

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Peggy Azuyak <pazuyak@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 12:48 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Public Testimony in Support of HB 69 – Increase to the BSA

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for **HB 69**, which would increase the **Base Student Allocation (BSA)** by **\$1,000**. This increase is **essential** for school districts across our state to keep up with rising costs and continue providing quality education for our students.

Across Alaska, districts are **facing budget shortfalls, school closures, and reductions in staff and essential services** due to years of stagnant funding that has not kept pace with inflation. Without an increase to the BSA, many schools—including those in rural and remote communities—will be forced to make **even more devastating cuts** that will directly impact student learning opportunities.

A \$1,000 increase to the BSA is a **critical step** in ensuring that our schools remain open, our class sizes stay manageable, and our students receive the education they deserve. Investing in our schools is an investment in the future of our state.

I urge you to **support HB 69** and advocate for sustainable, long-term education funding that allows districts to plan for stability rather than crisis.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to Alaska's students.

Sincerely,

Peggy Azuyak  
Parent of a 4th grader in Kodiak

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Baksis, Peter <pbaksis@valdezcityschools.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 8:44 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; House Education  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on HB 69

Good tidings from Valdez, Alaska!

This may be of interest to you or it may not, depending upon your already made up minds. I hope that my words come to you in a way that you hear them instead of treating them like a snowflake on a 38 degree day.

Please, with all due respect, understand the realm of education has dwindled from a once prominent role in the United States. Educators once flocked north to teach in a vastly supportive and robust system that allowed for the current leadership structure to flourish and thrive. Most of your cities and homes here in Alaska have leadership who were taught in these same halls or public institutions. It's surprising to see the dereliction of duty year after year when it comes to funding those sources of our future!

I taught in Fairbanks for 8 years and attempted to supply our students with an authentic approach to learning. They were given the best of what I had to offer even when I received notice of non-retention due to "budget shortages". I'm not naive to think that this could very well be a scheme to squeeze more money out of a borough or city budget but it had such a vast effect on me that I decided to leave Alaska, for good!

However, my heart and soul is the ol' 49'er and I had to come back to help alleviate the constant suffering of the professionals that brave that same path I walked not but a short time ago. I currently serve as an Administrator in Valdez City Schools. The primary purpose we have is to make sure we are offering a multifaceted approach to the "next step" in our students' journey. We find it supremely difficult to preach consistency and trust when we cannot enjoy that in our legislature and positions.

It is organically ingrained into each teacher's heart that they will be a greater sum of professionals tomorrow compared to today. They are reminded constantly about their performance either by the formative student check in or by the test scores and District administration. We want to be excellent, we want to have all students succeed but we do that at our own expense when we are not valued.

The legislature can make a grand step forward by passing this through both the AK House and AK Senate for approval from on high! It would be a hook to hang our hat on as a State that Cares! Comparatively, Alaska has easily been in the lowest 10% in [funding increases](#) and has some of the highest per pupil costs. It is embarrassing to you as Politicians to sit there and allow this to happen in a State that can be the beacon of support and trust.

I implore you to do what is right by your position and support those educators who stand at the front line with students battling for 21st Century resources against 18th Century thinking. We should come out on top together.

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***Peter Baksis III***  
***Valdez High School***  
***Principal***  
***907-834-2301***

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Rebecca Bezdecny <rebecca.bezdecny@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 9:17 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; House Education; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Justin Ruffridge  
**Subject:** Public Testimony HB 69

Good Evening,

I am writing in support of HB 69 to increase the BSA.

I realize increases like this require revenue and my family would not be adverse to a well-thought out state income tax, for example.

I appreciate all the hard work it will take to get an increase passed and to the Governor. I truly believe it will benefit the kids and the future our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rebecca Bezdecny  
204 Susieana Ln.  
Kenai, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Reid Tulloch <reidtulloch@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2025 10:53 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; House Education  
**Subject:** Support for HB 69 – Investing in Alaska’s Schools

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate and House,

My name is Reid Tulloch, and I have six children currently attending public schools in Anchorage. I also teach at the Nenana City School District’s Cyberlynx High School Completion program in Anchorage. I've been teaching in Alaska for 14 years, most of that time in Unalakleet with the Bering Straits School District.

When I first moved to Alaska in 2009, teacher salaries and benefits were competitive compared to the Lower 48, which was a major factor in my decision to come here. Even then, recruiting teachers for rural schools was a challenge. Since then, the teacher shortage has only worsened, largely because salaries no longer offset the difficulties of living and working in remote communities.

For the past three years, I’ve been teaching on the road system. I regularly speak with my children’s teachers, colleagues in other schools, and educators who refer students to my program. My wife, who is studying Early Childhood Education, shares what she observes in classrooms. The picture isn't encouraging—class sizes are too large, teachers lack staff and administrative support, and they don’t have enough prep time.

If schools were better funded, we could offer signing bonuses, more competitive salaries and benefits, and retention incentives to hire more educators and keep quality teachers in the classroom. HB 69 would be a strong step in the right direction. In Anchorage, for example, additional funding could prevent school closures while also reducing class sizes and improving student support.

I urge you to support HB 69 and invest in the future of Alaska’s students and educators.

Sincerely,

Reid Tulloch

## Michael Mason

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**From:** R Brooks <[robinbrooks907@gmail.com](mailto:robinbrooks907@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 2:39 PM  
**To:** House Education; Senate Education  
**Subject:** Dire funding needs in our state!

Good afternoon, Members of the Alaska Legislature,

I am a parent of two teens in the Anchorage School District, a resident and voter in Alaska since 2008. As you are well aware, the Anchorage School District is facing an unprecedented budget deficit for the coming AY2025-26 school year, and with it there are significant slashes being proposed to continue operations. The governor recently attended a fundraiser event for Rilke Schule, the German immersion school in Anchorage, which is one of the district's public schools. The fundraiser was held because of the ongoing budget shortage that is a direct result of no increase to the BSA in more than 10 years. This has not kept up with inflation and is causing problem after problem for the Anchorage School Board, parents, students, faculty, and staff.

A few personal impacts to my family:

- my daughter is a high school swimmer, who took 2nd at State this year in one of her events. She intends to swim in college, and to eliminate high school swim (a no-cut sport) would be devastating for her goals
- my son is in middle school, intending to continue German from Rilke Schule into Service High School. Cutting support for immersion programs would completely derail his progress and goals
- my son participates in middle school sports through neighborhood schools. He participates in cross country and track, and cutting athletics in middle school would significantly alter his goals of continuing those sports in high school

PLEASE support Senate Bill 46, and House Bill 69 to preserve language immersion programs, athletics, adequate staffing, and school resources throughout our state. The time to act is NOW.

Sincerely,  
Robin S. Brooks

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Robin S. Brooks  
she/her/hers  
[robinbrooks907@gmail.com](mailto:robinbrooks907@gmail.com)  
907.351.1303

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Rozlyn Grady <rozlyn\_grady@live.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 12:49 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support for HB 69 Ensuring Adequate and Equitable Education Funding

Hello

Chairwoman Senator Tobin and committee members this letter was sent to our house committee in support of HB 69

Co-Chairs Himschoot and Story and Committee Members

House Education Committee

Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol

Dear Co-Chairs Himschoot and Story and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rozlyn Grady-Wyche, and I am a mother of five children in the Anchorage School District (ASD), an ASD graduate, an ASD educator, and the Education Chair for the Alaska NAACP Tri-State Area Conference. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 69 because Alaska's students deserve adequate, consistent, and equitable funding for their education.

The Alaska Constitution, Article 7, Section 1, mandates that we establish and maintain a public school system open to all children. That means every student whether they live in Anchorage or Bethel must have access to the resources, teachers, and opportunities they need to succeed. Yet today, too many of our schools lack proper materials, adequate training, and enough staff to meet student needs. Overcrowded classrooms and teacher shortages persist because education funding has not kept up with rising costs.

HB 69 is a critical step toward stabilizing school funding by increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and tying it to inflation. This will allow our schools to keep pace with real costs, ensuring students have:

Qualified teachers who stay in their schools

Up-to-date materials and technology

Purposeful training and professional development for educators

The support services they need to thrive

However, while HB 69 addresses inflationary adjustments, it must also reflect the unique and complex realities of Alaska's educational landscape. Rural schools often face disproportionately higher costs due to factors such as transportation, housing for educators, and access to resources. Without adjustments to account for these challenges, the increases outlined in this bill may not be sufficient to close the persistent gaps between rural and urban schools.

#### Considerations to Strengthen HB 69:

##### 1. Incorporating a Rural Cost Differential:

The bill uses the Consumer Price Index for urban Alaska, but rural districts experience even steeper cost increases due to geographic isolation and limited infrastructure. Adding a rural cost adjustment would ensure funding accounts for these unique challenges.

##### 2. Targeted Support for Underserved Communities:

Rural schools often serve higher proportions of Alaska Native students and communities facing systemic inequities. Increased funding should be accompanied by resources to support culturally responsive education, teacher retention, and wraparound services that address the social-emotional needs of students.

##### 3. Equity Monitoring and Accountability:

To ensure the funding truly benefits underserved students, I recommend creating mechanisms to evaluate how these increases impact rural and urban schools differently. Transparent reporting can help guide future adjustments and ensure this bill delivers on its promise of equitable funding.

#### The Time to Act Is Now

Our children only get one shot at their education and they cannot afford to wait while we debate whether their schools should receive adequate funding. Investing in education is



investing in Alaska's future workforce, economy, and communities. Underfunding schools today means fewer opportunities for students tomorrow.

HB 69 is a step in the right direction, but it must be fine-tuned to ensure education adequacy between rural and urban schools. Alaska's children cannot afford for us to kick this can down the road. If we believe in Alaska's future, we must invest in it starting with our students.

I urge you to pass HB 69 with the necessary adjustments to ensure all students regardless of where they live receive the quality education they deserve. Because our kids are worth it.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rozlyn Grady-Wyche

Education Chair, Alaska NAACP Tri-State Area Conference

907-519-1693

Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Gaye Wright <piglet\_1956@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 5:08 PM  
**To:** Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. Mike Shower; Senate Education  
**Subject:** School budget

I forward this message because it is well said, and I agree 100%!!

**30 January 2023**

**I am writing to you today to voice my opinion on the raising of budget for the Department of Education and the schools in general in the State of Alaska.**

**Generally, a raise in pay is subject to a heightened performance by the person(s) requesting said pay raise. Thus far, I have not seen proof of heightened performance by the schools except for the "Reads Act" which they have already been paid extra for. In my estimation, that raise in pay was not necessary, because our children should already have been reading at a level far exceeding what they are now, not just trying to catch up. Teachers are/were responsible for "teaching" certain subjects to our children, such as reading, writing, math, science, geography, history. I would further surmise that there are several problems with the current system.**

- 1. The school administrators asked for unnecessary things, such as large, beautiful buildings that include large swimming pools, large gymnasiums, large hockey rinks, etc.**
- 2. The Boroughs that house these schools were more than happy to oblige. So, the administration got what they wanted. Schools that are way larger than needed cost more money to maintain.**
- 3. Now when the teaching is substandard and the parents are removing their children from these schools, these large buildings are no longer needed and "Oh my, what do we do now?"**
- 4. According to the Governor at his State of the State Address, we have increased in number of people and decreased in students in schools across the Great State of Alaska. How is that?**
- 5. The parents of the students are not happy with what and how their children are being taught. They are choosing Charter Schools and Homeschooling. This should tell the Department of Education something.**
- 6. The Department of Education, it appears, is not getting the message from the parents. Instead, they want to throw more good money after bad. This is not the best plan. With less students in our schools, are we supposed to pay more money to the schools? I think not.**
- 7. A possible answer is, yes, closing schools. But also regrouping, selling these large schools (maybe leasing them, but then there is maintenance) and building smaller schools without the entertainment factor included. That would allow for a much lower cost, a much more efficient system of use of space and if the design is done proficiently, the schools can be added on if there is a requirement for numbers of children. But unless the school system begins to teach our children what they need for their future as productive individuals in society, there won't be a need for expansion.**

8. **There are waaaay too many Chiefs and not enough Indians, so to speak. Paring down is the name of the game unless you are going to insist that our PFD needs to go to the current school system and that is like pouring money down a rat hole.**
9. **Your budget should reflect reality not fantasy and should be dealt with as such. Alaska spends more money per student than any other state. Why is that? And yet we are 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation? Oops, again, not good.**

**Please look again at your budget and refrain from fantasy in forwarding it to the Governor for his approval.**

**Regards,**

**Sally Duncan**

**P.O. Box 16108**

**Two Rivers, Alaska 99716**

**[duncanaands@protonmail.com](mailto:duncanaands@protonmail.com)**

**Gaye Wright**

**Piglet\_1956@hotmail.com**

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

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sara Loewen <sara.loewen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 5:01 PM  
**To:** House Education; Senate Education  
**Subject:** please support HB 69

I am writing in support of an increase to education funding in Alaska. I live in Kodiak because my parents retired from teaching here and we wanted to raise our children in a school system we were proud to have been a part of. In Kodiak, it has been incredibly difficult to participate in the last month of meetings about shutting down one of Kodiak's beloved elementary schools. The process has created conflicts between families, and it will create a huge amount of change for children in our small town next year. That such major choices are having to be made because of a budget crisis, and not because they will in any way improve the education of Kodiak's students is disheartening.

I left one meeting in January after 3 hours of wrenching testimony against bigger class sizes and the impact of a school closure and job loss--only to turn the radio on during the drive home and hear parents speaking about the EXACT same things in Fairbanks. We have to do better for Alaska's kids. We have to do better for our public school educators. Our population may be declining, but the lack of support for thriving, quality education in our state is only going to exacerbate this trend.

Thank you for your time and for caring for Alaska's learners, teachers, and for the future of our state.

Sincerely,

Sara Loewen-Danelski

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sarah Campbell <sarah.campbell@k21schools.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 3:10 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support HB69!

Senate Education Committee:

HB 69 prioritizes our students' education and ensures the survival of the community schools we all hold near and dear!

Years of stagnant and one time funding coupled with declining enrollment and inflation have sent a wrecking ball through school districts all throughout our state. Alaska school's have endured cuts to staff and programs, and because there is no more "stuff" to cut, Districts are left with no choice but to implement the least best option.

**Kodiak**, projecting an \$8 million deficit for next year, recently made the difficult choice to close a beloved elementary school before next year; a recent news article reported the "school board meeting was more like a funeral rather than a school board meeting." Kodiak's students deserve better!

**Sitka** has distributed the impact of cuts over all its buildings in previous years, and completely offloaded the maintenance department and the Blatchley Swimming Pool to the city. If a substantial BSA increase is not passed, Sitka schools will endure more cuts. Sitka's students deserve better!

**Ketchikan** has lost staff, eliminated essential academic and CTE programs at the high school, and are now in the horrible position of having to choose between making further cuts or restructuring elementary schools due to insufficient state support. Ketchikan's students deserve better!

**Juneau** restructured much of their district last year; Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks have closed schools and have plans to close more; Juneau, Anchorage, Mat-su, and Fairbanks's students ALL deserve better!

None of these cuts or radical changes are being made because they are educational best practices. None of the cuts and changes have been proven to improve student outcomes. None of these changes are embraced by educators, students, or parents. Alaska's students deserve better.

Public education decisions in Alaska are being made from purely a financial lens. It's a sad day when the state of Alaska is unwilling to fund neighborhood schools which are the heart of every community in our state. Our students deserve better!

HB69 invests in Alaska's biggest asset: our students. Ensure HB69 becomes law because it is what our students not only need but also deserve!

Thank you,  
*Sarah Campbell, English Department*  
**Ketchikan High School**  
2610 Fourth Ave.; Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

School Phone: (907) 225-9815

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sarah Holmgrain <spholmgrain@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 1:17 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB69

Dear Members,

I represent myself and my family in Petersburg. My husband and I have two children in the Petersburg School District, one graduate of the District, and myself who graduated from the District in 1989. I have followed the saga of school funding for many years, testified for the last 10 years, and continue to advocate for doing what is right and what is required by the State's constitution. I have seen how different the District is than when I grew up in it and most of it has to do with funding, not the efforts of staff. We have a great group of educators working hard every day but it is not sustainable with the current funding.

I fully support HB69 and urge you to as well. This is an old story that needs to be permanently addressed. It is your constitutional duty to fund education and ignore the Governor who clearly does not have the best interest of children in mind.

Imagine if public school was sufficiently funded? Imagine what could be done in our schools! Buildings would not have to be shuttered, class sizes would not grow to unmanageable proportions, important inventive programs would not be eliminated, and districts would have sufficient staff. When the Governor claims he wants to see "results" before funding, how is that even possible when Districts have been underfunded for years and literally scrambling to just provide the most basic bare bone programs? I don't expect you to have your 2017 salary and pay for a remodel in your home with today's costs. That is essentially what he and some of you are expecting. Remodel the education system but with 2017 dollars. No one, no matter how innovative, can produce substantive results without proper funding. Refusing to pay for programs won't magically change the outcome. Maybe if Districts had been properly funded for several years I could understand the point of view, however, the Governor's office, as well as other departments, have been granted increases in funding for years without any requirement to show any results nor actually show any results at all. The double standard is obvious.

Do what is right, do what the Constitution of the State of Alaska requires of you, and fully fund public education in Alaska without additional mandates or strings, and if necessary override any Governor veto. You will not regret this decision.

Sincerely,

Sarah Pawuk Holmgrain  
Broker/Owner  
Petersburg Properties, LLC  
907-518-0718  
Fax: 800-371-7793  
[www.petersburgproperties.com](http://www.petersburgproperties.com)

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## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sean Campbell <SCampbell@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 9:38 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** KPBSD Budget Defecit

Good morning Senate Education Committee,

I wanted to reach out this afternoon to share my input on the budget deficit that our school district is facing. What we face pales compared to other school districts in the state; however, like Anchorage, Mat Su, Fairbanks, Kodiak, etc. the KPBSD is facing a significant budget deficit, nearly \$17 million. Without an increase to the BSA, the KPBSD will face implementing severe cost saving measures. Some proposed solutions for this budget deficit include closing pools and theaters, eliminating after school programs, increasing the PTR as much as +10, consolidating and closing schools, eliminating counselors and academic programs, and eliminating positions, both certified and classified.

More specifically to Paul Banks, if a +10 PTR were established, we would lose two teaching positions which would increase our class sizes significantly. The impact of increasing class sizes is vast. For learning to happen, teachers must develop safe and trusting relationships with students; with larger classes, this is more challenging. The opportunity for teachers to provide small group and individual instruction diminishes as classes grow in size. When I give tours of our building to families from the Lower 48, they marvel at our class sizes and comment how their children were in classrooms with 30+ students and that learning wasn't happening. Learning is happening in our classrooms every day, quantitative and qualitative data supports this.

Last week, our school board presented school closure and consolidation scenarios that included students at Paul Banks going to West Homer Elementary. Families have shared with me their concerns about this as has our staff. Homer families treasure our K-2 program for what we create for kids academically as well as socially.

I would be remiss to not mention the impact the budget deficit is having on our staff as well. It seems that annually they are faced with whether or not they will have a job. Governor Dunleavy advocates for teacher retention strategies such as a \$5000 bonus for teachers but this is a temporary fix. At one time, Alaska was one of the most alluring places to teach in the country. This was when our teaching salaries were more competitive and our retirement packages were excellent. Neither one of these are a current reality. While I am sure teachers would appreciate this temporary salary bump, it doesn't have the systemic impact that a change in retirement would. In fact, I haven't had one teacher say to me they agree with Governor Dunleavy's teacher retention proposal.

Speaking of Governor Dunleavy's education proposals and how they fit within the budget, I would urge you to support HB 69 rather than the proposals the governor has put forth. Notably, Governor Dunleavy advocates for more money going to charter schools. However, the author of the study he consistently cites critiqued the governor and rejected using his study as evidence to support his proposal. Furthermore, Governor Dunleavy has put forth a desire for more money to go to homeschooling. Any increase in homeschool funding should come with the caveat that a family must complete the same assessments public school students take in order for the family to receive the state funding.

Finally, our school district introduced a tool that stakeholders can use to provide feedback on our budget deficit. In addition to scores of options to cut, there is the option to increase the BSA. By increasing the BSA by

\$1000, our budget deficit is erased. I urge you to support HB 69 and support public education in your district and state.

Please feel welcome to reach out with any questions about education funding and always feel welcome to visit our school.

Best,

Sean Campbell  
Paul Banks Elementary School Principal  
907-226-1801

## Michael Mason

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**From:** christowclark@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 22, 2025 12:11 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; House Education; Sen. Matt Claman; Rep. Carolyn Hall; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Chuck Kopp; Rep. Bryce Edgmon  
**Subject:** Request for a Permanent and Guaranteed BSA Funding Increase

Dear Senator Claman, Representative Hall, Senate President, Speaker of the House, Majority Leaders, and members of the education committees;

The legislature must pass HB 69 to raise the BSA to pre-2011 funding levels and override the Governor's veto when received. We owe this to our children and the great state of Alaska.

I am writing to strongly support a permanent and guaranteed funding increase for public K-12 education that adjusts for inflation so that our school districts can adequately operate and educate our children. Funding has fallen behind inflation for almost two decades, and our schools, students, teachers, and the State of Alaska suffer.

We are in a vicious cycle of underfunding, which directly impacts performance. This, in turn, doubles down on further reduced funding and lower performance. This is a downward cycle in which no one benefits and our children's opportunities are greatly diminished.

The lack of BSA funding means schools will continue facing layoffs, program cuts, and operational challenges.

Dunleavy's education package ties targeted funding increases to specific policy changes rather than offering broad, sustainable funding for public education, and it falls short of addressing the real crisis facing Alaska's schools: chronic underfunding, inequities in resources, and an unprecedented teacher shortage. The proposed education budget will result in the elimination of a significant number of teacher positions, leading to class size increases, reduced course offerings, and reduction of sports and extracurricular activities that provide a valuable way for students to enjoy school, have well-rounded interests, and create a community at their schools.

The Alaska constitution requires that the legislature "establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the state," the lack of adequate funding for our public education system for well over a decade does not carry out this mandate. Schools are closing, teachers are leaving the profession, families are leaving the state, and companies are having difficulties attracting talent because we have failed to invest in our kids and Alaska's future.

We deserve a public education system that provides our communities with a strong, stable, and non-polarization foundation. We all benefit from cross-cultural and cross-socioeconomic exposure that predominantly happens through our diverse public schools. Our communities need less polarization and segregation, which are only amplified through private and charter schools.

Thank you for your time and service to our great State.

Sincerely,  
Christopher Clark

(Lifelong Alaskan, a proud product of the Alaska public education system, father of two (5 and 7), and professional civil engineer)

christowclark@gmail.com

907-306-7384  
Anchorage, AK 99502

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Shelby Hagen <shelby.l.hagen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2025 10:27 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** I support HB69!

Hello,

My name is Shelby Hagen from Homer. I'm a mom of 3 and I support HB69 and a substantial increase to the base student allocation for Alaskas kids!

Kids in our coastal town learn to swim at our local high school pool. Extracurriculars give our kids opportunities and a well rounded youth. Our class sizes should not get any bigger than they already are. We need a substantial increase to the BSA.

I SUPPORT HB69!

Thank you,  
Shelby Hagen

## Michael Mason

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**From:** S C <sychen333@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2025 12:57 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69/permanently increasing BSA

I'm writing in support of permanently raising the BSA . The public schools in Alaska are facing a crisis in funding, which negatively impacts a number of aspects of good society. I know that skilled and talented workers are leaving the state due to fear of the demise of public education for their children. And I don't feel confident recruiting other skilled workers into the state when they ask me about the future of public education in the state of Alaska. If you want a strong Alaska, you need to support our future--our children, and the educators that dedicate their lives to teaching them.

Dr. Stephanie Chen

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Stephanie Meek <stephandkalen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2025 10:42 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support Public Schools

Honorable Committee Members:

Public schools are in crisis. This isn't news. Schools across our state have closed and more are slated for closing. Our resources are being stretched thinner than ever, Alaska students are losing educational opportunities, and amazing teachers are being forced to leave the profession. Resolution of this crisis has been kicked down the road year after year and we've reached a dead end. We cannot continue to ignore the funding crisis that has plagued public education in our great state.

Our children deserve the best education possible. Every time their class sizes grow, that is denied them. Every time the community that their educators foster for them is disrupted because of cuts and displacements, that is denied them. Every time an academic or extracurricular program is eliminated because of ongoing budget constraints, that is denied them.

Teachers are doing everything they can to work with what they have, going above and beyond by dedicating their own time to find outside donors for classroom materials and often spending their own money because districts lack funding for the materials teachers need to effectively do their jobs and support their students.

I urge you to support HB69's Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase and long-term education funding solutions. Set aside political differences and focus on providing this impactful relief to our public schools, so that Alaska's school districts have the resources necessary to support the future generations of this great state.

Public schools are the cornerstone of our democracy. An informed and participating citizenry is critical to maintaining a free society. Public schools establish the foundation in which our economy generates its workforce. Public schools create the safe and welcoming space in which our children grow into the well-rounded future leaders of our communities.

My family urges you to invest in our children - in Alaskans.

Thank you for your service and leadership on this important subject. I appreciate you taking the time to listen,

Stephanie Meek  
Mother of 3, fourth generation Alaskans

Alaskan educator  
Eagle River, AK



**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Sue Whitney <sue.r.whitney@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 7, 2025 8:21 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support HB69, or any means for multi-year secure education funding

Senators,

I support multi-year secure funding for our public schools, whether HB69 or otherwise. And, I support use of PFD money for this purpose if that's what it takes.

Please, we are counting on you not to let us down.

Sue Whitney

## Michael Mason

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**From:** tabitha trospert <trosperta@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 11:26 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman  
**Subject:** Alaska's Education Funding Crisis - My Testimony

Hello and thank you in advance for your time.

My name is Tabitha Voeller, I am a parent of two children with disabilities who attend Anchorage public schools, and I work as a substitute Paraprofessional in a Title 1 school for the Anchorage School District. We personally experience a lot of challenges, but are extremely grateful for the educators and staff who support our children, we know they work very hard to provide a safe learning environment.

I write to you today asking that you please support adequate funding for education. Right now our schools are threatened not only by underfunding from the state of Alaska, but now the federal government as well, therefore, state support is more important than ever. I have been working in a kindergarten classroom with 27 students, seven of these students have IEPs (individualized education program). My understanding is that this school does not have the resources to split the class into two separate classrooms. These are five to six year old children - that is a lot of children of this age without any additional needs! The level of need is high, students come to school unprepared. Behavioral issues distract the entire class which affects learning for all of the students. Many will argue that this is a "parent" issue, not a school or government issue, but I believe this is a much larger systemic issue. The economic and social climate of our country has the majority of our families feeling extremely strained, they are overwhelmed and trying to survive - and that is no different for most Alaskan families. We see these conditions reflected in the children in our classrooms- students that depend on free lunch programs, students who need additional nurturing and support, students who require special programs due to disabilities.

To meet the needs of our schools, adequate and full funding is imperative to provide each school with the resources - trained staff, equipment, and materials - that they need. We want to retain and continue acquiring eager and qualified educators. Our educators are under immense pressure and are doing the best they can to support students in the myriad of ways they are needed. I am in awe of the patience and selflessness our current educators and staff bring to the table, but it isn't right, no one should be responsible for that level of stress. Under the existing socioeconomic conditions our most vulnerable families are struggling and yet it is the children and schools who are penalized.

Please take the time to really consider ALL Alaskans in your decisions, showing support for bills that promote increasing the BSA (like HB 69) and continuing to fully fund education in years to come can help us develop stronger communities and a stronger future for Alaska.

I appreciate your consideration,  
Tabitha Voeller

509-929-7003  
[trosperta@gmail.com](mailto:trosperta@gmail.com)  
6419 Blackberry St, Anchorage, AK 99502

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Tam Agosti-Gisler <tamag5@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 11:02 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Alyse Galvin  
**Subject:** Public education success threatened

Dear Senate Education Committee:

As a 65 year resident of Anchorage who completed grades 1-12 in the ASD, a parent of three successful K-12 graduates of the ASD and now a grandparent with a grandchild in the ASD (with more coming), I have been pleased with the public education we have all received **over the past 60 years.**

As a former educator, I know first-hand how our talented teachers have played a key role in this success. My former colleagues have never been more stressed as they are now as annual funding cuts have increased their class sizes and asked them to continually do more with decreased classroom supports.

I fervently ask your support for the increased BSA bill as proposed by Reps. Himschoot and Story. I am worried that this long history of good public education is reaching a breaking point after so many years of inadequate funding.

Sincerely,

Tam Agosti-Gisler  
907 240-2345  
[tamag5@me.com](mailto:tamag5@me.com)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Theresa Lyons <theresalyons907@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 2:25 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; House Education  
**Cc:** Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Rep. Alyse Galvin  
**Subject:** Support for HB69

Greetings Alaska State Legislators,

I am Theresa Lyons of Anchorage, Alaska. I am a graduate of the Anchorage School District, and I earned a Master's Degree at the University of Alaska Anchorage. I support education for the students of Alaska.

Education is proven to be a pathway out of poverty. The earlier we begin to foster a culture of lifelong learning in Alaska's children the better for the future of our great state. We know that we must develop our own leaders and it begins with a good foundation supported by our systems of education. I implore you to fund education in Alaska.

Of course, education is good for the people of Alaska. We must ensure our residents can think critically about themselves, their families, their state, and the world. Surely, we want to have problem solvers in our communities. Certainly, we want people that can lead and follow good leadership. We want Alaskans to have agency and be empowered to engage in our local and state government. Right?

I support HB69. Educate Alaska's students!

Thank you.

Theresa Lyons

[theresalyons907@gmail.com](mailto:theresalyons907@gmail.com)

907-947-8008

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Timothy Whip <tim\_whip@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 9:54 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Education Funding

It is imperative to pass HB69 as it begins to repair the years of under-funding public education. This bill allows school districts to fund teachers and classrooms that keeps pace with inflation. Allocating funds to keep up with inflation is a minimum amount of funding for school districts.

Thanks,  
Tim Whip  
57639 Kokomo Rd  
Homer, AK 99603  
(907)299-2539

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Tina Tweedley <tina.tweedley@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 8, 2025 11:56 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** School Board  
**Subject:** Please Support HB 69!

Dear Senate Education Committee,

My name is Tina Tweedley and I am a District 10 constituent who returned to Anchorage (Klatt area) from out of state in August 2024. We lived in various parts of Anchorage from 2010-2019, then overseas 2020-2023, and finally in Texas for the first half of 2024. My husband, an oil and gas engineer, and myself, a medical professional, wanted to return to the Alaskan mountains, culture and community we loved.

I would like to encourage you and all other representatives to vote FOR House Bill 69! The state should be embarrassed by the proposed budget cuts and the blatant lack of adjustment the Base Student Allocation (BSA) has seen for inflation. This state needs to invest in the education of its young people if it will have a bright future. Preserving a PFD may serve lower income families in the present but at the risk of crippling them with poorly educated children and thus endangering their future.

Upon returning to Alaska, ASD has been a massive disappointment. Not because the educators aren't passionate or lack the skills to do their jobs. Not because the administrators lack ability or motivation to run the best schools they possibly can. But because the lack of state financial support affects whether they can perform their jobs to the best of their ability.

Honestly, the Alaskan government we have returned to is a disgrace and I cannot in good conscience encourage other professionals with young children to come here. In fact, had we not just made the move, we would be looking to leave as many of our colleagues are now considering in light of the deep budget cuts. The underfunding leads to devastating cuts that will inevitably destroy the education and future for the children of Alaska.

Please consider supporting HB 69 to increase the BSA, thereby saving our children's education and securing their future!

Regards,

Tina Tweedley

[tina.tweedley@gmail.com](mailto:tina.tweedley@gmail.com)

504-669-0708

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Homer Hounds <homerhounds@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 9:16 AM  
**To:** House Education; Senate Education  
**Subject:** I support HB 69

Dear Alaska education committees,

My name is Tory Rockefeller and I am a parent of a 1st grader and a local business owner here in Homer. I am in support of House Bill 69 and a substantial increase to the base student allocation for Alaska's kids. Homer is a rural community and our public schools are a vital part of that community. We do not have a private school option here, and homeschooling is not a realistic option for most families. Without adequately funding public schools, children will not be able to get a quality education here in Alaska, and many families will be forced to consider relocating. I ask you to please support HB 69 and invest in Alaska's future. Thank you.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Vera Rutzer <vrutzer@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 4:57 PM  
**To:** Education  
**Subject:** Support HB 69

Hello , Support HB 69 for better education funding! Our schools and kids need this investment! Please pass HB 69. Thank you!

Vera Rutzer  
Cordova, AK