. I work as a program coordinator for a small nonprofit. I am writing to advocate for Alaska's future. Please increase the BSA by \$1,000. I grew up in Alaska's public school system and my good experiences with amazing teachers lead me to stay in AK for my undergraduate at UAS down in Juneau. When I was growing up people wanted to be teachers in AK. Now everyone I know in the field is trying to find an exit. This is and will continue to hollow out our education system and lead to more youth leaving the state upon graduation. We need them here. The time is now, please, invest in Alaska's future and raise the BSA by \$1,000.

Sincerely,
Josh

Doniece Gott

From: Diana Wolf [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:19 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: support our schools

Please increase the Base Student Allocation by \$1000/ student.

Our children are our future, and we need to invest in strong schools to make our children's future bright. We are closing schools and making classes larger, but it isn't enough! Our schools are still running a deficit.

We need high quality teachers, and we need to pay teachers a competitive salary. We need small enough classes that teachers can spend time with struggling learners. What happened to "no child left behind?" We are leaving too many students behind

Diana Wolf
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Rebecca Braun <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:16 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: please support a significant increase to the BSA

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

Thank you for taking public testimony on the state budget. I live in Juneau and I'm a parent of a student at Juneau Douglas High School (JDHS). **I am writing to urge you to support a significant, sustained boost to the K-12 funding formula, equal to a \$1000 increase to the BSA**, to make up for years of losses to inflation.

For three years I served on the site council at JDHS, where I happen to have taught for a few years in the 1990s. The difference is striking. For example, in 1997 when I finished my masters in teaching at UAS, several of my classmates applied for an open English teaching job at JDHS. There were over 30 applicants for one job. Last year, school started with an open full-time English position, because the school had zero qualified applicants willing to take the job.

This is happening across the state. This year there were 598 vacant teacher positions when school started, the highest number ever recorded, and a 230% increase over fall of 2020.

Student success is associated with the presence of experienced, qualified teachers, and supportive relationships with those teachers. Having no teacher is unacceptable. Having 600 missing teachers is an indication of a system in crisis.

I believe it's foolish to starve education while spending more and more on incarceration. We have the capacity to generate the revenues we need, and I applaud this committee's leadership in bringing revenue bills to the table.

Finally - please do not trade critically needed education funds for policies that threaten the foundations of our education system, and reject the Governor's effort to hijack control by the state of charter school authorization. Local accountability must be paired with local control.

Thank you again for your time and leadership. Gut salmon, not schools!

Sincerely,
Rebecca Braun
Juneau, Alaska
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: John Hall [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:16 PM
To: Sen. James Kaufman; Rep. Julie Coulombe; House Finance; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Funding

My thoughts: the greatest under- served resource in our State are the futures of our children
For forty some years the Legislature/Governors have spent wildly on frivolous projects and not made an endowment with some of the permanent fund monies for public education.
Instead the citizens have reaped benefits of no state taxes and annual PFD: no return to the State had to be made .

It is now our time to make hard choices and fund the public -good by providing good education for all children of this state. This will take money . How to get it? No dividends of PFD for a short time? Starting a tax revenue system in the state (income or sales tax)

Please, Gov Dunlevy, sign the education bills purposed by the Legislature as a start.
You grew up and did well by the education you received in AK (in its glory, rich days). Provide the same experience for these young students.
Make this a start to your legacy as an educator - governor.

I have lived in Anchorage for 48 years. Our Four children were well served by the public education they received.
We have 7 grandchildren in Anchorage going to public schools. I worry for their future education. Please help our schools.
Thank you
John Hall

Doniece Gott

From: Jeff Raun [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:11 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please Increase BSA \$1,000

Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for your service and leadership on behalf of all Alaskans.

As a resident of midtown Anchorage, a father of 3 students in the Anchorage School District, and a consultant in the Oil and Gas industry, I am asking the Senate Finance Committee to make an investment in education funding that upholds the values mandated by Alaska Constitution Article VII.

I am asking for three things:

1. Your vote for a durable education funding solution: A 2-3 year education funding plan.
2. Your vote for a significant, affordable investment in education funding: A \$1,000 (or larger) BSA increase.
3. Your timely action: Hearing and approving an education funding package not later than mid-March.

I appreciate your Committee's responsibility to steward State finances, and I understand the budget challenges our State is facing.

Respectfully, I do not accept the argument that "we can't afford" a \$1,000 BSA increase, and I expect each of you to fight hard to achieve it. Please remember that you have a Constitutional Duty to maintain a system of public schools (Article VII), and the Constitution retains no such Duty relative to the Permanent Fund Dividend or other State "priorities". Furthermore, a \$1,000 BSA increase is achievable with no new revenue and a moderate dividend. It should not be lost on anyone that a \$1,440 Dividend eats approximately \$269 Million of the State's budget more than a \$1,000 Dividend would. If one is to pit Education Funding against the Dividend, then consider that as a \$269 million tax on our children's backs, pushing them further and farther behind. Is \$440 more in PFD an investment in Alaska's future? Does it stem the tide of out-migration? Does it attract families to move to Alaska? Does it help build tomorrow's workforce, today? No. No. No. And No. However, investing in education achieves those objectives.

Yes, as a State we need to have broader conversations about revenue and spending, values vs. priorities, and how we build a better Alaska. But in this moment where the PFD and School Kids are in the same ring, duking it out. Sheesh. The mental imagery of a bruised and battered school kid sure doesn't feel like a good or healthy or Constitutionally Supported approach, especially given Article VII's Title: Health, Education, and Welfare.

Thank you for your investment in Alaska,

Jeff Raun
Alaska Dads for Economic and Student Capacity (A-DESC)
Strong Schools. Strong Students. Strong Economy.

Doniece Gott

From: Brandy Harty [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 1:35 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: At least a \$1000 increase to the BSA and increased Transportation Funding

Dear Members of Senate Finance,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to and review public testimony as you work to prepare the state budget. Though I write in my personal capacity, I currently serve as a member of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education, where we are also in the midst of budget preparations for the upcoming year.

As part of this process, we have already been forced to make difficult decisions, including closing three schools this year alone—bringing the total to seven closures in the past four years—and outsourcing valued evening custodial positions. These cuts compound the reductions of previous years, which eliminated elementary instrumental music and the extended learning program for gifted students in grades K-8. Our community has faced nothing but cuts for years, even as our Required Local Contribution (RLC) has increased by over \$5 million since 2017 and our local government has consistently funded above the RLC to support our schools.

Meanwhile, the state continues to withhold more and more of our local funds—through both the RLC and Federal Impact Aid—while flat-funding education with a Base Student Allocation (BSA) that has failed to keep pace with inflation. No amount of local cuts or contributions above the RLC can compensate for the failure to adjust the BSA to reflect the rising costs of education.

The disparity in communities' contributions to the state for education across the state is staggering. When factoring in withheld Federal Impact Aid, Fairbanks pays an average effective tax rate of 3.32 mills for education, while districts like Mat-Su pay only 2.65 mills. And Fairbanks isn't even the worst case—small communities like Klawock are paying an astronomical 10.93 mills for education. The disproportionate impact of how the state utilizes Federal Impact Aid is undeniable and inequitable.

This is the year for a substantial BSA increase of no less than \$1,000, along with an increase in transportation funding exceeding the currently proposed 20%. If the legislature supports the expansion of charter schools, equitable access depends on adequate transportation funding. Our proposed district budget includes a \$2 million subsidy just to maintain current transportation services—not to expand transportation to schools of choice. With an increase of at least \$1,000 in the BSA and a significant boost to transportation funding, our district could lower pupil-teacher ratios (PTR) across all schools and begin providing transportation to more schools of choice.

I urge you to prioritize education and transportation funding in this year's budget. Our students are counting on you.

Happy Trails,
Brandy Harty
Fairbanks, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Mary Hausler [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 1:17 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase to BSA

Alaskan Senators,

I am writing in very strong support of increasing the BSA by at least \$1000 per student. As an educator and retired educator I have watched state support for schools dwindle and fail to keep up with inflation. Schools and teachers have been asked again and again to do more with less-less money, fewer support staff, less respect, fewer retirement benefits but bigger class sizes. We need a system that supports teachers and kids with enough nurses, counselors, aides, spec ed staff, psychologists, reading specialists, art and music teachers, and OT folks. All of them are important for student success. We need a system that pays teachers enough and has a good retirement system that will motivate teachers to teach here and stay here more than a few years. We need a reliable and consistent system for funding schools so districts don't have to wonder every year how much money they will have and when they will know. Good schools help build strong and resilient communities. Please show your strong support for public schools despite a governor who consistently does not.

Thank you,

Mary Hausler
Juneau, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Mandy Lehm <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 1:14 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public testimony

Hello, I am writing in as a constituent of Homer Alaska. I live at 39570 Brenmark Road. I am the parent to two young children, one in the public school system, and one to start kindergarten this August. My concerns are the potential of not funding our public schools. We really need to increase the BSA by at least \$1000 to try to stay up with inflation. There's the common argument of throwing money at public schools and increasing the BSA doesn't do anything but by removing or limiting resources to our children, they have no chance. We continually increase our funding to prisons and law-enforcement, but we don't offer our children the same privileges. They are our future and if we don't take care of them and educate them, they will be left at a huge disadvantage when they enter into adulthood.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Amanda Lehm

Doniece Gott

From: angie Jensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 1:09 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase Education Funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

As someone who has been a tax paying member within my Anchorage community for almost 20 years, please increase the Basic Student Allocation.

By investing in classrooms and supporting teachers' salaries, you are providing the most underserved children in our communities an equal opportunity to succeed. By investing in the education of every child, you make a lasting impact for all of us by encouraging productive adults who contribute positively to our future.

Inconsistent, unpredictable and insufficient funding has taken away opportunities for a safe and prosperous future for too long. You have the opportunity to change this and do the right thing. Please increase the BSA.

Thank you for your service and doing what is best for us all.

Angie
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Stacie Morris [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 1:04 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please raise the BSA!!!

My name is Stacie Morris. I have 2 children in the Anchorage School District. Please support an increase to the BSA of at least \$1000. It is past time that this essential action is taken. 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,

*Stacie Morris
Anchorage, AK*
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Kirk & Jenn DesErnia [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 1:02 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Thank you taking the time to read my email. I am writing to tell you about the state of our schools in Seward, AK, and implore you to do what is right for our children and raise the BSA.

I am the parent of 2 high schoolers, who have been in our public education system their whole academic careers. I am an active volunteer in schools for the past 12 years, former PTA President, member of our Site Based Council and Athletic Booster Club, substitute teacher, and tutor. I know our schools inside and out and can speak from a boots on the ground, fully informed position.

Our schools are crumbling. I have watched as the staff of our schools gets cut annually. A teacher moves and the position disappears and doesn't get refilled; the librarian gets cut; music education is cut; PTR gets raised; 1 counselor is shared between 2 schools to serve all of their emotional AND academic needs; a principal oversees 2 schools 30 miles apart; there's not enough staff to provide for lunch and recess coverage without parent volunteers coming in to school. This has been happening annually to the point that there is literally nothing left to give. What will we cut next year because all the extras are already trimmed? Math? Science? Reading?

We are failing our children. The state of their schools is not their fault and they can do nothing to change it, yet they are the ones who are suffering and will into the future. They aren't getting a quality education and they are graduating unprepared to compete and provide for themselves in the real world.

Why do we think that budget cuts and penny pinching is appropriate for our children? This is the category of spending where our investment pays dividends!!!! Fully invest in children's education and they will thrive, become productive citizens, make positive contributions to society, and take care of us when we age. Please raise the BSA, so school districts can budget appropriately into the future with sustained financing.

Thank you for reading,
Jennifer DesErnia

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Doniece Gott

From: michal <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:58 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Mia Costello
Subject: Please increase school funding

Dear legislators:

I'm a dad of two school boys in Anchorage, and I'm writing to you again about the topic most important to me: increasing school funding. Anchorage public schools are struggling because of inadequate funding. My kids' class sizes have been increasing. There was talk about cutting teachers and after school activities at the middle school (I think this has been placed on hold assuming an increase in funding). Many teachers don't have a pension, and retention is hard.

Please fix the problem of inadequate school funding. Please permanently increase the BSA. I support eliminating the PFD and installing a state income tax or sales tax so that the State has money for what it has a constitutional mandate to do: educate our kids. They are the future of this state and the world. It is surprising to me that there is no state tax here, we receive a dividend, and we expect state funding and services.

It is abysmal that Alaska ranks at the bottom in standardized test scores. I agree that this needs to be improved. But insufficient school funding is not going to help. It's going to make the situation worse.

Increasing school funding is more important to me than anything else this legislature is working on, and I will vote that way.

Thank you for your time.

Michal Stryszak
Anchorage, AK 99517

Doniece Gott

From: Rozlyn Grady-Wyche <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:58 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; house.committee@akleg.gov
Subject: Support a \$1,000 BSA Increase for Alaska's Public Schools

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche, and I am writing to you as the Alaska Education Chair of the NAACP Tri-State Area Conference (Alaska Oregon and Washington) and the 3rd Vice President and Education Chair of the NAACP Anchorage Branch Unit 1000. I urge you to support a \$1,000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) to provide Alaska's students with the quality education they deserve.

For over a decade, Alaska's BSA has remained nearly stagnant, failing to keep pace with inflation and the increasing costs of education. This has resulted in severe budget shortfalls, staff layoffs, larger class sizes, and cuts to essential student programs issues that disproportionately affect students of color, low-income families, and students with disabilities. These funding gaps directly impact equitable access to education and undermine the very foundation of opportunity that our public schools should provide. **YOU MUST ADEQUATELY FUND EDUCATION!**

A \$1,000 BSA increase is not a luxury it is a necessity to:

- ✓ Ensure that schools can keep their doors open without drastic cuts to essential programs.
- ✓ Support mental health services, special education, and student support programs that are currently underfunded.
- ✓ Retain and recruit qualified teachers and school staff by offering competitive salaries and resources.
- ✓ Provide smaller class sizes and ensure every student receives the individual attention they need to succeed.

As an advocate for educational equity, I urge you to prioritize our students over political negotiations. Failing to invest in public education disproportionately harms marginalized communities and widens opportunity gaps. Our children cannot afford to wait any longer. Now is the time to take action and fully fund Alaska's public schools.

I strongly encourage you to approve a \$1,000 increase in BSA funding and give our students, teachers, and schools the resources they need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your leadership in ensuring a bright future for Alaska's students.

Sincerely,
Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche
Alaska Education Chair, NAACP Tri-State Area Conference
3rd Vice President & Education Chair, NAACP Anchorage Branch Unit 1000

Doniece Gott

From: Holly Williams [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:41 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony on State Budgets

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Holly Williams, and I am a teacher in Scammon Bay, Alaska. I have been teaching here for 10 years. I am asking the state legislature to please increase the BSA by \$1,808. Funding our public schools is a Constitutional duty. Our school has had to make major cuts in the past couple years because we have not received the funding promised by the state.

We have had to cut back on sports, particularly wrestling, which used to provide a great sense of connection and purpose for many of our struggling students. Not all students play basketball, and the cancellation of wrestling has contributed to several of my students becoming less interested in school.

We have also had to cut back on the hours of our teacher aides, who are invaluable in our school. Aides who have worked at our school for YEARS have had their hours reduced and their benefits cut. Having local people working in our classrooms helps manage behavior and helps students who are struggling in academics get some more support. In cutting their hours, we are denying students some of the valuable support they need.

Currently our district is trying to replace our science curriculum (and hopefully next year, social studies). The current textbooks for these high school courses are over 15 years old and are in desperate need of replacing, but we currently have no budget to replace them.

The governor talks about wanting to increase teacher retention and recruitment. Do you know what attracts good teachers? Well-funded schools. No teacher wants to work at a school that is barely funded, where there are constantly cutbacks that create a difficult working environment and more challenges to an already-challenging profession. If the state wants to attract and keep good teachers, they need to fully fund our schools.

It is very frustrating to see how little our state government seems to value the education of Alaskan students. This neglect of our most vulnerable and at-risk students and families must end. Please raise the BSA.

Thank you,
Holly Williams

Doniece Gott

From: Jess Stanley [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:36 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for BSA Increase

Hello,

My name is Jessica Stanley and I'm a middle school teacher at Thunder Mountain Middle School in Juneau, AK.

I am emailing you to offer my support of at least a \$1000 increase to the BSA. I can't describe how difficult it continues to be to teach classrooms of 35+ student mathematics and give them the individualized instruction and the attention that they need to be proficient at grade level curriculum.

The only way we can make significant impact on student learning is if we have the funding to provide smaller class sizes. Why do private/charter schools do well, like Dunleavy refers too?? Because they have more funding and smaller classes. Public education should be kept public and small class sizes should be available to ALL students, not just those who can afford it.

I also want to urge you to make a plan to override the veto should Dunleavy oppose a bipartisan approved increase, as he did last year.

Thank you,
Jess Stanley

Doniece Gott

From: Sharlay Mamoe [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:12 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA, PLEASE...

Hello,

My name is Sharlay Mamoe. I live and work in the beautiful small town of Petersburg. I want to recognize the original inhabitants of Petersburg as the Lingit, Tsm'syen and Haida peoples. I am writing to ask for your support of significant and SUSTAINED funding for K-12 education. I believe the children of today are our future of tomorrow and that means an investment of them now. Investment looks like funding of course, but that funding is used in many ways: wages, funding for maintenance of buildings, supplies, etc. but of course you know that.

If we want Alaska to be thriving in the future we NEED to invest in it today. That investment, in my opinion, should be the children, the families, and those that work with the children of Alaska. Please support a significant and sustained BSA for our children. Please, FUND OUR FUTURE!

Thank you so much for your considerations!

Sharlay Mamoe
Petersburg Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: jack fowler [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:47 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: increase to the BSA

My name is Jack Fowler. I have 2 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. Please invest in Alaska's future!

From: [Molly & Dave Brann](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: State Parks funding
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 11:20:32 AM

Feb. 27, 2025

To the Senate Finance Committee.

First off, let me say thank you for the important work you do.

I am asking for your support to increase funding for Alaska State Parks. I have been a volunteer in Alaska State Parks, Homer area, for nearly 40 years. I have seen support from the State Legislature, Governor, and DPOR, continually go downhill - lately it seems to be an avalanche.

Kachemak Bay State Park used to have 90 miles of well maintained hiking trails, now there are less than 20 well maintained miles. These are mostly maintained by volunteers from the Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park and the Kachemak Bay Water Trail. The Friends have worked extensively on the Grace Ridge Trail and the Trail to Grewingk Lake. The Kachemak Bay Water Trail (KBWT) has adopted four camping sites around Kachemak Bay (including outhouses). Some of these sites have a short section of well maintained trail. The KBWT does all the maintenance, repairs, and record keeping for those sites to ease the load of local Park employees. In 2022 volunteers acquired the materials to build five badly needed outhouses to replace existing, damaged outhouses. Four of the outhouses are yet to be installed due to the lack of State Park funding to maintain them. At recent Friends of Kachemak Bay State Parks and the Kachemak Bay Water Trail meetings, members volunteered to install and maintain the remaining four outhouses. We are waiting on approval from the State Park. It is sad and frustrating, when volunteers have to do critical work of the state due to lack of funding for the State Parks.

The Kachemak Bay State Park has one trail specialist who advises volunteers and teaches volunteers to use chainsaws and brush cutters. He focuses on reclaiming the trail to Leisure Lake accessed near the cluster of public use cabins in Halibut Cove Lagoon. Every year there are trees down that block previously used trails. The brush encroaches on the trails making them difficult to follow. Without annual maintenance these trails, although they might be on maps of Kachemak Bay State Park, are not clearly defined.

The March 2019, the Economic Development in Alaska, OUTDOOR RECREATION, (Impacts and Opportunities, presented to the Alaska Division of Economic Development, prepared by The University of Alaska Center for Economic Development), REPORT estimates that the in-state consumer spending related to outdoor recreation trips amounts to nearly 3.2 billion annually. That spending creates about 29,000 direct jobs, and 38,100 total jobs through a multiplier effect. About one job in ten in Alaska is tied to trip-related outdoor recreation spending.

In the State of Alaska FY 2022 Governor's Operating Budget, Department of Natural Resources Parks Management & Access Component Budget Summary, it states, "There is an estimate of \$64.3 million in deferred maintenance needs. This need grows approximately \$3 million per year. The longer some of these needs go unaddressed, the more expensive they become to fix. Facilities in disrepair decrease the visitor experience and have a negative effect on the division's revenues." So in 2025 we may well be at \$73 million plus in deferred maintenance.

In the current SCORP document, a park manager's survey reported, "Our parks are being run by volunteers." "We need more rangers." "Our parks are running on fumes."

In closing I say, "Volunteers can't do it all."

Sincerely,
Dave Brann Volunteer

[REDACTED]
Homer, Alaska 99603

[REDACTED]

From: [Cliff Wilson](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Re: Educate our kids!
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:26:54 AM

Correction:
See italics below:

Here in the “last frontier”, charter schools and religious education, not to mention homeschooling, ~~do not fully prepare people~~ *cannot stand alone to prepare our population* engagement in the challenges moving forward for the state, the nation, the world. It enrages me to think that the state budget would prioritize those programs over public education, especially when this has to happen at the expense of programming that allow for high-quality experiences and optimized educational models in our public schools.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 26, 2025, at 9:35 AM, Cliff Wilson <cliffordwilson@gmail.com> wrote:

Legislators,

The fact that the budget has been flatlined for so long during a time of epic inflation explains itself. I shouldn't have to go into the details, you all need to fund education properly and make sure that the governor cannot veto it. This is a crime and will lead to a feeble workforce, and serious problem with “brain drain” as people will be leaving as a result of your lack of due diligence.

Please vote appropriately to fund education for the future. I think it is ironic that the governor runs on a platform of “north to the future” and yet he vetoed a budget last year that would barely fund public education, and now we face cutting crucial programs, including my children's French immersion program at O'Malley elementary school, not to mention art and sports, important activities related to science and engineering as well. It is obvious that there are lots of private interests driving the governor's ideology, but elected officials have a broad constituency and a small vocal minority of personal religious goals and agendas related to maintaining an elitist, status-oriented education system cannot override the essential mission of public education which supports a Democratic Society.

This is not a matter of ethics, more one of pragmatics. We need a good workforce and responsible citizens to function. Here in the “last frontier”, charter schools and religious education, not to mention homeschooling, ~~do not fully prepare people~~ for engagement in the challenges moving forward for the state, the nation, the world. It enrages me to think that the state budget would prioritize those programs over public education, especially when this has to happen at the expense of programming that allow for high-quality experiences and optimized educational models in our public schools.

Bottom line: if public funding is under funded, my children will not be educated properly and therefore we will be leaving the state which means losing crucial workforce participants in me and my wife. Please vote appropriately.

Cliff Wilson

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, Alaska
99516

From: [Tara Swanson](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: BSA Increase - Urgent Need
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:41:46 PM

Good afternoon,

I am writing to you on my lunch break from teaching 5th grade in the classroom where I attended 5th grade and my dad was my teacher.

I am writing to urge our elected officials to heed the voices of your constituents and make the choice to make a meaningful increase to the Base Student Allocation for your Alaskan students.

Much of the conversation around increasing the BSA has been pitted against the lack of funding in our state reserves and concerns around the cost of funding education. I do not view funding public education as a choice, but as a requirement of a functioning democracy and society that values its future.

While many elected officials have vocalized support for increases to the BSA tied to policy changes and stipulations, we need to understand what it would mean to limit funding increases only to those schools who are organized as a Charter school. Charter schools are a great concept and work well in many communities in the state of Alaska. The tenets of charter schools mirror the values of educators, community members and elected officials in our state. We want local/community control, research-based best practices executed in our classrooms and for educators to have professional autonomy to work within their home communities to create rigorous and authentic learning environments and experiences unique to our communities and the needs of our students.

Charter schools differ from public schools in that they can choose who attends. This occurs by way of a charter. In many schools this includes parents being required to volunteer in the school for a certain amount of hours. In many schools with ski programs, it requires students attending obtain both classical and skate skis. Within the construction of a charter, in choosing the type of school program that a charter school would like to offer, they have the ability to economically exclude swaths of the Alaskan population that are not able to meet the requirements to entry due to their family circumstance.

Charter schools should be allowed to exist and continue operating in the way that they do. Public schools must be recognized as the center of our communities; they welcome everyone. Excluding funding increases to specialized schools is to say that, yes, we want quality education, but only for those who can afford it. Increases tied to such policy changes exacerbates the social and economic divides in our state and limits opportunities for students particularly in rural areas.

Our state must pursue avenues of funding whether the BSA is increased or not. Our state is at a turning point - we can choose the people who live here - all of them - or we can choose to continue to value a handful of out-of-state companies and their use of our resources while leaving the rest of us fighting for scraps. We can't keep pitting ourselves against each other. We have to choose our communities. We have to choose our public schools. We have to choose Alaska.

Thank you for your time.

Tara Swanson
5th Grade Teacher
William H. Seward Elementary