

Eugene Harnett

From: Stephen Morse [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 8:45 PM
To: House Education
Subject: CHSB393

Please support this bill! I think it will save our school district in Sitka from irreversible setbacks! The need for school funding in form of an increase to the funding formula is way overdue and funding for Alaska reads is most important for implementation of this program.

The school communities have called for it, the students have called for it! and it is your constitutional duty to fund education!

Thank you so much.

Stephen Morse

Sitka resident& school board member,

[REDACTED]

Sitka AK.

[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Brian Charlton [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 8:12 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Robert Myers; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Governor Michael J. Dunleavy
Subject: RAISE THE BSA!

Hello and thanks for your service!

I know you are all busy so I will keep this short.

As graduate of our local schools, a coach, a volunteer, and a parent of two I am pleading for you to raise the BSA by at least \$680, support AK reads program funding for the staff that program needs badly, and support school transportation funding.

You can stop there if you want...

To continue:

It is so saddening to see the stress caused by the states inconsistent funding plans throughout our community. Following the pandemic this is not what our state needs.

I have seen so many families leave our community in recent years. High PTRs and closing schools, failing recreation facilities, and difficulty finding child care pile on top of the challenge of living in the Far North.

Please help make a difference and put us on a new path to success for our schools and our community.

Thank you,
Brian Charlton

[REDACTED]
Fairbanks

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

Eugene Harnett

From: Kari Gardey [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 3:04 PM
To: House Education; Rep. Julie Coulombe
Subject: Please support and increase in BSA

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to strongly support an increase in the BSA. Both of my children were well educated by the Anchorage School District and I was impressed by the caliber and quality of teachers and schools they benefited from. Since their time the schools have had less and less funding and it feels like there is an attempt to starve these amazing public resources.

Please keep this promise of increased funding to our public schools that you made when you passed SB 140. It breaks my heart to see how badly we are treating our kids. Also, I am not in favor of the state getting in the business of setting up charter schools, nor of focusing on teacher bonuses when we need longer term solutions. Charter schools are great, but rely on very engaged parents and no transportation. We need to support all our public schools if we are to keep Anchorage and Alaska thriving and vibrant places that will keep our young adults here and attract others to come to our state. Who would move to a state that doesn't support its schools? And if I had kids still in the district I might consider moving out of state.

Thank you for your time and service, Kari Gardey, [REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Tasha Shields [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 12:39 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Testimony

Good Morning,

My name is Tasha Shields and I am the mother of two boys that attend Pearl Creek Elementary. My husband and I are wildland firefighters and have been in Alaska for almost 20 years. I have always been under the impression that the State of Alaska funds education well and the importance of schools in Alaska. I was disappointed when funding started getting cut in the mid-2000s. Now that my kids are involved in the public school system I have been appauld by the rhetoric that I hear in the media and community. I know that the change from a defined contribution retirement has declined retention for teachers. I support increasing the BSA to at least \$680, funding transportation and to support the Alaska Reads Act. I believe that public education is crucial to a thriving society. I understand some people's desire for charter schools and religious schools, but I don't think that is where tax dollars belong. Please, fully fund the BSA.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Tasha Shields

Eugene Harnett

From: Luann McVey [REDACTED] n>
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 10:33 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Sara Hannan; Sen. Jesse Kiehl
Subject: CSHB 392 – Education Funding

House Education Committee : CSHB 392 – Education Funding

Co-Chairs Allard and Ruffredge, and Members of the Committee,

I was in the hearing room today while the House Education Committee considered amendments offered by Representative Story and Representative Himshoot to CSHB 392 regarding education funding. I spoke to the committee in response to the bill. I'd like to submit the following for the record.

I'm a retired Alaskan teacher, living in Douglas. I was raised in Alaska and spent 20 years of my career as a literacy leader in Juneau. My husband and I have two daughters who grew up in Juneau and graduated from the University of Alaska. They married wonderful local men and live in the Juneau area, where all four young adults now work and contribute to our community. Our two young grandchildren will attend public school here soon. I support most aspects of CSHB 392, especially concerning raising the BSA to at least \$680.

Families with young children need public schools that offer a rich environment where children and school staff thrive. It is the responsibility of the state and local governments to ensure schools are provided funding to offer appropriate instruction to all children. Smaller class sizes are key to schools' success - and this can only be accomplished by adequately funding schools. Raising the BSA to \$680 is not enough, but I support this addition, provided in the bill.

Young children who struggle with reading and writing need targeted instruction to help them learn to make sense of the wide world of information available to them. We must provide the funding to give these children a firm foundation in literacy so that they can realize their full potential as they become adults and begin to contribute to society on their own. Representative Story offered an amendment today that would have increased this funding; her amendment was unfortunately voted down 4-3 in committee today. I urge you to reconsider your NO vote on this amendment.

I am not opposed to charter schools, but I support spending the bulk of public money on our neighborhood schools where most children receive their education. These special schools should be locally controlled, not managed by a state board with members who are appointed by the governor. I'm opposed to the part of the bill that brings about this change in charter school management.

Please support young Alaskan families and give them reason to stay in our state by adequately funding our neighborhood schools. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Luann McVey
[REDACTED]

Douglas, Alaska
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Dianna Leinberger <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 10:09 AM
To: House Education
Subject: Public Testimony 4.8.24 - Increase the BSA

Honorable Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Dianna Leinberger, and I live in Fairbanks. I took time off from work to call in to provide testimony at today's House Education Committee only to learn it wouldn't be taken initially. I waited and listened online (streaming). At about 10:35 (streaming time) it was announced that public testimony would be taken. I called in at 9:45 and was told that the Chair wasn't accepting any more testimony. I asked when that decision was made and the operator said "about 10 minutes ago," which meant about the time we were notified the Committee would take testimony, the operator was told not to allow anyone else to sign up, and then the Committee only took testimony for 20 minutes. This was incredibly frustrating.

Since I was unable to provide testimony, despite my best efforts to participate in our legislative process, I'm sending my testimony.

I'm testifying today to advocate for an increase in the BSA funding.

I would like to see \$1400 to account for inflation since the BSA hasn't increased since 2017. I've heard there was a January 30, 2023, memo from the Legislative Finance Division which calculated that **the BSA would need to increase by \$1,348** to match the buying power of peak year 2015.

It's my understanding that this amount is not politically feasible, but that \$680 would be.

According to the State Constitution "the Legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State." I would argue that funding the BSA to keep up with inflation is a critical component of "maintaining a system of public schools."

While Rep. Prax asserts the constitutional requirement doesn't mean Districts should be getting everything that ask for, I would assert that it means what it says, "maintain" a school system, and that is not happening.

I am frustrated that we have to fight so hard for education funding, funding that is critical not only for those with children, but the entire state.

According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development working age people (18-64) are leaving the State, which is holding back economic growth. If we don't have a strong

education system, people are going to leave Alaska and others are not going to move here. A strong education system is critical for strong communities and strong economies.

I've heard comments about not throwing money at a problem, but public schools aren't a "problem" and if we really care about education we need to at the very least provide enough money to maintain the system. We can't underfund schools and then point fingers at performance measures.

I'm asking the House Education Committee to please do what you can do to make sure public schools are adequately funded, specifically at least a permanent \$680 BSA increase, transportation funding, and additional reads act money.

Thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,
Dianna Leinberger
Fairbanks, House District 36

Eugene Harnett

From: Nina Faust [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 10:05 AM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392
Attachments: cidE53A7480-3210-46A2-AAE0-998B718C2920.pdf

Please submit this for testimony on this bill HB 392. Thank you.
Nina Faust

Nina Faust

Eugene Harnett

From: Karin Halpin [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 9:54 AM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392

To whom it may concern.

I find it frustrating that every year the public needs to beg for adequate funding for our schools. In regards to HB 392:

I am against the State Board deciding what charter schools should be approved.

I am for DEED creating a position to support charter schools at the department.

I am for increasing the SBA to \$680 at a minimum...ideally it would be about \$1,300.

I am for providing schools a minimum of \$180 per student to support the unfunded mandate of the AK Reads Act.

Kind regards,

Karin Halpin
[REDACTED]

Anchorage, AK. 99507

Sent from Outlook

Eugene Harnett

From: Sydney Mullen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 9:49 AM
To: House Education
Subject: Support a BSA increase!

To whom it may concern:

I'm emailing today to ask for continued support for a BSA increase of at least \$680 to invest in our classrooms, teacher salaries, among other things.

I do not support the state board of education having the ability to make new charter schools. Charter school creation needs to remain under local control.

I am a mother of three young kids in Fairbanks, Alaska and this is currently the most important issue for me and my family.

Thank you for your time,
Sydney K. Mullen

Eugene Harnett

From: Kimberly Hanisch [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 9:42 AM
To: House Education
Subject: HB392

Thank you Chairman Allard and House Education committee members. I am Kim Hanisch, Supt. Of Unalaska City School District. A significant increase in education funding for all Alaska students is needed now. As UCSD builds the FY25 budget, we have no options but to maintain, if possible, status quo. Even by accepting the fact that growing our programs and opportunities may not be an option, with flat funding and lack of inflation proofing, we will still have a \$400K deficit, fully depleting our fund balance by the end of the year. Is inflation truly a burden at UCSD? Just this past week, we negotiated contracts for student activity airfare – the only way our students get to compete or join other students throughout the state. Next year, airfare alone, will cost us an additional \$30,000.

Without a dependable increase of funding, only possible within the BSA, we enter next year's certified and classified negotiations with nothing to offer. As you can imagine, this will have a negative impact on morale, which will be felt by students and the community as a whole. We will, likely, lose some classified staff with non-competitive wages in the city and possibly teachers who might seek employment in areas with better salaries and retirement systems

I ask that you, please, stay focused on what has the greatest impact for all and not bargain this away for wins for only some of our Alaskan students. A substantial increase in the BSA benefits students of neighborhood schools, charter school and correspondence programs. I, and Unalaska City School District, thank you for your time.

Kim Hanisch
Superintendent
Unalaska City School District
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Scott Ballard [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 9:20 AM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392

House Education Committee members,

All sections of HB 392 should be supported with the exception of the provisions on charter schools. For the last few years there has been an emphasis on education reform in Alaska before supporting sustainable funding levels for school districts. The Alaska Reads Act, handicapped by inappropriate and unsustainable regulations, nevertheless will change the educational landscape in Alaska. Bipartisan support for the Alaska Reads Act demonstrated the resolve of the legislature in solving a critical system wide problem.

The present model for creating and sustaining Alaska's charter schools is working. Foundational to charter school success is local control by community members and school districts. We need to celebrate this success, rather than moving to change the model.

Appreciate all your hard work in this session,

Scott Ballard

--

George (Scott) Ballard
Superintendent
Yupik School District
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



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Eugene Harnett

From: Alex Koplin [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 9:04 AM
To: Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Jamie Allard
Cc: senator.gary.stevens@ak.leg; Rep. Sarah Vance; House Education
Subject: Let's fund education and get it done. In favor of HB 392 at long as BSA is included.

Dear House Committee on Education,

I am writing to you that you support HB 392. I want my voice to be heard in favor of whatever educational funding that can happen. I would like for the money to be spent on public school funding. Please get regular funding into the BSA formula.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Alex Koplin

Teacher in Alaska since 1988.

Eugene Harnett

From: michal [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 8:00 AM
To: House Education; Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Jennie Armstrong
Subject: Increase school funding

Our legislators:

Please increase school funding. My kids' class sizes have increased, teachers are leaving, and more cuts are slated. Our public schools are in peril. Please do YOUR duty and consider our future. If you want Alaska to prosper, you need to invest in school funding. I agree that school performance must improve, but without adequate funding that won't happen.

Thank you.

Michal Stryszak
Father of two ASD kids
Anchorage 99517

Eugene Harnett

From: Palmisano_Jennifer [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 7:49 AM
To: House Education
Subject: Public Testimony

Good Morning!

I am the Freshman Academy Principal at Service High School. The state continues to underfund education and its impacts can be seen everywhere. Some of our village schools are a safety hazard and require help from the legislature to fix fire suppression systems, sewer and water issues. These are basic needs that have gone unmet for years. The legislature has a constitutional obligation to fund education. We all want Alaskan student to do better, but we need your help. We need help funding the Alaska Reads Act, providing mental health support and transporting student to and from school and other school related activities.

Please raise the BSA ❤️

Jen Palmisano (Crowe)

Freshman Academy Principal

Service High School
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Lessens_Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 7:47 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Office Of The Superintendent; Lon Garrison; Lisa Parady; Bellamy_Margo; Jacobs_Carl
Subject: CS HB392 Testimony

Dear members of the House Education Committee--

Prior to the introduction of the Committee Substitute for HB 392, I wrote to your body as an individual member of the Anchorage School Board in support of passing HB 392 as it was written, albeit with removing the expensive and unproven teacher bonus component. **I write today to ask you to reject major problem areas within the Committee Substitute for HB 392 and instead use the amendment process to pass a version of HB 392 that looks more like the original**—ie without Broadband, since the Legislature has addressed that, without the teacher bonus component, since that gambit will be inexpensive and unsuccessful in the long run and is likely to face Senate headwinds, and with an increase to the Base Student Allocation that will significantly lessen the likelihood that the Coalition for Education Equity sues the State of Alaska for failing to meet its constitutional obligation.

My objections to the CS language for HB 392, however, are really focused on two areas:

- 1) I strongly object to the CS language which would allow the State Board of Education to authorize charter schools and contract with a district to operate a SBOE charter (Section 1); and**
- 2) I strongly object to the CS language downgrading HB 392's proposed funding for the Alaska Reads Act (Section 8).**

In addition, I strongly support amending Section 7, as proposed by Rep. Himschoot, to \$7,373, and strongly support her amendment to allow districts—supported with State funding—to incentivize teachers' pursuit of National Board Certification.

Regarding my first objection:

As my recent email to your body with data on ASD's charter schools showed, and as [my recent letter to the ADN highlighted](#), **there is not a backlog of thousands of students wishing to get into ASD's charter schools (or even Alaska's).** I recently shared that three of ASD's charter schools received the bulk of 388 applications from current students to enroll next year in a charter school. However, I've since learned that 388 applications were submitted by 347 students, and that of ASD's entire 43,000 student body, **only 199** of the 347 applicants sought to lottery into a charter school—but no other option—for the 24-25 school year. (The others were also interested in neighborhood or other non-charter schools of choice in ASD.) **These 199 "charter school or bust" students amount to less than half of a percent of ASD's student body.**

For what it's worth, I believe that the scale of those students' demand/interest in enrolling at one of ASD's charter schools can be addressed locally, ie by a charter school's Academic Policy Committee deciding to increase the school's enrollment cap and/or its Pupil:Teacher ratio, by an APC agreeing to enroll more students in a school's lower grades so as to deal with attrition that may take place by the

time a student enters its upper grades, and/or by that APC working with ASD to move the charter school into a more suitable location that allows for increased enrollment levels while maximizing instructional outcomes.

We already have great examples of such actions and local partnerships!

One of the earliest decisions I made as a member of the Anchorage School Board --at my second meeting, no less -- was to [approve the Eagle Academy Charter School's request](#) to expand from a K-6 school to a K-8 school. This involved increasing their cap from 180 to 240 students and creating 7th and 8th grade cohorts. This was initiated at the site level and approved unanimously by the ASD Board. I think it stands the test of time as a great example of local control supporting charter students' needs. However, demand seems to be larger for their early grades than for their secondary offerings; **although their enrollment cap is now 240, their current enrollment is only 204**. The bulk of the space appears to be available at the 7th and 8th grade levels, where only 24 students (rather than 50-52) are currently enrolled. If their APC figured out how to place another 3 dozen students in their school in earlier grades, Eagle Academy Charter School could potentially cut their wait list down by ~32%.

My point is districts and APCs need to address demand at the local level. To this end, I expect that conversations about how ASD can continue to support its charter schools, **when it comes to facilities**, is going to be increasingly salient. It may interest you that in coming weeks and months, ASD will return to the process of "right-sizing" the district's footprint. Supporting facility based charter schools with adequate space and safe facilities for FY26 and beyond is going to be the single most important next step in addressing demand for charter schools—NOT a SBOE-initiated process.

But again, we have models for local adjustments when it comes to facilities. The Board's approval of moving the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School into the Abbott Loop Elementary School facility one year ago—following ANCCS's earlier facility's failure and their temporary move into Bettie Davis East High School--is a great example of this partnership in action. Similarly, when the Board renegotiated a lower lease for the District's Education Center earlier this year, it offered a lifeline to the Highland Academy Charter School's financial picture. I guarantee that other ASD charter schools stand to benefit from placement in ASD facilities, though the State could certainly support that process.

As you consider this bill, please recognize that ASD families—and likely families in other districts around the state--are not universally expressing demand for any and all charter schools: they are likely to be laser focused on specific types of schools. SBOE-created charter schools are unlikely to address the fact that a family may be in pursuit of a very particular school: they may either want a Waldorf inspired school, a back to basics type school, or access to a high performing school with a long track record; there is not much crossover across these, however, and each one is unique.

In sum, I strongly urge the committee to reject the proposed CS language regarding SBOE created charter schools and allow a successful model of local control to remain in place.

Regarding my second objection:

I am confident that **the change in CS HB 392 Section 8 re: AK Reads Act funding would shortchange students in ASD and across the state**. Please ask Legislative Finance and/or DEED to calculate the difference between the two funding models, at a district level, before simply supporting the CS language!

For the Anchorage School District, for example, the original language in HB 392 contained a provision to provide \$500/K-3 student diagnosed with a reading deficiency. Using ASD's fall 2023 mClass screening data and its enrollment data, I calculated that 6,800 ASD K-3 students were "below" or "well below" benchmark this fall on mClass screenings, qualified for IRIPS, and were thus "deficient." If ASD had received \$500 to support each of those students, this **would have amounted to \$3.4m** in AK Reads funding for the district this year.

However, the language in CS HB 392 would have provided far less. At \$180 for all K-3 kids, for ASD's 12,878 currently enrolled K-3 students, CS language would have generated an additional + \$2.318m this year. Even with language providing an additional \$100 for each of ASD's 4,320 Title 1 K-3 students, **the CS would have provided** an additional \$432k, for **a total of \$2.75m** for AK Reads act funding.

In short, therefore, **the CS language would have provided ASD's K-3 students with \$650,000 less than HB 392's proposed language.** Hypothetically, that could equate to ASD being able to provide roughly 5-6 instructional coaches (or not); those ICs are one of the key components in our 2023 Picus-Odden adequacy study ([which is available here](#) and also included in today's Senate Education hearing documents).

What can you do?

In short, please support passage of critical components of HB 392 while deleting and/or amending CS language which would provide a major disservice to Alaska's students.

Thank you for your time!

Kelly Lessens
Anchorage School Board Treasurer

Eugene Harnett

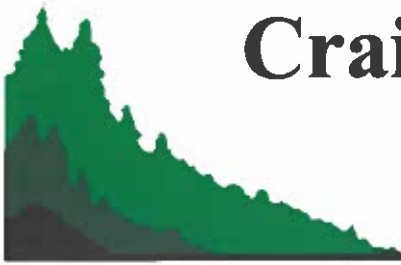
From: Chris Reitan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 7:47 AM
To: House Education
Subject: Craig City School District Re HB 392
Attachments: CCSD Support for HB 392.docx

Dear House Education Committee Members,

Attached is written testimony from CCSD regarding HB 392.

CCSD appreciates the work of the House Education Committee continuing these important conversations about how to stabilize our statewide educational system and ensure that we have the appropriate resources available for our students/

Chris Reitan, CCSD Superintendent
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Craig City School District

P.O. Box 800, Craig, Alaska 99921
www.craigschools.com
Phone (907) 826.3274
FAX (907) 826.3322

Chris Reitan, Superintendent
David Harris, Elem./MS Principal
Betty Hall, HS Principal
Christina Woodward, PACE Principal

TO: House Education Committee
FROM: Chris Reitan
DATE: April 8, 2024
SUBJECT: HB 392

Members of the House Education Committee, I'm testifying on behalf of Craig City School District and the students and families we serve.

I'm testifying in support of HB 392 because HB 392 provides critical support to our Alaskan public school system by providing the following:

- Increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$680,
- Increasing funding for school transportation,
- Increasing funding for correspondence/homeschool students, and
- Support for district's responsibilities to live into the Alaska Reads Act with integrity.

I'm also testifying in cautious support of HB 392 due to language related to the operation of charter schools.

- My 30 year career has been steeped in district, developed school choice options for students and families. Charter schools provide a fundamental support for families across our state to support the specific needs and interests of some students, and I'm an advocate for locally developed school choice options, of which charter schools are one critical component. HB 392 provides support for school districts and more importantly the families school district serve because it provides funding for a charter school coordinator position at DEED to support districts' and families' efforts to develop the most robust curricula options for our students statewide. I'm concerned about language within HB 392 that would allow DEED to override a school district if the school district disbanded a charter school because this language oversteps the authority of elected school board members in governing their locally provided programs.

For Alaska school districts to have the opportunity to provide the most robust curricula options for students and school choice options for the families and students we serve an increase to the Base Student Allocation is critical. Our students deserve a solid, public educational system that regularly and consistently invests in their future and more importantly the future of our state. In closing I am fully appreciative of the House Education Committee continuing these important conversations about how to stabilize our statewide educational system and ensure that we have the appropriate resources available for our students.

Eugene Harnett

From: Lon Garrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 5:42 AM
To: House Education
Subject: AASB Written Testimony on CS HB 392
Attachments: 2400408_HSE_Ed_CS HB392_AASB Testimony.pdf

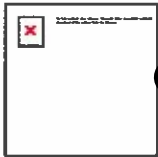
Good morning,

Attached is the written testimony from AASB for CS HB 392.

Thank you,

Lon Garrison

--



Lon Garrison | Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards

AASB honors and respects the Ancestral Lands on which all Alaskans live, work, play, and learn, and encourages activities and practices that acknowledge and recognize the past and present stewardship of these lands.



**House Education Committee
CSHB 392 Written Testimony
April 8, 2024**



Co-Chairs Allard, Ruffridge and members of the House Education Committee, I am Lon Garrison, the Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards. I appreciate the opportunity for written testimony on the **Committee Substitute CSHB 392**

AASB's 2024 legislative priorities include:

- Sufficient, sustainable, and predictable education funding
- Retention and recruitment of teachers, administrators, and staff
- Student wellness and safety

AASB expresses appreciation for the legislature's continued efforts to address public education issues, especially school funding.

AASB's legislative advocacy is driven by the resolutions adopted each year by the membership at its annual meeting in November. Resolutions supporting this testimony are attached to my written statement.

AASB is supportive and thankful for the proposed \$680 increase in the BSA, even though it is far less than the \$1,413 increase needed to account for inflation since 2016. This increase in the statute would be a permanent investment in Alaska's students. Thank you.

The proposed additional funding increases for pupil transportation will help prevent districts from using funds that might otherwise be used for instruction and student support.

The additional funding for implementing the Alaska Reads Act is critical to its success and the significant impact it will have on all our students. However, AASB prefers the original language in HB 392, which provides \$500 per student identified as needing an Individual Reading Intervention Plan (IRIP). This is a more strategic and targeted approach for supporting those students with the greatest need for improving their reading skills.

Alaska's public charter schools are noted to be some of the best-performing charters in the country. AASB believes that the proposed appeal process for charter school terminations and a dedicated position at DEED supporting charter schools are needed improvements. AASB advocates for efforts to enhance and support charter school applications through local school boards and the State Board of Education. AASB is an ardent and active supporter of locally authorized and operated charter schools as an important public school option.

AASB's membership is resolved (Resolution 1.3 Maintaining Local Control of Charter School Formation) that ***the formation of charter schools remains within the authority of local school districts and opposes any effort to enact other sole authorizers.*** Creating and operating effective schools is a complex task that requires significant support from the parents, community, and, most importantly, a local school district. It has been reported by the Governor and the Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development that there are "thousands" of students on charter school waitlists that are not being served. The Department has no data whatsoever to substantiate that claim. In truth, when AASB contacted and surveyed school districts with charter schools in mid-March 2024, the result was 975 students total, many of which may be duplicates because students may apply to several charter schools at once. A one-page summary of that investigation is attached.

Given the serious concerns of AASB's membership, AASB cannot support CS HB392 as proposed and recommends amending the provisions for the Alaska Reads Act support of students with a qualifying IRIP and retaining local school board control for authorizing charter schools in conjunction with State Board of Education approval.



Lon Garrison,
Executive Director, AASB

APPLICABLE AASB RESOLUTIONS:

Funding Resolutions:

2.2 URGING EARLY, ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

2.14 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

2.63 FUNDING FOR EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION

2.65 RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE ALASKA READS ACT

Charter School Resolution:

1.3 MAINTAINING LOCAL CONTROL IN CHARTER SCHOOL FORMATION

1.3 MAINTAINING LOCAL CONTROL IN CHARTER SCHOOL FORMATION

AASB recognizes charter schools as a locally developed alternative to the standard education program. AASB urges the Department of Education & Early Development to work in partnership with local school districts in the formation of new charter schools. AASB supports charter schools as long as the local school board:

- a) Retains the sole authority to initiate the approval or rejection of the charter,
- b) Retains options to terminate the charter of any school that fails to meet criteria set forth in the charter or as otherwise specified by the local school board
- c) Maintains authority to require and enforce accountability, including determining the criteria, standards, or outcomes that will be used in establishing the charter;
- d) Ensures that a charter does not foster racial, social, religious or economic segregation or segregation of children with disabilities.

Adopted 1997, 2017

Amended 1998, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2014, 2017

Renewed 2022

(Sunset 2027)

Association of Alaska School Boards

2.2 URGING EARLY, ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

AASB urges the State of Alaska to provide early, adequate, equitable, and predictable funding of public education. AASB believes that adequate funding should include the following:

- State funding of the TRS-PERS retirement liability;
- An increase to the Base Student Allocation to inflation proof pre-K through 12th grade education funding by no less than the amount of \$ 1655
- Increase funding to account for flat funding in past years.
- Recognition of the need to keep pupil-teacher ratios to a level in line with research-based best practices;
- Funded career and technical education.
- An early adoption timeline that allows school boards and district administration to effectively plan instruction and staffing for the upcoming school year. (Refer to Resolution 2.23 Funding for Schools by Establishing the Base Student Allocation in Advance)
- Programs and Initiatives focusing on Alaska Native languages and cultures.

AASB urges that in the years when the Alaska Legislature has not approved an education budget by April 1, the budget from the previous year shall be the legal minimum funding for the next fiscal year.

AASB urges the Legislature to review and recommend appropriate adjustments to [AS.14.17.460](#), District Cost Factors, to ensure equity in school funding.

AASB urges the Legislature to provide stable forward funding that addresses inflation, including the use of an education endowment, to ensure funding predictability.

Adopted 2014

Amended 2017, 2022, 2023

Renewed 2019

(Sunset 2024)

Association of Alaska School Boards

2.14 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

AASB urges the State of Alaska to adequately fund pupil transportation by increasing the transportation allocation to accurately reflect true costs, to avoid the use of operating fund dollars, and to provide funding for districts with increased transportation needs due to state legislated labor costs, rising fuel costs, special circumstances and/or student growth. Getting students safely to and from school is a vital part of public education.

Adopted 2000

Amended 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016

(Sunsets 2025)

Association of Alaska School Boards

2.63 FUNDING FOR EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature and Administration to provide adequate funding to public education in the State of Alaska, to increase the Base Student Allocation to compensate for inflation, and increase the student transportation award to cover the true costs of student transportation.

Adopted 2022

(Sunsets 2027)

Association of Alaska School Boards

2.65 RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE ALASKA READS ACT

The Association of Alaska School Boards urges the Legislature to provide funding and resources to effectively implement the mandates of the Alaska Reads Act.

Adopted 2023

(Sunsets 2028)

Association of Alaska School Boards

Alaska Charter School Waitlist as of 3/19/2024

School Districts with Charters	# of Charter Schools	Total Students**	Student Waitlist
Anchorage*	8	2563	527
Fairbanks	5	881	45
Juneau	1	76	0
Kenai	4	666	0
Ketchikan	2	330	0
Lower Kuskokwim	1	119	Awaiting response, but very few
Lower Yukon	1	68	0
Matsu	7	1995	384
Nome	1	60	19
Total	30	6758	975

As a % of Charter Students: **14.4%**

23-24 Final ADM (DEED) **127,931** As a % of all Students: **0.76%**

* For some ASD charter schools, the enrollment cap in their charter is greater than their facility capacity. Parents may place students on multiple waitlists for charter schools, which may result in an inflated estimate of waitlisted students.

** Student counts taken from DEED census in October 2023

Data was collected on 3/18 through direct contact with school district administration.

Lon Garrison
Executive Director
Assoc. of Alaska School Boards

Sherry Stead
representing our students

I urge all of you to
support our public schools.

This improves the out
comes of our children,
keeps our teachers in our
state and improves the
livability of our state.

The schools are a
part of our communities.
The performing Arts, swimming
pools and community events,
ie health fairs, craft fairs
and many sporting events
that bring teams together
in a healthy competitive
manner.

We need our schools.

Better outcomes have
NEVER happened by
not funding public
education.

Eugene Harnett

From: Lessens_Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 7:47 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Office Of The Superintendent; Lon Garrison; Lisa Parady; Bellamy_Margo; Jacobs_Carl
Subject: CS HB392 Testimony

Dear members of the House Education Committee--

Prior to the introduction of the Committee Substitute for HB 392, I wrote to your body as an individual member of the Anchorage School Board in support of passing HB 392 as it was written, albeit with removing the expensive and unproven teacher bonus component. **I write today to ask you to reject major problem areas within the Committee Substitute for HB 392 and instead use the amendment process to pass a version of HB 392 that looks more like the original**—ie without Broadband, since the Legislature has addressed that, without the teacher bonus component, since that gambit will be inexpensive and unsuccessful in the long run and is likely to face Senate headwinds, and with an increase to the Base Student Allocation that will significantly lessen the likelihood that the Coalition for Education Equity sues the State of Alaska for failing to meet its constitutional obligation.

My objections to the CS language for HB 392, however, are really focused on two areas:

- 1) I strongly object to the CS language which would allow the State Board of Education to authorize charter schools and contract with a district to operate a SBOE charter (Section 1); and**
- 2) I strongly object to the CS language downgrading HB 392's proposed funding for the Alaska Reads Act (Section 8).**

In addition, I strongly support amending Section 7, as proposed by Rep. Himschoot, to \$7,373, and strongly support her amendment to allow districts—supported with State funding—to incentivize teachers' pursuit of National Board Certification.

Regarding my first objection:

As my recent email to your body with data on ASD's charter schools showed, and as [my recent letter to the ADN highlighted](#), **there is not a backlog of thousands of students wishing to get into ASD's charter schools (or even Alaska's).** I recently shared that three of ASD's charter schools received the bulk of 388 applications from current students to enroll next year in a charter school. However, I've since learned that 388 applications were submitted by 347 students, and that of ASD's entire 43,000 student body, **only 199** of the 347 applicants sought to lottery into a charter school—but no other option—for the 24-25 school year. (The others were also interested in neighborhood or other non-charter schools of choice in ASD.) **These 199 "charter school or bust" students amount to less than half of a percent of ASD's student body.**

For what it's worth, I believe that the scale of those students' demand/interest in enrolling at one of ASD's charter schools can be addressed locally, ie by a charter school's Academic Policy Committee deciding to increase the school's enrollment cap and/or its Pupil:Teacher ratio, by an APC agreeing to enroll more students in a school's lower grades so as to deal with attrition that may take place by the

time a student enters its upper grades, and/or by that APC working with ASD to move the charter school into a more suitable location that allows for increased enrollment levels while maximizing instructional outcomes.

We already have great examples of such actions and local partnerships!

One of the earliest decisions I made as a member of the Anchorage School Board --at my second meeting, no less -- was to [approve the Eagle Academy Charter School's request](#) to expand from a K-6 school to a K-8 school. This involved increasing their cap from 180 to 240 students and creating 7th and 8th grade cohorts. This was initiated at the site level and approved unanimously by the ASD Board. I think it stands the test of time as a great example of local control supporting charter students' needs. However, demand seems to be larger for their early grades than for their secondary offerings; **although their enrollment cap is now 240, their current enrollment is only 204**. The bulk of the space appears to be available at the 7th and 8th grade levels, where only 24 students (rather than 50-52) are currently enrolled. If their APC figured out how to place another 3 dozen students in their school in earlier grades, Eagle Academy Charter School could potentially cut their wait list down by ~32%.

My point is districts and APCs need to address demand at the local level. To this end, I expect that conversations about how ASD can continue to support its charter schools, **when it comes to facilities**, is going to be increasingly salient. It may interest you that in coming weeks and months, ASD will return to the process of "right-sizing" the district's footprint. Supporting facility based charter schools with adequate space and safe facilities for FY26 and beyond is going to be the single most important next step in addressing demand for charter schools—NOT a SBOE-initiated process.

But again, we have models for local adjustments when it comes to facilities. The Board's approval of moving the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School into the Abbott Loop Elementary School facility one year ago—following ANCCS's earlier facility's failure and their temporary move into Bettie Davis East High School—is a great example of this partnership in action. Similarly, when the Board renegotiated a lower lease for the District's Education Center earlier this year, it offered a lifeline to the Highland Academy Charter School's financial picture. I guarantee that other ASD charter schools stand to benefit from placement in ASD facilities, though the State could certainly support that process.

As you consider this bill, please recognize that ASD families—and likely families in other districts around the state—are not universally expressing demand for any and all charter schools: they are likely to be laser focused on specific types of schools. SBOE-created charter schools are unlikely to address the fact that a family may be in pursuit of a very particular school: they may either want a Waldorf inspired school, a back to basics type school, or access to a high performing school with a long track record; there is not much crossover across these, however, and each one is unique.

In sum, I strongly urge the committee to reject the proposed CS language regarding SBOE created charter schools and allow a successful model of local control to remain in place.

Regarding my second objection:

I am confident that **the change in CS HB 392 Section 8 re: AK Reads Act funding would shortchange students in ASD and across the state**. Please ask Legislative Finance and/or DEED to calculate the difference between the two funding models, at a district level, before simply supporting the CS language!

For the Anchorage School District, for example, the original language in HB 392 contained a provision to provide \$500/K-3 student diagnosed with a reading deficiency. Using ASD's fall 2023 mClass screening data and its enrollment data, I calculated that 6,800 ASD K-3 students were "below" or "well below" benchmark this fall on mClass screenings, qualified for IRIPS, and were thus "deficient." If ASD had received \$500 to support each of those students, this **would have amounted to \$3.4m** in AK Reads funding for the district this year.

However, the language in CS HB 392 would have provided far less. At \$180 for all K-3 kids, for ASD's 12,878 currently enrolled K-3 students, CS language would have generated an additional + \$2.318m this year. Even with language providing an additional \$100 for each of ASD's 4,320 Title 1 K-3 students, **the CS would have provided** an additional \$432k, for **a total of \$2.75m** for AK Reads act funding.

In short, therefore, **the CS language would have provided ASD's K-3 students with \$650,000 less than HB 392's proposed language.** Hypothetically, that could equate to ASD being able to provide roughly 5-6 instructional coaches (or not); those ICs are one of the key components in our 2023 Picus-Odden adequacy study ([which is available here](#) and also included in today's Senate Education hearing documents).

What can you do?

In short, please support passage of critical components of HB 392 while deleting and/or amending CS language which would provide a major disservice to Alaska's students.

Thank you for your time!

Kelly Lessens
Anchorage School Board Treasurer

Eugene Harnett

From: Maureen Longworth [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 12:59 AM
To: Maureen Longworth
Subject: INVEST in Public Locally Controlled Education

Dear Legislators:

I appreciate your support of locally controlled public education in our state. Thank you for standing behind your vote for Alaska kids by voting to override Gov. Dunleavy's veto. Let's not stoop now! We won't give up on Alaska kids. Please SUPPORT CSHB 392 with opposition to the aspect listed below..

Please **support** aspects of the bill that would:

- Raise the Base Student Allocation of at least \$680
- Fund pupil transportation (funding for buses is in addition to the BSA increase.)
- Provide additional funding for students who need reading support in Kindergarten through third grade.

Please **oppose** aspects of the bill that would:

- Allow the Governor-appointed State Board of Education to authorize charter schools rather than locally-elected school boards.

We the general public - students, families, and employers - want to see the state invest in our schools! We can not effectively supply a future job market or happy healthy families, or attract professionals or any needed Alaskan workers if we do not offer public education of excellent quality. This is spending that should be utmost priority in your budget.

Thank you for your commitment to Alaska's students!

Maureen Longworth, M.D.

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99802
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Nate Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 8:45 PM
To: House Education
Subject: FUND THE BSA

The public - students, families, and employers - want to see the state invest in our schools! As our legislature, it is your constitutional obligation to support our students. Raise the Base Student Allocation of at least \$680 RIGHT NOW.

Fund pupil transportation (funding for buses is in addition to the BSA increase.) Provide additional funding for students who need reading support in Kindergarten through third grade. The READS Act is an intense act that requires additional funding.

Lastly, I am absolutely opposed to aspects of the bill that would allow the Governor-appointed State Board of Education to authorize charter schools rather than locally-elected school boards. This would take away local control and collaboration and could pave the way to further siphon-off public education funds for private interests. Any charter school that receives public funds must be held to the exact same standards as public schools. It is your obligation as our legislature to stop this. DO THE RIGHT THING. Do what you are elected to do. Vote as your constituents want you to vote.

Thank you,
Nate Johnson

Eugene Harnett

From: Lila Lee Little [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 8:43 PM
To: House Education
Subject: FUND THE BSA

I will keep this short and sweet. The public - students, families, and employers - want to see the state invest in our schools! As our legislature, it is your constitutional obligation to support our students. Raise the Base Student Allocation of at least \$680 RIGHT NOW. Fund pupil transportation (funding for buses is in addition to the BSA increase.) Provide additional funding for students who need reading support in Kindergarten through third grade. The READS Act is an intense act that requires additional funding.

Lastly, I am absolutely opposed to aspects of the bill that would allow the Governor-appointed State Board of Education to authorize charter schools rather than locally-elected school boards. This would take away local control and collaboration and could pave the way to further siphon-off public education funds for private interests. Any charter school that receives public funds must be held to the exact same standards as public schools. It is your obligation as our legislature to stop this. DO THE RIGHT THING. Do what you are elected to do. Vote as your constituents want you to vote.

Thank you,
Lila Johnson

Eugene Harnett

From: LUPITA ALVAREZ [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 4:37 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Rep. Sara Hannan
Subject: HB 392 – Education Funding

Dear House Education Committee Members,

My name is Lupita Alvarez, I am a teacher in the Montessori Borealis Public Schools. I have been an advocate for early childhood education for almost 30 years and continue bringing high quality education to children in the Juneau Community. I love my work with the children and am proud of the results. I teach much more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. I help the children become caring and responsible members of their community and inspire them to become life-long learners. I aim to know every single child well enough to provide them with **individualized education to meet their needs**. Without adequate funding for schools, we have been forced to have larger class sizes. This year I have 27 children in my PreK and kindergarten class. The thought of having an increase in PTR next year is overwhelming.

I'm writing to you to urge you to:

- Raise the Base Student Allocation by at least \$680
- Fund pupil transportation in addition to the BSA increase
- Provide additional funding for students who need reading support in Kindergarten through third grade

And please say NO to the Governor's idea of appointing a Board to authorize charter schools. Every locally elected school board should have the authority to decide if a charter school in their district would really serve the needs of their community. These boards are best suited to collaborate with families to create and then hold their charter schools accountable.

Thank you for all your hard work. I really appreciate it.

Yours truly,
LUPITA ALVAREZ
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Jeff Meyers [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 3:55 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Raising the BSA

To the House Education Legislative Body,

My name is Jeff Meyers and my wife is Danielle Meyers. I am the History Professor at KBC in Homer and my wife is an acute care night nurse at South Peninsula Hospital.

We have a son Lev at Paul Banks Elementary and another Hugo who will be there next year. We own a house, volunteer and donate to many organizations, pay taxes, and are politically active.

We love Paul Banks. The staff and administration make real changes in this community and we are looking forward to our sons moving through the public education system.

Public schools cannot be everything for everyone, but it is one of the only equalizers in our society. Kids need to be around a variety of other children and to learn to take directions from people other than their parents.

They also need to learn how to read, and if they struggle with it like our first son did, families need the support to help with that. Paul Banks excels at that and it is important for the future of this state that we raise the BSA.

I could go on with all the benefits of public school. The last thing Alaskans should want is a Governor-appointed Board of Education making decisions for our communities and schools. That is anathema to the culture of this state.

Please fund the BSA and help us make Alaska a brighter, better educated society.

We sincerely appreciate the time,

Meyers Family

Eugene Harnett

From: Gary Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 10:29 AM
To: House Education
Subject: CSHB 392 (Education Funding)

I am still angry at Governor Dunleavy for vetoing the BSA of \$680. Shame on him! CSHB 392 (Education Funding) will remedy that, and hopefully Dunleavy won't veto it or reduce the funding.

Allowing the State Board of Education to authorize charter schools instead of the local school boards smacks of "Big Brother" and Dunleavy's wish to fund parochial schools. Charter schools siphon off money from public schools. Funding of public schools is mandatory according to the Alaska constitution.

Thank you.

Gary Miller

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801-8211
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Eric Knudtson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 9:41 AM
To: House Education
Subject: CSHB 392 – Education Funding

Dear Representatives,

It is imperative that our charter schools remain under local control, rather than being authorized by the State Board of Education. Doing so would not only strip away local collaboration and control but could also lead to further diversion of public education funds towards private interests. I also strongly urge you to consider raising the Base Student Allocation to a minimum of \$680, while also allocating additional funds for pupil transportation, and providing extra support for students who require reading assistance from Kindergarten through third grade.

Thank you,
Eric Knudtson
Homer, AK

Eugene Harnett

From: Colleen Bickford [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 7, 2024 9:10 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Laddie Shaw; Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: Invest in Education

Once again, we implore all of you to invest in education, largely the future of Alaska. Both of our adult sons (both went through the public school system here and one to UAF for undergrad and grad school and both now employed engineers) want to move back to Anchorage but they are concerned if AK is still a good place to raise a family.

Please vote to Raise the Base Student Allocation of at least \$680, Fund pupil transportation (funding for buses is in addition to the BSA increase.), Provide additional funding for students who need reading support in Kindergarten through third grade.

We adamantly **oppose** aspects of the bill that would allow the Governor-appointed State Board of Education to authorize charter schools rather than locally-elected school boards.

The community voice on this matter has been loud and clear: students, families, and employers want to see the state invest in our schools!

Colleen Bickford

Jay Bickford

[REDACTED] Anchorage

Sent from my iPhone

Eugene Harnett

From: Stephen Morse [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, April 6, 2024 9:10 AM
To: House Education
Subject: Please vote for Support For Education

I strongly support the education bill CHSB 392 to provide funding for public schools! We are in a crisis mode here in Sitka unable to attract or maintain teaching staff, provide appropriate classes to challenge our students and to provide for health and safety needs of our student body.

Stephen Morse
[REDACTED]
SITKA ALASKA 99835

Eugene Harnett

From: Laura Silliphant [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 5, 2024 8:18 AM
To: House Education
Subject: Increase the base student allocation rate

My child is talking to me at breakfast about his fears about his education. He is talking about student walk outs. Increase the base student allocation rate for our public education. I want to see an permanent increase.

The kids our our future. Schools matter. They serve as a role of community in Alaska.

Get this right. Increase the BSA!

Respectfully,
Laura Gregersen

tax payer, voter, and parent of two boys who are high achievers in their academics, sports, and their other pursuits such as music and arts.

My kids go and have gone to Aquarian Charter School. An excellent school that does not need to be changed. It needs to be funded.

On Monday, March 18, 2024 at 08:33:57 PM AKDT, Laura Gregersen <laura_silliphant@yahoo.com> wrote:

Please increase the base student allocation rate to a sustainable rate. My son's education depends on it.

Sincerely,
Laura Gregersen
Sent from my iPhone

> On Mar 18, 2024, at 7:35 AM, Laura Silliphant <laura_silliphant@yahoo.com> wrote:

>
>

> My name is Laura Gregersen. I am a parent, voter, and taxpayer from Anchorage, AK. I am writing to support Senate Bill 140 (SB 140) to increase critical funding to Alaska's educational system.

>

> My sons, ages 9 and 13, have been engaged in their schooling at Aquarian charter school and Romig Middle School respectively. I see excellent educators at work, and I want my sons to continue to receive excellent education. They are students who love learning and excel in academics and athletics. My husband and I work and sacrifice to make sure that we can provide the best upbringing for them. Their public education is a pillar to their future! We need you to make sure that they can continue to receive this quality of education.

>

> In addition to our home in Turnagain, my husband and I own a home on the Hillside in Anchorage. Every tenant is renting our house because of the schools in that neighborhood. When my industry colleagues move to town, their first question is, how are the schools? Where are the best schools? Education is paramount – to me, to our society, to our businesses that are extracting our state's critical resources that bring in our state's income.

>

> Base student allocation funding hasn't increased since 2017, and costs have. Senate Bill 140 significantly bolsters public school funding across the state. The \$680 increase, as passed in SB 140, to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for the upcoming school year would provide much-needed relief to Anchorage as well as other communities across the state of Alaska. After years of record inflation, and corresponding flat funding by the state, Anchorage's structural budget deficit has grown progressively larger. For FY 25, ASD is currently grappling with a budget deficit nearing \$100 million.

>

Eugene Harnett

From: neil waggoner [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 1:36 PM
To: House Education; Rep. Andrew Gray
Subject: I support HB 392 and a \$680 BSA increase

Hello,

I am writing in support of HB 392 and increased funding for education. As an Anchorage father of two kids one of whom is entering kindergarten next year, I urge you to support this bill and invest in our kids.

Our families and future workforce cannot afford another year of budget cuts. Please increase the base student allocation to at least \$680.

Thanks for considering my comment.

Neil Waggoner
Anchorage

Eugene Harnett

From: Emily Youcha [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 12:27 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Support for HB392 and BSA increase

House Education Committee,

Thank you for continuing to work on the increase to education funding through the BSA. A large increase to the BSA will greatly help to stop the cuts that our school districts are facing, especially in the FNSBSD and the rural districts. I am not a education lobbyist, I am just a parent (with a "special interest" in my child) who would like to see smaller class sizes, better and faster transportation to/from school, and increased educational opportunities (instead of continual decreases) at my child's neighborhood public school. Our school district has already cut programs at the elementary level such as band, orchestra, art, and now they are completely axing the gifted program and closing at least one school - but it will likely be 4 school closures if funding is not increased. Last year they already closed 3 elementary schools. Closing schools is difficult as our Fairbanks borough geographical area is quite large and the more rural families do not want long commutes to schools within the city. Our school district needs significantly more than a \$680 increase in order to keep class sizes low and reinstate closed education programs mentioned above. Our school district is geographically large, but with decreasing population I think school closures will be coming, but even with redistricting, the current level of funding is insufficient to offer an excellent education and reinstate closed educational programs that families support.

We parents are getting very tired of the year-after-year cuts to educational programs and teacher positions, increasing class sizes, high teacher turnover, and school instability and closures. Please increase the BSA by well over \$680 this session.

Sincerely,
Emily Youcha, Parent in 34-Q, Fairbanks.

Eugene Harnett

From: Cody McCanna [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 11:55 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: HB 392 Alaska Education Funding

To: House Education Committee
Re: HB 392 Alaska Education Funding

HB 392: Alaska Education Funding

I am writing in support of HB 392 as the principal of Aurora Borealis Charter School.
Comments about important sections of HB 392 are below:

Sec. 2 Sec. 14.03.256 Charter school termination appeal.

We support this language to help protect charter schools since district school board members do change and sometimes bring personal opinions into the equation.

Sec. 3 Sec. 14.03.277. Charter school coordinator.

We support having a charter school coordinator at the state level.

Sec. 6 Sec. 14.17.470 Base student allocation. (*This is the highest priority of this bill.)

We need and support the increase of the BSA to \$6,640.

Sec. 7 Sec. 14.30.773. Support for reading improvement plans.

Additional financial support for Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIP) is necessary. Possible reimbursement process for schools as needs arise. Extra costs for us will be to pay staff to work after school hours, at the end of the year, and for training.

Sec. 8 Lump Sum Payment For Teachers.

This would have no effect on our ability to recruit or retain teachers.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

I would be able to answer questions about charter schools that you may have.
My cell phone number is 907 513-9161. You can call or text me as needed.

Thanks for your time.

Cody McCanna

Aurora Borealis Charter School
Administrative Leader
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Fran Talbott [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 11:51 AM
To: House Education
Subject: HB392

I am a retired Elementary Principal from the Anchorage School District. I cannot understand why it is so difficult to pass a bill that would fund our Alaska public schools. We are losing our teachers, our students, and our communities due to continued education cuts. In my own family I had four children and 6 grandchildren and two worked in the Anchorage School District. They have all moved to different states that allowed my grandchildren to have an opportunity to attend schools that were funded and thriving. My children moved because there were better economic opportunities for them. We are losing precious time to save our schools and keep our children and grandchildren in Alaska.

Eugene Harnett

From: Matthew Lichtenstein
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 11:32 AM
To: House Education
Subject: CS for 392

Hello,

Do you think the CS for HB 392 and/or the accompanying power point presentation from this morning will be posted by Friday?

Thanks,
M

Matt Lichtenstein
Information Officer
Alaska Legislative Information Office
[REDACTED]
Petersburg, AK 99833
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Joan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 11:19 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Laddie Shaw; Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: HB 392

Representatives: I am writing in support of education funding and our public schools. Nothing is more important to the "American Dream," a foundation of our American democracy, than universal access to a good education--regardless of your family's status or *even basic interest in you*. For our most vulnerable children, school is a place of refuge, support, and safety. School nurses watch for abuse and health issues--even if parents aren't. Teachers provide role models--even when parents don't. Educated, curious children become the citizen-voters we want. For quality families choosing to move to Alaska, or remain in Alaska, the quality of our education system is very important. If you don't have children, or grandchildren, or neighbor children...a quality education system is important to property values!

This is an issue of great importance to your constituents. We are watching.
Thank you for considering my opinion. Joan Clover

Eugene Harnett

From: Scott Hayden <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 9:35 AM
To: House Education; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Rep. Craig Johnson
Subject: HB 392

I support a \$680 increase to the BSA.

Inflation has defunded our school system in Alaska. Schools are being hollowed out from within as teachers leave and positions go unfilled, class sizes increase, and programs are eliminated. Zero people see this as a recipe for success. I am left to conclude that legislative members with an "R" next to their names do not CARE that our school system is falling apart.

Claims that schools need to do better before they can be funded echo the saying, "the beatings will continue until morale improves." Schools need a consistent, reliable amount of money every year. They get that through an increase in the BSA -- something that has not happened for many years, even during a time of inflation. It's not rocket science that if you pay for less, you will get less. Well, we are getting less every year.

You all worked hard to pass a compromise that funded education. Then it was torpedoed. I urge you not to fail again on education funding. Alaska's kids are worth the investment.

Sincerely,
Scott Hayden

[REDACTED]
Anchorage AK 99515

Eugene Harnett

From: Susan Jabal [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 9:29 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Rep. Sara Hannan
Subject: Support for HB392 - Education Funding

Good morning Alaska House Education Committee -

Thank you for the work you put into supporting robust education for Alaska's children, and our future.

I am writing today to let you know that I expect you to move forward with the desperately needed \$680 increase to BSA funding for our kids, supported by the following points:

- We needed an increase in the BSA two weeks when you had an opportunity to override Governor Dunleavy's veto. I have children in the middle school and high school systems and every week I hear about their desperate attempts to keep providing quality education without adequate funding. Their actions are nothing short of heroic, which highlights how embarrassing your lack of action is, that you have chosen to make this such a low priority.
- We are glad to see this attempt to live up to the promises you made to invest in our schools and our most precious resource - our kids! You have another chance to make this right, and I expect you to hold up to your promise to our children/our future.

Our families and our future workforce cannot afford another year of budget cuts. Please focus on increasing the Base Student Allocation to at least \$680.

Thank you -
Susan Jabal

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801

Eugene Harnett

From: Jacqueline Muehlbaue [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 9:23 AM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392

Dear House Education Committee,

We needed an increase in the BSA two weeks ago when you had an opportunity to override Governor Dunleavy's veto. I am glad to see this attempt to live up to the promises you made to invest in our schools and our most precious resource - our kids! Our families and our future workforce cannot afford another year of budget cuts. Please focus on increasing the Base Student Allocation to at least \$680.

Thank you,

Jacqueline Muehlbauer
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Eric Knudtson
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 9:23 AM
To: House Education; Rep. Sarah Vance
Subject: HB 392

Dear Sirs:

Please support HB 392. We needed an increase in the BSA two weeks when you had an opportunity to override Governor Dunleavy's veto. We are glad to see this attempt to live up to the promises you made to invest in our schools and our most precious resource - our kids Our families and our future workforce cannot afford another year of budget cuts. Please focus on increasing the Base Student Allocation to at least \$680.

Thank you,
Eric Knudtson
Homer, AK

From: John Tomac [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 8:51 AM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392 SB 29

HB 392: Education Funding

- Allows DEED to override a school district if the school district disbanded a charter school
***AGAINST**-Elected school districts should have THE RIGHT to retain or disband a charter school. DEED is a state government body getting involved in a local issue with a locally elected board.
- Adds a charter school coordinator position at DEED
***AGAINST**-DEED does not to be more top-heavy than what it already is.
- Increases pupil transportation funding ***ABSTAIN**
- Increases funding for correspondence students to 100 percent of the BSA
***SUPPORT**-By increasing funding for correspondence students they would have access to more opportunities.
- Increases the BSA to \$6,640 (an increase of \$680)
- ***SUPPORT**-The increase in SBA will allow some sports, humanities, and other activities remain in schools.
- Adds \$500 for each student in K-3 with a reading deficiency, to be used to improve reading proficiency
***SUPPORT**-Most parents take their kids to the library to check-out books over the weekends and school breaks which contributes to the increase in Alaska reading scores. However, there are some families that may not have access to a library and need their child needs additional support.
- Implements Teacher bonuses
***SUPPORT**-Given the nearly 25+ years assault on public teachers which started with NCLB local public schools have been decimated to the point where nobody wants to enter education. The hypocrisy is that there are those who want their child to attend part-time for sports or music.

SB 29: Civics Education

- Requires DEED to develop a civics education curriculum
***AGAINST**-Allow teachers to teach without being hindered
- Requires schools not to issue a diploma to students who have not completed a civics course and haven't passed the civics test with a score of at least 70 percent
***AGAINST**-Instead the state should have a ACT score of 30 or an SAT score of 1400 to receive a high school diplomat. By doing so, Alaska may be the 49th State and may move higher than 49 in state rankings
- Establishes a civics education commission at DEED
***AGAINST**-It would be a another bloated commission that is not needed.

Eugene Harnett

From: Trisha Bermudez [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 8:51 AM
To: House Education
Subject: I SUPPORT HB 329

Good morning. I am Trisha Bermudez, an active certified teacher from Ketchikan, Alaska. I am writing to give my full support for HB 329.

Thank you.

--

Thank you. Haw'aa. Salamat.

Ms. Trisha Bermudez
Instructional Specialist
Schoenbar Middle School
Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District
Ketchikan, Alaska, 99901



Eugene Harnett

From: KC Casort [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 8:49 AM
To: House Education; Sen. Click Bishop; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski
Subject: Please support HB 392 school funding

Hello,

I am a lifelong Fairbanks resident, a graduate of West Valley High School and UAF. My mom was salutatorian when she graduated from West Valley, and she also attended Pearl Creek Elementary.

I am so sad to see another year of beloved schools closing, even bigger class sizes, cuts to the programs that keep students engaged.

Please support HB 392 and whatever other options to increase school funding make it to the finish line.

Senator Bishop, thank you so much for your vote to override the education funding veto. I wish I could say the same to my representative.

-KC Casort
Fairbanks, AK
HD 34

Eugene Harnett

From: Mike Bronson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 7:54 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Alyse Galvin
Subject: HB 392: pass parts out of committee

Dear House education committee,

Please pass parts of HB 392 out of committee.

The bill is a reminder that the Legislature owns the public schools, legally if not morally. If you amend the bill, please consider a couple of things, as follows:

Page 5, lines 3 to 8, regarding district-level reading interventions.

First, define what you mean by reading deficiency. The original definition in the Reads Act was ambiguous enough that the education commissioner abused it and gave guidance to superintendent letting them short-cut thousands of reading-deficient K-3 students out of the extra help the Reads Act entitled them to. As Dr. Bishop explained the term reading deficient, she figured it allows schools the discretion to avoid the inconvenience and expense of individual reading plans with families and small group tutoring for thousands of K-3 kids who screen as “below benchmark” on Amplify’s mClass DIBELS 8. See her September 29, 2023, letter to superintendents around the state.

To define the term reading deficiency, you can use the DEED definition from the January 26, 2023, webinar Reads Act intervention course for teachers by Dr. McKenzie.

Secondly, the \$500 looks like something pulled out of a hat. Instead, the level of payment for your Reads Act mandate for district-level intervention and IRIPs should be calculated from 2023-24 estimates of the school districts’ current actual costs. Where is that estimate the education commissioner promised to the Senate education committee on January 22, 2024?

Page 4, line 31, regarding the BSA.

The bill’s proposed BSA level appears illegally low. Instead of providing for adequate schools, it is some compromise between vague expectations about school districts and how little school funding you can get away with. The House has no idea what BSA level is adequate because you don’t know what legally adequate schools look like. You don’t know what makes schools adequate because the House has not made the effort to gather the data nor to reach some consensus about what you expect your schools to provide.

- If you want school budgets to recover their real-dollar level, then the BSA would have to increase by more than one-third. Ask Mr. Painter or see his memo to the Senate education committee last year.
- If you want school budgets to return to the days of Alaska’s best NAEP scores ten to fifteen years ago and before the plunge in math and reading skills, you’d want to calculate a particular BSA.
- If you want to recover the ratio of teachers-to-pupils from its record low, you’d use a different BSA than in HB 392. See NAACP’s charts sent to you earlier that show the strong correlation between real-dollar BSAs, teacher ratios and NAEP scores over the last 20 years.

Don’t let compromise become a cover for ignorance. Ask for what you need, not for what you think you can get.

Eugene Harnett

From: Lessens_Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 8:16 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Bellamy_Margo; Office Of The Superintendent; Lon Garrison
Subject: Amend HB 392

Dear members of the House Education Committee,

I write as an individual member of the Anchorage School Board in support of **amending HB 392 before passing it out of committee.**

I understand that this bill couples the substance of SB 140 with the Governor's priority to give teachers temporary bonuses based on the type of region in which they work. I, too, believe in increasing teacher compensation!

However, from my individual perspective on the Anchorage School Board—and particularly out of my conversations with ISER researchers and the trainings I've done with Georgetown's Edunomics Lab--I don't see how this mechanism would allow the Anchorage School District (or others around the state) to address disparities *within* a district when it comes to rates of teacher experience or teacher turnover, and – broadly speaking – working conditions.

I address these below with a couple of salient data points, but to be brief, **my suggestion for an amendment is that you direct the State's aggregate bonus amount to each district (based on # of teachers budgeted for and retained during the FY25, FY26 and FY27 school years) as an earmarked grant for teacher retention and require annual reports on how and where the money was spent. That could be something like \$5000/\$10,000/\$15,000 x (# teachers in the district's FY budget).**

Here's some data behind my reasoning for how doing so could better address disparities within your largest district (and hopefully others as well):

1. According to DEED's recently-released 2022-2023 report card (<https://education.alaska.gov/compass/report-card>), while only 5.19% of Anchorage School District teachers in low-poverty schools were inexperienced that year, 12.83% of teachers in ASD's high-poverty schools were considered inexperienced. But those are just averages. While 32.38% of the educators in one high-poverty ASD elementary school were considered inexperienced last year, 0% of the teachers at another elementary school fell into this category! I believe that district-level management of retention bonuses funded by the State of Alaska would allow ASD to incentivize experienced teachers to stay at high-poverty schools rather than migrate to low-poverty schools over time, as many do.
2. Using an data-set about Classroom Coverage Payments by School—which Board members received as recently as Friday night last week after another Board member submitted a formal Request for Information from our administration about the issue—I can tell you that in FY23, ASD made approximately \$661,000 in additional payments to teachers based on gaps in coverage for

planning time, the loss of their duty free lunch period, and whether they took on a class whose students were divided into 2, 3, or more classrooms. These payments were NOT made equally across all of our schools. At the lower end, a few schools made payments of less than \$100 over the course of the year to compensate teachers for unexpected classroom duties. A few more made payments in the hundreds of dollars at the course of the year. But at the highest end, however, individual schools paid out tens of thousands of dollars for these duties. Two schools paid approximately \$54,000 and \$56,000. These classroom coverage payments indicate HUGE disparities in the working conditions across ASD, and they seem to fall disproportionately on the teachers serving schools who have higher proportions of high-needs students.

- a. Although I don't have data at hand, I would wager that the schools where largest amounts were paid for duties teachers incurred may likely have experienced higher than normal—if not the highest—rates of teacher retirement/quitting. At a cost of \$28,000/teacher to replace a teacher, this adds up fairly quickly.

My point, therefore, is that the teacher lump sum payments embedded in this bill, divided simply along an urban-to-rural spectrum, do not account for disparities that are taking place within Alaska's largest district—and may well be occurring within possibly others. If I've learned anything from my Edunomics Lab trainings, it would be that flat retention bonuses made directly to teachers and which ASD could not leverage in specific ways would not be the state's highest and best use of those dollars.

I urge you to enable ASD and other districts to address the challenging working conditions of our teachers at our highest needs schools by allowing us the flexibility to do things like incentivize experienced teachers to teach at certain locations, to incentivize our most effective teachers to take on additional students or mentor inexperienced teachers, and to address the overall workplace conditions that are causing them to lose their lunches, their planning time, and increase class sizes on a daily basis.

Sincerely and with respect,

Kelly Lessens
Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair
Anchorage School Board

Eugene Harnett

From: Mike Bronson
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 7:54 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Alyse Galvin
Subject: HB 392: pass parts out of committee

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Please pass parts of HB 392 out of committee.

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- If you want school budgets to recover their real-dollar level, then the BSA would have to increase by more than one-third. Ask Mr. Painter or see his memo to the Senate education committee last year.
- If you want school budgets to return to the days of Alaska’s best NAEP scores ten to fifteen years ago and before the plunge in math and reading skills, you’d want to calculate a particular BSA.
- If you want to recover the ratio of teachers-to-pupils from its record low, you’d use a different BSA than in HB 392. See NAACP’s charts sent to you earlier that show the strong correlation between real-dollar BSAs, teacher ratios and NAEP scores over the last 20 years.

Don’t let compromise become a cover for ignorance. Ask for what you need, not for what you think you can get.

Eugene Harnett

From: Patti Truesdell [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 7:02 AM
To: House Education
Subject: Increase in the BSA

We need your help! I am a retired teacher who volunteer in my local elementary school! I can see first hand the hard work and dedication of the staff! But... they are tired. Tired of increasingly large classrooms and not enough staff. In our school there is no music program. Period. When my children attended this same school, they had not just music but band. When I inquired why no music, I was told the position was posted but there were NO applicants! For Christmas this past year, the parents volunteered and our together a small program!

Our schools are NOT failing! We need help to keep staff and have the many programs our students deserve

Thank you.

Patricia Truesdell
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Soldotna, Ak 99669

Sent from my iPhone

Eugene Harnett

From: Lon Garrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 5:34 AM
To: House Education
Subject: AASB Testimony on HB 392 and CSSB 29
Attachments: 2400327_HSE_Ed_CS HB392_AASB Testimony & Resolutions.pdf; 2400327_HSE_Ed_CS SB29_AASB Testimony.pdf

Attached is the written version of the testimony by Lon Garrison on behalf of the Association of Alaska School Boards for HB 392 and CSSB 29.

--



Lon Garrison | Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards
[REDACTED] K 99801
Office: [REDACTED]

AASB honors and respects the Ancestral Lands on which all Alaskans live, work, play, and learn, and encourages activities and practices that acknowledge and recognize the past and present stewardship of these lands.

**House Education Committee
HB 392 Testimony
March 27, 2024**



Chair Allard and members of the House Education Committee, I am Lon Garrison, the Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the **Committee Substitute HB 392**

AASB's 2024 legislative priorities include:

- Sufficient, sustainable, and predictable education funding
- Retention and recruitment of teachers, administrators, and staff
- Student wellness and safety

AASB expresses deep appreciation for the legislature's continued efforts to address public education issues, especially school funding.

AASB's legislative advocacy is driven by the resolutions adopted each year by the membership at its annual meeting in November. Resolutions supporting this testimony are attached to my written statement.

AASB is supportive and thankful for the proposed \$680 increase in the BSA, even though it is far less than the \$1,413 increase needed to account for inflation since 2016. This increase in the statute would be a permanent investment in Alaska's students. Thank you.

The proposed additional funding increases for pupil transportation will help prevent districts from using funds that might otherwise be used for instruction and student support.

The additional funding for implementing the Alaska Reads Act is critical to its success and to the significant impact it will have on all of our students.

Alaska's public charter schools are noted to be some of the best-performing charters in the country. AASB believes that the proposed appeal process for charter school terminations and a dedicated position at DEED supporting charter schools are needed improvements. AASB advocates for efforts to enhance and support charter school applications through local school boards and the State Board of Education.

AASB's membership is resolved that the formation of charter schools remains within the authority of local school districts and opposes any effort to enact other sole authorizers. Creating and operating effective schools is a complex task that requires significant support from the parents, community, and a local school district.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lon Garrison', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lon Garrison,
Executive Director, AASB

Applicable AASB Resolutions:

Funding Resolutions:

2.2 URGING EARLY, ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

2.14 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

2.63 FUNDING FOR EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION

2.65 RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE ALASKA READS ACT

Charter School Resolution:

1.3 MAINTAINING LOCAL CONTROL IN CHARTER SCHOOL FORMATION

2.2 URGING EARLY, ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

AASB urges the State of Alaska to provide early, adequate, equitable, and predictable funding of public education. AASB believes that adequate funding should include the following:

- State funding of the TRS-PERS retirement liability;
- An increase to the Base Student Allocation to inflation proof pre-K through 12th grade education funding by no less than the amount of \$ 1655
- Increase funding to account for flat funding in past years.
- Recognition of the need to keep pupil-teacher ratios to a level in line with research-based best practices;
- Funded career and technical education.
- An early adoption timeline that allows school boards and district administration to effectively plan instruction and staffing for the upcoming school year. (Refer to Resolution 2.23 Funding for Schools by Establishing the Base Student Allocation in Advance)
- Programs and Initiatives focusing on Alaska Native languages and cultures.

AASB urges that in the years when the Alaska Legislature has not approved an education budget by April 1, the budget from the previous year shall be the legal minimum funding for the next fiscal year.

AASB urges the Legislature to review and recommend appropriate adjustments to [AS.14.17.460](#), District Cost Factors, to ensure equity in school funding.

AASB urges the Legislature to provide stable forward funding that addresses inflation, including the use of an education endowment, to ensure funding predictability.

Adopted 2014

Amended 2017, 2022, 2023

Renewed 2019

(Sunset 2024)

Association of Alaska School Boards

2.14 PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

AASB urges the State of Alaska to adequately fund pupil transportation by increasing the transportation allocation to accurately reflect true costs, to avoid the use of operating fund dollars, and to provide funding for districts with increased transportation needs due to state legislated labor costs, rising fuel costs, special circumstances and/or student growth. Getting students safely to and from school is a vital part of public education.

Adopted 2000

Amended 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016

(Sunsets 2025)

Association of Alaska School Boards

2.63 FUNDING FOR EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION

AASB urges the Alaska Legislature and Administration to provide adequate funding to public education in the State of Alaska, to increase the Base Student Allocation to compensate for inflation, and increase the student transportation award to cover the true costs of student transportation.

Adopted 2022

(Sunsets 2027)

Association of Alaska School Boards

2.65 RESOURCES TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE ALASKA READS ACT

The Association of Alaska School Boards urges the Legislature to provide funding and resources to effectively implement the mandates of the Alaska Reads Act.

Adopted 2023

(Sunsets 2028)

Association of Alaska School Boards

1.3 MAINTAINING LOCAL CONTROL IN CHARTER SCHOOL FORMATION

AASB recognizes charter schools as a locally developed alternative to the standard education program. AASB urges the Department of Education & Early Development to work in partnership with local school districts in the formation of new charter schools. AASB supports charter schools as long as the local school board:

- a) Retains the sole authority to initiate the approval or rejection of the charter,
- b) Retains options to terminate the charter of any school that fails to meet criteria set forth in the charter or as otherwise specified by the local school board
- c) Maintains authority to require and enforce accountability, including determining the criteria, standards, or outcomes that will be used in establishing the charter;
- d) Ensures that a charter does not foster racial, social, religious or economic segregation or segregation of children with disabilities.

Adopted 1997, 2017

Amended 1998, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2014, 2017

Renewed 2022

(Sunset 2027)

Association of Alaska School Boards

Eugene Harnett

From: Christy Everett <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 5:08 AM
To: House Education; Rep. Mike Prax; Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: Please support HB393

Dear Legislators,

I raised five sons in North Pole, Alaska, and currently have four grandchildren in the Alaska public school systems. I am heartbroken to see the reduction in state funding over the years, which has led to loss of vital programs, like music, art and ELP, increases in student to teacher ratios, and retirement/quitting of gifted teachers who can no longer tolerate the constant pressure to do more with less. I am not an educator but I have a deep respect for the passion and perseverance I have seen from the teachers I have known.

The legislature did the right thing when you voted to increase the BSA in HB 140. Please do the right thing again and support HB 393. A **permanent** increase in the BSA is needed to give school districts some certainty in their funding. While I do not believe \$680 is enough, it will help. Please uphold your constitutional responsibility to provide for our children's education.

Thank you,
Christine Everett
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Charles Bingham [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 2:11 AM
To: Charles Bingham
Subject: Support for HB 392

All,

I am writing to show my support for HB 392 and its \$680 increase in the BSA. Our state legislature has been neglecting its Constitutional duty to fund education for way too long, and it's causing irreparable harm to our education system. Our teacher wages used to be among the best in the country, and our results justified the spending. Now we rank among the lowest education results, and one reason is teacher retention has suffered since our wages haven't kept up with inflation. It's time to start righting the ship before it sinks. Thanks.

Charles Bingham
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Sharon Clawson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 1:53 AM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Julie Coulombe
Subject: HB392

Committee members,

At the very least you must pass this Important bill to fund our public schools in Alaska. For the veto override to lose by one vote was heartbreaking to those of us who believe we can and must do better for our children's education and opportunities to thrive.

Republicans, please do not let our schools down again. The Governor is wrong on starving public education.

Sharon Clawson
Sent from my iPad

Eugene Harnett

From: Colleen Bickford <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 10:21 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Cathy Giessel; Rep. Laddie Shaw
Subject: Increase Education Funding

To the Alaska House Education committee,

We are glad to see this attempt to live up to the promises you made to invest in our schools and our kids. Our families, our teachers, other education system workers, and our future workforce cannot afford another year of budget cuts.

Please focus on increasing the Base Student Allocation to at least \$680.

Colleen Bickford
Jay Bickford
[REDACTED]

Anchorage

Sent from my iPhone

Eugene Harnett

From: Colleen Bickford [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 10:21 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Cathy Giessel; Rep. Laddie Shaw
Subject: Increase Education Funding

To the Alaska House Education committee,

We are glad to see this attempt to live up to the promises you made to invest in our schools and our kids. Our families, our teachers, other education system workers, and our future workforce cannot afford another year of budget cuts.

Please focus on increasing the Base Student Allocation to at least \$680.

Colleen Bickford
Jay Bickford
[REDACTED]

Anchorage

Sent from my iPhone

Eugene Harnett

From: Rozlyn Grady-Wyche [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 10:13 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Testify in support of an \$680 BSA increase HB392

To all Those of Concern:

I am writing to bring to your attention the urgent need for an increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA). As you are aware, Governor Dunleavy's veto will significantly impact our schools and the education of our children across the State of Alaska. We had hoped for an opportunity to override this veto and invest in the future of our state, but unfortunately, that did not happen.

We understand the challenges that come with managing a state budget, but we cannot afford to compromise on the education of our children. Our families and future workforce are counting on us to provide them with the best possible education and resources. However, with the current BSA in place and skewed data on the budget, we are facing immense difficulties in meeting the needs of our students.

We appreciate your commitment to investing in our schools and our most precious resource - our kids. Your promises to prioritize education have given us hope for a better future. However, we need to take action now to prevent the budget cuts and ensure that our children receive the education they deserve.

Therefore, we urge you to focus on increasing the BSA to at least \$680 along with all the other fantastic items in the bill. This will allow us to provide quality education and necessary resources to our students. We cannot afford to wait any longer, and I sincerely hope that you will take immediate action in this matter.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your prompt response and support in securing a better future for our children.

Sincerely,

Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche

District 19 -Rep. G. Mina
District J - Sen. F. Dunbar

NAACP State Area Conference - AK, OR, WA

President of The Alaska Coalition of BIPOC Educators

Great Alaska Schools Member

Chairwoman of the Special Education Council for ASD

Eugene Harnett

From: Ann Rappoport [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 10:07 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Laddie Shaw
Subject: Please pass HB 392 ASAP!!!

Hello House Education Committee -

Thank you for swiftly working to bring up HB 392 which will provide a \$680 increase in the Base Student Allocation so that we can stop choking our education system in Alaska! While I would like to see a higher amount, let's at least pass this for now, in a streamlined bill that only deals with the BSA. I was SOOOOO disappointed when the Legislature could not overturn the Governor's vindictive veto of the recent bill, SB 140 that would have provided a similar increase in the BSA as well as including additional features.

You've all been lobbied by many, many educators, parents, school administrators, parents, and others around the state documenting how education funding has been effectively reduced as inflation and costs have increased over the last far too many years. Larger class sizes are not helping to raise student scores, neither are teacher vacancies and turnover, or the elimination of enrichment and elective programs. Let's reverse those trends NOW! Do what you must: hear HB392, approve it and move it on and up through the process!

Thank you,
Ann Rappoport
Anchorage, AK 99516

Eugene Harnett

From: jamie shearer [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 9:55 PM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392

Dear legislators,

I'm writing in support of HB392, specifically the \$680 increase to the BSA. I wish the bipartisan support that existed in passing SB140 carried through to override Governor Dunleavy's veto, but I'm glad that this bill attempts to follow through with the necessary investment in our future. Please focus on increasing the BSA in support of public schools and Alaskan children.

Thank you,
Jamie Shearer
[REDACTED]

Anchorage
99508

Eugene Harnett

From: Lem Wheelles [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 9:54 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Jennie Armstrong
Subject: Written testimony on HB392

Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for continuing the conversation on education funding and improvements to our public education system. While I am disappointed that the Legislature failed to have the courage to override the Governor's veto, it's not too late to take meaningful action to help our schools and our students.

I write today to strongly urge you to advance HB 392 as is, or with an even higher increase to the BSA. I have taught for the past 20 years at Dimond High School in Anchorage, and I have a daughter attending there and another at UAA. Unfortunately I cannot testify before you because the hearing is scheduled while I am teaching.

As I said earlier this month at the Anchorage Legislative Caucus town hall, you should want teachers like me to be in our schools. I was the 2018 Alaska History Teacher of the Year. I was a BP teacher of excellence. I run a Student Government program that has been recognized as a National Gold Council of Excellence for 7 years running (the highest recognition from National Student Council). I have served on the Bill of Rights Institute's National Teacher Council. I am the chair of the Professional Teaching Practices Commission. I love my profession, and my students go on to successful careers and lives. However, as things stand right now, you will lose me in 5 years when I can retire.

You see, class sizes have exploded since I started teaching. I used to expect around 25 students in a class, now it's not uncommon to have 35-40. Even adding one more student per class means adding 5 more students to my work load. That's 5 more essays to read, grade, and give feedback on every time I assign them. That's 5 more families to contact about their student's progress. That's 5 more students to keep an eye on for signs of mental health struggles. That's 5 more students to care about and connect with. And yet there's no more hours in the day and no additional compensation for it.

Our school districts want to raise pay for educators and support staff so they can recruit and retain the best teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, and other staff needed to fully educate and care for the students entrusted to us every day. They cannot pay competitive wages, offer competitive benefits, or improve working conditions without more money. Inflation has eaten away at our spending power, and as a result at our class sizes and our workforce. It's time to fix it with a substantial investment in school funding through the BSA.

This bill gives you a second chance to do the right thing for our children, our families, our teachers, and our state. Move this bill along promptly, get the House Majority that many of you are a part of behind it. And stand up and demand that the Governor sign it when it gets to his desk. Alaska's future depends on you!

Lem Wheelles

Eugene Harnett

From: Bette Seaman [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 9:52 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Sarah Vance; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: HB 392

To the House Education Committee,

I am in favor of increasing school budgets and doing it quickly so that districts can plan next years budget. I would like to see a larger increase in the BSA. Alaska has the most unique school districts. Some are way above the Arctic Circle, with small villages where the first language is not English. Some are in rainy Southeast, and some are mostly on the road system. It does not seem appropriate that a State employee in Juneau should decide on what motivates teachers to stay in those communities. It seems like teacher bonuses will be quite a bureaucracy! If the state has enough money to fund bonuses, let's take that money and increase the BSA by that much.

However, I am in favor of this bill if the only way to fund school districts early is this bill as is.

I am happy about the rural internet funding. It would have been awful to leave that 9:1 money on the table. I worked many years as a traveler in the Bush. The internet was awful!

Bette Seaman

Homer

Eugene Harnett

From: Wendy Burke [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 9:40 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Vote YES on HB 392

Hello

I am writing as a mother of 12 year old twins to ask for your help. Please vote YES on HB 392 to increase the BSA. Our state and our children NEED your help to increase the base student allocation and fund Alaska Public Schools. Just like the rest of us, schools cannot keep up with inflation and need you to do your constitutional duty to fully fund the public school system. Please vote yes on HB 392, and vote for our children— they are the future of our great state!

Sincerely
Wendy Burke [REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Peggy and Alex [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 9:38 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Rep. Andi Story; Sen. Jesse Kiehl
Subject: HB 392

We strongly support the \$680 BSA increase included in HB 392. Thank you for this attempt to live up to the Constitutional mandate to provide adequate funding for public education for Alaskan children. In contrast to the Governor's statement, we have not been throwing more money wastefully spent at public schools, but in reality have been allowing inflation to erode school districts' budgets. Our school districts are facing school closures and large layoffs of teachers and support staff because of flat funding for a decade. Thank you again for standing strong and investing in our schools and our kids!

Sincerely,

Alex and Margaret Wertheimer

[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801

Eugene Harnett

From: michal [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 9:19 PM
To: House Education; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Sen. Matt Claman
Subject: Please support our schools and kids

Hi

I urge you to pass an increase in the BSA. You worked hard to pass a bill to support our kids, and I'm very thankful for that. Unfortunately, the governor vetoed it. I commend you for working on an alternative to ensure that our schools are funded and our kids receive a quality education.

Thank you.

Michal Stryszak
Anchorage 99517

Eugene Harnett

From: Shiery, Tauga [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 6:10 PM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392: Education Funding

Teacher Bonuses

Bonuses for competent teachers would be great. Competency should be proven by state approved student progress assessments, evaluations by parents, and evaluations by school administrators. Bonuses for any warm body willing to stick it out in a classroom is not going to move the dial on literacy in this state.

Alternatively, providing a legitimate retirement with a state pension, would be a much better incentive for the recruitment and retention of QUALITY educators.

Tauga M. Shiery, M.Ed.
1st Grade - Hermon Hutchens Elementary

Eugene Harnett

From: Laura Scholes [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 5:02 PM
To: House Education
Subject: Pass House bill 392!

Laura Scholes

Eugene Harnett

From: Sean Campbell [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 4:32 PM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392 Education Funding

Good afternoon,

I am writing to you all regarding HB 392. I want to implore you to sign this bill. Although I disagree with the provisions regarding teacher incentives and charter schools, I do agree with the provision within the bill that will increase the BSA by \$680. As the principal of Paul Banks Elementary in Homer, I can tell you that without this funding my students' education will be compromised. Regardless of the age, but particularly in the primary grades, it is essential for teachers to build positive, supportive relationships with their students. Without doing so, students struggle to learn. It is more difficult to build these relationships with students when there are more students in a classroom. Practically speaking, without this BSA increase, we would lose an additional teaching position, making our class sizes larger. This is true across the state. Additionally, while our school district waits to learn if there will be a BSA increase or any sort of additional funding from the state, our schools cannot plan for the next year, nor can our teachers. These teachers will seek jobs elsewhere, exacerbating the retention problem. By increasing the BSA, we create better learning environments for our students and working environments for our teachers. By increasing the BSA, we can offer the sort of intervention programs necessary to help our students grow as readers in support of the Alaska Reads Act. By increasing the BSA, we can keep our teachers. In conversations I have had with my staff and former teaching colleagues, they have not once mentioned a temporary bonus as an incentive. They have mentioned a defined benefit retirement package such as the one Governor Dunleavy has from his days as an educator. They have mentioned that they want to teach classes where they can nurture learning rather than attempting to manage crowds. It is absolutely essential for our current students and future students that we pass a BSA increase. Their futures depend upon it.

Thank you,

Sean Campbell
Paul Banks Elementary School Principal
[REDACTED]

Eugene Harnett

From: Hannah Dolphin [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 4:25 PM
To: House Education
Subject: HB 392

Good Afternoon,

I am writing in support of HB 392. I see that it is very similar to SB 140 with some of the governor's stipulations. I want to thank you for your continued support of Alaska's public education. I urge you to continue your support.

Thank you,



Hannah Dolphin

Principal
Mountain View Elementary
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[Mountain View Elementary Website](#)

[Mountain View Elementary Facebook Page](#)