

My name is Adina Roberts and I am in 4<sup>th</sup> grade  
at chinook elementary in Anchorage  
Alaska.

The teachers at my school are so nice and  
make everything at school seem fun!  
But to make things at school fun  
for us kids and help us learn, we need  
money from you. We kids want to grow faster  
and smarter and to do that, we need your  
help.

I am in the IGNITE program at school,  
and every time it's time to go to ignite  
I get this warm and excited feeling.  
In ignite we do many fun projects like drawing  
bison and coloring it in with coffee grinds!  
And we play with math and science with  
things like disco balls and music and  
nature, it is all so fun and nobody wants  
it to end, so please, please, donate money to the  
school districts.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Aldrin Torrejos <aldrintorrejos@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 1:37 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Pass HB 69!

Dear Senators of Alaska Legislature,

I am reaching out as a concerned educator and community member regarding the critical state of our public schools, especially here in Ketchikan. Our schools are consolidating/restructuring, many programs are shutting down, and we are seeing an alarming number of teachers and staff resigning (18 as of the moment). The community is frustrated, and understandably so, our children deserve better.

House Bill 69 proposes a \$1000 increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA), which is essential to help schools keep up with rising costs. Without sufficient funding, our district faces a budget deficit, forcing us to cut or change staff and programs. This will have a direct impact on our students' education, opportunities, and future successes. Without it, the consequences will be severe and far-reaching:

- **More school closures and consolidations/restructuring.** With shrinking budgets, neighborhood schools will continue to merge, increasing class sizes and reducing individualized instruction.
- **Elimination of critical programs.** Art, music, career and technical education, special education services, and extracurricular activities will continue to be cut. These programs are essential for student development.
- **Loss of experienced teachers and staff.** Without adequate funding, schools cannot offer competitive salaries or stable job security. More educators will leave, resulting in less support for students and fewer qualified professionals to guide them.
- **Declining student achievement and opportunities.** Our schools already struggle to provide essential resources, and further budget cuts will only widen the gap. Students will have fewer academic and career pathways, limiting their future prospects.
- **Strain on families and the broader community.** As schools cut services, families are left to pick up the slack, whether that means seeking expensive alternatives or going without crucial educational support. Communities will suffer as public education weakens.

***The reality is public education funding is not optional; it is a constitutional obligation.*** The majority of students in Alaska rely on public schools, and without immediate investment, we are failing them. Our district already faces a budget deficit, and without increased funding, the cuts will be devastating.

Passing HB 69 is a crucial step toward ensuring that every child in Alaska receives the education they deserve. I urge you to support this bill and prioritize meaningful, long-term investment in our schools.  
*The future of our children - and our state - depends on it.*

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Aldrin Torrejos  
Intensive Sped Teacher  
Houghtaling Elementary  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Amber <eckard.amber@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 3:05 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB69 - Correspondence Funding and Regulation Discrimination

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the provisions of HB 69, particularly in relation to the funding and regulation of correspondence programs in our great state. While I fully support efforts to improve education across the state, the language in this bill creates discriminatory practices that unfairly impact correspondence schools, charter schools, and, ultimately, students.

As a mother of two thriving correspondence students, I am gravely concerned about the blatant discrimination being expressed in this bill. Why are my children and others like them a target of attack simply because they are educated in a more personalized manner? There are many aspects of this bill that are deeply flawed, including the absolute lack of any fiduciary responsibility even being discussed (because let's face it, we all know that we don't have the funds for this), but I will focus on my top concerns.

### 1. Funding Discrimination

HB 69 discriminates against correspondence programs by valuing them at only 0.9 of a full-time student. This means correspondence students are treated as less than full-time, which not only undermines their educational experience but also denies them equitable access to funding for special education services and career and technical education programs. By undervaluing correspondence students in this way, the state is sending the message that their education is somehow less important than that of students in brick-and-mortar schools. This is a clear violation of the principle of equal funding for ALL public school students, regardless of the delivery method of their education. My children are equal to every other full-time student in this state and should be funded accordingly.

### 2. Regulatory Discrimination

The bill's provisions regarding correspondence regulations also impose discriminatory practices. No other type of public school in our state, whether traditional or charter, is required to report curriculum or expenditures by line item in the manner that correspondence schools are. This unnecessary regulatory burden limits local control by school districts and school boards, forcing them to focus more on compliance with regulations rather than on the actual needs of students. It raises the question: what is the ultimate purpose of creating a master list of curriculum for only one type of school? Why isn't the bill equally concerned with the curriculum used in brick-and-mortar schools or charter schools, who are not subject to such stringent oversight? This uneven treatment of different school models creates an unfair and unproductive disparity in the way educational institutions operate in Alaska. It should not be a case of "us" versus "them" with correspondence and brick-and-mortar students. It should be an even playing field for all Alaskan students, with the same rules of the game and the same funding for each team. Let's show our children that we believe in fair play by opposing the discriminatory and overly regulatory HB 69 playbook.

### 3. Increased Administrative Burden on Charter Schools

Another troubling aspect of HB 69 is the provision that increases the administrative cost deduction for charter schools from 4% to 8%, which would direct more funds to district administration rather than supporting teachers and student programs. This increased burden on charter schools takes away

resources from where they are needed most: the classroom. Charter schools, which already operate with limited resources, would face even greater financial strain under this provision, potentially limiting the number of educational services they can provide to students. It is difficult to understand how increasing administrative costs at the expense of instructional funding could be in the best interest of Alaska's students. It is especially troubling considering that the one common factor that every Alaskan I know agrees on, regardless of political leanings, is that any funding needs to find its way to the classrooms and NOT to administrative costs. So I ask you, why aren't Alaskan leaders listening to their Alaskan constituents?

In conclusion, I strongly urge the Senate Education Committee to carefully reconsider the provisions of HB 69 that disproportionately impact correspondence schools, charter schools, and the students they serve. A more equitable approach is needed to ensure that ALL students in Alaska, regardless of their mode of education, receive the resources and support they deserve.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. I look forward to your thoughtful consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,  
Amber Eckard  
Wasilla, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Andrea (Docherty) Clark <andreamay.doc@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:33 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Education funding

Hello

I am writing in support of raising the base student allocation. This is critical for the wellbeing of our current students, teachers and communities and will have a profound impact on the future of our state.

Thank you,

Andrea Clark, MD

2728 E 68th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99507

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Andrea Clark

910-315-3355



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Andrea Gardner <andrea.r.gardner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 11:11 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** I Gave Everything—And It Still Wasn't Enough. A Teacher's Testimony on HB 69.

Chair Tobin, Vice Chair Stevens, and members of the committee,

My name is Andrea Gardner, I live in Anchorage, and I am a teacher for the Anchorage School District. I have rewritten this testimony countless times, trying to capture why this bill is so critical. Instead, I'll share my story.

Last year marked my tenth year as a classroom teacher. I hold a master's degree in elementary education, am a certified reading specialist, and have extensive training in supporting neurodiverse students. I became a teacher to be the steady, regulated adult so many children need—a safe, dependable presence in their lives. I planned to teach for my entire career. I love teaching.

But during the 2023-2024 school year, I faced my largest class ever—35 kindergarten and first-grade students—without enough learning materials, space, support, or even chairs.

Out of respect for my students' privacy and the program in which I taught, I won't share many details. But I can tell you this: many of my students were twice-exceptional, needing both academic enrichment and behavioral accommodations—yet they were placed in an overcrowded, overstimulating, under-supported environment.

Thirty-five five- and six-year-olds may not sound like much. But imagine three cartons of eggs—minus one. Place each egg on the floor, know that you alone are responsible for keeping every single one from breaking.

Twice-exceptional students experience the world intensely. In our overcrowded classroom, many became overwhelmed, leading to escalating vocal, physical, and destructive outbursts throughout each day. Despite my expertise, I alone couldn't simultaneously provide enriching education, accommodating interventions, data documentation, and crisis management for 35 children.

At the end of each day, I'd say goodbye to the last student, close my door, and often the tears would come. I was heartbroken by all the ways I couldn't meet my students' needs.

I started with a classroom assistant, but he and all the kindergarten TAs quit early in the year.

I sacrificed my contractually obligated planning time to support my students during Specials—otherwise, I’d be radioed constantly for behavioral crises, elopements, or explosive episodes. My own calls for back-up often went unanswered—our principal and support staff stretched too thin, in a school full of overcrowded classrooms.

One day, a student eloped—yet again— and was about to hit his head on the tile floor. I caught him in time—but in doing so, I severely injured my SI joint, requiring urgent medical attention.

By year’s end, my body bore the consequences of that injury, and my mind was traumatized—exhausted from the relentless, high-alert state of constantly managing extreme behavioral and emotional needs. I am on leave this school year.

An education system starved of funding doesn’t just fail students—it drains teachers and makes learning a daily struggle.

I urge you, pass this bill. Teachers like me are doing everything we can, but “remembering our why” just isn’t enough.

HB 69 isn’t an upgrade—it’s what stands between instability and total collapse. It’s the bare minimum Alaska’s students and teachers deserve.

Thank you,

Andrea



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Angie Regier <angie.regier@avmi.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 16, 2025 6:20 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Dear Education Committee Senators,

I am writing concerning HB 69. I would like some clarification on what the bill says regarding children attending the school within their residential district. The fear among the public correspondence school families is that it would effectively shut down schools such as IDEA from operating outside of the cities they are based in. Is this an accurate concern based on the wording and intention of the bill? If so, I would like to express my strong disapproval of this bill, even if it does include some beneficial things. It would leave several homeschooling families stranded, especially in rural or isolated communities. We live in Juneau and homeschool through IDEA, which has been a wonderful experience for my children. It provides us with incredible resources to give my kids the best education they can get. Our family lives and works 6 months of the year in a remote area several miles north of Juneau, where getting to town often involves boats, depending on the tide. Driving my kids back and forth to a brick and mortar school each day would create an undue burden on our family. Please remember that you are representing all Alaskans and creating legislation that affects everybody in the state, including families with lifestyles where homeschooling with a correspondence school provides the best and most robust education.

Respectfully,  
Angie Regier

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Anna Marie Kupilik <amkupilik@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 3:42 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69 Education Funding

Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to you to implore you to raise the BSA. The reduced \$1,000 amount is the bare MINIMUM. We need more. Please do not reduce it anymore than it already has been. This should not be a partisan issue, kids from ALL walks of life and parties attend our public schools. Education is a right not a privilege.

I am frustrated, because we have been asking nicely for years, yet it seems to be falling on deaf ears. Something drastic needs to change, we are hemorrhaging good teachers and cannot attract or retain new ones. I have two young children one in first grade at Kincaid and one heading into Kindergarten next year. I love Anchorage and want what is best for our community and our state. A strong public education system is vital to a healthy community.

Best,  
Anna Marie Kupilik

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Anna Marie Kupilik  
907.748.2625

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** anna polonowski <annawaan@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 3:45 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Vote YES HB 69

Esteemed Senators,

The future of our state's crippled education system depends on your support and vote to pass HB 69.

The impact of continuing to underfund our states education system goes beyond the cuts that include more than 380 teacher, staff and administrative positions, ending the IGNITE program for gifted elementary students and eliminating all middle school sports and high school hockey, gymnastics and swimming and diving. Additionally, class sizes are set to increase by four across all grades, and some elementary schools will see their singular nurse and librarian positions reduced to half time.

Gutting the public school system that the majority of Alaskan kids attend and redirecting funds for home school and charter school is dangerous and appears to only serves a small population in our state. This is a short sighted distraction from the root of the problem with our education: severe underfunding from the state over the course of 10 years of inflation.

It's come time to that we can no longer kick the can of education funding any further down the road.

Please do the right thing and pass HB 69!

Respectfully,  
Anna Polonowski  
Anchorage, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Beth Adams <bethmuir54@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 7:51 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Cathy Giessel  
**Subject:** In support of HB 69

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of raising the BSA. This is long overdue. Funding for education in Alaska has eroded to a dangerous level. If the legislature is unable to get it together, the consequences for Alaska schools will be dire (once again).

I was born, raised, and educated in Alaska in simpler times. Alaska was once known for having a great public education system and attracted quality teachers due to good pay and benefits.

Somewhere along the line conservatives began one of their many gaslighting campaigns, claiming that schools should receive LESS funding until testing results improved. This is ignorant and plain wrong-headed. Alaska's public schools are expected to do more with less year after year after year.

The testing issue is a weak cover for the real issue conservatives have with public schools. Our dear governor would like to privatize the school system (misrepresenting the definition of charter schools). Along with his desire to privatize and lottery off public lands, he'd like to see citizens get money to send their kids to private (code for "Christian" schools). He would like to foster a more unequal society and actively works to do so.

True Alaskans and Americans have had enough conservative BS. As Trump attempts to burn the U.S. Constitution and plunder our public institutions, let us maintain the more just system Alaska's founding citizens created, for the health of all and the education of our children.

PASS AT THE VERY LEAST A \$1K BSA!!

Beth Adams

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Bridget Smith <bridgetannsmith49@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 9:22 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB69

Dear Senate Education Committee members:

I unequivocally support increasing the BSA at least \$1000 per student.

Bridget Smith  
bridgetannsmith49@gmail.com  
Cell (907) 209-0025

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen <lovegreensnorth@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 1:13 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Dear Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for serving Alaskans.

Some say that we shouldn't give more funding to public education until scores improve. Let's think about that logic in terms of transportation. If we have bad roads due to low funding, and tell DOT to fix them all while short staffed with only picks and shovels, do you think roads would dramatically improve? No, we'd need to give them more resources first. It's the same thing with schools.

As you know, our state has a public education crisis. HB 69, while not perfect, provides a way forward that will get our schools back on track. Please vote to support this bill, and encourage the governor to let it become law. We need permanent, adequate funding in order to improve public schools. We need this NOW to make a difference for next school year.

Thanks for your time,

Cheryl Lovegreen  
Anchorage

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Christian Martin <chris\_martin4@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 9:26 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Robert Yundt  
**Subject:** Opposition to HB 69

Dear Senator Yundt and Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 69 and to urge you to vote against it in its current form. While I support efforts to improve education in Alaska, this bill fails to address critical inequities and introduces measures that disproportionately burden certain educational models while misdirecting funds away from students and classrooms.

First, HB 69 perpetuates the inequitable treatment of correspondence schools by imposing regulations that brick-and-mortar schools do not face. Correspondence programs, which serve nearly 17% of Alaska's students, provide a vital alternative for families across our diverse state, particularly in rural areas. Yet, these programs would now be subjected to stricter oversight and administrative hurdles that traditional schools avoid. This disparity undermines the flexibility and accessibility that make correspondence education a lifeline for so many Alaskan families.

Second, the bill continues the longstanding inequity in funding, where correspondence students receive significantly less per-student support than their brick-and-mortar counterparts. Currently, correspondence students are funded at a factor of 0.9 compared to 1.0 for brick-and-mortar students, despite requiring resources for curriculum, technology, and special needs services as well as the need to fund teacher salaries, buildings and administrative overhead. HB 69 does not rectify this gap and instead locks in a funding model that undervalues these students, denying them equal opportunities to thrive.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the bill's impact on charter schools. While it increases the Base Student Allocation (BSA), an amendment funnels more BSA dollars into administrative overhead rather than directly benefiting classrooms. Charter schools, which Alaska prides itself on as some of the highest-performing in the nation, should not see their resources diluted by bureaucratic expansion. Our focus should be on empowering teachers and students, not growing administrative budgets.

I recognize the need to address education funding, but HB 69 misses the mark by failing to ensure fairness across all educational options and by prioritizing systems over students. I respectfully ask you to oppose this bill unless it is amended to:

- Eliminate disproportionate regulations on correspondence schools,
- Equalize funding for correspondence students to match brick-and-mortar levels (1.0 factor),
- Guarantee that charter school funding increases reach classrooms, not just administration.

Alaska's students deserve a funding model that supports all learning environments equitably and prioritizes their education over bureaucratic interests. Thank you for considering my concerns and for your service to our state. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further if you have questions.

Sincerely,  
Natalie Martin



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Christine Niemi <cmniemi@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 2:34 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Jesse Kiehl  
**Subject:** House Bill 69 Funding

Senators:

As the grandmother of an Alaska kindergarten student, I ask for your support of HB 69 & a BSA increase of at least \$1,000 which is a compromise from the \$1,808 increase originally requested by the House. Our children are worthy & we must figure out how to fund our public schools adequately. One of my daughters & her husband WERE valued teachers here. After last years' budget uncertainty, they moved to the lower 48 taking their 2 children. The elementary class that my daughter would have taught has 35 students!!! Teachers are working hard to meet the educational needs of children, many who struggle due to situations outside of school that are beyond their control through no fault of their own. School funding has become a humanitarian plea. We all want positive outcomes for our children. Recently, Louisiana schools have shown that low achieving students can make academic gains taking them out of last place nationally. Their superintendent is quick to point out that not all students are reading on grade level and that FUNDING IS NECESSARY TO MAKE ACADEMIC PROGRESS.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Christine Niemi  
Douglas, Alaska

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Christopher Brown <fvluckystrike@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 1:43 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Greetings,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 69, particularly for a meaningful increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

I recognize the financial challenges our state faces, as well as the significant fiscal pressures on our schools. However, a \$1,000 increase to the BSA fails to keep pace with inflation, let alone address the learning and mental health challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I firmly believe in the importance of adequately funding education. If necessary, I would support the reinstatement of a state income tax to ensure essential state services, including education, receive proper funding.

Thank you for your time and for your dedication to the people of our great state.

Christopher Brown

## Michael Mason

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**From:** christowclark@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 10:35 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee; Senate Education  
**Subject:** Request for a Permanent and Guaranteed BSA Funding Increase

Dear Members of the Education Committee;

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 dramatically diminishes our children's opportunities.

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](mailto:christowclark@gmail.com)  
907-306-7384  
Anchorage, AK 99502



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Colleen Bickford <c2mizzc@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 11:34 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the BSA!

Greetings,

I am a longtime resident of Alaska, retired federal employee. I write to support HB 69, requesting that you approve this increase in vital funding to our public education system.

I have adult children who want to move back to Anchorage but hesitate largely due to the lack of investment in public education here.

Thank you,  
Colleen Bickford  
907/360-5424

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Colleen M Bolling <colleenmbolling@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 7:54 AM  
**To:** House Education; Rep. Mia Costello; Sen. Matt Claman; Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please pass HB 69 to raise the BSA to fund public education

Good morning,

I am writing to express my continued support of HB 69 and the increase to the BSA. Our students and our schools are desperate for an increase in funding to provide an adequate education for all of Alaska's children. As a lifelong Alaskan and a mother of three elementary school aged children, it is tragic to see programs and extracurriculars being cut, class sizes increasing, and amazing teachers leaving the field because of a continued lack of funding.

Please increase education funding in a meaningful way for our children and the future of our state. We need to raise funding for all public schools across the board through a BSA increase to carry out the mandate in the constitution to provide quality education for all Alaskans.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Colleen Bolling  
Anchorage, Alaska 99515

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Dan Bjornlie <dan.bjornlie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 8:04 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Dear Senate Education committee members,

I am writing to encourage your support for House Bill 69 to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for Alaska education funding. An increase in the BSA is the only way to provide adequate and reliable funding for Alaska schools into the future. One-time funding appropriations may help prevent outright funding disasters, but they come too late for planning for future staffing needs and aren't adequate to allow for many needed improvements. An increase in the BSA and a method for inflation-proofing those funds in the future will help provide consistent funding and staffing and allow for the innovation and improvements to dramatically improve education for Alaska's children.

Please support legislation to increase the BSA and maintain inflation adjustments going forward.

Thank you,  
Dan Bjornlie  
Lone Tree Dr  
Anchorage, AK 99507



**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Dan Busch <cohokodiak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 4:26 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Education Funding Crisis

Dear Senators,

We should not settle for less than the \$1,000 BSA passed by the House. HB 69, as passed by the House, includes common-sense reforms and represents a major compromise.

Thank you for your support,  
Dan Busch  
Kodiak

Sent from my iPad

19 March 2025

Dear Chair Tobin, and members of the Education Committee,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the critical issue of education funding in Alaska. As a School Board Member of the Delta Greely School District, I believe that the current level of funding is inadequate and jeopardizes the future of our children and our state.

### **The Need for Increased Funding**

Alaska's education system has faced significant challenges due to years of underfunding. This has resulted in:

- **Larger class sizes:** Students receive less individual attention, hindering their learning potential.
- **Outdated resources:** Textbooks, technology, and other essential materials are often insufficient or obsolete.
- **Reduced programs:** Schools have been forced to cut extracurricular activities, arts programs, and other valuable learning opportunities.
- **Difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers:** Low salaries and lack of resources make it challenging to recruit and keep talented educators in Alaska.

These issues have a direct impact on student achievement, graduation rates, and the overall quality of education in our state. While we would love to see the \$1808 increase to the BSA, I don't honestly think that an agreement will support that number. The Delta Greely School District would be appreciative of any increase to the BSA both inside and outside the BSA, however, to us, one-time money equals one-time expenditures, we can't balance our budget based off of that.

### **The Importance of Inflation-Proofing**

It is crucial that education funding is not only increased but also protected from the effects of inflation. As the cost of living rises, the real value of education funding decreases, further exacerbating the challenges faced by our schools. Inflation-proofing will ensure that our schools have the resources they need to maintain their current programs and invest in improvements for the future.

### **The Benefits of Predictable Funding**

Knowing the education budget, a year in advance is essential for effective planning and decision-making. Schools need to be able to:

- **Hire and retain qualified staff:** Teachers and administrators need to have job security and know their roles for the upcoming year.
- **Develop curriculum and programs:** Schools need time to plan and implement effective educational programs.

- **Allocate resources wisely:** Predictable funding allows schools to make informed decisions about how to best use their resources.

By providing schools with a clear picture of their funding for the following year, we can enable them to make strategic decisions that benefit our students.

### **Accountability**

I know that everyone is concerned about accountability. I would encourage and invited every member of the House and Senate to come visit our District. You can see what great work our teachers, staff, and students are doing. We have some of the highest test scores in the state. We have a dynamite CTE program. Our Homeschool program is one of the largest in the state. We are maintaining a 70/30 split on education funding and have a reserve balance for the rainy day that will come. We have found ways to partner with other school districts, as well as state and federal organizations. We continue to look for grants to improve our district. Our graduation rate for Delta High School is over 90%, our attendance rate is 93%, and our dropout rate is 1%. We believe in parental engagement and know that it is key to student success. Our culinary class placed 19<sup>th</sup> in the Nation for Restaurant Management and our sports teams are competitive year after year. We are doing good work in our district but in order to get to great work we need your help.

### **Call to Action**

I urge you to take immediate action to address the urgent need for increased and inflation-proofed education funding in Alaska. Additionally, please support legislation that would provide schools with budget predictability. By investing in education, we are investing in the future of Alaska.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

*Dana Mock*

Dana Mock

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Dani W <akwiczaks@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 7:33 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Fwd: HB 69

I am writing to urge you to vote No on HB 69.

Alaska admittedly has some problems with our education system that must be fixed. We are, after all, at the very bottom (or close to it) in reading scores and aren't faring much better in math. The solution, however, isn't to just continue increasing spending for a failing system. Alaska's education spending is already among the highest in the nation. And while our vast geography makes delivery challenging, there are solutions that could actually SAVE the state money rather than costing us more year over year-- money that nobody has been able to identify a source of.

Throwing more money at the same failed system is not going to result in improvements for our students. Increasing this funding without identifying substantial ways to increase student performance is reckless and irresponsible spending and a disservice to our families. Alaska schools are top-heavy with administrators and streamlining some of our rural districts could help to shave off some of that excess spending. There are a handful of districts in the state that spend in excess of 50,000 per student, or even in at least one case, 100,000 a head. This is outrageous! But the legislature won't touch this topic. Instead of working to figure out how to make AK education delivery more efficient and more effective, HB 69 just wants to trust that blindly handing over more money is going to result in better outcomes without actually requiring anything to ensure those better outcomes.

In addition, I am very disturbed by the insertion of amendments to this bill that seek to increase the control over correspondence programs WITHOUT even increasing the per-student funding. This is vastly unfair to the students enrolled in these programs. Homeschoolers are performing by all measures perfectly adequately with just a fraction of the funding of students in brick and mortar schools, but support for this bill is treating the families who educate their children through correspondence schools with contempt and distrust. It will happily pump more money into failing systems and require nothing additional from them while subsequently seeking to place additional burdens on schools that are NOT failing with an accompanying unwillingness to increase the funding to those students. It's time to stop looking for ways to claw back students from the correspondence programs or limit their funding and instead embrace this educational format as a wonderful way to educate our youth. As more states move toward MORE homeschool freedom as the proof is undeniable about the success of these students in life, Alaska is moving backwards. Instead of supporting the most cost-effective way to educate Alaska's children, HB 69 is looking to hamstring that system and pump more money into schools that already outspend most of the country for a very poor track record in outcomes.

Supporters of HB 69 tout this increase in education funding as "for the children," but if it was truly concerned for the welfare of Alaska's children, it would be looking to fund students, not systems. It would allow families to direct their education funding to the most successful schools of their choosing.

Vote No on HB 69. Focus instead on ways to actually improve student outcomes apart from relying on the system that is currently failing a large number of our kids.

Thank you,  
Danielle Witczak, Palmer AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Linda Boyle David Boyle <pennyak@earthlink.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 11:46 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69 Testimony

Request my following testimony be made part of the public record.

Senators,

My name is David Boyle and I am testifying in opposition to House Bill 69.

The question we all need to ask is, "Will funding K12 education with millions of more dollars actually result in higher student achievement?"

Last year, the legislature added an additional \$680 per student outside the BSA. Did this funding increase student achievement? I don't think so.

Per Legislative Finance, since 2006 we have increased funding for K12 by 34%, more than inflation for that same period. This funding increase came from outside the formula, by adding more factors such as CTE and increasing the Intensive Needs from 5X the BSA to 13X the BSA.

So, saying that the K12 funding has not increased is totally misleading. Today, we spend more than \$2.63 billion on K12, not counting the PERS/TRS costs.

And the national NAEP results still show only 31% of Alaska's 4th graders are proficient at reading. That really begs the question--if we cannot teach our kids how to read, what are we teaching them?

And only 30% of our 8th grade students are proficient in reading according to the NAEP results. That spells disaster for their futures.

Alaska needs education reform to help all our kids succeed. Here are my recommended solutions:

1. Increase the number of charter schools by allowing the state Board of Education to authorize them. The demand is there. Please meet the demand for more.
2. Increasing the funding for Correspondence students by increasing the factor to one. Why are these students only worth 9/10ths of a brick and mortar student? This is not equitable funding. These Correspondence students save the state money. For every student who leaves the brick and mortar school at 1.0BSA, the state will save about \$7,200 per student per year in formula funding. These students also save the local government and capital funding.
3. Do away with the school size factor in the formula. We are incentivizing bad behavior by encouraging districts to build new schools when they should be closing schools due to fewer students.
4. As you know, the cost of providing health insurance to school employees is skyrocketing and not sustainable. Require/allow districts to enroll employees in the State's Alaska Cares health care plan. Today, the Anchorage School District pays \$22,000/per teacher union member (approximately 3,000 members) for health insurance.
5. Consolidate and reduce the number of school districts to reduce the administrative overhead and direct more funds to the classroom.

Regarding parts of the HB69 bill. "Open enrollment" is not really open enrollment when parents are restricted to enrolling their child in the local district. Open enrollment should allow a parent to enroll their child in any K12 public school, be it neighborhood, charter, or Correspondence school. Why draw imaginary lines around a child's future?

Increasing the administrative overhead costs from 4% to 8% that a district can charge its charter schools will only impact the students in that school. It will also incentivize the district to increase its administrative costs because it can merely pass these cost on to the charter schools. This could have a seriously detrimental effect on the operation of the charter schools. We need to reduce administrative overhead, not facilitate it.

The Education Task Force mentioned in HB69 replicates the task force established in 2014. This was the House Sustainable Education Task Force which put forth recommendations that the legislature did nothing with. Matter of fact, that report cannot be found in DEED or the legislature. Please find it and follow its recommendations.

Many are concerned with the impacts of inflation on the K12 schools. And I do agree that inflation has affected our schools, especially in the energy and supply areas. But what about the Alaskans who are suffering even more from inflation? When you reduce/take away the PFD from Alaskans you are actually taxing them. That deflates their income! The lower income parents are the most impacted. How about the parents of the lower income students who now have to live off less income due to the reduction of the PFD? Will you, the legislature, help them with countering the effects of inflation as you are prone to do with increasing the BSA for public education. The K12 employees may benefit from the increased BSA because they may receive higher pay/benefits. But many Alaskans will suffer from a reduced/zeroed out PFD.

Please reform the current K12 system before adding more funding.

Our children deserve better! Only you can help them succeed in life!

Sincerely,

David Boyle



## Michael Mason

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**From:** David Nees <davidneesak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 15, 2025 1:07 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Suzanne Downing, Editor; House Education  
**Subject:** HB 69 as written fails to correct Social promotion problem in Alaska Schools

Senators,

Thank you for addressing BSA funding.

But please add an amendment to HB69 making state funding contingent on mastery by the student.

This needs to apply to all students, not currently on an IEP or other plan, which is 98% of Alaska's student population..

The amendments written, language must punish all Districts who promote students to the next grade, when they are not proficient in both Math and Reading.

The district should not receive BSA allocation for all of its enrolled students assigned to to the wrong grade level by feeder schools or classes in next years funding.

Perhaps AkDeed could receive that funding for remediation services.

The current funding just pays for having a student in a class seat one week in October..

In 1983 one of my 7th grade students told me "it does not matter how I do in class, I will be in 8th grade next year anyway." They were right, despite the 4 failing grades they received on all 7 classes.

It is wasting critical state money, which is in short supply, to provide a system of daycare for 5 to 18 year olds.

The system currently only gets you, the funders, a majority of high school graduates who are not proficient, about 56%..

And a big check for that party.

ASD/ FBNSD/ JDSD and KPSD all have official policy, or unwritten policy, that they will not retain an illiterate, illnumerate student if the parent objects, or the principal intervenes over riding teachers input. In fact quite often the Principal may change grades to meet a quota.

This does real harm as teachers are faced with classrooms where students are years apart in ability, disruptive and the students know there are no consequences for the student, only for the teacher. School choice has to work both ways.

Affix the responsibility where it belongs, on the student. Raise the expectation.

In my experience those students who are behind the most in reading are more likely to disrupt the education of others.

If you cannot read you cannot solve word problems.

India has shown us the higher the expectation the more likely the success.

Russia, Japan, India and most former soviet countries get all their students through Calculus.

50 percent of Alaska 9th grade students cannot pass Algebra 1, due to promotion by age not mastery.

If the BSA increase is a carrot, you need to have a stick.

I am a retired 28 year Math teacher, yes we separated by ability., it made sense.

I even had one socially promoted student who attended 1 day of 6th grade, and had a 3rd grade math level who went to 8th grade after failing ever subject.

Your Alaska Constitution says you the Legislature are to "make and maintain a system of education open to all students."

It does not say you have to keep a bad system funded.

So the ball is in your court, do you want disruptive, illiterate innumetae thugs preying on children who go to school to learn?

Not addressing this with an amendment is a yes

David Nees

20q4 Sustainable Education Task Force

Cooper Landing

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Donna Hauser <donna.hauser@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:44 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support HB69 and support Alaska's next generation

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am a life-long Alaskan, PhD scientist, product of the Anchorage Public School system, Fairbanks resident, and mother of a high school freshman. **I strongly urge your support of HB 69 and a \$1000 BSA increase.** I *do not* support the Governor's education claims or proposals. The education my son is receiving in Alaska's schools does not match the excellent education I myself received from this state over 20 yr ago. **A significant and sustained funding increase is required.**

Some relevant facts:

- **State funding for education has not kept pace with costs.** Since 2011, the base student allocation has fallen behind inflation by 25%.
- **We spend less than the national average on education.** According to the Institute of Social and Economic Research at UAA, Alaska's per-student spending was 15% below the national average in 2023 when adjusted for geographic costs.
- **Districts are unable to recruit and retain teachers.** The state had 598 vacant teacher positions on the first day of the current school year, the highest number ever recorded, and more than double (+230%) the number of vacancies in fall of 2020. Sadly, my son has had far fewer of the amazing and inspirational teachers that I had as a student growing up - and the teachers clearly work very hard with huge class sizes.
- **Alaska is losing its allure - and its workforce.** More people have left Alaska than moved to Alaska for 12 straight years, and Alaska's nonresident workforce hit a record high of 24% in 2023, the most recent year for which data are available. Where I work at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, we are having a hard time recruiting and retaining faculty and staff but I also have a hard time keeping a general practitioner physician. There is too much turnover, and people want to have good schools to send their kids, no matter their profession!

To make up for lost buying power, we need a \$1000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) this year, followed by \$400 increases in the next two years and annual inflation adjustments thereafter. **Increasing the BSA benefits neighborhood schools, charter schools, and public homeschool options.**

Thank you for your hard work to represent all Alaskans. Please join me in support of HB 69 and an increase in the BSA!

Best regards,  
Dr. Donna Hauser

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Ellie Smith <elliemlaf@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 1:45 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69 Support

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate,

As our education system faces increasing demands and challenges, it is imperative that we ensure the resources available to schools are sufficient to meet the needs of all students. Recently, the proposed budget cuts have raised concerns, particularly in essential areas such as school nursing services. A BSA increase is necessary to keep pace with inflation and ensure all students have access to quality education, resources and opportunities that they rightfully deserve under our state constitution.

Without the BSA increase, 13 school district Nurse positions will be cut. School nurses are essential to the well-being and success of elementary schools, and their role is more critical than ever. A school nurse is responsible not only for managing the day-to-day health needs of students, but also for ensuring that students with chronic conditions receive the care they need to be in school and succeed. For example, students with asthma, diabetes, or severe allergies rely on school nurses to manage their conditions throughout the day. Without this support, these children may be at risk of life-threatening emergencies.

But school nurses don't only care for children with chronic illnesses. They handle an overwhelming number of sick visits — typically 20 to 40 each day, managing everything from fevers to injuries. With increased class sizes next year, this burden will only grow. Teachers, no matter how dedicated, simply cannot be expected to take on the additional responsibility of health care management for every student in their classroom, especially while focusing on their academic duties. It's not sustainable or safe.

Having a nurse only part-time may seem like a cost-saving measure, but it would not provide consistent or effective care. Students could go without necessary treatment during crucial times of the day, and teachers would be left to handle health emergencies they are untrained for. This could lead to delays in care, missed opportunities for early intervention, and even worse, the safety of our children could be compromised.

In conclusion, school nurses are a lifeline for our children, helping them stay healthy and ready to learn. Without them, the burden shifts to teachers who already face incredible pressures. To ensure the safety, health, and success of all students, it's critical that we support our students by increasing the BSA. Our kids deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your time,

Ellie Smith- Registered Nurse

Anchorage School District

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Emily Potter <eapotter13@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 10:14 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* SB 69

I write to you as a lifelong Alaskan raising my family to be lifelong Alaskans. I am pleading for support on HB 69. I am pleading because that is how desperate I am to fund the education of Alaska's future. I understand that Alaska has high costs associated with education but anyone who has lived in this state understands that our costs are elevated and comparing us to lower 48 states is not apples to apples.

We cannot expect improved education results for our students if all we do is cut teachers, cut programs, and close schools year after year. I can speak specifically about the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Our school district is drowning. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a row requiring 40 **million** dollars in cuts. The schools are being closed. Because of flat funding, our district will not allow the creation of charter and alternative education programs.

Please help the future success of our state by making education a priority and fund our students.

Emily Potter

## Michael Mason

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**From:** fiona randazzo <randazzokristina@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 6:53 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please Pass HB 69

We should not settle for less than the **\$1,000 BSA** passed by the House. HB 69, as passed by the House, includes common-sense reforms and represents a major compromise.

I am a teacher with 23 years of classroom experience. At the very least, fund public education at the rate of inflation.

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Hannah Rowland <hannahroserowland@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 10:39 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69 public comment

Senate Education Committee;

Thank you for your time in serving our state and country.

I want to share my personal testimony as a homeschooling mother. We live in McCarthy, Alaska; a remote village that booms in the summer and is very quiet and small in the winter. We live here mostly year round, but we do travel to Eagle River/Anchorage for maternal needs, medical needs, groceries, and to stay with my family if my husband needs to travel for work from time to time.

I am giving a public testimony about how closing open enrollment for homeschoolers would affect our family.

We are just now finishing our first year of homeschooling with our oldest daughter and last year before I enrolled in a homeschool program, I took my time to go through and consider which homeschool program would be the best for us.

I did look into our local school districts program; but they are a 4 hour drive away from us and we only stop there mid drive to get to Eagle River; I tried to stop there a few time to meet teachers when my daughter was 4; but then our drives were very lengthy and tiresome for all of us. In the winter it would lengthen the time to where I would drive treacherous highways in the dark. I normally drive into Eagle River without my husband, driving about 8 hours with 2 little girls. I decided that if we wanted to enroll in a program which we could maybe once in a while participate in group activities, then we should enroll in one that has an office in Eagle River, since we spend the most time there out of other options for homeschool offices.

Last spring, while we were in that area, I took time to interview some of the programs in the area and then made my decision through not only how much allotment funds we get, but through other aspects as well. I would like to keep with our current program for all of our children through highschool graduation. I have found this program to be very supportive and would like to stick with them. Our homeschool program is not necessarily a part of the Anchorage School District, but there is an office for a branch of the homeschool program in Eagle River.

Receiving this support through allotment funds and guidance to be able to purchase material and items which help to enhance my children's learning is crucial in our area where there is no public school and I want to be a part of educating my children, every day is an adventure with them and I want to spend time with them while I can; they grow up so fast.

-Hannah Rowland, McCarthy Alaska.



**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Heidi Heimerl <heidi.mccroskey@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 5:29 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Sen. Matt Claman  
**Subject:** Please Support HB 69

Dear Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for your public service and for being a change-maker in our state.

As a public school employee, I see firsthand how our education system is struggling. Chronic underfunding is taking a toll — not just on our schools, but on our entire community. That's why I'm urging you to support HB 69.

My partner, a lifelong Alaskan, and I are raising our three elementary-aged children here. We both work full-time and love our children's public school—their teachers, the staff, and the warm, welcoming community. But this year, for the first time, my partner asked me: *Where should we move?* That question shook me. We never imagined leaving, but after years of budget cuts, the exhaustion is real. It's wearing down families, educators, and our entire community. If Alaska won't invest in its children, what reason do we have to stay?

Every year, we lose dedicated, experienced teachers and school staff. Can you imagine receiving a layoff notice year after year? Or trying to learn in a building that has been condemned? It's unthinkable—and yet, it's happening. And for what? Political posturing? That won't sustain a thriving state. These continued cuts are devastating our children's education and the future of our communities.

We need action. Please support HB 69 and stand up for Alaska's public schools. Our kids, our families, and our state depend on it.

Thank you,  
Heidi M. Heimerl  
99502

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Idamarie Piccard <idie@pobox.alaska.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 8:57 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the BSA!

It is critical the current legislature of state of Alaska affirms the educational mandate in our state Constitution by increasing the BSA by \$1000 during this session; and be willing to 'override' an expected veto by the governor.

We have woefully failed to support the teachers, students, parents, & population by keeping the BSA stagnant for so many years. It is time to correct this problem and insure 'the future of this state- our children' are prioritized by funding education in our state.

Thank you

Idamarie Piccard

Anchorage

former educator ASD

## Michael Mason

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**From:** jamie shearer <jagshearer@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 8:33 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support for HB 69 - public testimony

Good morning,

My name is Jamie Shearer, an Anchorage resident, mother of two ASD students, former teacher, and current youth advocate. I am testifying in support of HB 69. The legislature needs to increase the Base Student Allocation to help bolster Alaska's public education system. It is promising that the House passed HB 69 and I hope the Senate will follow suit.

Years of flat (or under) funding have led to school closures, teacher retention struggles, and families seeking non-public school options. School funding has not kept pace with inflation and we haven't had an investment like this since 2014. It is important to do so now.

Districts across the state are struggling. In Anchorage, passing this bill directly translates to smaller class sizes, maintaining middle school sports and other activities, and keeping invaluable nurses and librarians full time.

Governor Dunleavy has been very vocal in his opposition to funding public education. Please stand up against him and vote for our kids and future.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Jamie Shearer

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jeff Alexander <jalexander@nwarctic.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:21 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB69

Dear Senators,

HB69 is a critical part of a quality education for our Alaskan students. I am a retired school superintendent from the lower 48 states. I have been in Alaska over two years in the Northwest Arctic Borough School District. I have seen several programs cut in this region. The most devastating cuts are teacher positions. Very few electives are offered to our students because of the lack of funding for our schools. Our CTE programs and extra-curricular activities are almost non-existent. These are the programs that keep our students attending school. Both years that I have been here cuts have been made to staff and without more funding the largest cuts are coming this year with very few options to cut. We are down to cutting out sports at both the middle and high school levels, CTE programs, and part of our free lunch program. Please support HB69.

Sincerely,

Jeff Alexander, Asst. Supt. NWABSD

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jenni Lefing <jlefig@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 7:59 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69 Support!

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 69, which would increase the BSA by \$1000. This bill provides desperately needed funding to public schools across Alaska. If Alaska schools don't receive sufficient support within the BSA during this legislative session, the impact on our students, staff, and communities will be devastating.

As the parent of a fifth grader attending Harborview Elementary School in Juneau, I have seen firsthand how the lack of adequate education funding has affected students.

This includes overcrowded classrooms with high student/staff ratios (over 30 students in many elementary classrooms), teacher and staff shortages, teachers' lack of necessary resources, the discontinuation of extracurricular activities, and the discontinuation of the universal breakfast program.

Alaska's students deserve learning environments that enable them to feel safe, supported, and engaged. Alaska's teachers deserve the financial stability and working conditions needed to focus on what matters most: Alaska's students.

I urge you to support HB 69 and prioritize the well-being of Alaska's students, educators, and communities. Adequately funding Alaska's schools should be our first priority, as strong public schools are the foundation of a thriving society and economy. Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,  
Jenni Lefing

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Jenni Lefing  
434 7th St.  
Juneau, AK 99801  
cell: 907-957-3587

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Jennifer Phillips <jplovestrees@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 9:05 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** BSA increase to avoid collapse of our education in Alaska

Dear Esteemed and Elected Senators,

Alaska students deserve a permanent increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

Investment in public education is critical—not only for our students and families but also for the future of Alaska’s workforce and economy.

For over a decade, Alaska has faced a troubling trend of outmigration, losing working-age residents and families. This decline is directly impacting our economy, and business leaders have repeatedly stated that the lack of investment in our schools is making it harder to recruit and retain a strong workforce.

Military leaders have also voiced concerns, noting that soldiers are choosing not to bring their families to Alaska due to inadequate funding for public schools.

A desperately needed increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) will help ensure:

- Opportunities for career and technical education and for students to learn real-life skills.
- Reasonable class sizes, giving our students the one-on-one attention they need to succeed.
- Stability in the education workforce, ensuring our schools remain fully staffed.

Your support of a significant investment in public education sends a message to parents and business leaders: Alaska is open for business, committed to developing a skilled workforce, and dedicated to student success.

Please stand with parents, educators, and business leaders in making public education a priority. I urge you to support a significant increase in the BSA.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Phillips

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jill Jordan <jordan.jill95@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 5:37 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Save our schools- fund education- raise the BSA

Without investment in our schools, in our students, in our education programs, we are failing to invest in Alaska's future. Why would anyone choose to live here when class sizes are 37-40 students in a room? How can I reach or teach all of them? With worksheets and multiple choice tests. With no room or time to develop conversation or problem solving skills. How can I teach students in schools with failing HVAC systems, with needed repairs, with unsafe conditions? Why would I choose to live in a state or a city that doesn't care about education, that is unwilling to fund education so that as parent I know my kids are getting quality personalized education? Why would I send my kids to overcrowded and underfunded schools?

We should not settle for less than the \$1,000 BSA passed by the House. HB 69, as passed by the House, includes common-sense reforms and represents a major compromise.

Thank you for supporting education and for supporting Alaska.

Jill Jordan



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jocelyn Doremus <jocelyndoremus@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 3:11 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Hello, Please include this written public testimony statement in the bill folder for all 5 Senate Education standing committee members.

Please vote in favor of increasing the BSA and overall budget for ASD.

I have a student in the Spanish Immersion Program at Chugiak Elementary School and a student at Mirror Lake Middle School. I am writing this public testimony statement in favor of keeping the elementary school programming and in particular, the middle school sports programs. Hundreds of students participate in many of these activities, the very activities that make ASD the best school district we have ever been enrolled in.

In the first week of middle school, my teenage son who typically teases his little sister, busted through our front door declaring to her, "I can't WAIT for you to get to middle school. You are going to LOVE it!" He was serious this time; not teasing. He was not referring to writing assignments or math class. He was referring to the variety of clubs and sports available for students to try out.

At MLMS alone, almost 200 students participate in cross country running, which is the first sport of the school year. Clearly, not all 200 students enjoy running. They participate in the sport because it is an activity to do. They get to spend time with friends in healthy competition rather than sitting at home alone or being unsupervised out on the public streets.

The total education experience will not be as valuable to the community if these programs are taken away.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jocelyn Doremus  
907-726-3572  
jocelyndoremus@gmail.com

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jodi Severson <jodimseverson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:02 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Increase BSA

I am writing in favor of \$1000 increase to the BSA.

I have school age children here in Petersburg who I'd like to keep in our amazing school system with the clubs and activities available.

Thank you  
Jodi Severson



# LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

[www.lysd.org](http://www.lysd.org)

**George Smith**  
Chairman

**John Hargis**  
Superintendent

March 19, 2025

Subject: Support for HB69: Investing in Alaska's Students and Future

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB69 and to encourage the Legislature to focus on increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Predictable and sustainable funding is essential for Alaska's schools, especially in rural areas where options for education are often limited to just one school.

Over the years, inadequate and inconsistent funding has created significant challenges for districts across the state. Many schools have had to reduce programs and electives, increase class sizes, cut extracurricular activities, and struggle to retain and recruit qualified staff. These issues directly affect the quality of education our students receive and put additional burdens on educators already working in rural, remote areas facing enormous challenges.

Our district is currently facing a **\$9 million budget shortfall**, assuming zero one-time funding—essentially a “sky is falling” budget scenario. Without additional funding, sustaining programs without making deep cuts will be impossible. However, even a **\$680 increase to the BSA** would significantly reduce this deficit, bringing it down to **\$3.5 million**, allowing for only a mix of necessary adjustments. With **an \$850 BSA increase**, the deficit would drop to **\$2 million**, which could allow us to hold off on cuts and reassess as things unfold.

We have already absorbed several positions and restructured our classified staff, leveraging all available funding sources to the maximum extent possible. These efforts have stretched our discretionary dollars as far as they will go, but the financial strain has reached its limit. The rising costs of utilities, staffing, air transportation, health insurance, and other essential services have made it increasingly difficult to sustain school operations. Inflation has affected every aspect of our work, yet funding has not kept pace with these growing demands.

If we do not invest in our public schools, programs, and students, we are choosing not to invest in Alaska's future. Other states have demonstrated the impact of bold investments in education. Pennsylvania, for example, recently announced an **\$11 billion investment in education and mental health services**, which includes targeted funding for underfunded districts, mental health initiatives, universal free breakfast programs, and improvements to school infrastructure. These efforts promote equity, improve learning conditions, and prioritize student well-being.



# LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 · Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

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**George Smith**

Chairman

**John Hargis**

Superintendent

Alaska has the opportunity to make a similar investment by supporting **HB69**. Increasing the Base Student Allocation is not just about balancing a budget—it's about ensuring that students have access to quality education, that schools can retain their teachers, and that programs essential to student success remain in place. Our communities and the future of our state depend on it.

Thank you for your dedication to Alaska's students and for considering this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

John Hargis

Superintendent

[jhargis@lysd.org](mailto:jhargis@lysd.org)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** John Welsh <jwelsh@dlgsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 12:05 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Education Funding

Thank you for working to pass upwardly adjusted education funding, especially for literacy endeavors.  
John Welsh  
Dillingham Middle/High School

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Karin Halpin <karinhalpin@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:04 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB69

Dear Senate Education Committee --

I find it utterly exhausting that we have to beg each year for adequate education funding. It infuriates me when I hear legislators say something along the lines of 'when schools do better, we'll give them more funding.'

Education takes resources, both human and financial. Without the appropriate financial resources, schools aren't able to employ the needed human resources. We have schools with many students who are working below grade level and we know that early intervention makes a difference!

I ask you to please do right by the children of Alaska and increase the BSA at a minimum to \$1,000 along with inflation proofing the BSA for future years.

Kind regards --

Karin Halpin  
4628 Grumman St  
Anchorage, AK. 99507  
907.230.0012

Sent from [Outlook](#)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kate Hammer <katewues@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 4:13 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB69 - Please support BSA Increase of at least \$1000

Good afternoon,

**I am writing today to urge you to support HB69 to increase BSA by at least \$1000.** Our schools are floundering without adequate funding. BSA has not had a meaningful increase in a decade and lags significantly behind inflation. You wouldn't expect to successfully buy groceries today with 65 cents of the dollar you had in 2014, why do we think school districts can do the same? The failure of the State to provide stable funding to this critical infrastructure is causing lagging performance.

I hear a lot of noise about asking schools to demonstrate improved performance, but that's not productive when teachers are not paid at a competitive rate, support staff is slashed, classroom sizes increase, and infrastructure is not maintained. Looking at current performance after years of defunding conclusively proves that lack of funding yields poor performance – and the need to pay to perform. I love efficiency and I think you do too, think about the annual wasted time, energy, and money as parents and teachers and children and lawmakers and school board members spend our time hashing over this same issue time and time again. How much more efficiently could our society run if we just recognized that supporting our students is foundational to the continued success of our state.

I know revenue is tough. I want you to hear me clearly - **take some or all of my PFD.** Start an income tax. I've lived in a lot of states, mostly deeply republican (Oklahoma, Georgia, southern Virginia). They all have a successful tax structure, they don't get annual payouts from the State. I don't have an exact solution but I do very much oppose the argument that we don't have any money so we can't pay for students to learn. Baloney. We have money and we have resources we just need to choose to allocate it differently.

I grew up in Alaska and received an excellent education from ASD schools. My husband (also born and raised in Alaska and an ASD graduate) is about to retire as a Lt. Colonel with 20 years experience as an Air Force pilot. When we were stationed at JBER 4 years ago we couldn't believe our luck. We purchased what we hoped would be our forever home, enrolled our oldest child in our neighborhood school and have been very happy living life back in the great state of Alaska. In December when my husband retires we will, for the first time in 20 years, get to choose where to live. Until recently the answer was clearly Anchorage. I'm certain we will consider moving out of state if the State of Alaska continues to underfund education. I have zero interest in private school, charter schools (I've learned their finances are a mess), religious schools, or home-schooling. This is not a threat, I just want you to understand the reality of your constituents.

Please vote to pass HB69 with a \$1,000 increase to BSA, preferably with inflation proofing for the future. Please know many Alaskans support using PFD funds to pay for this bill including myself.

Thank you for your service to our State,  
Kate

Kate Hammer  
907.306.6354  
[katewues@gmail.com](mailto:katewues@gmail.com)



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kathleen Metcalfe <teenyray@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 9:13 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** BSA VOTE YES

Please vote yes.

Kathleen Metcalfe  
6624 Imlach Dr  
Anchorage, Alaska 99502  
907-248-4650

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kayla McDonogh <kayla.ann9@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 12:10 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** BSA Increase!

Alaska's public schools face a critical funding challenge. HB 69, already a compromise, reduces necessary funding from \$1,808 to \$1,000 per student.

We urge you to maintain the \$1,000 Basic Student Allocation (BSA) in HB 69. This amount is the minimum required to prevent further school closures, program cuts, and educator layoffs.

A \$680 BSA is insufficient, leading to larger class sizes, more school closures, lost programs, and further deterioration of school facilities.

Supporting the \$1,000 BSA is essential to stabilizing our schools and protecting the quality of education for Alaska's students.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,  
Kayla McDonogh  
22114 Oberg Rd Chugiak, AK 99567-5422  
[kayla.ann9@gmail.com](mailto:kayla.ann9@gmail.com)

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Kayla McDonogh (she/her)  
Wife, mother, teacher, advocate and ally  
Cell 1 (907) 250 -4279  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kayla-mcdonogh/>

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

— Maya Angelou

I acknowledge that I and my family lives on the traditional lands of the Dena'ina People of Upper Cook Inlet.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** KC Casort <kc.casort@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:08 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Robert Myers  
**Subject:** Please pass HB 69 - School funding

Hello,

I am a lifelong Fairbanks resident and a proud graduate of West Valley High School and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I am writing to urge you in the strongest possible terms to SUPPORT HB 69, which would more adequately fund public education.

Programs were cut and class sizes grew every single year when I was growing up in the FNSBSD public school system. It felt unmanageable by the time I was a senior back in 2017, and our average Fairbanks class sizes are significantly larger now. When I started high school, I was excited to take American Sign Language as my required arts/language class. The program was cut before my first semester at West Valley, so I took French instead. Then French 3 was cut before my junior year, so I didn't get to keep pursuing learning the language to fluency, which was disappointing. Kids deserve our investment in their brilliance, their wellbeing, and their futures. That means putting our money where our mouth is and paying for schools to keep their doors open to provide the excellent education that all Alaskans deserve.

As Alaska's representatives, I know you know that Alaska loves our schools. We cannot keep closing schools and cramming more kids into classrooms with fewer teachers receiving poorer compensation packages. The Alaska Constitution requires that the State of Alaska adequately fund public education, and right now I think there is a very strong argument that that is not being met.

Please support Alaska's families and pass HB 69. Thank you.

-KC Casort  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kelly Kowal <kmullie34@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 5:43 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** BSA

Hello-

We should not settle for less than the **\$1,000 BSA** passed by the House. HB 69, as passed by the House, includes common-sense reforms and represents a major compromise.

Thanks for your time,  
Kelly Kowal  
30+years as an educator

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kendal Pike <kendalpike@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:27 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Oppose HB 69

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong **opposition to House Bill 69** and to urge you to vote against it in its current form. While I support efforts to improve education in Alaska, this bill fails to address critical inequities and introduces measures that disproportionately burden certain educational models while misdirecting funds away from students and classrooms.

First, HB 69 perpetuates the inequitable treatment of correspondence schools by imposing regulations that brick-and-mortar schools do not face. Correspondence programs, which serve nearly 17% of Alaska's students, provide a vital alternative for families across our diverse state, particularly in rural areas. Yet, these programs would now be subjected to stricter oversight and administrative hurdles that traditional schools avoid. This disparity undermines the flexibility and accessibility that make correspondence education a lifeline for so many Alaskan families.

Second, the bill continues the longstanding inequity in funding, where correspondence students receive significantly less per-student support than their brick-and-mortar counterparts. Currently, correspondence students are funded at a factor of 0.9 compared to 1.0 for brick-and-mortar students, despite requiring resources for curriculum, technology, and special needs services as well as the need to fund teacher salaries, buildings and administrative overhead. Correspondence students are funded at around 1/3 the rate of other public school students but are expected to cover all the costs of the overhead including teacher salaries and inflation. HB 69 does not rectify this gap and instead locks in a funding model that undervalues these students, denying them equal opportunities to thrive.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the bill's impact on charter schools. While it increases the Base Student Allocation (BSA), an amendment funnels more BSA dollars into administrative overhead rather than directly benefiting classrooms. Charter schools, which Alaska prides itself on as some of the highest-performing in the nation, should not see their resources diluted by bureaucratic expansion. Our focus should be on empowering teachers and students, not growing administrative budgets.

I recognize the need to address education funding, but HB 69 misses the mark by failing to ensure fairness across all educational options and by prioritizing systems over students. I respectfully ask you to oppose this bill unless it is amended to:

- Eliminate disproportionate regulations on correspondence schools,
- Equalize funding for correspondence students to match brick-and-mortar levels (1.0 factor),
- Guarantee that charter school funding increases reach classrooms, not increase funds to administration,
- Make sure that open enrollment works across districts and protects the existing ability to directly enroll in statewide correspondence schools.

Alaska's students deserve a funding model that supports all learning environments equitably and prioritizes their education over bureaucratic interests. Thank you for considering my concerns and for your service to our state. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Kendal Kruse, Palmer -Mother of four young children

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Larri Spengler <larri.irene.spengler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:34 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** yes on HB 69

Greetings:

Please take action to raise the **BSA** by \$1000. You can use **HB 69** to improve funding for education in Alaska, an increase that is much needed!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Larri Spengler

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**Larri Irene Spengler**  
4545 Thane Road  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
907-586-9768 (phone/fax)  
[Larri.Irene.Spengler@gmail.com](mailto:Larri.Irene.Spengler@gmail.com)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Laura Bonner <ljbbonner@acsalaska.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 9:25 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support HB69

Senate Education Committee

I support HB 69. It's critical that the minimum increase of the BSA at least \$1000 for all public schools including local schools, charter and homeschools.

Thank you for hearing HB 69.

Laura Bonner  
Anchorage AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Laura Volmert <lauravolmert@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 9:28 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** support for HB 69

I am writing in support of HB 69 and raising the BSA to \$1000. Frankly, I would support a greater increase, since the schools in our state are in such dire straits. I live in Fairbanks, and both of my children attended K-12 school in the FNSBSD. My youngest graduates this year, and I have watched the resources available and quality of education diminish over the years. The idea that we can improve schools by withholding money is absolutely ridiculous. Teachers are doing their best with less and less, and Fairbanks has watched some of its most beloved schools be closed. I urge you to support HB 69 and get our public schools back on track.

Laura Volmert  
Fairbanks, 99701

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Laura Volmert  
*She/her/hers*

*"You can either practice being right or practice being kind." -Anne Lamott*



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Leah Higgins <lhiggins2024@alaskapacific.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 12:38 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Written Testimony for HB 69 & Need for Permanent K-12 Funding Increase

Hello, please see my written testimony below.

Why do human societies throughout history educate children at all? Can't it be left up to their community, their parents, even the kids themselves? While you are pondering these questions, a few facts I like to share with my homeschool students: 1. Most spiders deposit eggs and leave. The newly hatched spiders never meet their parents. Sometimes, they eat their siblings! 2. Red squirrel babies live with their parents for less than a year. In that time, they learn a few things from their parents, but mostly their instincts awaken and they learn everything they need to learn. Still, many are eaten by predators in their first year of adult life. 3. Big mammals like wolves raise their young for years before expecting them to have adult responsibilities. The cubs learn survival skills from their parents, but they also learn from other adult wolves. Abandoned wolf cubs rarely survive.

Okay, so why do human societies educate children at all? The fact is this is the best way we, as humans, know to survive. We do not abandon children to fend for themselves, and we do not abandon parents to raise their children by themselves. Funding is one small part in the story of education, but it is also the most essential. Without funding, students cannot learn, teachers cannot teach, parents cannot be freed up to contribute to the community elsewhere, and certainly, Alaskans cannot continue to be Alaskan. I strongly support a permanent funding increase for K-12 education in Alaska and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Leah Higgins

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Leah <lhdubber@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:59 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I was born and raised in Alaska and have been teaching History and Civics to Alaskan students for 22 years. I am writing to request your support for HB 69 and the \$1000 permanent increase to the BSA passed by the House of Representatives. We can no longer kick the can down the road for another year or attempt to limp along with one time funding. The consequences of inaction will ultimately negatively impact every resident in Alaska as we continue to lose families to states that do a better job supporting schools, as we are unable to attract skilled workers to our state because the word is out that Alaska doesn't prioritize school funding and as we fail to grow our own skilled workforce.

In the Anchorage School District, the 2025-26 budget, in an attempt to deal with a monumental deficit, raises the pupil-teacher-ratio (PTR) in secondary classrooms to 35. With the current PTR of 31, class sizes in general education classes are consistently at 32-36 students. The PTR isn't a class size cap. Everyone who works in a secondary school knows a PTR of 35 will translate into class sizes of around 40 students. This will not improve student learning outcomes. ASD's school board amended their budget to state that if the State passes education funding, increasing the BSA by \$1000 by May 15th, then it will restore the teaching positions cut and put money into hiring student support positions to help students who are behind in reading and math. This would be a tremendous move in the right direction for Alaska's students.

Should the Legislature fail to increase the BSA by \$1000, I expect my class sizes will jump to 36-40 students. Due to projected staffing cuts, I anticipate having roughly 200 students next year. As a result, the time I'm able to spend helping each student individually will decrease. The feedback I will be able to provide on student work will have to be generalized rather than specific. I will have to reduce the number of writing assignments or provide completion grades rather than actual feedback. The number of formal essays my students write will drop from two essays per year to one. As you might recall from your own experience, it takes repetition and individualized feedback from a teacher to learn complex skills. Next year my students will see a dramatic decrease in both because I won't have time to carefully read and provide feedback on all their written work. There will be no way to avoid the negative impact this will have on next year's student learning outcomes.

Should the Legislature fail to increase the BSA by \$1000, and one third of my school's general education teaching positions remain cut, I will also have to eliminate all engaging cross-curricular projects due to an inability to collaborate across content areas. Those include the Civics project "We the People: Simulated Congressional Hearings" as well as other projects essential to student skill development. The bottom line is the quality of education I will be able to offer my students will go down and they will be forced to move on to high school less prepared than students in previous years.

The State has the money to increase the BSA, but it requires reducing the PFD. As an Alaskan, I've seen the PFD become a barrier to sensible, forward thinking governance in Alaska. I have received all but a

couple of PFDs since their inception and I would gladly give up all future PFDs for a state budget that funds our collective future as we reallocate those monies to fund essential services.

Our country's history has been an ongoing conversation about what is in the common good - that which is in the best interest of the community as a whole - and once again, you as legislators ponder and debate that tremendous question. I want to thank you for all you do to thoughtfully serve the residents of Alaska and request that you pass HB 69 out of the Senate Education Committee maintaining the \$1000 increase to the BSA approved by the House of Representatives.

Thank you,  
Leah Meyring, M.A., M.A.T., M.Ed.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Linda Shore <sharasmom@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:16 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Senators,

I urge you all to support this bill and get it passed. Then, when the inevitable gubernatorial veto comes, get organized and override it. Our schools have been starved for far too long.

Let us not forget, either, the dilapidated and often dangerous conditions obtaining in some of our rural schools! Why have you people not designated the woefully overdue funding for repairs and maintenance????? Sleetmute, anyone?

These calls for better performance before more funds are ludicrous. Huge class sizes benefit no one. You're basically telling me I can't go buy gas until I get my car to go further on empty.

Fund the schools.

Linda Shore  
Anchorage

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

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Liz Van Patten <liz.vanpatten@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 9:00 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support HB69!

Please support HB69 to adequately fund our schools. Also, as a UAA alum, my former business professor Frank Jeffries wrote a superb article that was published in ADN yesterday regarding the % of our state budget dedicated to education vs the State of Mississippi. Draws some interesting conclusions on how we've historically underfunded education in our state while expecting great outcomes.

Thank you for all you do to support Alaskans, especially the young Alaskans in school today!

Liz Van Patten  
907-229-6234

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Lucas Parsley <lucas.w.parsley@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 8:35 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Good Morning,

I am Lucas Parsley - a social studies teacher and XCR / Track and Field coach at Homer High School, and I am reaching out in support of HB 69.

I'm relatively new to Homer -- I've only lived here for about two and a half years. Before moving to Homer, I spent a year teaching in Sitka. Before entering teaching, I served in the US Army, spending most of my time up in Fort Wainwright. For my first three years of teaching, I continued my service in the Alaska Army National Guard. I retired from the Army about nine months ago after roughly seven years of military service. Though the decision to leave the Guard was challenging, I knew that I would be unable to adequately fulfill my responsibilities as an officer in the US Army while simultaneously dedicating the time and energy I need to be a good teacher and coach. I care too much about my students, athletes, and community to allow for anything to draw me away from that.

I am writing to you about my growing concerns relating to the state of education in Alaska and the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, specifically. In my short time at the high school, I have witnessed a gradual attrition of the resources needed to have a thriving school. We have lost key electives such as auto shop and natural resources. We have witnessed a reduction in staff numbers across the board, including my social studies department. Teachers, including myself, have dealt with the burden of increased class sizes and more preps. The degradation of our schools has negatively impacted our staff and student body. Teachers are stressed, students are losing electives they love, and we are all treading water just to get through the week.

This is attributable to the inadequate funding that school districts have received from the state in recent years. We have not had a substantial increase to the Base Student Allocation in ten years. Because of this, KPBSD is anticipating a \$17 million budget shortfall next fiscal year. As a non tenured teacher, this means I am at risk of not having a position. It is heartbreaking to know that my position at a school I love is at risk, and that I may have to choose between leaving a community I love or leaving a profession I find meaning in. Beyond my personal experience, the failure to increase education funding will have profound consequences on the Homer area, possibly resulting in the closure of Nikolaevsk next year.

We cannot continue allowing this to happen year after year. I implore you to support any legislation that ensures a substantial, inflation-proofed increase to the Base Student Allocation. Our students, families, and teachers deserve it.

I don't envy you in your task, and trust that you have the best interests of Homer residents at heart.

Sincerely,  
Lucas Parsley  
907-978-4249

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Mark Johnson <ghostguy14@myyahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 9:10 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SBA

I am against an increase in the SBA. Maybe if Anchorage, FAILbanks, and other districts were school districts, in the business of education, rather than an EMPLOYMENT and PROMOTION AGENCY this discussion would be moot. How about those schools who are financially cut district staff and continue to shut down schools first and then revisit this proposal.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Mary Crann <mcrann1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 11:52 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Education

Senate Education Committee

Insanity is repeating the same mistakes over and over. Pumping more money into a failing education system will not yield better outcomes. I suggest a Doge response, investigation, and overhaul of the system. I was an eighth-grade language arts teacher at Skyview Middle School in Soldotna for a year. I experienced woke ideologies pushed by certain teachers and unions. The teachers who were not woke feared losing their jobs and did not speak out.

The language arts and social studies departments worked together to promote a woke agenda. Students were not punished for disrupting class and disrespecting students who wanted to learn. The disruptive students needed the most help; many could not read or write to grade level, and I was asked to pass students who did not turn in assignments and were not proficient. When I refused, they were usually transferred to a different teacher. I taught grammar and punctuation to eighth-grade students who could barely read and write and was told that I didn't have time to do that and that they had already had those lessons. I refused to teach that The Lion King was racist, that Pocahontas was sexually abused, and that dystopian literature was the only genre and other woke ideology. The students who needed the most help were often absent.

The administration coddled transgender students, and as much as I offered to help, they were not able to focus on learning. Again, students who needed the most support and individualized attention were unable to receive it. This is not unique to Skyview, as I learned by substituting at other schools in the district.

We should promote good behavior and help those who need it. Learning and discipline should be the priority to prepare students for success. As it exists, the current system is failing.

Mary Crann



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Mary Henderson <maryalaska@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 11:08 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the BSA!

Please raise the BSA!

Thanks,  
Mary Henderson  
Anchorage, AK

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Mary E. Henderson  
Teacher

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Mary Sullivan <marycatherinesullivan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 16, 2025 8:39 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB69

Dear Senators of the education committee.

My name is Mary Wagner and I am a strong supporter of public schools. I worked as a special education clerical and my mother retired from ASD after a decades long career as an OT. I am mother to two children, one with special needs who went through ASD's early intervention program and attended Nunaka Valley for pre school.

We chose to homeschool our son because we wanted to be able to give him an educational experience that built on his strengths and provided consistently all the accommodations he needed to thrive, which he wasn't getting in public education, not because he didn't have excellent teachers but because his educational needs do not align with a traditional educational setting and larger classroom sizes. Since enrolling in Idea correspondence school and working through a curriculum that both meets Alaska educational standards and meets his unique learning style he has excelled. He continues to be on an IEP and work with an OT which we access through our correspondence program, in addition to the support we get from a special education teacher available to support us in making progress on his IEP goals. Because of the flexibility and accountability of correspondence programs as they exist now, our son has met and exceeded the state's education standards for his grade level.

I support a higher BSA for public education because I believe all students deserve access to a quality education. Part of this equity and parity is ensuring that our correspondence programs continue to provide parents with the flexibility to choose the educational format and curriculum that meets their child's needs, and utilizes their tax dollars to support not only the education of brick and mortar schools, but our own homeschooled students as well.

I support public education and believe that that support need not be at the expense of the correspondence school structure and framework that has allowed so many Alaskan students and families to thrive for decades. Our correspondence schools are not broken and do not need to be subject to the unfair scrutiny and unfair bias (such as removing access to special education funds) as our public school counter parts.

Please continue to support the allotment and flexibility of Alaska's correspondence programs. Accountability for meeting educational standards is understandable but we should not be held to a higher standard than our brick and mortar counterparts in terms of having to provide line item budget scrutiny or approval of curriculum to the state rather than a local school board.

Many homeschooling families - which make up 17% of Alaska's students - will simply withdraw from their correspondence program and homeschool independently or leave the state if undue burdens and oversight are placed on them. I am not necessarily speaking for myself, only what we have heard from many families. This would mean less funds for our state, and not only further undermine correspondence programs but our public schools as well, many of whom offer a homeschool or hybrid program.

Please ensure equity in education and parity by removing elements from HB 69 that treats correspondence schools unfairly.

Sincerely,

Mary Wagner, MSW, CFRE  
Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Mary Sullivan <marycatherinesullivan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 9:51 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Mia Costello  
**Subject:** HB 69 open enrollment

Good evening Senators,

My name is Mary Wagner, constituent to Sen. Costello and Sen. Claman. I'm writing to express my concern over open enrollment language in HB 69 which may impact correspondence school students by forcing them out of their correspondence program of choice and into their home districts, regardless of whether the correspondence programs in their home districts are aligned with their students' needs or parents preferences for supports. Please provide an amendment which would clarify the intent of open enrollment, and expressly outlining that parents may continue to choose and enroll in the correspondence program of their choice within Alaska. Thank you.

Mary Wagner, MSW, CFRE  
Sent from my iPhone

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Mary-Claire Bernstein <maryclairetb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 7:36 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Please support HB 69 and the \$1000 BSA. This is the minimum we need to address inflation and save our schools. Schools are the investment in our future citizens— which is the STATE!! The more we do to provide services to our young people the less we have to provide services to them when they are older. Do the right thing. Provide for all people in the state. That is what you were elected to do.

Sent from Mary-Claire's iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Melanie Pitka <mpitka9977@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 1:04 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Dear Senator,

I hope this email finds you well. I am a certified teacher in Alaska with 20 years of experience, I have homeschooled my own children for 10 years, and I currently work full-time in a homeschool program, supporting families in providing quality education for their children. I am reaching out to express my strong opposition to HB 69C, particularly due to its unclear and restrictive language regarding open enrollment.

I urge you to **vote NO on HB 69C** for several reasons, but specifically because of the ambiguity that could limit families' ability to choose correspondence programs across district lines. Many people interpret the current wording as restricting correspondence enrollment, and if that is not the bill's intent, it should be made explicit. The rest of the bill contains highly detailed provisions, and this issue requires the same level of specificity. Legislative language matters, and any lack of clarity could lead to unintended restrictions or even legal challenges.

After reviewing HB 69C, I am particularly concerned about Sections 1 and 2, which require students to attend a school in their district of residence. While Section 1 allows parents to select a school outside their district, it does so only under Section 3(i), which mandates a lottery system. Most correspondence programs do not operate on a lottery basis, making this section especially problematic. The only stated exceptions (for cooperative and inoperative districts) do not appear to apply to correspondence enrollment.

Representative Sarah Vance attempted to clarify and protect parental choice through an amendment stating: "...allow a child to attend the school in the district selected by the parent instead of the school assigned based on the child's residence." However, her amendment was rejected. She also noted that both her attorney and Legislative Legal Services determined that there is no statutory language explicitly allowing correspondence students to enroll outside their district.

Given the concerns raised and the ambiguity in the bill's current form, I encourage everyone to **oppose it now** to prevent any restriction from taking hold. Instead, I urge you to advocate for clear language that explicitly protects families' rights to enroll in correspondence programs outside their physical district of residence.

If restricting families from enrolling in correspondence programs outside their resident school district is the intent of this bill, then this is not a transparent way to achieve that goal. A clear and open conversation is needed on this topic, as such a move drastically undermines parental choice and fundamentally alters the operation of correspondence programs as they have existed.

Briefly, additional issues with HB 69 as it is are:

- The BSA spending increase is not tied to a specific funding source raising concerns that it will likely come from new or increased taxes or further reduced pfds —both of which are unacceptable, especially given people's ongoing economic struggles and inflation.

- The continued unequal treatments of funding between brick-and-mortar and correspondence students.
- It creates an education task force, which is both unnecessary and unfair.
- There are no meaningful provisions to show how increased funding is tied to performance outcomes or how it will directly and positively impact students and teachers in the classroom. Too often, additional money seems to go toward administrative costs, oversight committees, or bureaucracy rather than directly benefiting education.

I appreciate your time and any clarification you can provide. Thank you for your service to our state and for your commitment to parental choice and equal education for all.

Sincerely,  
Melanie Pitka

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Melissa Wechter <prechtl.melissa@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 7:47 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please pass HB 69

Hello,

Please use **HB 69** to improve funding for education in Alaska. We need to raise the **BSA** by \$1000!

I am a third year Alaska teacher and mom of two young daughters just starting school. Alaska's low educational rating in the U.S. worries me. I want to live and teach in a state that values education. Young families are moving out of Alaska due to the high cost of living but also because our schools are over crowded and under funded. Our teachers are exhausted. We don't have the resources we need. Para educators need higher wages. Our special education students are getting screwed (for lack of a better word). It's a lose- lose situation for our students, educators, and Alaska families.

Please, do your part to make this bill pass. Education is a bipartisan issue. Our children and educators are counting on you.

Best,  
Melissa Wechter  
Juneau, Alaska



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Michael Kruse <mike.t.kruse@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:59 PM  
**To:** kendalpike@gmail.com  
**Cc:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Oppose HB 69

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong **opposition to House Bill 69** and to urge you to vote against it in its current form. While I support efforts to improve education in Alaska, this bill fails to address critical inequities and introduces measures that disproportionately burden certain educational models while misdirecting funds away from students and classrooms.

First, HB 69 perpetuates the inequitable treatment of correspondence schools by imposing regulations that brick-and-mortar schools do not face. Correspondence programs, which serve nearly 17% of Alaska's students, provide a vital alternative for families across our diverse state, particularly in rural areas. Yet, these programs would now be subjected to stricter oversight and administrative hurdles that traditional schools avoid. This disparity undermines the flexibility and accessibility that make correspondence education a lifeline for so many Alaskan families.

Second, the bill continues the longstanding inequity in funding, where correspondence students receive significantly less per-student support than their brick-and-mortar counterparts. Currently, correspondence students are funded at a factor of 0.9 compared to 1.0 for brick-and-mortar students, despite requiring resources for curriculum, technology, and special needs services as well as the need to fund teacher salaries, buildings and administrative overhead. Correspondence students are funded at around 1/3 the rate of other public school students but are expected to cover all the costs of the overhead including teacher salaries and inflation. HB 69 does not rectify this gap and instead locks in a funding model that undervalues these students, denying them equal opportunities to thrive.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the bill's impact on charter schools. While it increases the Base Student Allocation (BSA), an amendment funnels more BSA dollars into administrative overhead rather than directly benefiting classrooms. Charter schools, which Alaska prides itself on as some of the highest-performing in the nation, should not see their resources diluted by bureaucratic expansion. Our focus should be on empowering teachers and students, not growing administrative budgets.

I recognize the need to address education funding, but HB 69 misses the mark by failing to ensure fairness across all educational options and by prioritizing systems over students. I respectfully ask you to oppose this bill unless it is amended to:

- Eliminate disproportionate regulations on correspondence schools,
- Equalize funding for correspondence students to match brick-and-mortar levels (1.0 factor),
- Guarantee that charter school funding increases reach classrooms, not increase funds to administration,
- Make sure that open enrollment works across districts and protects the existing ability to directly enroll in statewide correspondence schools.

Alaska's students deserve a funding model that supports all learning environments equitably and prioritizes their education over bureaucratic interests. Thank you for considering my concerns and for your service to our state. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further if you have questions.

Sincerely,

mike Kruse - father of 4 in Palmer

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Nancy Hjelm <nhjelm@acsalaska.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:16 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** BSA

I am contacting you to express my support for the \$1000 increase to the BSA. More financial support for public education is long overdue in our state. Public taxes should go to public schools only. Thanks for your support for public education.

Nancy Hjelm  
AK resident since 1976

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Nancy Lehnhart <aklehnarts@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:19 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please pass funding for education!

Dear Senate Education Committee members,

In Alaska our public schools are so vital to our communities, our kids and their families. Please pass this long-awaited legislation to provide some recovery from low funding. In my mind the needed shift with this committed funding will be:

- Restoring reasonable class sizes
- Giving parents confidence they can count on the school to stay open and educate their child
- Restore support programs for students with needs
- Keeping teachers hired and giving them the assurance that teaching is a job they can afford to continue doing

Please listen deeply to testimony. This raise in the BSA is lower than what would make up for inflation so every dollar of it is needed.

Thank you so much,  
Nancy Lehnhart

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Natalie Martin <mrsmartin4@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 9:24 AM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Robert Yundt  
**Subject:** Opposition to HB 69

Dear Senator Yundt and Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 69 and to urge you to vote against it in its current form. While I support efforts to improve education in Alaska, this bill fails to address critical inequities and introduces measures that disproportionately burden certain educational models while misdirecting funds away from students and classrooms.

First, HB 69 perpetuates the inequitable treatment of correspondence schools by imposing regulations that brick-and-mortar schools do not face. Correspondence programs, which serve nearly 17% of Alaska's students, provide a vital alternative for families across our diverse state, particularly in rural areas. Yet, these programs would now be subjected to stricter oversight and administrative hurdles that traditional schools avoid. This disparity undermines the flexibility and accessibility that make correspondence education a lifeline for so many Alaskan families.

Second, the bill continues the longstanding inequity in funding, where correspondence students receive significantly less per-student support than their brick-and-mortar counterparts. Currently, correspondence students are funded at a factor of 0.9 compared to 1.0 for brick-and-mortar students, despite requiring resources for curriculum, technology, and special needs services as well as the need to fund teacher salaries, buildings and administrative overhead. HB 69 does not rectify this gap and instead locks in a funding model that undervalues these students, denying them equal opportunities to thrive.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the bill's impact on charter schools. While it increases the Base Student Allocation (BSA), an amendment funnels more BSA dollars into administrative overhead rather than directly benefiting classrooms. Charter schools, which Alaska prides itself on as some of the highest-performing in the nation, should not see their resources diluted by bureaucratic expansion. Our focus should be on empowering teachers and students, not growing administrative budgets.

I recognize the need to address education funding, but HB 69 misses the mark by failing to ensure fairness across all educational options and by prioritizing systems over students. I respectfully ask you to oppose this bill unless it is amended to:

- Eliminate disproportionate regulations on correspondence schools,
- Equalize funding for correspondence students to match brick-and-mortar levels (1.0 factor),
- Guarantee that charter school funding increases reach classrooms, not just administration.

Alaska's students deserve a funding model that supports all learning environments equitably and prioritizes their education over bureaucratic interests. Thank you for considering my concerns and for your service to our state. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further if you have questions.

Sincerely,  
Natalie Martin

## Michael Mason

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**From:** nazime Downing <naz.downing@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 12:53 PM  
**To:** Senate Education

*Dear Senate Educators,*

*We should not settle for less than \$1,000 BSA. HB 69, as passed by the House, includes common-sense reforms and major compromises. As a parent of students attending Alaska public schools, I urge you to support the version of HB 69 passed by the House.*

Additional talking points for a longer email/testimony, if desired:

- Without a \$1,000 increase to the BSA, we are facing the very real possibility of further devastating cuts to our schools.
- Increased class sizes: Overcrowded classrooms hinder individual attention and student success.
- Further school closures: Our districts are grappling with untenable decisions. We are closing schools in Fairbanks, Kodiak, Kenai, Anchorage, and more.
- Program eliminations: Vital programs like language immersion, gifted programs like Anchorage's IGNITE, and sports are at risk.
- Deteriorating facilities: As [recently reported](#), Alaska schools are literally crumbling. Our students deserve safe and well-maintained learning environments.
- Layoffs of valued educators: Losing our experienced teachers and school staff.
- The bottom line: These cuts will have a profound and lasting impact on our children's education and our communities.

Nazime Downing  
480-645-4551  
Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Patrice Parker <patrice.parker@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:09 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the BSA!

Please raise the Base Student Allocation. It's been stagnant for years, and test scores reflect the underfunding of our public schools. Our teachers have been doing more with less for years, and it's time to let them do more than just crowd control. With proper funding they'll have smaller class sizes, adequate materials and the ability to provide each child with the attention they need to learn and thrive.

Thank you.

Patrice Parker  
Anchorage

Sent from my iPhone

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Patricia Stark <pstark@mosquitonet.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 5:47 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Bill 69

Dear Ms. Tobin and the Education Committee, Please support this bill with the BSA increase of \$1,000. This is the minimum. The schools really need more than that. We do not want more school closures, crowded classrooms, and the elimination of vital programs.

Please support this bill. Our children are the future of Alaska.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Stark  
Fairbanks



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Paula Davis <akpaula25@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 11:15 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the BSA! HB 69

Senators,

Thank you for your hard work in Juneau this year.

The house has passed an education bill that was a much needed compromise that will improve the educational lives of Alaskan's children.

Please continue to support alaskans and their children by passing this bill in the Senate. It is urgently needed!!

Thanks,

Paula Davis  
8650 Barney Circle  
Anchorage, AK. 99507

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Rachel Bjorklund <rachelbjorklund@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 12:51 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

To Whom it May Concern,

More and more Alaskans are finding it increasingly important to be able to choose the best education we see fit for our children. At the same time, we are finding the new house bill 69 to be concerning in language chosen and how it may affect homeschoolers as well as a lack of transparency/plan on an increase of funding toward our school system without the requirement of becoming more effective in its spending.

I oppose HB 69 because it increases the BSA without identifying funding sources or requiring any additional accountability from our public schools. We have problems that will not be fixed simply by throwing more money at it without any accompanying change. Also, HB 69 dingles out correspondence schools with increased burdens without increasing the funding to their students. In addition, open enrollment language in the bill could impact our ability to enroll in correspondence programs outside of our own districts.

In my, albeit short, time as a public school teacher in the state of Alaska as well as working as a teachers assistant in the Lower Kuskokwim school district leading up to my teaching career, I can assure you that a lack of funding had nothing to do with teacher retainment or the general ins and outs of a student's day. Rather it is the chaos and frustration of increasing work loads on teachers, lack of play time for young students, increased class sizes, interruptions from administration, lack of cohesion in scheduling for core class blocks and student pull-outs, etc. While I am sure there are some schools and maybe even districts who could use an increase in funding, a general increase in funding per student (especially without a directive to specify where that money is coming from or where it is going exactly) across the state of Alaska is not a fix-all for the plethora of issues our public school system is facing today, and may in fact increase the budgeting issues we've already been dealing with for years.

In this bill and future, I also urge you to consider the importance of homeschool and correspondence programs to so many of your fellow Alaskan families, and to acknowledge how effective they are in working within their budget and advocating for their students/children - deserving recognition, not inspection - and trust, not reservation. It is so important to us that we retain the right to autonomy over our children's education, as you can see with the growing homeschool community.

Thank you for your time,

Rachel Bjorklund

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Randy Busch <northernemerald@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 4:25 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Fund Education

Dear Senators,

We should not settle for less than the \$1,000 BSA passed by the House. HB 69, as passed by the House, includes common-sense reforms and represents a major compromise.

Thank you for your support,  
Randy Busch  
Kodiak

Sent from my iPad

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Senn\_Rebekah <Senn\_Rebekah@asdk12.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 2:28 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support Education!

Please fund our schools. Students deserve full staffing and reasonable class sizes. Educators cannot continue to do more with less.

Rebekah Senn  
Chugiak and Birchwood ABC Elementary  
Health Specialist

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sandy Blomfield <aksandyb@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 4:44 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Senators,

HB 69 is not AFFORDABLE. It should be immediately discarded.

Education is at a crossroads from the Federal government whom will change the education system as we know it while greatly reduce funding from Washington to Alaska.

It would be unwise to increase the BSA, which Alaska cannot afford, when drastic changes are imminently coming from DC.

I strongly urge you to refrain from acting upon this bill which is only supported by the NEA and does not consider the impact to our budgets.

The voting public will be watching how each senator votes on HB69.

Sincerely,  
Sandy Blomfield

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Shannon McBride-Morin <shannon@alaskawildernesslodge.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 15, 2025 9:25 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Sarah Vance  
**Subject:** Support the BSA - Education Funding

Please support raising the Base Student Allocation, the BSA and support all aspects of Public School Funding in Alaska. As a life long Alaskan, in Homer, I went through AK public schools in the 70's & 80's and my girls attended Homer area public schools in the 2000s. We have all received great educations, and we hope to see all of our Alaskan kids well supported in public schools fully funded and forward funded.

I support public school teachers, support staff, nurses, counselors, administrators and all of the educators because the work they do is critical to keeping our kids safe, educated, inspired, healthy and fed. I do NOT support diverting funding to private or faith based schools - this does not work for villages, small towns and for many folks who can not do that. Or who like me, do not want to send our kids to private or religious school. I want great public schools in Alaska. I expect this.

Public schools are the hub of our small towns in Alaska - the gym, the pool, the theatre are our small town Alaska gathering places. Public Schools are safe places for many Alaska kids who may not have a safe home, may not have enough food, and need extra supports and interventions.

Please do everything in your power to lift up our kids and families and teachers all around Alaska by fully funding and forward funding our public schools.

Thank you

Shannon McBride-Morin  
Kachemak Bay Wilderness Lodge  
PO Box 653  
Homer AK 99603

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Shannon McBride-Morin  
Co-Owner & Operator

Kachemak Bay Wilderness Lodge  
China Poot Bay & Homer, Alaska  
[www.AlaskaWildernessLodge.com](http://www.AlaskaWildernessLodge.com)

Please read our [reviews](#) on



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Shannon McBride-Morin  
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China Poot Bay & Homer, Alaska  
[www.AlaskaWildernessLodge.com](http://www.AlaskaWildernessLodge.com)

Please read our [reviews](#) on



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Stacey Pike <sapgolden@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:28 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Fwd: Oppose House Bill 69

Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong **opposition to House Bill 69** and to urge you to vote against it in its current form. While I support efforts to improve education in Alaska, this bill fails to address critical inequities and introduces measures that disproportionately burden certain educational models while misdirecting funds away from students and classrooms.

First, HB 69 perpetuates the inequitable treatment of correspondence schools by imposing regulations that brick-and-mortar schools do not face. Correspondence programs, which serve nearly 17% of Alaska's students, provide a vital alternative for families across our diverse state, particularly in rural areas. Yet, these programs would now be subjected to stricter oversight and administrative hurdles that traditional schools avoid. This disparity undermines the flexibility and accessibility that make correspondence education a lifeline for so many Alaskan families.

Second, the bill continues the longstanding inequity in funding, where correspondence students receive significantly less per-student support than their brick-and-mortar counterparts. Currently, correspondence students are funded at a factor of 0.9 compared to 1.0 for brick-and-mortar students, despite requiring resources for curriculum, technology, and special needs services as well as the need to fund teacher salaries, buildings and administrative overhead. Correspondence students are funded at around 1/3 the rate of other public school students but are expected to cover all the costs of the overhead including teacher salaries and inflation. HB 69 does not rectify this gap and instead locks in a funding model that undervalues these students, denying them equal opportunities to thrive.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about the bill's impact on charter schools. While it increases the Base Student Allocation (BSA), an amendment funnels more BSA dollars into administrative overhead rather than directly benefiting classrooms. Charter schools, which Alaska prides itself on as some of the highest-performing in the nation, should not see their resources diluted by bureaucratic expansion. Our focus should be on empowering teachers and students, not growing administrative budgets.

I recognize the need to address education funding, but HB 69 misses the mark by failing to ensure fairness across all educational options and by prioritizing systems over students. I respectfully ask you to oppose this bill unless it is amended to:

- Eliminate disproportionate regulations on correspondence schools,
- Equalize funding for correspondence students to match brick-and-mortar levels (1.0 factor),
- Guarantee that charter school funding increases reach classrooms, not increase funds to administration,
- Make sure that open enrollment works across districts and protects the existing ability to directly enroll in statewide correspondence schools.



Alaska's students deserve a funding model that supports all learning environments equitably and prioritizes their education over bureaucratic interests. Thank you for considering my concerns and for your service to our state. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further if you have questions.

Sincerely

Stacey Pike

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Susan Humphrey-Barnett <susanhumphreybarnett@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 11:19 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the BSA!

Please support raising the BSA by \$1000 per student. Good schools are critical to our future. We have ignored this problem for far too long. Let's get it done now! Thank you. Susan

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Susan Johnson <jsusan503@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:12 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 69

Good morning, Education Committee,

As you know, Alaska's constitution says:

*"The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions. Schools and institutions so established shall be free from sectarian control. No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution."*

The Base Student Allocation or BSA is an important part of Alaska's school funding formula. The Base Student Allocation has not been raised significantly in more than a decade; meanwhile the cost of living - including the costs running our schools - has gone up astronomically.

Please consider this funding for our schools so that we don't turn out adults that are incapable of thinking for themselves.

Sincerely,  
Susan C Johnson  
6590 Glacier Hwy #224  
Juneau AK 99801  
jsusan503@outlook.com  
907-713-7871

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Tam Agosti-Gisler <tamag5@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 8:29 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the BSA!

YES, YES, YES raise the base student allocation by \$1,000 per student. Thank you.

Tam Agosti-Gisler  
Anchorage  
tamag5@me.com

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Elliott\_Tammy <Elliott\_Tammy@asdk12.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 2:55 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please support our schools.

PLEASE support our schools. Our children will be running the country one day, with or without an education.

THANK YOU, Tammy Elliott

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Taren Jones <tjones.raven@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 7:46 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** PFD comment on HB69

My name is Taren Jones and I'd like to make a comment:

Just two months ago, I witnessed village residents resorting to eating out of garbage cans and stealing pastries. They lacked winter clothing for hunting, money for bullets to catch food, and the ability to purchase a new saw to cut wood and heat their homes. People were even stealing fishing rods just to catch something to eat and fill their stomachs.

The Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) amount is crucial because most Alaskans use it to buy gear for catching food in extreme weather and to purchase food, especially given the poorly managed food stamp process. Because you and your family haven't experienced such poverty, hunger, or the inability to buy new clothes and shoes, you may not understand how vital the PFD is for numerous Alaskan families in the villages. Please, leave the PFD alone.

Taren Jones  
Quinhagak, Ak

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Teresa Schellekens <schellekensteresa@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 9:40 AM  
**To:** Senate Education

If children are our nation's future how can we continue to reduce school funding? If you continue to cut funding for our children's education you will be forced to build more prisons. Children in our nation deserve high quality educational services to support their development as well as their future success. Today's politicians will not live forever, our children will be voters and political leaders someday. Don't you worry they will not be prepared, educated and successful in guiding our nation in the future? Children deserve the best our country has to offer. Don't make our best so poor in comparison to the rest of the world. Our nation must be a leader in this world, our future depends on it.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Tiffany Damota <t.damotasupplee@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 14, 2025 6:05 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Fwd: No hb69

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Tiffany Damota <t.damotasupplee@gmail.com>  
**Date:** March 14, 2025 at 3:05:44 PM AKDT  
**To:** SenateEducation@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** No hb69

I do not support hb69 and do not want more funds to go towards our failing education system. I struggle as it is to pay property tax AND have to homeschool my 4 kids, because our schools can't be trusted to provide a safe and quality education. I do not want to pay more tax or have my dividend stolen from me to keep funding a failing system. We don't need a new tax on top of it all to pay for a bloated budget. I also do not support the portion that will make it to where we loose the homeschool program we love because of districting. We currently live in Fairbanks and use Raven and love it. As it's written we possibly will not be able to continue to use the wonderful program. What we need is the school districts to be held responsible for the disaster they created. They treat teachers, students and parents horribly. They have failing ideas and bloated admin. Vote No on Hb69 or hopefully Dunleavy will veto it. If you choose to heavily fund the failing district, at the very least we need an amendment that makes sure the money goes directly to teachers!

Thank you for your time  
Tiffany Supplee of Fairbanks  
Sent from my iPhone



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Toby Erickson <therick452@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2025 10:30 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Education Funding Bill HB 69

Dear Senators,

I am very glad the legislature is trying to pass a bill to increase the BSA. Public education is critically important to the future of our state's economy. Without an educated workforce, the state's economic outlook is bleak. Companies and institutions have a very difficult time recruiting from outside the state, and getting and retaining employees is extraordinarily difficult if the employees feel that the educational opportunities for their children are substandard; they simply move elsewhere. This is already happening, and it is going to get a lot worse if the state doesn't do its part to fund public schools.

I do not support moving funds from traditional schools to charter schools, and I do not support public funds being used for homeschooling.

The most important thing the government does is to provide basic government services to the people, including education, public safety, transportation, and other services.

Kind regards,  
Toby Erickson  
Anchorage, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Zoe Styron <zoestyron@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:44 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of HB69/\$1000 BSA increase

Dear Senators Tobin, Stevens, Cronk, Kiehl, and Bjorkman,

I am writing as a parent of two young children in the Alaska public school system to urge you to retain the full \$1000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) in HB 69. While this amount is already significantly less than the \$1500 the Anchorage School District needs to maintain all positions, it is essential to preserving class sizes and vital programs across our state. Without it, schools will continue to lose teachers, programs will be cut, and the quality of education in Alaska will decline even further.

I understand the challenges of the state budget, but cutting education is not a sustainable solution. We often hear the argument that a household budget cannot spend beyond its means—but in reality, responsible households also ensure they have enough income to cover essentials. Alaska must take the same approach by addressing revenue, whether through oil and gas tax credits or an income tax. The days of relying solely on oil revenue and investment income are over; we need a long-term plan that invests in our children, our workforce, and our state's future.

Public education is not a luxury—it is the foundation of a thriving economy and a strong community. Raising my children in Alaska should not mean putting them at a disadvantage. If we want to retain families, attract businesses, and ensure our state remains a great place to live, we must prioritize education.

I urge you to support the \$1000 BSA increase currently in HB69 and to consider sustainable revenue solutions that protect Alaska's future. Thank you for your time, your service, and your commitment to our state.

Sincerely,

Zoé Styron

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Zoé Styron  
11145 Totem Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99516  
907-202-1813