

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: BSA funding
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 3:53:15 PM

Hello,

I am a father of two elementary students and the principal of Soldotna Elementary. I have 19 years of experience in the state as a teacher and school administrator and I would like to thank this committee for the hard work they put in in securing funding. I would like this committee to put together a package that will enable us to provide an adequate education for all the state's students, mine included.

Every year I'm asked to do the same with less and I have exhausted my resources to do so. My school is a standout school and has met or exceeded our district's charter schools averages in reading and math as reported on the state report card to the public, and yet, I have fewer resources, options, and my students are far needier, lower income, more impacted by disabilities and far more racially diverse than charter school students.

According to the state report cards to the public. Soldotna Elementary has a score of 55.68 in reading and 57.95 in math. Our four charters average 52.4 in reading and 57.99 in math. The state continues to divert resources from boundary schools to these underperforming charters who place barriers to education against marginalized and disabled students. In addition to meeting the rising costs induced by inflation, I respectfully ask that all schools be held to the same standard, be given the same privileges, responsibilities and obligations. The two tier system should be abolished. Separate is inherently unequal.

Why does the state see fit to continually divert resources from one class of students to another class? If the privileges bestowed by statute are good for charters, why are they denied to boundary schools? The executive branch needs to be held accountable for enabling this system that both underfunds the traditional schools and discriminates against students in need of more resources. This committee has the power, legal, and moral responsibility to do this. I encourage the committee to do the right thing: ensure our state's investments are paying off. Fund a reasonable amount and also provide equity for students by giving all schools the same level of freedom to operate and use its funds. One school's existence and freedom (charters) should not be contingent upon another school being held to a higher and stricter standard.

While I appreciate the time you're taking to consider this, I understand the issues are complicated. I encourage any member to reach out to me and discuss this further if they want more information on the topics I have written about here.

Sincerely,

Austin Stevenson
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 69 - INCREASE EDUCATION FUNDING
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:45:44 PM

Alaska House Representatives,

I'm writing in regards to the HB69 for Education Funding. I have a 2nd grader at Paul Banks and another who's about to start Kindergarten this year. We moved from Texas 7 years ago with the hopes of a great place to raise our children. I don't see how we can't cut anything from current funding when we are actually in need of an increase. Paul Banks has a teacher who splits a 1st & 2nd grade class and class sizes all around are already 24+. My children also get swimming classes at the high school pool and enjoy the theater performances there as well. I would hate to see any of these programs plus sports cut as my children are just beginning their education. If funding isn't increased, it will push families like ours who have an option out of Alaska. Please don't gut Alaska public education! There is nothing more important for Alaska's future than the education of our children.

Sincerely,
Lauren Corcoran
Homer, AK

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:33:54 PM

Offering quality public schools to all children of our nation is a main priority for me. I will never understand why and how public education is not at the top of the list for supported programs in our state, and country.

I am a recent retired teacher who knows, without a doubt, that it is our responsibility to ensure that our schools are adequately funded and available to all.
It is a constitutional duty!

Our state and federal government has fallen way below this goal.
This continuous neglect and under-investment in our public schools must end for the benefit of our students, families, and communities.

A significant investment in Alaska's school system is needed NOW!
Our district is facing a budget deficit of \$500,000.00.
Already working with a minimal staff there is no room for more cuts to be made.
One of our schools may be closed.

Please! Our schools need this extra funding desperately.
Do the right thing for our children.

Most sincerely,
Anne

Anne Connelly

[REDACTED]
Tenakee Springs, AK
99841

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB 69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 5:08:41 PM

Good evening,

I am writing to advocate strongly for an increase in the BSA. My job takes me into all of the public schools here in Juneau, and I've been able to witness the change for 14 years. The impact of reduced funding is shockingly obvious in every single classroom I enter. The teachers are not ok. The kids are not ok. The message you are sending us all is that you don't care about our kids, which I don't believe- of course you care about Alaskan kids.

Please, at a minimum increase the BSA to keep up with inflation, funding Alaska's public school system is a Consitutional duty.

Thank you for reading,
Kelly

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: [House Education](#)
Date: HB 69: Please support the strength of Alaskan education
Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:49:44 PM

To whom it may concern:

My name is Theresa Miller - I am currently a graduate student at the University of Alaska and reside in Fairbanks.

Along with tomorrow's public testimony schedule, I want to please implore you to support this bill as an investment in our current and future Alaskans. Providing education to our children is not only a Constitutional duty, but a human right ([UN Article 26](#)) and a cornerstone to the communities we live and work in.

This is a critical step to keep pace with the inflation that cripples our schools' ability to meet students' needs and districts here in Fairbanks are closing and my loved ones' school in Nome is facing budget and position cuts due to these limited resources. **Our children deserve to begin their lives with a quality, safe education - please help them thrive!**

Thank you,
Theresa Miller

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 5:04:12 PM

Dear Members,

I am a retired, 30+year elementary teacher, as well as the mother of two sons that went through both American and Italian public school systems. I know what it is to teach in a well functioning and financed school and one that is struggling. I know that when students go to schools that are well supplied, with supported and contented teachers, they learn better. When the State treasures and provides for its education system, that will make schools that create excellent citizens.

We are not doing that in Fairbanks now. Families with young children are leaving, we are in crisis.

Please support

The education situation in Fairbanks is dire; please support HB 69.

Sincerely,
Barbara Rondine

[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, Alaska
99709

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: House bil 69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:48:55 PM

Hello,

I am writing in reference to house bill 69. I am a teacher in Kodiak and have been so for 6 years. Over those 6 years I have seen more and more of our budget get eaten up by the increase in the cost of things like fuel, utilities, food and supplies. As these costs go up either the budget must go up or other things must get cut. We have seen the latter. I have seen us cut teachers, admin, programs and most recently an entire elementary school.

We are not asking for a raise in funds beyond what we have needed in the past. We are asking for our budgets to keep up with inflation. In inflation adjusted funds we are operating with \$1,808 less per student than we did in the past. No wonder that the quality of Education has suffered. We need to improve our education and that starts with getting back to baseline.

Thank you

Amanda Knutzen

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: [House Education](#)
Date: Public Testimony for Education Funding
Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:18:30 PM

To whom it may concern,

A significant investment in Alaska's school system is needed. Schools have been forced to continue to cut programs, layoff staff and increase class sizes. These factors all impact the quality of our education system and the outcomes of our students. One time funding does not provide districts predictability or allow them to prioritize students for the long term. Inflation has driven up the costs significantly for Alaska's schools in the past decade and our school districts need a substantial, permanent funding increase to make up for years of essentially flat education funding.

HB 69 would provide immediate and permanent inflation-proofing for education funding, as well as a \$1,000 increase to the Base Student Allocation on July 1, 2026. The bill also includes an additional increase of \$404 to the Base Student Allocation in 2027 and 2028. These increases would restore the purchasing power schools have lost with high inflation.

I urge the State Legislature and Governor to support HB 69 as funding Alaska's public school system is a Constitutional duty. A BSA increase of **\$1,808** is necessary to keep pace with inflation and ensure that all students have access to quality education, resources, and opportunities that they rightfully deserve under our state constitution

Respectfully submitted,

Marina Whitacre

Thank you to Representative Rebecca Himschoot for much of the text I provide in my testimony.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Public Testimony regarding House Bill 69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 3:44:23 PM

Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Jennifer Myrick Pedersen. I am a lifelong Alaskan, member of the community in Kodiak, parent of 3 school aged children in the public school system, and an elementary school counselor. I encourage you to support house bill 69, and urge you to look at an education funding solution that is predictable from year to year.

Alaska's public school system is a constitutional right and in Kodiak, the majority of students attend public schools.

An investment in public education, is a direct investment in the future of our beloved state, and in our future leaders. Sadly, years of flat funding have left our Kodiak community in a school funding crisis. This must end.

The proposed increase to the BSA is necessary to keep pace with inflation and to ensure all students have access to a quality education.

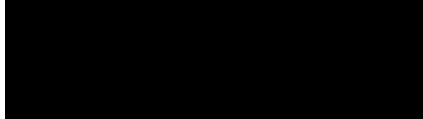
In Kodiak, the school district is facing an anticipated \$8 million dollar budget deficit, and as a result, the school where I work is being closed for the 2025/2026 school year. Kodiak is reeling from the closure of an elementary school building, and a complete restructure of 3 schools. Next year we will have a stratified school district. Even with a school closure and stratification, we will face position and/or program cuts this spring to balance the budget. This is taking any of the joy and vibrancy out of education, and leaving teachers with full classes and fewer resources to support them in the challenging work of educating students. An increase in funding and a plan for the future is critical for my community, my children's future, and for those who have no one to advocate for them.

Thank you for your early start to address education funding, and for taking the time to consider how education impacts my community, my three children, and my profession.

If I can provide any additional information or testimony, please reach out.

--

Jennifer Pedersen, Three Sisters Consulting



From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#); [Rep. Mia Costello](#)
Subject: Support for HB 69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:33:02 PM

Dear Members of the House of Representatives and the House Education Committee,
I am the mother of 3 children at Bayshore Elementary School and I was born and raised in Anchorage and educated at my local neighborhood schools. When I was growing up, I had experienced teachers who were masters of their subject areas and effective and artful at classroom management. I fear we are losing these masterful teachers due to our lack of education funding.

I have witnessed large class sizes for my children, high teacher turnover, families moving out of state in part because of our lack of education funding and support, and friends who are master teachers leaving the profession because they are fed up with the situation and there is no pension in place to incentivize them to stay.

I fully support raising the BSA by the amount required to make up for inflation since 2011 (approximately \$1,808). We owe this to our children, our educators, and the future of our state! We do not need to pander to the unreasonable demands by the governor-we need to increase education funding now to support strong public education for all Alaskans.

Please do what is right for our children and support the increase to the BSA.

Sincerely,
Colleen Bolling
Anchorage, AK

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Support for HB69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 4:38:26 PM

Dear House Education Committee,

Please pass HB69 or a bill with similar permanent increases to the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

As a parent of 3 children in Fairbanks, I am committed to our community and public schools. The dispiriting effects of declining funding are all too apparent: ridiculous class sizes (33 in my son's 1st grade class!! what kind of learning happens with 33 six-year olds in a room...), educators and staff departing (at least 1/4 turnover at our elementary last year), closing schools...these add up to a vicious cycle of declining educational attainment and declining enrollment.

The Governor's cruel veto of last year's proposed BSA increase and the failure of the Legislature to override that veto is nothing less than a tax on students...we mail oil royalty checks out to all Alaskans and tell our kids and teachers there's no money for a serious boost to education.

We have to do better. We elected you all to do better for our kids. Please, increase public education funding meaningfully.

Thank you for your service on our behalf,

Andrew Allaby & Family
Fairbanks AK

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: Support of HB 69
Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2025 5:10:46 PM

I support this bill in correcting the funding to catch up with inflation. Funded education is most important for the future of all Alaskans. Both of my now adult children have attended Alaskan public schools, furthered their education, and are now working in our state. This is what we want.

Support this HB,

Amy Rowe Danielson
Sitka, Alaska