

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Therese Lewandowski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 9, 2023 12:54 PM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** HB 65

Members of the House Education Committee,

I urge you to support HB 65, An Act relating to education; increasing the base student allocation; and providing for an effective date.

There seems to be state-wide agreement the BSA need to be increased to better serve our public schools. It won't fix everything but it will directly positively affect our students!

The other need is to address teacher salaries and pension packages. The many wonderful teachers of the previous 2 decades have retired and took with them marvelous pensions. They would not have served as public school teachers as long as they did without that pension.

It is imperative that Alaska attract and hold onto public school teachers who would have that same long term commitment. But they cannot afford to raise families or live long term in this state without better pay and a future retirement commitment.

Please confirm HB 65 and start to work on bills to adequately compensate public school teachers.

Thank you so much,  
Therese Lewandowski

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Jeanne Fredrickson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 10, 2023 10:30 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** BSA Increase

Dear Legislators,

This is to urge your support for a long overdue increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Specifically, we would like you to vote in favor of HB 65 and/or support SB 52. Both bills show a determination by our state legislature to support public education, which we strongly support. Thank you.

James & Jeanne Fredrickson

Seward

Sent from my iPhone

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2023 8:22 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** I oppose HB 65

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to voice my opposition to HB 65, raising the BSA by \$1000. I have followed the trend in per pupil spending and proficiency rankings for several years now and find it appalling that there is a lack of accountability in the State education system. Alaska routinely ranks in the top seven states in the amount of money spent per student. However, it ranks in the bottom 5 states in proficiency rankings

(<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile?chort=2&sub=RED&sj=AL&sfj=NP&st=MN&year=2022R3>).

With such a discrepancy noted by the Federal Government, I cannot help but question where all of the money is currently going in the State's school systems. Having worked in the local school district, I know a lot is spent on administration, yet teachers sometimes have to go without essential supplies. This crisis needs to be addressed before any additional funding is granted to school districts. Each district must be held accountable and audited to make sure that the vast majority of funding goes toward a student's education, rather than lavish benefits for administrative staff.

Sincerely,

Aaron Stierle  
[REDACTED]

## **James Sexton**

---

**From:** Louis Imbriani [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 16, 2023 2:10 PM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** HB 65 and the increase in the BSA

Co-Chairs Allard and Ruffridge,

Your committee has a preliminary hearing calendared for HB 65 on 2/20/23. A similar bill SB 52 is being heard in the Senate. While I generally agree with an increase in the BSA there are a few requests that I have.

1. Existing funding and new funding needs to have an accountability measure built in. The measure needs to be based on learning outcomes.

So how do we accomplish this? In clear language it is stated that this increase goes directly to class rooms and in classroom support. Then we speak with educators on finding a metric to track classroom outcomes that are not standardized tests.

2. New and existing funds go to the classrooms and not to administrations. Please tighten the ratio that is already in state statutes for the classroom vs admin.

Our immediate focus needs to be on students grades 4-12. These kids are going to be going out into the world very soon and have already been underserved in our public schools at no fault of their own or the teachers. We need to give these students the skills they need to succeed in the real world.

We need to take a balanced approach to the k-4 graders. These students in the near future will need more help. Many of these kids were robbed of critical developmental growth during the pandemic and will more than likely need more support to get through school.

The Alaska Reads Act is a good start for these younger kids but balance needs to be achieved. There is no balance and no accountability in the way schools spend money. This has created not only a bad return on investment for tax payers but has handicapped Alaskan children. We need to do better. We need to do better for our children and better for our state.

Thank you

Louis Imbriani

From: Ashley Dewey

To: Rep. Daniel Ortiz

Fri 2/17/2023 9:46 AM

Good morning, Sir,

I am a Health Aide (School Nurse) in Ketchikan, Alaska. I know you are a busy man. I have so much data and information I could share, but I will keep this brief and stick to the most important topics.

The Superintendent mentioned students have not been given more money in 8 years. With inflation, this is jarring.

Teachers and Staff in Ketchikan Schools are about to lose their jobs. We can barely cover day to day responsibilities as it is. And they plan to eliminate all Health Aide/School Nurse job starting next 2023 school year. I have 30+ kids in my office daily to receive their medications, throwing up, needing bandages, ice packs. Cutting this position and giving someone else (the school secretaries have been mentioned) these responsibilities as a collateral duty will have horrible impacts on the school climate and the well being of students and staff. This will cause attendance issues, safety issues, policy issues, efficiency issues...

We have got to get more money into these schools. We have to save these jobs. Children will suffer without more funding...I have pleaded to our Superintendent and School Board. I am pleading to you. If there is anything else I can do, please let me know. As I want to advocate as best I can.

--

Ashley Dewey

Fawn Mountain Elementary - Health Aide

*Gunaalcheesh, to the first people of this land. We pay respect to those, past and present, who have stewarded Tlingit Aanii since time immemorial. I respectfully acknowledge the traditional first people of this land, the Saanya Kwaan and Taanta Kwaan.*

From: Elizabeth Hayes

To: Rep. Daniel Ortiz

Fri 2/17/2023 4:17 PM

Hello Representative Ortiz,

Clayton Holland, KPBSD Superintendent asked me to share some information about our need for a BSA increase, and what it means to us if we don't get an increase.

I will be in the office Monday at 8am if you have any questions or would like to discuss this information.

#### **General Fund Budget**

FY24 projected enrollment is 8450 which include 200 Intensive needs students and approximately 1,710 special education students.

In FY24, we are facing a deficit of 10..8M to 13M depending on funding from the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The remaining ESSER III funds will help offset the deficit for one year, resulting in a deficit of 4.4M to 6.5M. With no increase to the BSA, we will be cutting our budget. Approximately 81% of our General Fund budget in salaries and benefits, we will have to cut staff to balance our budget.

Increases in insurance, property and liability, workers comp insurance, utilities and supplies will also have an affect on our budget causing further pressure on budgets and on our classrooms.

To close an 4.4 million dollar shortfall it would be equivalent to approximately 33 FTE certified teachers and 6.5M would be 49 FTE certified teachers. To accomplish that, we would have to raise the PTR +3 for the 4.4M gap and +5 PTR for the 6.5M gap.

#### **Pupil Transportation**

The last increase to the pupil transportation was in FY16, KPBSD was increased to \$1011 per ADM from \$995. We are currently running a deficit in transportation. In FY22 we transferred \$550,000 our General Fund budget to our Transportation fund, and we are scheduled to transferr that same amount or more (depending on expenditures) for FY23 and FY24. Our busses travel 3,330.7 miles throughout the district every day.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Hayes

Director of Finance

Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Emily Kane [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 17, 2023 11:50 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; representative.C.J.McCormick@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** HB 65

Let's raise smart kids in Alaska so our great state reaches its high potential.  
Please pass this bill. Paying teachers adequately is crucial to cementing their commitment to future generations.  
Sincerely  
Dr Emily Kane  
Juneau

[REDACTED]

On Big Island until mid February and may respond more slowly than usual. For refills try [REDACTED]

Be good to yourself :)

## **James Sexton**

---

**From:** Sandy Blomfield [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 17, 2023 2:21 PM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB52/HB65 BSA FUNDING

Legislators,

I would strongly encourage you to strengthen educational opportunities in Alaska for all students.

You have been tasked to change the BSA amount per student during this legislative session. Be courageous! Take this opportunity to tie student funding to the student rather than the school district.

The time has come, post Covid, to digest what has taken place for our students over the past few years. The local public school may not be the most prudent educational system for some students. This was certainly apparent in the standardized testing results where Alaskan kids are falling far short of reading and mathematics; at some public schools students don't even register on the chart for competency and literacy.

So many opportunities are now available for parents and students to choose the educational method that works best for them along with promoting their own family value systems.

By you directing the money to the STUDENT every student will be at the same level for education opportunities. This creates equity in education!

Where there is competition, the best programs will strive and survive. We all want our children to have the best educational opportunities available to them.

I strongly encourage you to take the step, as many other states have already done, and increase BSA funding and allotments tied directly to the Students in the great state of Alaska.

I await your email responses and will be available for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Sandy Blomfield



**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Sandi Trumbower [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 17, 2023 3:12 PM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** Fwd: HB 65

**From:** Sandi Trumbower [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 16, 2023 12:25 PM  
**To:** house.education@akleg.com <house.education@akleg.com>  
**Subject:** HB 65

Committee Members,

I am writing asking for your full support for House Bill 65 which proposes to raise Base Student Allotments by \$1,250.

Student Allotments have not been since 2016. Inflation has increased, cumulatively, 24.65% since that last increase. It is astounding to me that even if the full \$1,250 is passed it still will not meet the level of inflation since the previous increase. Our students are our future. Invest in them!

Thank you for your attention.

Sandra Lee Trumbower  
[REDACTED]

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Devin Finch [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 12:32 AM  
**To:** Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** House Bill 65

February 18, 2023

Dear Representative Justin Ruffridge,

I write today to express my concern with education funding. I am concerned and frustrated by flat state funding and would like to see the legislature inflation-proof the Base Student Allocation.

The Alaska Constitution (Article VII, Section 1) requires that the legislature establish and maintain a system of public schools, and Alaska school districts rely heavily on state funding to support their budgets. You already know the importance of a strong public school system in Alaska, and yet, year after year, education funding is in jeopardy, class sizes grow, and school districts issue teacher layoff notices.

As you know, the State of Alaska funds the majority of education through a foundation formula, which is set forth in AS 14.17. This formula provides for over half of the state's funding for education—and state funding of education is over 60 percent of the funding that Alaska public schools receive. Despite the name, "Basic Need" does not refer to a funding level that provides a particular level of educational adequacy. The BSA and its multipliers were established through legislation that took effect in Fiscal Year 1999 and have been modified repeatedly since then. The BSA can be changed only by passing legislation that modifies the statute. At a time when inflation impacts every community, it is critical that the BSA finally increase in order to keep up with rising costs of providing education. The past five years of flat funding, unforeseen costs and retention issues due to the pandemic, and a population that is leaving Alaska year after year have left our school districts on unstable footing financially.

This past legislative session, Representative Andi Story introduced legislation to strengthen our public school system. House Bill 272 and House Bill 273 proposed increasing the base student allocation for K-12 public education in Alaska. HB 272 proposed increasing this number to \$6,153 in FY23 and then to \$6,208 in FY24. The legislative session ended, and the full House did not consider HB 272 or HB 273. We understand that these proposed changes, while an improvement, are even still not enough to get education in Alaska fully funded.

Alaska students continue to score near the bottom in the nation for math and reading competency. Universal early education is shown to improve school readiness, reading levels, and long-term

economic performance. Long-term studies, such as the Perry Preschool project, suggest that students with access to high-quality early education are less likely to be incarcerated and less likely to receive government assistance as adults. Adequately funding education is a critical investment in Alaska's future.

I ask that you commit to passing legislation that strengthens our public school system, including inflation-proofing the BSA and expanding access to early childhood education, because public education is our best investment in Alaska's future.

Sincerely,  
Devin Finch

Sent from my iPhone

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Callie Conerton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 3:30 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; House Education; Rep. Sara Hannan  
**Subject:** Support of HB 65 from a return of Alaska's past investment.

Hi, my name is Callie Conerton. I have been teaching at Montessori Borealis public school for six years. Since my senior year at Juneau-Douglas High School in 2011, the BSA has only been raised \$250 and that's including the mere \$30 since 2017. It is vital to Alaska today and for the future that HB 65 is supported by the legislature. We all know that the flat funding of the BSA is actually a decrease for our students and schools.

As legislators, I know how important a return on investment is to you. I am a product of the past investments legislators made in the Alaska education system during the time when Public Education was well funded, and educators fought to come to Alaska for teaching positions. I grew up here in Juneau, graduated from Juneau -Douglas high school, have my BA in Elementary Ed from UAS as well as my Masters in Teaching and learning from UAA. I, along with many others, am the return on the investment, working not only in the Alaska workforce but also as an educator. However, that support was before the current inflation, the increased cost of living, and not during flat funding. Many of my born and raised-Alaskan friends who became educators have sought out teaching in other states or moved to different careers that did not stretch them thin.

As I stated previously, I have a Master's degree, six years of classroom experience, and a specialized Montessori certificate. Every year for the next 20 years of my career - it will be harder and harder to justify teaching in Alaska versus somewhere else with the current level of funding for education in Alaska. It looks pretty darn great in other states for teachers, as **every other** state has a defined pension plan for its teachers. I would have fewer students in my classroom, more resources to support my educational delivery to the students, and more fulfilled professional experiences. If you are not aware of it already, every teacher that leaves the school districts in Alaska costs Alaska tenfold to hire their replacement.

I'm in Alaska because I love Alaska. I love my students and school community, but that is not enough. I don't understand why educators are

having to choose between staying in the communities we love or having a secure and stable future. The BSA needs to be fully funded by supporting HB 65. Alaskan families should not have to worry about continuous education support for their children. Education and children must be a top priority, or teachers like myself, will move out of state or choose to leave education. Put yourself in our shoes. I cannot imagine you would not be thinking the same thing.

Thank you. Callie Conerton

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Linda Shore [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 5:56 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** SB 52, HB 65

Dear Committee Members,

I would like to express my support for these bills. We need to adequately fund our schools and allowing the BSA to wither for several years is not the way to do it.

Please enact this increase post haste.

Linda Shore  
Anchorage

--

There's nothing so good for the inside of a man as the outside of a horse....Lord Palmerston

From: Mardell Kiesel

To: Rep. Daniel Ortiz

Sat 2/18/2023 6:16 AM

I have recently read in the ADN that Alaska is increasingly failing to attract our most talented and motivated students to stay in-state for their higher education degrees. We are proposing to "lower the bar" and raise the scholarship dollars. I'm all for raising the scholarship amounts, but lowering the expectations signals a systemic failure. This brain-drain to the lower 48 has obvious cumulative and devastating long-term effects for Alaska. Increasing the BSA is also an obvious and cumulative step to address the multiple issues related to a weakening system.

The BSA is one vital component of a strong and stable education starting with pre-school. Our students need and deserve the highest quality components for pre-K-12 education. Fund the foundations and build toward a more promising in-state experience for all students.

Thank you for your time and attention,  
Mardell Kiesel

Mardell Kiesel

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Mark Miller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 6:29 AM  
**To:** Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Subject:** Support House Bill 65

Dear Representative Ruffridge:

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 65. We must attract and retain good teachers and support our schools to the best of our ability as an obligation to the next generation and the future of Alaska. I would gladly trade my entire PFD to make Alaska's schools the best they can be.

Thank you for your consideration.....Mark Miller



From: Beth E.

To: House Education Committee; Rep. Dan Ortiz

Sat 2/18/2023 7:34 AM

I am writing today to ask you to support increasing the BSA for our schools. Our schools have had to cut programs, teachers, and staff due significant shortfalls in funding. It is time to prioritize education and significantly increase the BSA.

As a mother with three kids attending school in the Anchorage School District and as a substitute teacher I have seen first hand the impacts to our children and teachers from underfunding. Please help make Alaska a place families want to live by funding our schools.

Thank you for your time.

Beth Elliott.

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Susan Ritter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 7:49 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education

Dear Representatives Allard and Ruffridge,

I am a teacher of special education in the Anchorage school district. I have worked with children with disabilities for over 20 years.

I am writing to ask that you and the committee support HB 65, increasing the BSA to a minimum of \$1,250.00. For too many years, the State of Alaska has chosen not to fully fund the educational needs of all Alaskan students. There are many who claim that teachers are not doing enough to support their students in the classroom and therefore students are not getting the education they need or deserve. The state government refuses to support its most precious resource, their children, this needs to stop.

HB 65 is a starting point.

Thank you for your time,

Susan Ritter  
[REDACTED]

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Sharon Davies [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:05 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** House bill 65 YES

Please vote in support of this bill.

Public education is one of the most important functions of government, not just for the individual children, but for the benefit to all our lives of an educated population.

Not having children or grandchildren in school, I had not been paying close attention. I was dismayed to read recently that the state support for schools had not been adjusted for inflation for so many years.

Again, Please support House Bill 65

Sincerely,  
Sharon Davies

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Sally Dybdahl [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:12 AM  
**To:** House Education  
**Subject:** HB 65

As a citizen, voter, parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, former educator, school supporter & volunteer, I implore you to pass the \$1250 increase to the BSA. We can't afford not to do so! Hoonah's and all Alaska's children are our greatest treasure.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sally Dybdahl

Sent from my iPhone

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:20 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** HB 65

I support HB 65 increasing the BSA by \$1250. Alaskan school districts are in economic crisis, affecting everything from the high number of students in classes to the lack of hot lunches in some schools. HB 65 will make a huge difference in making the districts whole again. Then they can spend their energy on refining their curriculum and teaching methods to reach students and increase their reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.

Please vote for HB 65. It goes a long way to fixing our educational problems.

Cheryl Lovegreen

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Paul Rioux [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:23 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** support for HB 65

Good morning,

I'll be brief, Alaska is rich in resources... but from a government perspective, it's greatest resource is its people.

Education spending is an INVESTMENT in the future of Alaska.

The stagnant BSA has hamstrung school districts for nearly a decade as they drown in inflation.

The research is crystal clear; dollars spent on youth save the state exponentially in social service later.

Please don't kick the can any longer.

Paul Rioux, Sitka

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Catherine Walker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:27 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** Support of increasing the BSA Bill 65

Good morning,

Please accept this email in support of raising the Base Student Allocation for Alaska students to match inflation. As a longtime Alaska resident and parent of two students in the Anchorage public school district, I strongly urge you to raise the BSA to where it would have been if it had been taking inflation into account.

Thank you,  
Catherine Walker, [REDACTED]

## **James Sexton**

---

**From:** Paula L Davis [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:38 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** Base Student Allocation bills

Dear Representatives,

Thanks you for your hard work in Juneau.

I would like to go on record in support of an increase in the Base Student allocation bills, both Senate 52 and house 65.

I am a retired teacher who volunteers in elementary classrooms. I can see what is happening in the schools over time. It is not pretty. Students are behind due to the interruption of covid, and some are socially struggling to know how to behave in a classroom, even now, even with good teachers helping them. The school district has cut back on the the school counselors who could be of help to these students. The school I work in, Denali Montessori, used to have a full time counselor, then it had a half-time counselor. Now it has none. This is a school that suffered a shooting at the entrance a few years back. I would love to see this reversed and have a full time counselor again.

It is the future of Alaska that is at stake when education of children is not a priority.

Please vote in favor of increasing the BSA, Senate 52 and House 65.

Thanks, and keep up the good work!

Paula Davis  
[REDACTED]



## James Sexton

---

**From:** Brenda Taylor [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:42 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** Education Funding

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to add my voice to the many urging you to pass HB65, raising the BSA \$1250.

My two children graduated from Juneau Douglas High School: Yadaa.at Kale 4 and 8 years ago. For all of the years they were in high school, I attended the district-wide Site Council budget meetings where the community was invited to have a say in creating the budget. For all but the first few years, we were asked only to generate ideas for where we would make cuts without harming the quality of the students' education. It was laughably predictable, disheartening and, absolutely, preposterous. There was nothing left to cut; the only way to make a budget that would create the educational environments that students deserved (and that my daughter had had when she first started high school) was to increase revenue, not slash it. I have watched in horror as the funding situation has gotten worse and worse. I am awed by the teachers, staff and administrators who continue year after year. And this is in Juneau, where our municipal government funds to the cap. I read about the smaller, rural school districts where they have no money to fix the waterline leaks and, literally, have no drinking water and am aghast, but not surprised.

Please, please pass HB65 out of the Education Committee with your full support and work to get it through the House and Senate. Alaskans, now and in the future, desperately need the BSA to return to pre-inflation levels. As always, my request for increased funding is accompanied by a willingness to be personally taxed at the state level and to have a smaller PFD.

Sincerely,

Brenda Taylor  
[REDACTED]

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Madisen Lundamo [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:58 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** HB 65 Written Testimony

Dear Madam and Mister Chair and Members of the House Education Committee,

I am Madisen Lundamo from Ketchikan and a senior at Ketchikan High School. Today I am writing to represent myself as a student in Alaska and a child of an educator. I am in full support of House Bill 65 because education is the very foundation of our communities and society. My mother has taught for 23 years in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District as an elementary teacher, and now is the Dean of Students at Houghtaling Elementary. Through her, I have witnessed the dedication every great teacher gives to every unique student in their school.

In the case of my mother especially, school is much more than a building full of classrooms, but rather a second home. Her classroom is bursting with flairs of her personality and embellished with seasonal decorations. Every seat is different and offers unique comforts. She has a large tank with two red-ear slider turtles swimming about. The overhead lights are never used as the room is illuminated with holiday twinkle lights and lamps. There's an essential oils diffuser going off every so often, filling the air with calming scents. For some time she even had a reading loft in a corner of her room! What an amazing environment to learn in, right?

Every single one of these items was paid for out of pocket by my mom because her stipend barely covered the extra comforts of an excellent classroom. This is the case with every single beyond-typical classroom in that elementary school. My mom's colleagues have used their own personal funds to improve the educational environment of their students for years.

Every single classroom in Alaska could be as comfortable and prosperous as those in the elementary school I grew up in with sufficient funding.

In my high school, students' education is taking a drastic hit due to underfunding. Teachers are in and out. Programs have uncertain futures. While my generation has been labelled as "resilient," we are seeing more and more struggles to bounce back after each hit. There is a stark shortage of substitute teachers which leads to classes being held in the library, overburdening our librarians. I have sat in the library with at least four other classes and it is not a civil picture. The environment is headachingly loud, the librarians are stretched so thin that administrators are in and out checking on the students, and there certainly is no learning happening. Programs such as Advanced Placement or AP classes are at risk to be cut due to a lack of qualified teachers. Our language classes are subpar at best due to poor quality teachers. I, a passionate and dedicated student, have found myself dreading the eight hours a day I spend at school.

There is a butterfly effect caused by a lack of funding in our education system. The school district is doing as much as they can with the little money they have, teachers are unable to provide opportunities to students, the students dread school, their education takes a hit, and in the years to come we will be made fully aware of the negative impacts. Students and teachers thrive in fully funded schools, causing our society itself to thrive. We cannot fight nor prevent great tragedies and societal illnesses such as violence, mental health crises, bullying, racial and cultural injustices, suicide, abuse, addiction, and more without prosperous schools.

Thus I urge you to remain in support of HB 65, an act to increase the BSA, and consequently an act to ensure the future of our education system and Alaska as a whole.

Thank you and Sincerely,

Madisen Lundamo

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Kassandra Mirosh [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 11:10 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education; Rep. Mike Prax  
**Subject:** Please Increase the BSA

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am writing to strongly urge you to pass a meaningful increase to the Base Student Allocation this year. I have been a public school teacher in Alaska for the past 24 years and I have seen first hand the devastating results flat funding has had on the education of our children. We are constantly being asked to do more with less and this means our children fall further behind. Meaningful programs like art, music, CTE are all threatened. Teachers are leaving the profession due to stress and lack of adequate compensation. In our small district, 2 of our brick and mortar schools are in danger of being shut down which would hurt those communities and eliminate the possibility for students to attend schools closer than an hour's drive from their homes.

Passing Senate Bill 52 and House Bill 65 would send a strong message that you value education for Alaska and would help support our schools to provide the very best for our children.

Please prioritize education in our state! We are a land of many natural resources and none of those resources are more important than our children.

Thank you for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Kassandra Mirosh  
Alaska Public School Teacher

## **James Sexton**

---

**From:** Jacy Turner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 11:16 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** House Bill 65

Dear Representatives,

Please help in funding our children's education. Without dedicated teachers and staff and support our kids will not be able to thrive and receive the additional help that they need.

I have already personally experienced the issues with the BSA not being adequately funded to keep up with inflation. Each year my kid's elementary school gets trimmed. Programs and teachers that used to be there when my daughter started Kindergarten are no longer there now in 4th grade. Teachers are trying to do more with less.

How do we assist those kids who need additional help in reading? The reading specialist at the elementary school no longer exists. She was able to help my daughter with her phonics and get her reading correctly. However, my son doesn't have access to this resource.

Schools are doing the best they can with the resources they have. We have taken away vital services that kids need to succeed and have put more burden on teachers who are already doing a full-time job.

Please increase the BSA allotment so that our kids can go back to thriving and having access to the resources that they need to be successful not only now but as members of our community. In just a few short years these kids will be in the community contributing and we want to give them the best chance at being able to develop and contribute in a meaningful way.

Sincerely,

Jacy Petersen

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Shannon Spalding [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 11:45 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Mike Prax  
**Cc:** Rep. Justin Ruffridge; House Education; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. CJ McCormick  
**Subject:** HB 65

I am an Anchorage resident and have been living in the city for 12 years. My husband grew up in Seward and we moved to Alaska after meeting in dental school. We decided to have a family and raise our children in Alaska. However, the SBA has not been adjusted in many years concurrent with inflation and due to this ASD has been faced with many cuts. Please adjust the BSA to a level where it should be, had the BSA been adjusted for inflation annually. Please understand all the families that live in Alaska will have to consider relocating if HB 65 is not passed. I grew up in Washington where the schools are not failing their students. You cannot recruit teacher or keep residents if you don't support the family unit.

Please don't disappoint all young families that have the ability to maintain the health of the Alaska economy in the years to come.

Thank you,  
Shannon Spalding

## James Sexton

---

**From:** R J Potter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 12:14 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** Please support HB65

Dear Alaska State Representatives and House Education Committee,

Please support for HB 65. I am writing to let you know that I enthusiastically support an increase to the Base Student Allocation. Right now, any addition to the BSA is nothing more than adjusting the BSA to a level where it should be had the BSA been adjusted for inflation annually.

One-time funds are not a solution to the problem of under-funded schools; we urgently need a BSA increase to consistently and equitably support the daily education of all of Alaska's students.

Despite significant inflation and the skyrocketing cost of operations, our school districts have been asked to provide better learning outcomes while cutting staff and programs across the board. *Alaska is a wealthy state*, and we need to prioritize our kids' education in order to attract and retain families, produce skilled and creative citizens, and ensure long-term prosperity.

Sincerely,  
Rebekah Potter

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Tam Agosti-Gisler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 12:15 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** HB 65

February 18, 2023

Dear Senate Education Committee Representatives:

It's time.... it's time for HB 65 to pass.

At a dinner party last night with Alaskan friends of varied political persuasion, we could all agree that our schools are in trouble financially.

Let's play catch up on adjusting the BSA for inflation and add \$1250 per student to the BSA.

It's that simple.

Sincerely,

Tam Agosti-Gisler  
[REDACTED]



**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Joclyn Reilly [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 1:05 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** Increase BSA

I am writing to support HB 65. I have three kids in Anchorage public schools, and the schools are doing the best they can with limited resources. Because of inflation, education funding has gone down every year. We are a rich state, let's put money into our children! Every dollar spent on public education is less money spent in the future on prison, etc.

Thanks  
Joclyn Reilly  
[REDACTED]

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 1:33 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story  
**Cc:** Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Daniel Ortiz  
**Subject:** Education Funding

Dear Co-Chairs Allard and Ruffridge and members of the House Education Committee:  
Please fully support HB 65. Our schools have suffered the lack of sufficient funding for so long that the legislature can no longer put off raising the Base Student Allocation. When I was a substitute teacher at our high school, in one class I had about five students who not only had to sit on the floor due to the lack of sufficient desks, but also do without books. As you might imagine, it was difficult to keep the entire class focused on learning in that type of over-crowded classroom. The lack of adequate state funding of schools has the direct consequence of class sizes that are too large to allow for learning. HB 65 does nothing more than catch up school funding to make up for severe cuts that over the years have been due to inflation combined with no change in the BSA amount.

Sincerely,  
Kris Benson

[REDACTED]

Julie Zundel

To: House Education Committee; Rep. Dan Ortiz

Sat 2/18/2023 3:09 PM

Hello Representatives,

I am a parent (with two children in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District), I am a science teacher in the FNSBSD and I am a lifelong Alaskan. I am testifying to you today to ask you to increase BSA to match inflation. Public education has been flat-funded since 2017 while inflation has increased by 15% (or more).

I am on the front lines - and I can tell you we are in crisis - just a few quick examples:

1. No one wants to work in the FNSBSD. The school I work at - West Valley High School - is losing teachers faster than we can replace them. I was hired in 2007, left in 2013 when I had my second child and then returned in 2018. When I was hired in 2007, it was very competitive - but when I was hired in 2018 there were very few people who were certified to teach chemistry

Since I returned in 2018, we have lost two chemistry teachers, four biology teachers and we will lose our physics teacher in May. Teachers are either retiring as soon as they can or leaving Alaska to work in states that fully fund education. It is becoming challenging to find replacements - this year we started off short-staffed. Admin tried to hire teachers from the Philippines, but that did not work out. Finally, they hired a UAF professor to teach 9th grade biology. The professor is trying, but she has no experience with teenagers, no teaching license, and it has not been a smooth year.

2. Class sizes are huge. I have never had as many students as I do this year with most of my classes pushing 30. Some science teachers had 36 students at the start of the year. The National Science Teacher Association says for safety purposes science classrooms should not have more than 24 students with most lab accidents occurring when classes are larger than 24. The increased workload (grading, managing behaviors, buying extra supplies out of pocket) has caused massive burnout. I don't know if I am going to return next year.

(sources: <https://static.nsta.org/pdfs/overcrowdingintheinstructionalspace.pdf>)

3. I teach Alaska Zoology, Chemistry and AP Biology. The budget we have to work with cannot possibly cover everything I need. I spend over \$1000 of my own money each year on pencils, tape, dry lab ingredients, kleenex, glue, and notebooks for my at-risk students. I save my science budget money to buy the materials I need to ensure my AP Biology, Alaska Zoology and chemistry kids get the lab equipment they need to have a decent lab-based science experience.

4. Cost of living has gone up, but my wages have not. Between spending money to supply my classroom and the increased costs of fuel and food, I am worried I will have to find another job to keep up with inflation.

5. Our roof in our hallway is falling apart and leaking (we have a lot of building issues, but this one is very close to my room). There are buckets and pipes to try to fix it, but as soon as the snow melts it will be another disaster. I have been waiting for almost two years for it to be fixed. There isn't money to do so.

6. Students returned to the classroom needing extra support after COVID school. This job is harder than it was, and we are having to do more with less. This isn't the time to have giant classes and less support - students need more support than ever.

Thank you for listening, I love teaching and I want to keep working in Alaska. Please adjust BSA to reflect inflation.

Julie Zundel

Parent, Science teacher, and lifelong Alaskan

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Luann McVey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 4:43 PM  
**To:** House Education  
**Cc:** Rep. Andi Story  
**Subject:** Education Funding

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I'm a retired Alaskan teacher with some concerns about education in our state. I am appalled that the BSA has not increased since 2017, in spite of the increase in fixed costs for districts. In the long run, this situation results in fewer services for our students. I have heard about class sizes of 25-40 in Juneau elementary classrooms. Please, dear legislators, recognize that these numbers make teaching and real learning next to impossible. Please pass HB 65, increasing the BSA by \$1250. It is the least you can do for our students and their teachers.

Also, I urge you to pass HB 31, modernizing the Alaska Performance Scholarship. We need to keep Alaskan students in our state and a sure-fire way to do that is to find the students who are performing well in high school and set them up for success in our state's universities. Expanding the scope of the APS is the ticket to helping our students stay in the state and find success in their university tenures.

My husband, also a retired teacher, and I are very fortunate that our two daughters, while not APS recipients, remained in Alaska and attended our universities here. Now that they are adults, they work in Juneau at Bartlett Regional Hospital and at Sealaska Corporation, putting their university degrees to work. Their husbands, also local boys, received their degrees from the University of Alaska as well and work as Deputy Clerk of the Senate and as brewmaster/owner for the Devil's Club Brewing Company in Juneau. They're all examples of how encouraging Alaskan students to attend our universities pays off in an enhanced work force for our state.

Again, I strongly urge the passage of HB 65 and HB 31, to lift up Alaskan students and schools in these challenging times.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Luann McVey  
Retired Alaskan Teacher  
[REDACTED]

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Gary McCarty [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 4:53 PM  
**To:** Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Subject:** Education funding!

I support the house bill 65 and that in fact, any addition to the BSA is nothing more than adjusting the BSA to a level where it should be had the BSA been adjusted for inflation annually.

Thank you,

Gary McCarty

Jeanne Larsen

To: House Education Committee; Rep. Dan Ortiz

Sat 2/18/2023 5:02 PM

Dear Legislators,

I am counting on you all to lead the charge to bring the Base Student Allocation up to modern standards, and inflation proof it as we lean into our future together.

As a parent of grown children educated in Alaskan public schools, I can see that we are falling behind, and our schools need your help.

We need to adjust the BSA to adequately fund our schools not just to survive, but to thrive and gain our rightful spot as one of the best and highest performing states in the country. Why not Alaska?!?

This will also help us attract and retain excellent educators. Please do the right (and hard!) thing, and lead the change we all know needs to happen. You can be an education hero. We need you to lead the charge! I'm right with you, just here in the classroom at school

Thank you for your service and I wish you strength and wisdom while you work.

Very Respectfully Yours,

Jeanne Larsen

Anchorage, AK

Lisa Paesani

To: House Education Committee; Rep. Dan Ortiz

Sat 2/18/2023 6:12 PM

Dear Alaska State House Representatives,

I am writing in support of increasing the BSA for our schools. I am wanting you to listen and abide by the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee to raise the BSA by at least 1000.

If Alaska does not insure our schools are properly funded, in order to acquire and keep good teachers and have smaller class room sizes, our population will continue to decline, especially those in educated fields. Already we have a worker crisis in Alaska. People will not move here or stay here if they see their children can not get a good education here. This issue applies to all Alaskans. Please find our schools by increasing our BSA by at least 1000.

Thank you,

M Lisa Paesani, MSW



## James Sexton

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 6:26 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** House Education  
**Subject:** HB 65

Please support HB 65 to it's maximum. It is little enough in view of the dire conditions in Alaska's public schools.

Don't be like Anchorage's train wreck of a mayor. His administration was clearly put on notice last spring or summer that the Anchorage maintenance divisions - specifically the snow removal departments - were woefully without equipment, employees, and parts. He and his administration totally ignored this information. They probably thought since the source of the information was the worker's union, it had no merit. Now, of course, it is more difficult winter driving in Anchorage than it has ever been in my experience - and my wife and I have lived here since 1970.

Don't be taken in by the anti-education argument that the schools should improve before they deserve more funding. This is an absolutely ridiculous argument. It is like telling your dangerously underweight child that she will not be given more to eat until she first gains weight.

Thank you if you actually read this overlong email!

Tom Nelson  
[REDACTED]

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Alisa Carroll [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2023 9:36 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** Please support HB65

Dear Representative, Please support HB65. We love our schools and our brilliant, inquisitive, creative, kids... our hope for a stellar future! Our state deserves to have school funding at the top of the list! Despite significant inflation and the skyrocketing cost of operations, our school districts have been asked to provide better learning outcomes while cutting staff and programs across the board. Alaska is a wealthy state, and we need to prioritize our kids' education for long term prosperity.

Please vote yes on HB 65,

Sincerely,

Alisa Carroll

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Anna Polonowski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2023 9:02 AM  
**To:** Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; House Education  
**Subject:** I support HB 65

Dear Representatives,

As a parent of 2 children in the Anchorage school district, I am writing to let you know I fully support funding the BSA via House Bill 65 being introduced this Monday. Despite significant inflation and the skyrocketing cost of operations, our school districts have been asked to provide better learning outcomes while cutting staff and programs across the board. Alaska is a wealthy state, and we need to prioritize our kids' education for long term prosperity.

I appreciate your support for this bill as well. Thank you for your time.

Anna Polonowski  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Odile Meister [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2023 10:42 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education; Rep. Mike Prax  
**Subject:** Please support House Bill 65!

Dear Representatives,

I have been teaching in the Wrangell Public School District for the last seven years. I have seen how the quality of our schools has continued to decline due to reduced budgets each year. It is vital for the future of Alaska that our schools receive the full addition of \$1,250 to the BSA.

Please support our students and public schools and vote for House Bill 65!

Thank you,

Odile Meister,

Spanish Teacher and more, Wrangell Public Schools.

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** Idamarie Piccard [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2023 11:09 AM  
**To:** Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Subject:** House bill 65

The House Bill 65 is for the increase of the BSA by \$1250. The schools of ALaska need this increase to cover ever increasing costs due inflation, rising fuel prices, increasing wages, and operational cost increases over the last 10 years. It is my hope, should this bill pass, most of the added money will be used in the classroom, directly for the students. Yes there should be accountability and yes there should be diligent use of the increase but the education of students in Alaskan schools should be a priority. They are the hope of our future and we need to keep them here. Thank you

Idamarie Piccard  
[REDACTED]

## James Sexton

---

**From:** Mari Jo Parks [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2023 11:42 AM  
**To:** Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Cc:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** BSA Increase

Dear Representatives,

Please support House Bill 65 to increase the BSA increase for education. It is critical that we fully support education. This would be a good start in helping schools deal with inflation and other demands on education.

Sincerely, Mari Jo Parks

Mari Jo Parks  
[REDACTED]

Michele Elfers

To: Rep. Daniel Ortiz

Sun 2/19/2023 11:53 AM

Good afternoon,

Please vote to support raising the BSA a minimum of \$1000 per student. We need more funding than this for our students.

I have a daughter in middle school and one in elementary school. Their class sizes are 28-35 students per class with one teacher. I hear stories from my middle schooler of kids jumping on tables and breaking them, balls being thrown, basically chaos in class because the teacher cannot control the class with so many kids. She is not being challenged because the teachers are not able to address all the varied needs and learning levels in such large classes. She sits in the gym on many days because teachers are out and there are no substitute teachers

Next year, she goes to high school and the highschool closest to us has a part time art teacher and kids can't get into art classes. She wants to be a designer - engineer/architect, so she is looking for math and art classes. In this same school, they are struggling to keep their CAD program.

Our schools are in crisis and there is nothing I can do for my kids, we don't have any other options. Please provide more funding now.

Michele Elfers

**James Sexton**

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2023 1:59 AM  
**To:** Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; House Education  
**Subject:** New plan please.

fyi, cc of email to Jamie Allard & Justin Ruffridge...

"It could just be me. My career in education spans nearly 30 years. As an aide in the classroom and a classroom middle school teacher. Can you believe that for 30 years, every year, my budget was reduced and my new colleagues made less money under less favorable contract provisions and educational outcomes were not improved? Am I missing something here? I worked hard, and so did my colleagues, but I can say what our school can offer students has been reduced to bare bones, from when I began. No foreign languages, reduced art music and PE. No drama program, diminished vocational education, diminished home economics also called life skills. Educational outcomes have not improved.

So I guess my question is what is your plan here? 30 years is a long time...scores haven't improved...30 more years? Your plan isn't working. Time for a new plan.

SB 52 and HB 65 look good.

These students deserve better. "