

Michael Mason

From: Adam Mehlhorn <a [REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 1:59 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: education bill

1. \$1,000 BSA increase, no less.
2. Need to pass this ASAP, not delayed.

Michael Mason

From: Amanda Neal <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 6:51 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please fund the BSA

Hello,

I have two young children in Elementary School and I work for the school district. Please fund the BSA. It is necessary to keep up with inflation and to invest money into the youth of Alaska and their education. Our family doesn't want to leave but we may need to move to a place that values their public schools and their teachers. Alaska is so disappointing when it comes to education. How are youth supposed to get a quality education here when the BSA doesn't keep up with the needs? How is Alaska supposed to attract good teachers with this dismal support and political climate for education? It's depressing. Please fund the BSA.

Thank you, Amanda Campbell

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Michael Mason

From: Amanda Dale [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 3:12 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please pass HB 69

This is so stressful for those of us with kids in school. Can we please move forward, even if it's not perfect?

Amanda Dale
Anchorage
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Tippetts, Amanda [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 3:45 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69 - New to Alaska Perspective

Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective with you. This year, I had the privilege of moving to Alaska to serve as a principal, and I have fallen in love with this beautiful state. However, I was floored to learn about the long history of unstable education funding in Alaska.

Even when managing a personal budget, we understand the importance of knowing our financial resources and having a reliable source of income. The same principle applies to schools, yet our districts have been forced to navigate unpredictable funding year after year. This instability directly affects students and teachers.

This year, after two teachers retired, we faced the difficult task of finding ways to cover their classes. Our middle school had already outsourced all elective classes to high school teachers, and now we were being encouraged to do the same for core subjects like science, social studies, and English.

Had there been a long-term funding solution in place, I could have immediately posted those job openings, recruited qualified educators, and ensured that our students received the best possible education. Instead, we are left scrambling, making compromises that should never have to be made when it comes to our children's future.

This issue has been a long time coming, and the need for a sustainable, reliable funding solution is critical. One-time funding measures provide temporary relief but do not allow us to plan for the future. Our students, teachers, and communities deserve better. I urge you to take action in creating a permanent, predictable funding structure that allows Alaska's schools to hire and retain the educators our children need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thanks!
Amanda Tippetts



Amanda

Principal

907-834-2411

Michael Mason

From: Amanda Zogas [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 2:24 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: BSA increase

Dear Senators,

Now is the time to act! Alaskans need you to fulfill your duty to our public by voting to increase the BSA by \$1,000. Act now to offset the detrimental effects of inflation over the last decade. Our students, families, and workers - all citizens- deserve it.

Thank you,
Amanda Zogas (parent and educator)

Sent from my Galaxy

Michael Mason

From: Amber Frommherz [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 6:01 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

First, I would like to say GUNALCHÉESH |AHÉHEE' for your public service and hard work to tend to the public education issues facing our public schools.

I am writing in strong support of HB69, specifically, the aspect that allows for a permanent increase to the BSA and to make the BSA inflation proof so that our school districts can properly educate our Alaskan students. A permanent increase to the BSA would help school districts have a reasonable amount of funding to plan and budget for each upcoming fiscal year.

A permanent increase to the BSA will ensure that all students who utilize the public school system, whether brick and mortar, charter or correspondence, benefit from an increased BSA. Right now, budgeting with a \$5,960 BSA is inadequate—this amount results in a higher teacher-to-student ratio which structures an environment that is harder for teachers to meet their students' needs. At times, classes so large are unsafe. Ultimately, conditions like this add to the state-wide teacher shortage due to burnout. Anecdotally, I know of a teacher who is consciously wrestling with the decision to come back next year, not because she is burnt out, but because the conditions are so concerning that it is a safety and liability issue for her. The current BSA is ineffective and not only is it a deterrent for new teachers to consider Alaska as a desirable place to work but driving passionate and well-seasoned teachers and staff away.

Please vote to increase the BSA by \$1,000 and include a measure that will inflation-proof it. Our students and the future of Alaska deserve adequate public education funding.

Sincerely,

Amber Frommherz

Juneau, AK

Michael Mason

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 9:43 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support BSA by Minimum of 1,000

I support HB 69 and am asking for a MINIMUM of \$1,000.00 dollars, more would be better.

My husband is a child psychiatrist and I am a speech language therapist. We both have the fortune of being able to practice anywhere. We have no family here, but love Alaska. However, given the lack of funding going to education, we are seriously considering moving. Our situation is not different from other families who would not like to uproot their family, but are starting to feel they don't have any other option. This is not just about education. It's about Alaska economy as well. If more families continue to move out of state, more vacancies in highly needed fields will continue. Furthermore families that are looking for opportunities will not consider Anchorage and the state if they know the lack of value put towards education. Investing in education is the smart choice and the right choice for Alaska's future.

Thank you for finding solutions to hard problems!

Respectfully,
Amy Rayess
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Andrea Gardner [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 4:14 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Andrea Gardner: Written Testimony on HB69

Good Afternoon, I testified over the phone however even speed-reading I wasn't able to get through it all, here's my testimony:

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

My name is Andrea Gardner. I live in Anchorage and teach in the Anchorage School District. I have rewritten this testimony countless times, trying to wholly capture *why* HB69 is so critical. I realize though, all I can do is share my own story of how underfunding affected me.

Last year was 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.

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

Out of respect for my students' privacy, I won't share many details. But I can tell you this: **many were twice-exceptional, needing both academic enrichment and behavioral accommodations**

Thirty-five five- and six-year-olds may not sound like much. **Imagine three cartons of eggs—minus one.** Now place each egg on the floor, and make sure you keep every single one from breaking.

Or picture hosting a dinner for 20. You have food, space, and settings for exactly that. But guests keep arriving. You welcome them, because it's what you do. Soon, you're hosting **35 people with resources meant for 20**. Would you like to host that party? Would you like to attend it? **Now imagine doing that every day for 180 days.**

This isn't a partisan issue. It's a logistical one— just because you CAN fit 35 bodies in one room doesn't mean you should.

Overcrowding made it harder for my students to **focus, self-regulate, and feel safe**. It lowered their engagement and test scores. I had to spend more time **managing behaviors than delivering actual instruction**. It felt like the difference between **teaching swim lessons and lifeguarding**.

As a **reading specialist**, I can assure you—**raising reading scores really isn't possible in overcrowded, unsupported classrooms**. Teachers need time, resources, and capacity to provide the systematic, research-based instruction young learners deserve.

Twice-exceptional students experience the world intensely. In my overcrowded classroom, many students became overwhelmed, leading to **escalating vocal, physical, and destructive outbursts**

throughout the day. Despite my expertise, I couldn't **simultaneously provide enrichment, accommodations, 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 burst into tears—heartbroken by all the ways I'd failed to meet my students' needs that day.**

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

My calls for back-up help often went unanswered—our principal and support staff were **stretched too thin in a school full of overcrowded classrooms.**

One day, a student eloped—again—and was about to hit his head on the tile floor. **I caught him just 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 soul was exhausted—drained from the relentless, high-alert state of constantly managing extreme behavioral and emotional needs.** I am now on **leave for the 2024-25 school year.**

An education system starved of funding doesn't just struggle—it wears down teachers, limits student potential, and makes meaningful learning harder every day.

I urge you, **pass this bill.** Teachers like me are doing everything we can, but **"remembering our why" isn't enough.**

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

Thank you.

Michael Mason

From: Angie Harris <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:10 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB69

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I would like to express my support for HB69 and hope that you will support and pass this bill. Our education system has lacked the funding necessary to provide quality education to the children in our communities. These children are our future business, community and state leaders. If we choose to continue to ignore the basic needs of our education system we will continue to struggle with low academic achievement, lack of quality teachers, and difficulty in keeping families and young adults in Alaska.

Please show your support and pass HB69.

Thank you!

Angela Harris

Michael Mason

From: Ann Rappoport [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 10:42 PM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Mike Cronk; Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: Fwd: Please adopt HB 69 and increase the BSA - ASAP!!


Dear Senate Education Committee:

I am thrilled that the Senate Education Committee is swiftly taking up HB 69 which would increase the Base Student Allocation by \$1000 for this funding cycle. The bill has already received extensive hearing and input in the House. The result you have is a compromise that will hopefully appease the Governor, while not compromising any further on the benefits it will provide for the education of our children, our future. **Please vote YES to advance this bill to the floor for approval as soon as possible!**

Our state education system has been in crisis for years. This bill will smartly address that crisis by reliably and predictably funding education to enable districts to recruit and retain good teachers, support small class sizes, and allow Alaska businesses to attract and keep talent here at home. Our school districts need to be assured of this funding as soon as possible so that they do not have to start the horrendous pink slip process where we will lose valuable, experienced teachers - further exacerbating the brain drain and population loss that has been plaguing Alaska for too many years.

There has not been a guaranteed increase in education funding since 2014 while inflation and unfunded mandates (e.g., the need to beef up security at schools due to school shootings) have steadily eroded our flat funding. The results have included larger class sizes, loss of enrichment programs, loss of basic programs (e.g., Service High School in Anchorage now only offers one foreign language; similar shrinking of language programs and other options has occurred elsewhere), and loss of kids to alternative schools where they may not receive a well-balanced education. Those alternative schools are not available to everyone as are public neighborhood schools. We have also been suffering a loss of population as teachers, with their families, have had to leave for better paying jobs with retirement benefits and families leave for better school districts Outside.

Please pass this bill NOW to give our school districts time to plan for the coming year and so teachers know their jobs will not disappear. The Governor has proposed tinkering with other aspects of education funding. You need to stand strong and tell him those can be debated and addressed later; there have been enough compromises in this bill. NOW is the time to increase the BSA as prescribed in HB 69!

Thank you,
Ann Rappoport

Anchorage, AK 99516

Michael Mason

From: Anna Mayra [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 6:41 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Educational Funding

Alaskan Students are worth every penny of the increase to the student base allotment.

While parking lots need to be plowed and heating systems need to be maintained, EXCELLENCE in education requires FUNDING, EXEMPLARY STAFFING, EXCELLENT PAY and RETIREMENT, and SUPPORT SYSTEMS for student achievement.

I began my teaching career in 1980 and served for 30 years. And I remember when our schools were adequately funded and we drew the BEST and BRIGHTEST to our folds, and the student needs were met.

This is the least we can do. AND WE SHOULD do the MOST by providing enough funding to not only keep up but to IMPROVE student outcomes with INNOVATIVE FUNDED INITIATIVES.

Fund it and they will come. Fund it and the students will thrive.

Thank you,

Anna Mayra
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Anne Biberman [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 1:24 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: House Education; Sen. Mike Cronk; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. Will Stapp
Subject: Support of funding for K-12 education

Dear Alaska Legislators,

Now that the Alaska House of Representatives has passed HB 69, I am writing again in support of funding for education and of significant and sustained funding for K-12 education. We need a \$1000 increase to the base student allocation to begin to make up for 15 years of losses to inflation.

Since 2011, the BSA has fallen behind inflation by 25%. Flat funding for our schools has resulted in school closures, loss of programs, and valuable, passionate, professional teachers. The impacts on our students of flat funding are real and harmful, not only for our students, but for our entire community. We can, and must, do better.

Education is our absolute constitutional obligation. Beyond that it is simply good policy. We can be proactive and fund schools now or pay the much higher costs of incarceration in the future. We can drive families away, making it harder to hire and retain a resident workforce and accelerate economic decline, or we can attract and keep families by supporting strong schools.

Further, while of course parents deserve a choice in how they educate their children, if that choice dictates private or home schooling, they should be responsible for the costs themselves. Funds should be entirely directed at providing the best public education possible. That is our responsibility.

I know you have a lot of tough choices to make about the state budget. But I truly believe that investing in our kids' education is the most important thing we can do for Alaska's future. When I think about where our state will be in 10 or 20 years, I want to know that we did everything we could to give our children the education they deserve.

Could you please support:

- A real increase in school funding that keeps up with inflation now and in the future
- Money for both basics (like heating, supplies and maintenance) AND programs that help kids thrive (like art, drama and music)
- Support for our teachers so we can keep good educators in Alaska

Please fund education in our state. It is the very definition of investing in our future.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I know these decisions aren't easy, but our kids are counting on you.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Biberman
Fairbanks

PS: The Governor's own 2024 polling found an overwhelming majority of Alaskans - 77% - want more funding for education.

I continue to believe the best way to fund our state is through a 2% tax on income above \$200,000 per year. Implementing a sales tax or using the PFD will hit those hardest who can least afford it. An income tax on all those earning here distributes the burden equally.

Michael Mason

From: Anne Brooks [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 3:31 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB69 education funding

I fully support HB 69 and believe we need to stop shortchanging the future leaders and workers of our state. It is imperative that they receive a good education.

Thanks

Anne Brooks
Anchorage, 99508
[REDACTED]

Sent from Gmail Mobile

Michael Mason

From: April Ostrom [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 11:08 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Opposition to 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 singles 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 this bill and future proposals, I 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,

April Ostrom, previous charter school parent and current homeschool novice

Michael Mason

From: Ashley Arezou Minaei [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:12 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: In support of HB69

Hi My name is Ashley Minaei and I am from Anchorage. My husband and I both grew up in Anchorage and are both graduates of the Anchorage School District. We now live in Anchorage with our three kids - ages 8, 5, and 2, and we are both public servants working for the state and municipality. I lived outside of Alaska for 15 years, in several different states and cities, while I pursued higher education, earned multiple degrees, and started my professional career. My husband and I - along with many of our childhood friends - wanted to move back to Alaska to raise our kids here. We didn't move back to Alaska because we wanted to escape income taxes or we wanted to have PDFs. We moved back because we wanted to give our kids rich and fulfilling childhoods like the ones that we had - and a necessary component of that is a strong and properly resourced education. We want to raise our kids in strong, educated, vibrant communities. We want to be in a state that values families - and shows that commitment by investing in their futures. We want Alaska to be a place where young professionals WANT to live and WANT to raise their families. Every time I hear of another of our friends leaving the state because they are worried about the lack of resources and lack of future opportunities, I am sad, but I have stopped trying to convince them to stay - because honestly, I can't blame them. If our leaders are more committed to cutting budgets rather than investing in building our states future, then why would families want to stay here?

My mother, Minoo Minaei, is an award winning retired ASD teacher. She is one of those teachers who lived and breathed her career. She is a teacher through and through. She loved her job and loved her students and their families and she loves this state. She taught and mentored numerous students throughout her career - in fact my sons kindergarten teacher was one of my moms students. Even my mom has said that if she were a new teacher now, she wouldn't stay. Teachers here today do not have the support and resources they need. We aren't investing in them, their careers, or their futures. They don't have the resources to take care of their students now, they don't have the resources to take care of their own families at home, and they don't have the resources to take care of themselves in retirement. So what is the point!? Why wouldn't they move somewhere that supports them? And many of them are doing so.

I implore our leaders to please show us that you actually are looking out for the people who voted for you to represent them. We aren't looking for more tax cuts. We aren't looking for more budget cuts. We WANT to invest in our communities and we WANT to invest in our families. Please allow us to do this. Please give us and other young professionals reason to stay in Alaska and raise our families here.

Ashley Arezou Minaei, MPH, CPH (She/Her/Hers)

ashleyminaci@gmail.com || Cellular: [REDACTED]

Dena'inaq elnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu. | I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina. (Translation by Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart and Joel Isaak)

Michael Mason

From: B Carlson [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 2:05 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for Increase BSA-HB69

> Dear Honorable Senators:

>

> Our family strongly supports increasing the AK BSA for education funding. I have taught in public schools in Washington and Alaska. We raised our sons here and our grandchildren are also attending Alaska public schools. Increasing the BSA is what would most immediately and continually improve the ability for administrators and educators to plan from year to year with confidence and a chance to regain some of the losses we have faced over this long period of no increases and fiscal austerity. It is appalling to see families leaving Alaska in droves to find better education for their children. The economy of our great state depends on strong, excellent, well-funded public schools to retain the current population AND to once again attract people to move to Alaska and bring their families to repopulate, replacing those who left, or bringing them back. A larger, young population is vital for the work force, the life of a state, and for the tax base. We urge you to increase the Alaska BSA and support HB69 now!

>

> Thank you for your time and consideration for this critically important action!

>

> Barbara and Michael Carlson

> [REDACTED]

> Anchorage, AK 99502

>

> Sent from my iPad

Michael Mason

From: b farris [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 5:20 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

Good evening:

I am writing in support of fully funding the BSA so that our children can have the best possible education.

Thank you for supporting Alaska children.

Barbara Farris

Michael Mason

From: Alex Pastorino [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:35 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support HB 69

I am a retired educator and have been an Alaskan resident for over 45 years and have had kids and grandkids attending school in both Anchorage and Juneau. I have seen personally how teachers struggle with both unpredictability and lack of funding, and I have struggled myself. I am confident you all champion our children and their needs educationally and, therefore, encourage you to support HB 69, which will give our educators and students the stability they need to meet basic needs. Our teachers are on the front lines with our most valuable resource – our children, and should, at the very least, have the training and resources to meet the needs of every student as well as the assurance that the financial support will be there annually. While an increase in the BSA should already be in place to address inflation, we need to do much more; but this is a wise and needed start. Thank you so very much for reading and considering my request and for your commitment to our children and to education in Alaska. Barbara Passtorino, Juneau

Michael Mason

From: Bergen Rosvold Dougher [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 10:43 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Strong Support for a Minimum \$1,000 BSA Increase

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my **strong support** for a **minimum** \$1,000 increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA). As a **third-generation Alaskan**, my family is currently relocating back to the state from Oregon. We have two children—one in school and another soon to be—and the **severe lack of school funding** is a serious concern.

Frankly, if Alaska does not prioritize education funding, families like ours will have little reason to relocate or stay. The state is already experiencing a declining population, and attracting and retaining working families should be a top priority. Without strong schools, Alaska risks losing not just families, but the future workforce, tax base, and economic stability that come with them.

We **want** to build our lives in Alaska, but we won't do so at the expense of our children's education. I urge you to commit to a **minimum \$1,000 BSA increase**—anything less puts Alaska's future at risk.

Sincerely,
Bergen Rosvold Dougher
[REDACTED]

June 2025 Resident of Petersburg, AK

Michael Mason

From: Beth E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:50 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please increase the BSA!

Please support HB69 because without an increase to the BSA districts across the state will crumble. Our education system is in crisis.

Thank you for supporting education and future generations of Alaskans.

Sincerely,
Beth Elliott

Written Testimony on HOUSE BILL 69 - EDUCATION FUNDING: INCREASE BSA

Thank you, Chair Tobin and Vice-Chair Stevens as well as members of the Senate Education Committee:

For the Record, my name is Bill Burr and I am the Superintendent of the Wrangell Public Schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on: *House Bill 69 - Education Funding: Increase the BSA*

Introduction

First I would like to thank the members of Senate Education for allowing public discussion and input into the continuation of HB69 and its impact on education for Alaska's Students.

Education in Alaska has been at a tipping point for more than a decade and in reality, it has been beyond the edge for half of that time. One-time funding or slight increases or reductions don't allow schools to prepare for the future but rather just react constantly. Research states that people and businesses rarely make the best long-term decisions when made to adapt extremely quickly to decisions that had to be made in the recent past.

Adrenaline is a very potent neurotransmitter and has helped school districts and students to react to extremely stressful situations. But Adrenaline is also dangerous when present long-term. Alaska School District's staff, students, parents, and communities have been "running on adrenaline" far beyond healthy measures.

We face continually changing legislation, unfunded mandates on training, new state-created courses, state education regulation changes, additional testing requirements, restrictions on funding, plus the media comments that we as educators as a group are failing. We have such a teacher shortage in the state (including cities and road system districts) that teacher contracts have to be given sometimes 5 months before districts even know their funding because if we don't we will lose teachers. We can not, as a service-based profession, continue to rely on the yearly "Fight or Flight" mentality we have been forced into.

In Wrangell specifically, we are facing the loss of "Essential Air Service" to SE which after the massive reductions in the Alaska Marine Highway is the last connection (even at a very high cost) we have. The loss of the Secure Rural Schools money has also impacted the ability of the City and Borough of Wrangell to support the schools beyond the minimum contribution (which is deducted from our foundation funding by the state).

Aside from generational wealth, the number one way to accumulate financial resources is education. Publicly many wealthy scions such as Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Marie Osmond, The Rock, and a number of other recognizable individuals have stated that they want their children to earn their own way.

Alaska has had generational wealth, rather than just passing along money, our students are asking for the ability to earn an education, school districts and communities want the capacity and ability to make that happen.

I ask the Committee to vote in support of HB69.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rep. Bob R. Williams". The signature is stylized with a large "R" and "W".

Michael Mason

From: Robert Bundy [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 10:52 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Zack Fields
Subject: Please raise the BSA!

As the parent of former ASD students and the grandmother of current ASD students, I urge you to support HB 69 raising the Base Student Allocation. There are several reasons advanced for cutting student funding and they are all false;

1) Small government governs best. In the case of education, not true. Numerous studies have demonstrated that children achieve higher academically if there is a small ratio of students to teachers. That costs more money - to hire more teachers and attract the best teachers, by paying them good salaries and benefits.

2) Our students scores have gone down, why “throw more money at the problem” ? The truth is that nationally and internationally, children have still not recovered academically from the COVID lockdown and distance learning. They are making progress. And they will continue to make progress, if schools are adequately funded and class sizes are small enough so teachers have more time to give students personal attention.

3) Taxes are always bad. When my children were attending Anchorage public schools, there was a \$10 property tax that went exclusively for education, and public education was funded generously through oil tax revenue. At that time, Anchorage public schools were among the best in the country. Let us not forget, that Alaska's only Nobel Prize winner (in physics) was a graduate of Anchorage Public Schools.

If we are worried about declining population in Anchorage, that is not going to be helped by inadequately funded public schools. If we want people to stay and if we want to attract educated, productive people to our communities, we have to offer quality public education.

Yours truly,

Bonnie Lembo

[REDACTED]
Anchorage AK 99501-4253
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: moore_bonnie [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:10 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Education Bill testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing as a parent, a teacher, and a concerned community member about our school funding issue. We are sitting in a staff meeting right now and I don't know where I will be working next year due to budget cuts in our district. Looking at an increase to the student to teacher ratio is not comforting either. At what point does it become glorified babysitting? When you have 28 or 30 students smooshed into classrooms designed for 20 pupils? As a Montessori teacher, how I can I individualize my students learning at that point? I urge the legislative body, work together with your colleagues and pass an education bill that works for students, teachers and our Alaskan communities. Don't sell the future of our state short.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Moore

Anchorage School District
Montessori Primary Teacher
Denali Montessori Elementary
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Bridget Paule [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 9:41 AM
To: Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony: Please Increase the Base Student Allocation

I'm writing to urge you to increase the Base Student Allocation. We need this increase to keep our schools intact and minimally functional. With the potential to lose federal education funds and our very own Congressman Begich telling us not to depend on federal funds, we really need to step up and take care of our kids - mine, yours - and our future society. The proposed increase of \$1000/student is one step in the right direction. Please do not hesitate to take this step.

Thank you,

Bridget Paule
[REDACTED]

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on Dena'ina Etnena

Michael Mason

From: brooke gilleland [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 1:14 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please vote no

My name is Brooke

I live in the Mat-Su Valley. My family has worked with cyberlynx doing a lot of good for so many students. I am concerned that HB 69 is supporting "open enrollment WITHIN districts." This would greatly limit our choice to utilize the educational resources of other state correspondence school options such as IDEA, Cyberlynx, Denali Peak, or Raven which are headquartered in other districts. The removal of options is NOT in the best interests of our students.

Please take the time to consider the full impact of your vote on this matter and vote NO to preserve options for families which will produce the best educational outcomes for Alaska's children.

Thank you.
Brooke

Michael Mason

From: Carmen DeVilbiss [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:39 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB69

Please enter into public testimony March 21, 2025

Dear Senators,

I would love to live in a world where money is not an object. I would love to purchase that beautiful new vehicle with all the bells and whistles, and have all new shiny appliances in the kitchen. However, I live in the real world. I could go out and purchase these items to fulfill my "I need it right now" mentality and love everything about all the new things. That is until the first credit card bill comes in. Then reality strikes: "I have no way to pay for everything I just purchased."

What we have in HB69 is this mentality that we can pull money out of the air and just continue to fund failing school systems with money that has no backing. You still have not had the "How we plan to pay for this increase" conversation with Alaskans. For several years now you have been taking more money from PFD's to pay for bloated government spending declaring there still isn't enough money. What everyday Alaskans continually hear from the halls of the government building in Juneau is "Tax them, tax them!" It continues to add burdens to everyday Alaskans because money from taxes comes from somewhere and that somewhere is the pockets of everyday people.

Alaska has some very forward thinking when it comes to schooling. We see Charter Schools making national headlines for their achievements. The homeschool community is thriving and growing due to the support of public correspondence schools. What we continue to see is the "Whoa is me" thinking from traditional brick and mortar schools. Who demand more and more money and give less and less results. I truly believe that every student in the state of Alaska should get a great education. Kids in traditional brick and mortar schools need opportunities to have a thriving education. There are some great schools with incredible principles and teachers. I am not negating that, what I really wish you as leaders in Alaska would understand is that we need real education reform that educates the whole child. Not NEAs idea of education. NEA is like the Dwarves found in the story of Narnia who declare "The Dwarves are for the Dwarves!" NEA is in it for themselves and are grasping at opportunities to hold onto the old education of the past.

Why are charter schools and correspondence schools doing so well? What can traditional brick and mortar schools learn from these "out of the box" thinking institutions? Is there something they could implement to figure out what they could institute to make their schools better. I fear that increasing budgets is going to bring you the same results and in three years we will be having the same discussion over again. What is that old adage about the definition of insanity? "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results."

Make it easy for new charter schools to open.

Give Correspondence schools equitable funding and treatment (homeschoolers are not second class citizens)

Open up opportunities for Alaskan students to attend Alaskan schools of their choosing (not just limiting it to the districts they live in).

Require all schools to develop and learn to live within cost effective budgets.

Thank you,
Carmen DeVilbiss

Michael Mason

From: Carol Morris [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 12:57 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: School fundin

My name is Carol Morris and i live in Anchorage. Please support the increase in funding for our schools. Financial assistance is greatly needed. Alaska must have an education system that puts students first now-and continues into the future.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Franco Venuti [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:04 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

Thank you for your service to Alaska. I testified yesterday at the LIO in Homer. My name is Caroline Venuti, and I am a retired educator. I taught in rural and urban schools for 40m years. I tried to help your awareness of what would happen to education in Alaska if HB 69 is changed to a smaller BSA.

I didn't have time to offer a solution for funding the change. When I was 16, I began a summer job in Kodiak at a local cannery. My first check had a notation of a \$10.00 school tax. I asked my mother and she explained that this was a way to support the schools. Everyone paid it in their first paycheck of the year. It made sense; I loved school, and I should have some skin in the game.

I wonder if you would consider a school tax of every worker in Alaska of

Michael Mason

From: Carolyn Morrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:25 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: written testimony for CSHB 69 --oppose

I respectfully ask that you vote no on CSHB 69 (RLS) for the following reasons.

1. Accountability to where the money is going before more funds are given out: As a family who attends IDEA, we must account for every single penny that we spend, and every penny must go to what is written on our students' Individual Learning Plan (ILP). We are seriously under the microscope for everything we spend. I am asking that the brick-and-mortar schools be held to the same level of accountability of where their money goes. The following examples of where the brick-and-mortar schools appear to not be held to the same level of accountability:

a. At the end of my first-year teaching as an English Language Learner (ELL) teacher in a brick-and-mortar elementary school, I was informed by my principal that I needed to move from one classroom to another, and that I needed to make sure everything was cleared out.

i. As I was moving out of one classroom, I opened a set of cupboards that I had never opened before, assuming they were the cupboards the teacher I was sharing a room with had been using before she moved to another building. There was an entire classroom set of extremely expensive textbooks just sitting there. The principal's response was, "oh we've been wondering where those were. We were going to order a new set." I never got an answer what the students did the whole year without their textbooks for that subject.... or where the money would have come from...say the books cost even just \$30 each 20 years ago (but probably cost more), that would have been an additional \$900....

ii. Moving into the other classroom, I found other supplies such as microscopes gathering dust and not getting used at all.

b. I was informed by a senator that giving more money to education will lead to higher test results. I have not found this to be necessarily true.

i. My experience with testing shows that while some students do extremely well with pen and paper, others do better with computers, others do better if given the questions orally, some do not test well at all, some do testing really well. I have worked with students who did well on the test even though they did not know the material, I have worked with students who know the material but did not test well. When my oldest did the AK Star early literacy test in third grade, he tested as a "probable emergent reader" while he was reading an unabridged copy of *The Lord of the Rings*.

ii. When I was the ELL teacher at the elementary school I was teaching at, I literally spent 4 ½ months proctoring the tests—school wide, district wide, and statewide testing. I was so very frustrated that I missed out on half the year of being able to teach my students. Instruction time is what would have helped my public-school students in furthering their education, not doing that much testing.

c. Sounds like correspondence schools are not in the lineup for receiving a larger BSA.... Someone told me that a senator's response to their email stated that since correspondence programs are the only ones without a deficit, correspondence programs do not need more funding. So basically, the people who are actually keeping to a budget are getting punished and those who are not keeping to a budget are having more money given to them?

d. There appears to be a whole slew of regulations that are going to be put on the charter schools and correspondence programs that are not outlined for the public schools:

i. Page five of the bill states “a statement of the charter school’s funding allocation from the local school board and costs assignable to the charter school program budget; the method by which the charter school will account for receipts and expenditures.”

ii. For the correspondence schools, the bill states that: “Each district that provides a correspondence study program, shall prepare an annual report that includes... an accounting of student allotment funds that have been disbursed.

1. We already must turn in how we spend the allotment money, and we can only spend the allotment money on things that are outlined in our students Individual Learning Plan (ILP), and the approval must go through several different people. IDEA is very careful on how the money is spent

Are the public schools also having to lay out how they are going to account for receipts and expenditures?

2. Open Enrollment: I keep hearing about open enrollment. I can only figure out that this is referring to the part of the bill that is talking about how there should be no tuition paid by students who attend public school—that is already not an issue. There’s also talk of lotteries, and how parents can choose a school within their district. I imagine that is not going to go well for those families who are in the bush....In the correspondence program community, we are worried that this means we will no longer be able to choose outside our geographic school district location. Families choose the correspondence program, charter school, private school, or public school that best fits their needs. I specifically chose IDEA over Twindly Bridge or Mat-Su Central because IDEA suited my family’s needs better.

a. Academic decathlon is one of the many reasons why I have continued with IDEA. There is no other school that has a consistent team. In the past five years of having two high school students, there has been one school in the Mat-Su School District who has ONE TIME sent an academic decathlon team to state.

3. There is worry about a master curriculum list due to the wording “and a review of curricula that have been provided by the program or purchased using allotment funds.” This is a major problem as not all students learn the same way, so there cannot be one size that fits all system. I do a new theme every year and tie as many subjects as possible into that theme: for example, mythology would cover myths from all over the world, and not just the typical Roman/Greek/Egyptian/Norse, and history would cover world history, outdoor theme would cover biology, outdoor sports for physical education, a semester of British Lit with books like *Beowulf*, *Pilgrims Progress*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Treasure Island* and a semester of American Lit with *Call of the Wild*, *A walk in the Woods*, *the Old man and the Sea*, and *Life on the Mississippi* (and these lists are not comprehensive!).

4. Under the correspondence section, the language states: “assessment and proficiency scores of the students enrolled in the program. We need an opt out clause.... Instruction time is important as I noted earlier. My experience in both the public school system and correspondence school program, test results take months to get back, and that does the instructors no good to help their students.

5. Education Task Force: We already have a department of education—Isn’t that their job to oversee what is going on in education? This is redundancy that is NOT needed. And again... where is the money coming from?

6. Reading incentives: Where is the money coming from? Who is going to be getting the money, is the money going to be going to the students to further improve their education in the form of smaller classrooms or the subjects like music, PE, art, and drama? The PFD is SUPPOSED to be protected under the constitution, so legally cannot come from the PFD. Also....students do learn how to read at their own pace, which is not always at the same time as others. Look at the neurosurgeon Ben Carson, who could not read at grade level in third grade!

Respectfully,
Carolyn Morrison

Michael Mason

From: Cassandra Gardner Raun [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 3:43 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support HB69

Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your service and leadership on behalf of all Alaskans.

I am a resident of midtown Anchorage, a graduate of Anchorage School District, the mother of three current ASD students, and a 20 year Realtor in our community. I am asking you to make an investment in Alaska by voting in support of HB69.

Strong schools attract and keep families and right now Alaska is losing families. As a Realtor, one of the first questions families always ask me is "how are the schools?" Right now, they aren't good. And not for any fault of our teachers or administrators, but for the fault of our government not properly funding our schools. One argument that I hear for not increasing school funding is that our test scores are low. But here's the thing, low test scores are a recent phenomenon. When Alaska's schools were well funded and teachers earned a pension, our test scores were above national averages. Funding matters. Your vote matters. Please support HB69.

Funding public schools is not just about schools or education. Funding public schools is about Alaska, it's about our economy, it's about our future. We simply can't afford to not properly fund our schools. Business and labor leaders support investment in education because they understand that a strong economy requires a trained and well educated workforce. Please support HB69.

Please fund our schools. Please do so quickly. The future of our state depends on it.

Thank you,
Cassandra Raun

Michael Mason

From: Cassandra Gardner Raun [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 5:33 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Re: Please support HB69

Hello again,

My apologies for the second email. I want to be clear that I am asking you to pass HB69 inclusive of the **BSA increase of at least \$1000.**

Thank you very much,
Cassandra Raun

On Fri, Mar 21, 2025 at 3:43 PM Cassandra Gardner Raun <cassandraraun@gmail.com> wrote:
Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your service and leadership on behalf of all Alaskans.

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Please fund our schools. Please do so quickly. The future of our state depends on it.

Thank you,
Cassandra Raun

--

Sincerely,

Cassandra Raun, Sales Manager



REALTOR® and Transaction Coordinator
Coldwell Banker Endeavor Realty

Michael Mason

From: Catherine Whaley [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 1:29 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please Vote NO on HB69

Dear Senators:

My name is Catherine Whaley. I am an educator, parent, and business owner in the Mat-Su Valley. In 2024, \$0.83 on every MSB tax dollar that I paid went toward education operating expenses and education debt services. I appreciate the desire to increase the BSA by \$1,000 but I believe it is prudent to actually consider and specify how those additional funds are going to be generated, especially at a time when the educational budget is looking at a \$22 million dollar shortfall. Will the funds be coming out of the Permanent Fund? Are you going to propose/support a state income tax? Will we see more property tax increases? I met with friends and colleagues last night and discovered that some of us have seen a 15% increase on our property values; some of us were assessed a 23% increase in just one year! This is not sustainable.

As an educational vendor, I have provided services through a variety of correspondence homeschool programs over the past 22 years. As a parent, I have worked closely with Cyberlynx and Mat-Su Central programs. Some of the programs - like Cyberlynx and IDEA - have provided services to families throughout Alaska since 1997. Mat-Su Central provides services only to students in the Mat Su Borough. Each program has unique features which meet the needs of various families and their situations. It is certainly NOT a one-size-fits-all scenario. However, HB 69 would "allow open enrollment in public schools WITHIN districts." This would potentially not allow Cyberlynx, IDEA, Raven, Denali Peak, etc. as viable options for homeschooling families who live in the Mat-Su Borough; only Mat-Su Central (MSC) would be an option. This would remove CHOICE and diminish student academic outcomes. One of the main reasons families make a change from MSC is because they are "too big" which results in long delays for reimbursements (sometimes months, rather than weeks) and difficulty in meeting with advisors to plan courses or address academic concerns. MSC is a great option for many students, and they offer all the bells and whistles of extra courses and a nice facility, but for many families that enroll with other public options like Cyberlynx and IDEA, they need something smaller that is better suited to oversee and partner with them in achieving their academic goals.

I ask that you consider the impact this would have on roughly 30,000 students. For example, 2300 students in MSB are enrolled with Mat-Su Central, but thousands more are in other programs. Mat-Su Central is not prepared to absorb all of those families, even with their new building (also consider that many families have chosen to NOT school in a brick-and-mortar building...). Cyberlynx and IDEA have families with whom they have worked for over a decade; in some cases, fifteen years or more. These families have unique needs and school staff have developed relationships with these students and parents. The disruption to their educational experience and outcomes would be far greater than what we experienced with COVID in 2020 if these students found themselves unable to receive services from their public school of choice and had to begin the process of integrating into a new program.

I respectfully ask you to consider what is best for Alaska's children. For all of them. Allow parents to choose the public program which best meets their needs. Please remove the "within district" clause. At the very least, "grandfather in" all students who are currently working with the other long-established programs in the Mat-Su Valley.

Alaskans need educational choices and need to see strong, positive academic outcomes for the investment we have already made in education. We want to see our hard-earned property dollars used more wisely before more is asked of us. Please stop pouring so much into technology that often serves to distract (and which you now try to regulate with the cellphone provision). Let's give students engaging and well-supported teachers and let's bring back the classics. Let's employ the methodology and pedagogy that developed the great minds of the past: our founding fathers, Nobel prize laureates, and the great inventors.

Thank you.

Catherine Whaley

Michael Mason

From: celeste novak [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 1:52 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB69

Date: March 21, 2025

To: Members of the Education Committee

Re: HB69

I'd like to thank everyone, legislators and staff, who are working to keep education properly funded. As I have said in messages to my representatives, we need people to be able to understand logic, science, and different points of view to help advance this world and solve the problems of today. What the new Republican Extremists want is a fearful, uneducated populace. This feeds their narrative that we need a supreme leader. We do not. We need independent thinkers who understand we are all interconnected and a solid education in logical thinking is one of the best ways to achieve that. We cannot do that while underfunding our classrooms.

Knowing we have a governor who has spent his whole time in office trying to get a job within the destructive trump administration, this time is critical. It is also important to note that the Alaska Commissioner of Education was in attendance at an illegal effort to dismantle the federal Dept of Education yesterday in DC. That tells me there's a lot of ignorance to counter, even among those who should know better. Please vote to increase the BSA to at least \$1000. The dribbles being suggested will not keep our schools intact. If parents want their religious programming funded, they can do that themselves. As an aside, I'd venture to say it's time to consider taxing churches since they have entered the political arena. We have a responsibility, and an ability, to educate our children, and now is the time to act by supporting an increase in the BSA.

To close, please support and fund public education. I feel it's time to focus on education without interference from organized religion, as our state constitution mandates.

Thank you, and may you each be guided by a clear conscience, a strong heart and hopefully, a background that includes a solid public education.

Respectfully,

Celeste Novak
[REDACTED]
Homer, AK 99603

Michael Mason

From: Christine COUTURIER [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 9:34 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Supporting the BSA increase

My name is Christine Couturier, and I am a concerned parent of 2 children enrolled in the French Immersion program at O'Malley. I am here to urge you to keep BSA at MINIMUM at \$1,000 to so that my daughter can still benefit from the program and that my son can continue to participate in the French Immersion program next year when the program moves on to Goldenview Middle School.

Immersion programs are at serious risk due to proposed reductions in staffing. Under the current budget proposal, elementary immersion programs will lose 12 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

Eliminating these positions could permanently dismantle immersion programs, disrupting my children's learning paths and negatively affecting future enrollment.

ASD has one of the most diverse and comprehensive immersion programs in the nation, with 2,848 students enrolled in Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Russian, Spanish, and Yup'ik programs.

These programs enhance student achievement, cultural understanding, and career readiness.

They are also a major asset to the district, attracting families from military, oil, medical, and other industries who value high-quality education opportunities.

Please support the BSA increase!

Michael Mason

From: Colette Gauthier Carr [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 9:50 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Immersion programs

Good morning,

My name is Colette Carr. I have been a foreign language teacher for more than 20 years now. I have taught kids from Kindergarten's age to 80 years old. For many sensible reasons, learning a new language is always a good idea but, by far, kids are the ones ready for it! Their brain is already wired to learn a language, so why not two?!

In the name of those children who are given an incredible opportunity to do so, please, save the French Immersion program at O'Malley Elementary. I am here to urge you to keep BSA at MINIMUM at \$1,000 so that students can continue to participate in this program.

Programs like this one enhance student achievement, cultural understanding, and career readiness. They are also a major asset to the district, attracting families from military, oil, medical, and other industries who value high-quality education opportunities.

We are always stronger together.
Thank you for your consideration,
Colette Carr

Michael Mason

From: Constance Jensen [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 10:25 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Do not pass HB 69

Please do not pass HB 69. All the money in the world won't help our education system. We need more than that: a new education perspective. I am a former educator, MEd., and left teaching because the system is not worth supporting. At. All.

Again, do not vote in favor of throwing more funds at a defunct system.

Thank you,

Constance Jensen
Kodiak.

Michael Mason

From: Connie Markis [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 9:42 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please approve HB 69!

Please follow the law of Alaska's constitution and fully fund our PUBLIC education so Alaska can once again be a strong and viable state to balance our economic engine.

Thank you,
Constance Markis
Anchorage, Alaska

Madame Chair Tobin and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

For the record, my name is Cyndy Mika and I am the Superintendent for the Kodiak Island Borough School District. I am here today to testify in strong support of HB 69 and an increase to the BSA of \$1000. This legislation is critical for the future of the Kodiak Island Borough School District and for the success of our students.

Since 2011, KIBSD enrollment has dropped by 21%. At the same time, our students who qualify for intensive needs have increased by an astounding 286%. In the same time frame, the price of heating oil has increased 30% and the cost of renting a two-bedroom apartment has increased 39%.

For Fiscal Year 2026, KIBSD faces an \$8 million deficit, forcing the Board of Education to make painful decisions, including the closure of an elementary school and the elimination of 23 positions. Since 2023, KIBSD has been forced to cut 72 positions in order to balance the budget—representing a 22% reduction in our workforce. Yet even with the cuts, the district has a shortfall of teachers annually.

Recruiting and retaining qualified educators has become increasingly difficult without the ability to offer competitive wages. Over the past three years, we have struggled to fill teaching positions without hiring from abroad, leading KIBSD to sponsor 26 teachers from the Philippines on visas just to ensure our students have certified teachers in their classrooms.

These financial uncertainties make it nearly impossible to plan effectively. One of the most critical provisions of HB 69 is the requirement that education funding appropriations pass the Legislature by March 15th each year. Knowing funding levels early allows school districts to make responsible financial decisions, prevent unnecessary disruptions, and provide stability for students, educators, and staff.

The passage of HB 69 and an increase of \$1000 to the BSA is essential. It is not just about balancing a budget—it is about ensuring that our students receive the high-quality education they deserve. Without additional funding, we will continue to see staff reductions, unfilled positions, and growing challenges in providing necessary services and opportunities to our students.

I urge you to support HB 69 and invest in the future of Alaska's children. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madam Chair and Committee Members--

My name is Cynthia Lagoudakis, from Petersburg. Last year my husband and I cared for a teen whose parents had passed away recently -- one due to illness and one by suicide. When her guardian grandfather developed cancer and had to travel to Seattle for treatment, we offered to help. Why does that matter? Because when she got bullied at school, staff worked around the clock to provide both her and us guidance and support.

When she mentioned to me that another student had contemplated suicide, I contacted staff. They were on top of the situation and quickly provided counseling and other support for that student.

This is to underscore that schools are not just places of learning. Staff must be skilled multitaskers. They also deal with physical and behavioral health, student citizenship, food insecurity, homelessness and more.

Staff deserve adequate compensation for the key roles played in our kids' learning, health, and socialization. They shouldn't have to work in buildings with leaking ceilings and other structural issues.

Education is a constitutional obligation in Alaska; and while the president may not think education is important, we Alaskans do. The base student allocation hasn't been raised significantly in over a decade. Please fund this important and overdue bill to maintain reasonable class sizes, and to provide more overall security and stability in our education system. We all will benefit.

I want to add that access to extracurricular activities provides incentive to students. Our foster teen went from failing grades to honor roll, in large part from the desire to be able to participate.

Thank you.

Michael Mason

From: Danica Saunders [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:56 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please vote NO on HB 69

Dear Alaskan Senators:

My name is Danica Saunders and I live in the Mat-Su Valley. My family has worked with Cyberlynx for many years now and I am concerned that HB 69 is supporting “open enrollment WITHIN districts”. This would greatly limit our choice to utilize the education resources of other state correspondence school options such as IDEA, Cyberlynx, Denali Peak, or Raven which have headquarters in other districts. The removal of options is NOT in the best interest of our students. Please take the time to fully consider the full impact of your vote on this matter and vote NO to preserve options for families which will produce the best educational outcomes for Alaska’s children.

I am also concerned that this bill does not specify where the money for the additional 1,000 per child will come from which makes me skeptical this is a fiscally responsible move.

Thank you for your time.

Danica Saunders

Michael Mason

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 7:10 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: House Bill 69 (HB 69)

Daniel Klingler
[REDACTED]
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
[REDACTED]

March 20, 2025

Senate Education Committee
Alaska State Capitol
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801
Email: Senate.Education@akleg.gov

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 69 (HB 69), which was recently passed by the Alaska House of Representatives and is currently under review by your committee. This bill proposes a \$1,000 increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for the upcoming year. Such a change is crucial not only for Kodiak but for communities throughout Alaska, as it will provide much-needed stability and foresight in educational budgeting and planning.

The passage of HB 69 is imperative to ensure that our educational institutions have the resources necessary to improve student outcomes. Increased funding directly translates into better educational materials, updated facilities, and the ability to attract and retain high-caliber educators who are committed to our students' success.

Personally, I have witnessed the challenges our local schools face due to insufficient funding. Over the years, I have seen educational programs being cut, class sizes increasing, and a lack of essential resources that are pivotal for a conducive learning environment. Enhanced funding through HB 69 would significantly alleviate these issues, benefiting students, families, and our broader community.

I sincerely appreciate your attention to this matter and your dedication to enhancing educational opportunities in Alaska. Supporting HB 69 is a vital step toward providing all Alaskan children with the education they deserve.

Thank you for considering my viewpoint and for your steadfast commitment to our state's educational future.

Sincerely,

Daniel Klingler

Michael Mason

From: Danielle Smith [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 3:30 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support the \$1,000 BSA increase for Alaska's schools

Dear Senators Tobin (chair), Stevens, Bjorkman, Kiehl and Cronk:

I write today to ask you to support a minimum increase of \$1,000 (and nothing less) to the BSA, as outlined in HB 69.^[L]_[SEP]

Alaska's public schools are in crisis and I genuinely see this as a crisis not just for our students, families and teachers but for communities like mine across our state.

Alaska is nothing without good public education systems. Who wants to live in or move to a community that doesn't have good public schools? No one! This is among the most important investments we can make in building our future leaders and citizens and thriving economies and communities.

I'm a proud product of a family, community and public school system that valued quality teachers and safe facilities. I will never again take what I had for granted and I believe every Alaskan student deserves the same.

Thank you all for your time, service and consideration,

Danielle Williams
30+ year Alaska resident
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99503

Michael Mason

From: Dannica Anderson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:25 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Written Testimony Regarding HB69

Madam Chair and Honorable members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share this with you today. My name is Dannica, and I'm a parent and a concerned community member living in remote Alaska. I'm writing to strongly urge you to support House Bill 69.

As a parent, I see firsthand the challenges our schools have been facing for years. And as an Alaskan I understand that the state has a constitutional obligation to properly fund education. Article VII, Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution clearly states that 'The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State. This is not a suggestion; it is a mandate.

Further, Alaska Statute 14.17.021 defines the purpose of the foundation program, which includes the Base Student Allocation, emphasizing the state's role in providing equitable funding. We are failing to meet this mandate.

Children are trying to learn in classrooms with leaks and broken windows, where resources are stretched thin. I see the dedicated teachers who are doing everything they can but are increasingly burdened by the lack of support. And in our remote communities and for our Alaska Native students, the challenges are even more profound.

It's heartbreaking to witness the impact of years of underfunding. I know of the difficult choices our school districts are being forced to make. We're talking about real, tangible impacts. Schools are struggling to decide whether to cut lunch programs to pay for necessities. Can you imagine having to explain to your child that they might not have lunch at school? It is because the state's funding hasn't kept pace with the rising costs of living.

As a community member, I see the ripple effect of this underfunding. When our schools struggle, our communities struggle. When our children don't have access to a quality education, our future is compromised. I especially see that our Alaska Native students and remote students are being underserved.

House Bill 69, with its much-needed increase to the Base Student Allocation, is not just a bill; it's a lifeline. It's about ensuring that every child in Alaska, regardless of where they live or their background, has the opportunity to succeed. It's about providing our schools with the resources they need to hire and retain quality educators, to provide culturally relevant education for our Alaskan children, and to provide the basic necessities that every student deserves.

The Lake and Peninsula School District anticipates a \$1,439,945.00 deficit in the 2025-2026 budget if there is no increase in the Base Student Allocation. If HB 69 is passed, LPSD would receive \$1,470,830.00. This would not allow us to bring back food service, however it would allow us to maintain our current classified and certified staff, pay utilities, and maintain programs we currently have in place for the upcoming school year.

This isn't about politics; it's about our children. It's about the future of Alaska. I urge you, as a parent and a concerned Alaskan, to support House Bill 69 and fulfill our state's constitutional and statutory obligations to our children. Thank you.

Dannica Anderson

Michael Mason

From: Darlene Trigg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 4:57 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Testimony for HB 69

Greetings Senate Education Committee Members,

My name is Darlene Trigg, and I am a lifelong Alaska resident, a Nome Beltz graduate, a parent of three Nome Beltz graduates, and a grandparent with one grandchild attending Nome Public Schools. I am also the President of the Board of Education for Nome Public Schools. Thank you for allowing me some time to hear my testimony on HB 69

I urge you to invest in public education in Alaska:

- An increase in education funding inside the BSA is crucial for children in Alaska. Previous years funding outside of the BSA has caused significant challenges to our district. Our district makes plans based on the BSA, In the last two years we've had to tell teachers that our district may have to lay off staff because we didn't have reliable funding to plan for the coming school year. It impacts our teacher morale, and moves the focus away from educating our children.
- Funding for public education has not kept pace with inflation, and as a result, our schools have been forced to make difficult decisions that have impacted the morale and consistency of our children's education. Nome Public Schools has worked hard over the last several years to ensure that our reduced purchasing power doesn't negatively affect our students' ability to learn. However, the inconsistent funding outside of the BSA makes it very challenging for both teachers and the community to focus on our children's needs.
- Without an increase to the BSA, our school district is facing a budget deficit of \$590,000, which would require us to cut \$550,000 in positions.
- Keeping the \$1,000 increase in the BSA will allow Nome Public Schools to maintain our current staffing levels and increase support for the children and families served by our district. It will help us continue the positive gains we've made in math, reading, and language scores. Additionally, it will provide our teachers with a sense of stability so they can focus on what is most important—teaching our kids.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this information and for your commitment to Alaska's future.

Sincerely,
Darlene Trigg

Michael Mason

From: Dave Mayo-Kiely [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 3:32 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

I am writing to express my support for HB 69. Alaska schools have suffered from flat funding for years. Yes there have been one time increases in funding but what districts need to adequately plan for future budgets is a permanent increase to the Base Student Allocation.

I have had children in the Anchorage School District since the fall of 2009. Since that time I have seen a steady decrease in services that can be directly tied to an effective decrease in state funding for education. There has been an increase in class sizes and a decrease in supports and support staff.

Please pass a permanent increase to the Base Student Allocation.

Thank you

Dave Mayo-Kiely
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99507

Michael Mason

From: David Mcelroy [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:29 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

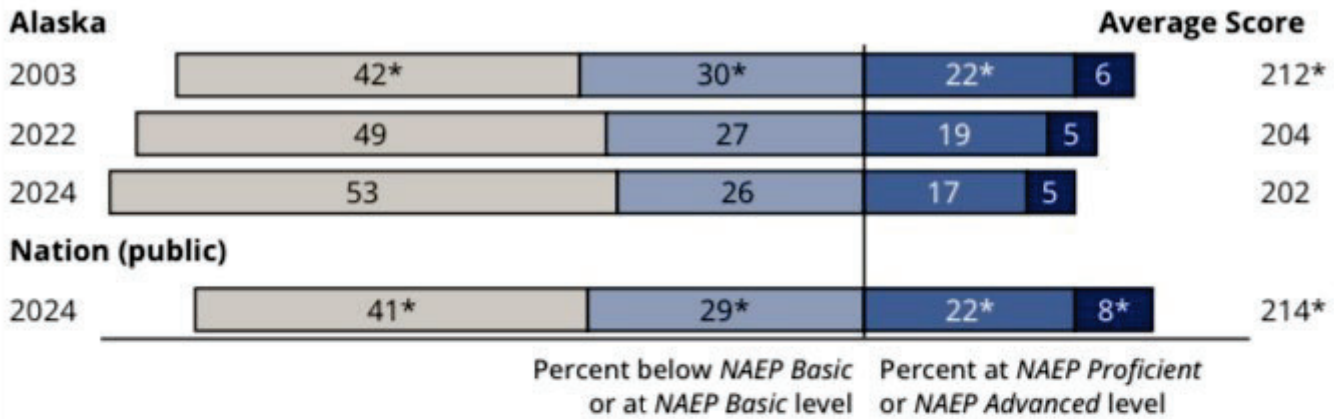
Please pass HB69! We are losing population, and poor educational opportunities are part of the reason. I have lived in and loved Alaska for over 60 years, but I would not move here now if I had young children. I also would not open a business here today because I might well have to recruit educated employees from Outside. And they would not want to come to Alaska if they had kids!

It is devastating to see results like this:

2024 READING STATE SNAPSHOT REPORT

ALASKA ■ GRADE 4 ■ PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NAEP ACHIEVEMENT-LEVEL PERCENTAGES AND AVERAGE SCORE RESULTS

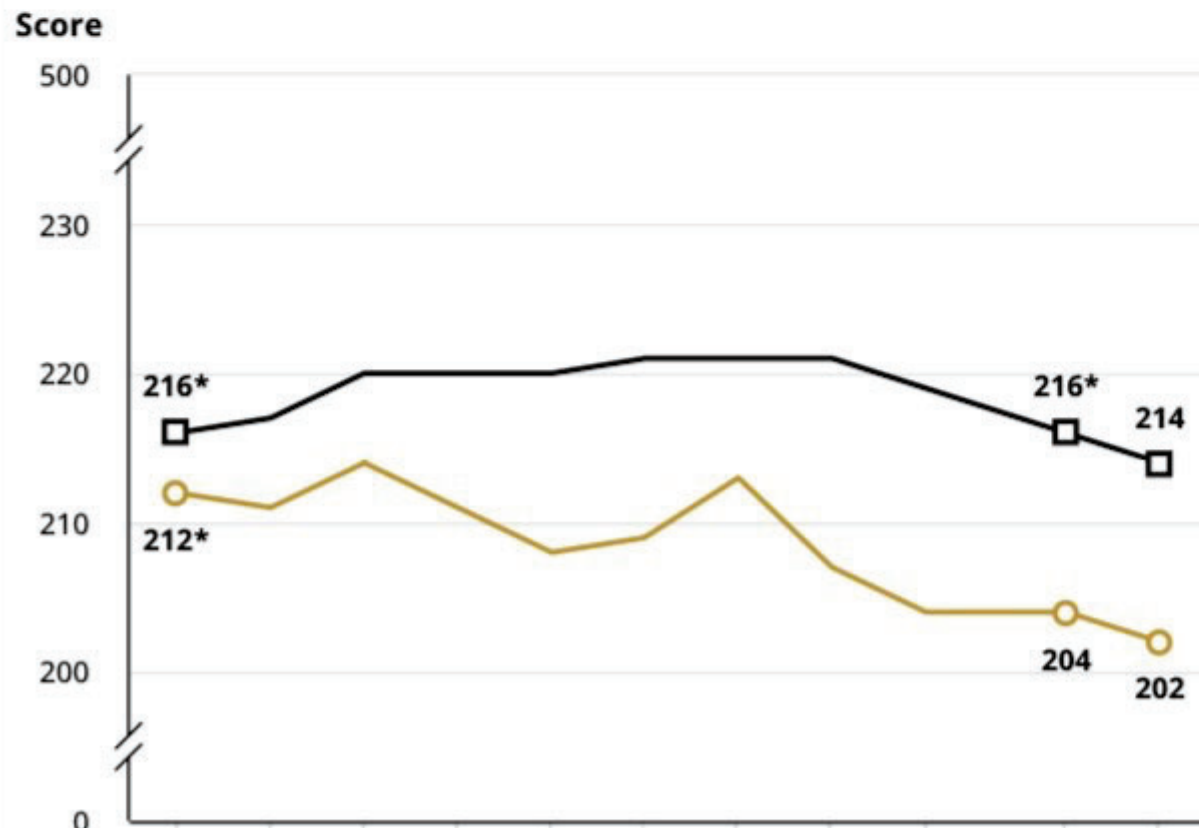


Below NAEP Basic
 NAEP Basic
 NAEP Proficient
 NAEP Advanced

* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from the state's results in 2024. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.

NOTE: NAEP achievement levels are to be used on a trial basis and should be interpreted and used with caution. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

AVERAGE SCORES FOR STATE/JURISDICTION AND THE NATION (PUBLIC)



You have the power to change these numbers. Please do so!

Sincerely,

David McElroy

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Deborah Bower [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 9:42 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support HB 69

First I would like to thank you for hearing my testimony regarding this subject. I am a 32 year resident of Alaska and Kodiak Island. This is important because it also means I have been involved in the public school system for 32 years on Kodiak Island. Raising 4 children and now 2 grandchildren through this education system. Over the years, I have seen the drastic reduction in our support for what I feel is our most important resource to the State of Alaskaour youth! We have a responsibility to educate our children and give them reasons to want to remain in Alaska. We have to do better in providing stable funding to our schools as we are in the mist of closing schools, forcing children into large class sizes and decaying school buildings. This is just a few things, I am sure you know how we are currently suffering in our education system. I plead with you to please look to the future of our children and provide a per student increase in funding so our schools can have balanced planning ability. This is the only way we can try to get our educational system back on track. They need to have a stable budget to rely on and build for the future. Can you even imagine trying to budget for a large family if your employer never provided to you the salary you are working for or if they will actually pay you in the future???? Well that is how I feel our schools have been workingflying in the blind. This is not acceptable and it is our students that are paying the price.

These are only comments from a grandmother that as of this year will not have any students left in the school therefore I am pleading for all of the other children that will grow up in Alaska. If we as a state provide support and education to our children they will be our future! I know this because I have just graduated from University of Alaska Fairbanks my grandson, a UA Scholar, who is now working in Alaska and my granddaughter is part of the high school senior class of 2025 also a UA Scholar that will be attending University of Alaska Anchorage. Education works but we have to provide a stable budget to our education system.

Thank you,
Deborah J. Bower

Michael Mason

From: Diana Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 7:41 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: BSA increase: at least \$1000

Senate Education Committee,

Amy BSA increase of less than \$1000 is a cut to our public education. Support Alaska's families and future with a permanent increase to the BSA of at least \$1000.

Sincerely,

Diana Johnson

Michael Mason

From: Donna Carlo [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 7:02 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69 - support of - my vote YES

I would like to support raising the student allocation. I don't understand after 40 years in Anchorage that within a year there can be such a financial crisis of so many millions. I think there needs to be a prevention plan but I'm still confused.

I could not imagine the teachers, the librarians who help the children with reading, basic skills can be cut. They not only help teach, they help inspire, introduce the kids to new things in life like discovering what books can do. They can help show them a new world, help learn words, help with imagination, to read and find a new world.

What are other communities in the US doing with budget cuts? What can we do to mitigate that 5 years out before a crisis happens?

Thank You

Michael Mason

From: Donna Sorrells [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 9:55 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB69

My name is Donna Sorrells. I have two children enrolled in the French Immersion program at O'Malley Elementary. I am a new resident to AK having just moved here in the Summer of 2024. We moved here at the encouragement of my oldest daughter stationed at JBER but we decided to settle here because of the opportunity of the immersion programs here in Anchorage. I have been a parent for a long time. These programs are some of the best in the nation. My two youngest children (Kindergarten and First grade) have thrived at O'Malley's French Immersion program. I see so much growth in their learning and the teachers are superb and supportive. I strongly urge you to keep BSA at a minimum of \$1000 so my children can continue to participate in the French Immersion program along with the other immersion programs in the Anchorage School District. These programs, when allowed to have the funds they need to operate, will attract more people like our family to Anchorage and encourage us to stay (we just bought a home here yesterday because of our commitment to keep our children in French Immersion).

Thank you for your time,
Donna Sorrells

Michael Mason

From: Dorrance Cullison [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 5:22 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Oppose HB19

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.

\$1000 increase the state simply can not afford. There is no sugar coating that.

Thank you
Dorrance Cullison
Eagle River AK

Michael Mason

From: Dylan Saunders [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 1:30 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Opposed to HB 69

Dear Alaska Senators:

My name is Dylan Saunders and I am writing to oppose the passing of HB 69 in its current form. I live in the Mat-Su Valley. My family has worked with and currently works with Cyberlynx. I am concerned that HB 69 is supporting "open enrollment WITHIN districts." This would greatly limit our choice to utilize the educational resources of other state correspondence school options such as IDEA, Cyberlynx, Denali Peak, or Raven which are headquartered in other districts. The removal of options is NOT in the best interests of our students. Please take time to consider the full impact of your vote on this matter and vote NO to preserve options for families which will produce the best educational outcomes for Alaska's children.

As written, this bill would limit Mat-Su families to a single option: Mat-Su Central. Other Alaskan students could potentially be left with no option at all. While Mat-Su Central with its large, new building may be a great choice for some, it should not be the only choice, as other options intended to serve students across the state have been operating in this capacity for a longer time and often at a lower cost to taxpayers. Mat-Su Central serves over 2,300 students and built a 45,000 square foot facility at a cost of over \$24 million, at a time when there is a \$22 million deficit in education funds. If Mat-Su Central becomes the only option, a change in the programs offered at any time could reduce options to zero under the current bill.

I also feel that the bill is vague and does not address how the bill will be funded.

Sincerely,
Dylan Saunders



Dylan Saunders
1st Officer/Mutineer
BountysChild.com

Michael Mason

From: Ellen Jaimes [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 11:34 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Testimony in support of HB69 and \$1,000 increase to BSA

Dear Chair Löki Tobin, Vice Chair Stevens, and members of the Senate Education committee,

My name is Ellen Jaimes and I called in to testify yesterday but did veer from my notes. Below are my notes/written comments. I want to thank you very much for your efforts to increase funding and support Alaska's system of public schools.

Thank you, Ellen Jaimes, Anchorage Alaska 99508

My name is Ellen Jaimes; my oldest child is a Kindergartener in Anchorage

I am testifying in strong support of HB 69 and a \$1,000 increase to the BSA

ASD's current FY26 Budget proposes to increase class sizes in K-3rd grade from its current levels of 22(K)-26(3rd) to 26(K)-30(3rd grade)

Instructing a class of 26 Kindergarteners would be like trying to transport 26 kids in a 24-seat bus with just one driver. There is no way to make it work.

Nearly a dozen U.S. States currently cap K3 ratios between 1:15 and 1:20^[1].

I don't know how class sizes of 26-30 in these early grades can do anything but decrease the quality of education provided to each and every student

I DO know it will worsen existing problems of teacher burnout and teaching vacancies which already plague our district.

My child arrived in her K/1 classroom this year with a long-term substitute teacher and no director overseeing her special program; I say this not because our situation is unique, but because it is the norm. This school-year began with over a hundred unfilled teaching positions across ASD.

Schools across the state need a permanent increase to the BSA and \$1,000 is the bare minimum amount required to uphold our state's constitutional duty to provide adequate education.

Next year, this increase would allow Anchorage schools to restore Pupil Teacher Ratios to 20-24 across the early grades. It will reverse proposed cuts to Gifted and Special Education, Immersion programs, nurses, librarians, middle school sports.

I know that our state is facing a challenging financial outlook this year, which is precisely why adequate and predictable funding is SO important for our schools NOW.

Children need and indeed have a right to a functional public school system; and investing in this system of public schools is a direct investment into the future of our great state.

Please pass HB 69 with a \$1,000 increase to the base student allocation.

^[1] NM, GA, NV, MN, AL, CT, FL, NC, AK, LA & MT see: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED608353.pdf>

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Dena'inaq ełnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu. (Dena'ina)

I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina. (English)

Michael Mason

From: Emily Ferry [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 9:44 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support of hb 69

Good evening,

Earlier this week I listened to a kindergarten teacher describe what it was like to try to teach 35 five year olds all day, every day.

Later in the week I toured UAF with my son. It was lovely. I was very pleased to walk away knowing that we have such a high quality, affordable option for him. And the student to faculty ratio of 10 to 1 is amazing.

But the more I thought about it, the more frustrated I felt. Why do college students get such personalized attention while we completely ignore the decades of research about the importance of high quality early education?

My 16 year old son joked that it's like the Hunger Games. Funny, not funny.

We should not be running our education system like the Hunger Games.

Please pass HB 69 AND do the difficult and unsavory work of raising revenue. I ask my kids to contribute to our household, and as an Alaskan, I should be contributing to my state.

Thank you,
Emily Ferry

[REDACTED]
Juneau
[REDACTED]

Honorable Members of the Alaska Legislature,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 69, an increase to the BSA. My name is Eric Filardi, and I am the proud principal of Mendenhall River Community School in Juneau. As a Tier III educator with over a decade of experience in Alaskan education, I have been privileged to serve in roles ranging from classroom teacher to STEM Director to principal, receiving recognition such as the 2024 AAESP National Distinguished Principal Nomination, 2023 Alaska Region II Principal of the Year, 2020 PolarTREC Educator, and being a 2017 Alaska State Teacher of the Year Finalist. Today, I testify before you not only as an advocate for my school but as a father of a six-year-old first grader who attends the very institution I lead.

The need for a significant and permanent increase to the BSA has never been more critical. Despite the resilience and commitment of educators across Alaska, our schools face unsustainable challenges. At Mendenhall River Community School, we began the school year with four of our ten general education teaching positions vacant. Two of these positions were filled on the first day of school, but the other two required emergency-certified hires six and eight weeks into the term. This resulted in a last-minute reassignment of a kindergarten teacher to a multigrade 4/5 classroom, a decision that, while necessary, strained morale and compromised the stability our students need. Until now, our team members - and students - continue to feel the strain of these last minute decisions.

This is not an isolated issue but a systemic one exacerbated by flat funding, historic inflation, and unpredictable budgets. Staffing shortages have led to situations where one of our four K-6 special education staff members is virtual. While virtual services are a creative solution, they place an undue burden on the remaining team members, who must support both the virtual staff member and the students they serve. As a building leader, I am stretched too thin to adequately support our new teachers, leaving them without the mentorship and guidance critical to their success and, ultimately, the success of our students.

When decisions regarding the BSA drag out, the uncertainty becomes insurmountable. This uncertainty leaves schools unable to plan effectively and erodes trust in the system. Ultimately, we will lose our educators—dedicated professionals who can no longer endure the unpredictability and instability caused by delayed funding decisions.

The impact of these challenges extends beyond our classrooms. As a parent, I worry deeply about the quality of education my daughter and her peers receive. Flat funding has left schools unable to invest in the resources, staff, and innovative programs that foster academic achievement and growth. How can we expect our children to thrive when their teachers are overworked, under-supported, and facing untenable conditions?

There is an urgent need for predictable and equitable funding. Without a permanent increase in the BSA to address inflation and rising costs, schools cannot maintain high academic standards or meet accountability requirements like those outlined in the Alaska Reads Act. To keep pace with inflation since FY11, the BSA requires an increase of \$1,808. This is not merely a

number—it represents the gap between what our students need and what our schools can currently provide.

I urge the Legislature to act decisively and invest in Alaska's future by increasing the BSA. The proposed increases outlined in House Bill 69—including an additional \$1,000 on July 1, 2025, and annual adjustments tied to inflation thereafter—are a step in the right direction. However, these changes must be implemented without delay to prevent further erosion of our schools' purchasing power and ensure that every child, in every community, has access to the quality education they deserve.

Education is the foundation of our state's future. By fully funding the actual cost of education, the Legislature can reverse the out-migration of families, support economic development, and uphold the constitutional responsibility to provide a meaningful education for all Alaskans. In benefit of the students, families, and educators in Alaska, I ask you to prioritize this investment in our children and our communities.

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

Respectfully,

Eric Filardi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Filardi".

Principal, Mendenhall River Community School

Michael Mason

From: Eric Paule [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 3:46 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Base student allocation

I support the \$1000 increase in the base student allocation as part of a whole-hearted effort to save Alaska's crumbling public school system. I also ask that you avoid using special allocations to fund extraneous and harmful policies such as private school tuition and extracurricular activity support, which have little to do with public education.

This may well require additional state revenues, and we should not shy away from this responsibility. The idea of the natural resources extraction sector once again pulling its own weight, as it once did, gives me zero heartburn.

Thank you.

Eric Paule

[REDACTED]
Anchorage AK 99504

Michael Mason

From: Erika Burr [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 8:00 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: In support of HB 69 and (at least) \$1000 increase to BSA

Dear Senators,

Thank you for taking time to understand why adequate funding is important to me and my students, though you have patiently heard so many of our stories already. I was born and educated in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, where I have now taught high school for the past fifteen years. I urge you to take a strong stand and **vote to pass HB 69 and the \$1000 BSA increase.**

How we spend our money shows what we **value**. Students, educators, and families feel funding decisions every day. With this \$1000-increase to the BSA to provide **adequate funding**, we can have functional buildings, reasonable class sizes, and strong academic, athletic and arts programs. These make school a **joy** for students and their families and set them up for healthy, successful lives contributing to our Alaskan **economy and communities.**

Insufficient funding makes school a **demoralizing** place for students, families and educators. Without a \$1000+ BSA increase, increasingly large class sizes will limit personal connections for students and families, and sap joy and motivation from learning. Limited educator time and minimal program resources frustrate and alienate families whose students need more support.

As a teacher, *large classes break my heart* because I only get to know the students who actively strive to teach me who they are and what they need. **I don't even have the chance** to learn what kinds of support and feedback will best help the rest of my students learn.

A large class is more stressful and tiring in-class and requires more preparation and documentation time outside of class. This has a direct impact on a **teacher's effectiveness** and their **satisfaction** with their job. Every exhausted educator faces a tough decision: do they stay in the classroom continuing to feel so **inadequate**, or do they pursue another opportunity that they have as a well-educated and accomplished leader and problem-solver? Remember this as we look for ways to **recruit and retain skilled teachers** for our children! What we *really need* are **reasonable** working conditions including manageable class sizes and adequate program funding so we can give our students our best! We aren't asking for an easy job, just one that is **possible.**

Large classes are stressful for students, too. Even with clever systems and best practices in classroom culture, in a class of 30 or more, teacher time and attention is stretched to breaking.

For the large number of students who need significant support building relationships with adults and peers or who need a closer relationship to be able to learn, this **scarcity** of time and attention **erodes the possibility of a productive classroom.** They learn that they are **not valued**, and they learn to check-out because they feel like *no one has the time or energy for them.*

But **YOU can** show our students and families that they are **valued**, that they absolutely **are worth** our time and our money. They need to hear it from you! Please vote to **pass HB 69 and the \$1000 BSA increase** (or more!) and work to secure a veto-proof majority on this legislation. You must fight for this BSA increase to ensure that our right to education, guaranteed in the state Constitution, is protected through adequate, sustained funding for our neighborhood public schools!

Thank you for taking **every action** to make funding choices that tell our students and families **that education matters** to our leaders.

Erika G. Burr
Teacher, Parent, Alaskan
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Michael Mason

From: Erin Michelle Arno [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:37 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Keep money in our schools!

We're having conversations right now about how we're going to organize our school next year while losing 3 teachers. It's heartbreaking to talk while our teammates are unsure of where they even will teach next year. Our schools need funding to keep classes from going up to 35 in elementary classrooms. 26 kindergartners is a disservice to all. Raise the BSA!

Erin Arno
Denali Montesorri
Anchorage AK

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: ethan laufer [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:22 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Ethan Laufer, and I am a lifelong Alaskan who has worked as a technical specialist in the oil industry. I am writing today to express my strong support for House Bill 69, which seeks to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for Alaska's public schools. I urge you to advocate for its passage without hesitation.

I am the father of two boys who currently attend the O'Malley French Immersion Program—one in kindergarten and the other in 1st grade. As an engaged parent and an active member of the Anchorage community, I have seen firsthand the crucial role that high-quality education plays in shaping our children's futures. Unfortunately, Alaska's education system has long faced significant underfunding, which has led to strained resources, school closures, larger class sizes, fewer educational opportunities, and a decline in overall instruction quality. Increasing the BSA is essential to addressing these challenges and providing our schools with the resources they need to deliver the education our students deserve.

The O'Malley French Immersion Program is a prime example of the kind of innovative educational initiatives that are vital to the success of our community and the future of our state. Research shows that students in immersion programs not only develop superior cognitive and life skills but are also highly attractive to families looking to relocate to Alaska. These programs foster global awareness and contribute to the state's growth. Unfortunately, despite growing enrollment, programs like French Immersion are disproportionately affected by budget cuts and staffing shortages. If the BSA is not increased, Anchorage's schools will struggle to maintain and expand these vital programs.

In fact, if additional funding is not allocated soon, our own school, O'Malley, may be at risk of closing. Language immersion programs like O'Malley's are critical for cognitive development and for preparing well-rounded individuals who will contribute to Alaska's workforce, national security, and global engagement. Losing these programs would have lasting consequences on student retention, family stability, and the overall growth of our state.

I believe the BSA needs to be increased by at least \$1,000 per student in order to reinstate the programs that have been lost due to years of underfunding. This increase will help provide schools with the funding necessary to restore critical programs, hire and retain qualified teachers, reduce class sizes, and ensure students have the resources they need

to succeed. Without this increase, Alaska's education system will continue to face severe challenges.

Increasing the BSA is not just about funding—it is an investment in Alaska's future. By supporting HB 69, you will ensure that schools can hire and retain qualified teachers, expand extracurricular activities, enhance mental health services, and invest in technology. These components are essential to providing a high-quality education and critical for attracting professionals and their families to Alaska, which is vital for the state's economic future.

Furthermore, I do not support HB 76 or SB 82, as these bills do not address the urgent need for increasing the BSA, and I have concerns regarding proposed changes to the charter school approval process. Alaska is fortunate to have excellent charter schools, and the current process for approval has worked well for our communities.

I urge you to support HB 69 and advocate for an increase to the Base Student Allocation by at least \$1,000. This investment will ensure that students across Alaska continue to have access to the education they deserve, and it will help preserve vital programs like Language Immersion, which have been a cornerstone of Anchorage's educational system for over 30 years.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue. I trust that, with your leadership, we can secure a brighter future for Alaska's students, our community, and the long-term success of our state.

Sincerely,
Ethan Laufer
Technical Specialist, Oil Industry
Father of Leon and Arlo Laufer

Sent from my iPad

Michael Mason

From: Eve Ryan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:04 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support a \$1,000 BSA increase

Dear Senators,

Please consider passing a \$1,000 BSA increase! Please be sure to fully fund the increase in the operating budget so our students, our schools, and our communities can thrive. Respectfully,

Eve

Michael Mason

From: Fallon Lind [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 11:54 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for HB69 – Enhancing Education for Our Future

To whom this may concern,

I Fallon, a mother of 3, am writing to express my strong support for HB69 as it moves to the Senate for approval. I believe that this bill represents a significant investment in our students' futures and will have a positive impact on our community. My older two are in elementary school and our youngest will be joining them this fall.

The proposed increase of \$1000 in base student allocation is a welcome step toward improving educational outcomes. ASD's commitment to using these funds to reduce class sizes and reinstate valuable programs—including IGNITE which my oldest son is in and he looks forward to it, language immersion, middle school sports, and battle of the books—demonstrates a clear plan to enhance our educational environment. Smaller class sizes allow for more individualized attention, while reinstating these programs will not only enrich our students' academic experience but also foster creativity, critical thinking, and overall well-being.

As a constituent who is passionate about the quality of education, I am confident that HB69 will help create a more supportive and dynamic learning environment for our children. I urge you to support this legislation and help ensure that our schools have the resources needed to prepare students for a bright future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to seeing positive changes in our education system as a result of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Fallon Allen

Michael Mason

From: Francis McLaughlin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 7:38 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: senator.forest.dunbar@akleg.gov
Subject: Strong Public Schools for a Strong Economy

Dear Senators,

We have 2 daughters in an ASD school, Scenic Park Elementary Chinese Immersion. We need strong public schools for a strong economy. Schools produce the skilled workforce that businesses need. Public education is the choice of the super majority of families and the foundation of the Alaska economy. The best thing that the Governor and State Legislature can do for the economy and the future of our State is to fund public education now. This is a core responsibility of government. It is written in the Alaska Constitution.

Something is very wrong in Alaska if a dad like me is compelled to write to you about education funding. One-third of the teachers that will be fired will leave teaching in Alaska and not come back. We should be hiring more teachers, not firing them.

Stabilizing school funding right now ensures that very successful school programs like IGNITE and Language Immersion can continue. Likewise, smaller class sizes lead to more successful kids. Education is an economic issue and it keeps families here in Alaska.

Please pass HB69 quickly with at least \$1,000 for the BSA.

Thank you,
Francis and Rose McLaughlin
Anchorage, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Franco Venuti [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 4:12 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

**Franco**

4:04 PM (0 minutes ago)

Venuti [REDACTED]to [Senate.Education](#)

Thank you for your service to Alaska. I testified yesterday at the LIO in Homer. My name is Caroline Venuti, and I am a retired educator. I taught in rural and urban schools for 40 years. I tried to help your awareness of what would happen to education in Alaska if HB 69 is changed to a smaller BSA.

I didn't have time to offer a solution to fund the change in the 2-minute testimony time. When I was 16, I began a summer job in Kodiak at a local cannery. My first check had a notation of a \$10.00 school tax. I asked my mother, and she explained that this was a way to support the schools. Everyone paid it in their first paycheck of the year. It made sense; I loved school and should have some skin in the game.

I wonder if you would consider a school tax for every worker in Alaska of \$75.00. It would be every worker, including slope workers, you, and me. I believe Alaskans are not totally blind to the fact that we need to pay for our schools.

I hope this will be a consideration in supporting the passing of HB 69 with a BSA of \$1,000. Think of the good this will do for all communities! Don't leave any child behind in education.

Caroline Venuti



Michael Mason

From: Renee Saunders [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:15 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69 - vote NO!

Dear Alaska Senators:

My name is Gavin Saunders and I am writing to oppose the passing of HB 69 in its current form. I live in the Mat-Su Valley. My family has worked with and currently works with CYBERLYNX. I am concerned that HB 69 is supporting "open enrollment WITHIN DISTRICTS." This would greatly limit our choice to utilize the educational resources of other state correspondence school options such as IDEA, Cyberlynx, Denali Peak, or Raven which are headquartered in other districts. The removal of options is NOT in the best interests of our students. Please take time to consider the full impact of your vote on this matter and vote NO to preserve options for families which will produce the best educational outcomes for Alaska's children.

As written, this bill would limit Mat-Su families to a single option: Mat-Su Central. Other Alaskan students could potentially be left with no option at all. While Mat-Su Central with its large, new building may be a great choice for some, it should not be the only choice, as other options intended to serve students across the state have been operating in this capacity for a longer time and often at a lower cost to taxpayers. Mat-Su Central serves over 2,300 students and built a 45,000 square foot facility at a cost of over \$24 million, at a time when there is a \$22 million deficit in education funds. If Mat-Su Central becomes the only option, a change in the programs offered at any time could reduce options to zero under the current bill.

I also feel that the bill is too vague and does not address how the bill will be funded. Please vote NO.

Sincerely,
GAVIN SAUNDERS

Michael Mason

From: Rob and Gina Carpenter [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 3:41 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: School funding bill

Hello!

I support the increase base allocation for school funding in exchange for a reduced dividend. People that move here want quality education for their children or they won't come here, or they won't stay.

Alaska has been built by quality individuals who are drawn here and share their talents and expertise to better our state and communities. I have seen it time and again living in Dillingham for 40 years.

Now I have a granddaughter in the Anchorage school district and class sizes are big. She has excelled by participating in after school middle school sports. Something that is currently on the chopping block.

This is our drug deterrent. Take some of the millions from marijuana and alcohol sales taxes to support the continued and vital support that strong education provides to a state. Please.

Thank you.

-Gina Carpenter retired RN

Dillingham / Aleknagik / Anchorage

Michael Mason

From: G Nelson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:37 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Full support for HB 69 Education Funding Bill

Good afternoon,

It is bright and sunny here in Anchorage, students and teachers in our struggling public schools have just finished their first week back after spring break. They desperately need your support of bill HB 69, which provides at least adequate funding to maintain the current programs and staff that our students, parents and community deserve.

As a retired teacher/librarian from Anchorage public schools I urge you to stand strong for our children and the teachers who work tirelessly to support student success.

Our communities are only as creative, productive and resilient as our public schools.

Thank you for your wise leadership and support of HB 69.

Gretchen Nelson

[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK

Michael Mason

From: Heather Johnson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 6:01 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support of HB69

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 69, to increase the base student allocation for education in Alaska. I have a child in an ASD elementary school, and have watched our school cut staff members, learning opportunities, and increase class sizes over the years in response to static education funding. My child will enter 6th grade next year, where classes already have 35 students (and teachers have 150-160 students) and are projected to increase to up to 40 students under the current funding paradigm. This is simply unacceptable. Such numbers severely limit meaningful learning and engagement. When I talk to friends that live elsewhere in the country, they are shocked by the class sizes we have in Anchorage. Currently, my family is considering leaving Alaska due to this education situation, as we want to live in a community that invests in our children.

Please support HB69 to give our kids a better education, and enable families to stay in Alaska.

Sincerely, Heather Johnson
[REDACTED] Anchorage

Michael Mason

From: Holly Cannon [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:12 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69

School districts across Alaska are struggling to keep up with rising costs in all aspects of their operation. Without additional funding, more neighborhood schools will close, families will be left scrambling, and teachers will continue to leave. When our schools suffer, so does our economy and communities. Families move away, businesses struggle to hire, and the state loses the very workforce it needs to thrive.

Investing in public education is about the future of our entire state.

Thank you,

Holly Cannon
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99516

Michael Mason

From: Irena Adams [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:03 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: increase the BSA testimony

Respetable senate education committee.

I would like to add my testimony in favour of increasing BSA for our schools.
I am a school librarian of 28 years in the remote Unalaska city school district.
We currently have around 400 students K-12. 2/3 of our student population is bi-lingual, most are immigrants working class families.

Our students are a bright, capable, creative, kind, exemplary generation of your people.
Despite the fact that we are 900 miles away from the closest city, our community encourages pursuit of exemplary education and many scholarships awarded for our graduates to enter college and postgraduate programs.

This is what however hinges their perspectives and growth: constant cuts to the school budget programs and funds. Over my work here in Unalaska for the public school (that was not so long ago named one of the best 100 in the country !) I witnessed a significant decline in the quality education we offer to each new generation.

Gone and forgotten art, Unangan language and culture program, physical education and many sports, drama and speech debate club, school nurse, full time counselor, two foreign languages programs, wood and metal shop education.

Library funds were cut to the bare minimum and we lost assistant positions, and currently have closed doors 1/2 the day as librarians share workload between two schools. Our libraries are still a state of art from testimony of every visitor on our island, but underfunding will eventually destroy it.
Though our district manages to attract young and talented teachers, it also has a hard time to keep the best and talented mentors as people with teaching professions can not make a living in our town. There is no housing for teachers and teachers salaries are way below average town earnings.

In good years our district was able to purchase 500 new books every year for each school, this year we only got 350 for both and next year dues to cuts proposed zero! True, the price for the book totals it higher than ever before. Does it mean we should stop funding libraries? In the age when everything changes rapidly, in the world when information is muddled, libraries and school libraries, in particular, are one of rare places where an adolescent can get a grip on the world, to secure its place in the future, to understand himself, herself, to learn, to grow.

and yet school is a vibrant place where students don't want to leave after the bell rings.
My students need new books and new technology to be competitive in the workplace of the future and it is denied to them. Our children need nutritional lunches and our biggest fishing port in America can not afford serving fish or seafood even once a month, not to mention fresh fruit and vegetables. Every

staff meeting we hear "cut, cut, cut" and it is disheartening and sad that in the richest country in the world education simply has no value in the eyes of politicians.

We teach our students to be good citizens, to grow, to be good people, respectful and loving to the country that brought them up. But does this country love and respect them back?

According to our budget, the needs of students are secondary to everything else.

I have HS students who want to be librarians when they grow up, it always been a highlight of my profession to see them entering doctorate programs and military training, leaving little notes: thank you for installing love to reading, love for education. This year I tell them not to ! you are better off driving a truck for living, the job you want to love will not pay for your house or feed your family. I am a school librarian of 28 years and this is my testimony.

How did it happen? How did we allow it to happen?
Please fund our school, our future.

Irena Adams

[REDACTED]

www.ucsd.net

*Unalaska City School District
Library Coordinator*

[REDACTED]

Currently reading 

“What's the point of having a voice if you're gonna be silent in those moments you shouldn't be?”
— Angie Thomas, [The Hate U Give](#)

I live and work on the land of the Unanga̋ people.

Collectively, Unanga̋ is the proper term for the Native people of the Aleutian region. The words Unanga̋, Ungangan, or Unanga, meaning "original people" can also be translated to "seasiders."

Michael Mason

From: Jamie Burgess [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 3:50 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for HB69

Greetings Honored Members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing to you today to express support for HB69 in my capacity as Superintendent for Nome Public Schools. During my six year tenure as superintendent, I have seen our budget dwindle as we have weathered large increases in energy costs, insurance costs, and cost of living increases for our staff, all against the backdrop of flat-funding from our State Legislature. We have cut positions left vacant due to attrition, trimmed our budgets for supplies and textbooks to the bone, and delayed replacing aging electronic equipment such as student computers and school copiers.

A BSA increase is absolutely necessary at this point to avoid drastic personnel reductions in FY26 - we would need to cut 4 additional teachers at our elementary school, have no library services and only a principal to run the school without any assistant principal, counselor or social worker. We would need to cut 6 teachers at our middle/high school, resulting in very large class sizes and a severe reduction in our ability to offer electives or even higher level college-prep courses. We currently have no ability to save for our participating share for any Capital Projects, so we have no plans to submit any to DEED this coming fall, meaning our deferred maintenance backlog will get longer and longer.

For districts such as Nome, we have a participating share of 30% of the cost of any capital project funded by the State. We must save for those costs for the projects on our Six Year Major Maintenance Plan by taking some money out of the general funds (provided by the BSA and City of Nome appropriation) and transferring it to our Capital Improvement Fund. We have had a project to replace the obsolete fire alarm system at our elementary school on the CIP list for years, but we will not re-submit it this year, as we couldn't cover our participating share if it is funded. We also need to replace the leaking roof on our elementary school; again, we will not submit this as we have no participating share.

I am deeply appreciative of the current HB69 - the \$1,000 BSA increase will allow us to avoid cuts, and work towards the reading proficiency incentive. Also mandating an education funding by March 15th will give districts a reasonable amount of time to build our own budgets and plan for staffing accordingly without having to experience the challenges of "pink-slipping" teachers and then attempting to rehire them. For Nome, that is likely a complete loss of some teachers, as they would likely leave Nome entirely if laid off. We are forced at this point to hire many staff from overseas, as our hiring pool is comprised almost entirely of these individuals. We would prefer to retain our dedicated teaching staff who have developed local knowledge and connections already from their time in Nome.

Thank you for your time.

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Thanks.

Jamie S. Burgess
Superintendent, Nome Public Schools



Excellence, Kindness, Joy

Michael Mason

From: Jan Caulfield [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 2:26 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SUPPORT HB 69

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

Jan Caulfield
Juneau, AK
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Jane Beck [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 1:13 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB69 comments

Members of the Education Committee

Re: HB69

As a 43-year resident of Alaska and professional woman who has dedicated her career to promoting and improving education in this great State, I strongly encourage you to, at the very least, maintain the \$1000 BSA if not increase it to the appropriate level to compensate for years of underfunding. For almost 20 years (ten as Executive Director), I worked for Project GRAD, a nonprofit committed to supporting the most rural and isolated schools in the Kenai Peninsula School District, a vast school district spanning 25,600 square miles and including 42 schools, several of them off of the main road system and accessible only by air or boat. I have seen first hand how cuts to this district have negatively impacted principals, teachers, classrooms, and most importantly students.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is facing a \$17M deficit. This is enormous! How in the world do we expect our dedicated teachers and educators to deliver quality instruction to our children with less and less funding in the face of rising costs and inflation and what looks to be a significant dismantling of the US Dept. of Education on the horizon?

I would like to address some of the opposition to this bill.


***Criticism of our proficiency scores:** Critics oppose giving more money to our schools when our test scores (part of our accountability system) are below the national average. Well, with the BSA stagnant for so many years, we have seen (1) experienced teachers leave the state for higher pay and better opportunities in other states, (2) high turnover of principals and teachers, (3) elimination of critical programs and personnel (school nurses, counselors, librarians, athletics, the arts), (4) limited access to professional development, and (5) increased tasks and responsibilities placed on our teachers. Our principals, teachers, aides, and educators somehow maintain a solid commitment to a system when so many in our State government unfairly criticize their work and cut their resources. They have not lost sight of the value and needs of our children and Alaska's future. It should be common sense that an investment in our children's education will result in better problem-solvers, creative and critical thinkers, innovators, and yes, higher literacy and numeracy rates. I want an educated youth who emerge from a system that was revered and supported by our legislators. Quality instruction will result in higher proficiencies. It's common sense. We have seen the results of reduced funding and reduction in staffing. By the way, let's put a renewed focus on Civics understanding! This is overdue in this divisive climate.

*** Accountability:** Over the last 20 years I have only seen increasing attention given to accountability. There is no shortage of student assessments, teacher evaluations, and data. As I remember one principal saying, "Let's feed them more and weigh them less."

***Inequity in funding for correspondence vs brick and mortar schools:** An increase in the BSA would benefit both. According to the AK State Constitution, "*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.*"

Again, please take this seriously. You have heard it a zillion times already. You KNOW that it is true. An investment in our children is an investment in our future. Look in the eyes of a child and tell her that she does not deserve the best Alaska can offer.

Thank you,

Jane Beck
Retired Educator

Homer, AK 99603

Michael Mason

From: Janice Banta [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:59 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69 Support

I am a resident of Anchorage, AK and am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 69. Our adult sons benefited from excellent educational opportunities in this state at the exceptional schools they attended. However, inflation and many years without increases in Alaska's BSA have taken their toll.

Our population is dwindling as families leave the state in search of a better quality of life. As a result, our hard-working school staffs are struggling - they need more support and I'm hopeful they will soon receive the pensions they've long deserved.

Please pass Senate Bill 69 without conditions that hamstring our schools, restoring local control of public schools, and help our students and their schools succeed.

Respectfully,

Janice A. Banta
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK. 99516

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Janice Habermann [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 7:33 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Homeschool

Dear Senators,
Please reject HB69. Limiting homeschool support programs to in district only limits school choice. Homeschool program choice gives parents more control in choosing an educational setting in which their child can thrive.

Sincerely,
Janice Habermann

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Michael Mason

From: Jason Kwiatkowski [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:38 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 69 comments

Good afternoon, Chair Tobin, Co-Chair Stevens and fellow members,

My name is Jason Kwiatkowski, and I am the parent of a fifth and third grader at Aquarian Charter School within the Anchorage School District. I also serve as the chair for the Academic Policy Committee (APC) at Aquarian. I am writing today, representing myself to express my strong support for HB69.

A common concern raised about HB69 is how to fund an increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA). However, these concerns often focus solely on education funding, which is a distraction. Funding conversations should address all areas of the state's budget, not just education. If we must talk about funding the state budget, I strongly support a state income tax for all employees.

Opponents of HB69 point to declining test scores and rising absenteeism as reasons to oppose it. However, these issues are rooted in years of underfunding, which has resulted in larger class sizes and fewer resources for educators. Teachers are being asked to do more with less, and when outcomes suffer, they are unfairly blamed. A key factor in this chaos is the lack of reliable, increased funding.

The staff at Aquarian, like educators across the state, are dedicated to the success of their students, but they continue to work under the strain of inadequate budgets that fail to meet basic needs. This is not the way to invest in our state. This is not the way to support our students and families.

While I support HB69, I do have concerns regarding Section 11, which limits charter schools' ability to manage their budgets. The provision reduces the amount a charter school can carry forward from its unreserved budget balance to no more than 10% into the next fiscal year. We have sought clarification on the intent of this change, as it appears to reduce financial and operational flexibility for charter schools.

I also have concerns with the indirect cost increase all at once from 4-8%. I would advocate for 1% increases annually instead of 4% all at once.

I advocate for a larger increase with inflation proofing, otherwise this bill becomes a short term solution to a long term problem. Without funding education adequately, outmigration will continue and our economy will contract.

As a parent deeply invested in my child's education and the future of all students in our state, I urge you to support HB69. Our schools, teachers, administrators, and children deserve the resources they need to succeed.

Please vote YES on HB69 to provide our schools with the stability and funding they deserve.

Thank you.

Jason Kwiatkowski

[REDACTED]

Anchorage, AK

[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Jeff Raun [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 2:30 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Alaska Dads Support HB69

Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your leadership and service to all Alaskans.

I am one of about 60 dads who recently started an informal group called *Alaska Dads for Economic and Student Capacity (A-DESC)*. Our mantra is simple: Strong Schools. Strong Students. Strong Economy.

My ask to you is equally straightforward:

1. Please endorse a \$1,000 BSA increase.
2. Please act immediately, without delay.

My story? Well, that would take longer to tell. But here's the important part: I love Alaska. My three daughters, all Anchorage School District students, love Alaska. This is our home, and despite all the challenges it is a place that we want to thrive.

Invest in our kids now. Help make Alaska a place that attracts families; make this a place that recognizes the key to a strong economy is through strong schools.

Just a dad from midtown Anchorage,
Jeff Raun

Michael Mason

From: Jenny Blanchard [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 2:37 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Raise the BSA!

Hello! Please vote to support raising the BSA as much as possible! All of Alaska's students are falling behind with a BSA that hasn't been raised in years. It's scary how much the current inadequate budget will impact my son's school, let alone all the other schools across Alaska. People aren't going to stay here if are schools continue to decline. Thank you.

Jenny Blanchard
Anchorage, AK

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Jill Jordan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:34 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Raise the BSA Invest in our future

As elected officials you have the power to make policy that will positively impact Alaska, and create a community that is inviting and prosperous. You can do that by investing in the future of Alaska, by investing in the education of Alaskans and by passing HB69.

I ask you, why would anyone choose to move to this town knowing that the schools are overcrowded (35-40+ in a classroom), knowing that few programs for students exist in our schools - no middle school activities, no choir at the high school, and few sports teams. How can we build a program that introduces students to the many career opportunities in this state, without enough teachers? How can we offer relevant project based curriculum that excites students about the many exciting and growing careers in Alaska when teachers are burdened with 40+ students in a classroom? What motivates a teacher to keep their families here in the state of Alaska when their income barely covers housing costs? When their own kids will receive inadequate education and have few to no extracurricular activities?

I moved back to this state where my kids receive an education that could compete with any school in the Lower 48. My kids have both moved back with the hopes of building careers and raising families here. The lack of education funding and investment in our students has me considering advising them to leave, to build a life in a state where they and their kids will be able to grow and succeed. They all benefited from the Language Immersion program. It helped them succeed in college and find careers. To cut such valuable programs means cutting opportunities for our young people.

Please invest in Alaska, invest in Anchorage, invest in our future, raise the BSA and ensure that students are getting an education that can compete with any other state. Raise the BSA and ensure that this state attracts the best and brightest teachers. Raise the BSA and see the return of investment for years to come. Raise the BSA - not just this year, but for the future.

Thank you
Jill Jordan
[REDACTED]

Michael Mason

From: Rick Onorato and Joan Clover [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 5:32 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: education funding

Senators: I am writing in support of the education funding bill. This is so important to attracting and retaining the Alaskans we want for neighbors. I was just speaking with someone about living in Alaska and one of the questions they asked me was "how are your schools?"

Thank you for considering my opinion. Joan Clover.

Michael Mason

From: John & Sarah [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 8:10 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: RAISE THE BSA - Support HB 69

Greetings,

I'm writing to ask you to support House Bill 69 to increase the base student allocation in Alaska's public schools.

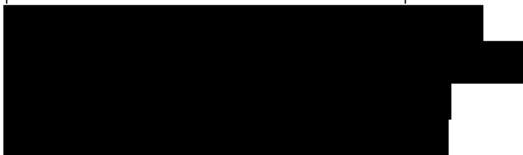
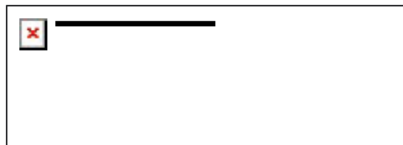
We were lucky to go through the public education system when funding was high and resources were abundant. My experience was overwhelmingly positive, and I have grown into a life long learner who has contributed meaningfully to my community thanks to high-quality public education.

Our children are not so lucky. They are immersed in environments where staff are stressed and underpaid. School resources are insufficient. School feels more like a punishment than an opportunity, where they struggle daily to receive adequate attention and supports.

SUPPORT HB 69 to RAISE THE BSA.

Finally, thank you to the committee for their attention and time to support Alaska's kids.

John Niel
[REDACTED]



Michael Mason

From: Judith Burtner [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 4:13 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: House Bill 69

I am sending my support for House Bill 69 to boost our children's futures!
Judith W. Burtner

Michael Mason

From: Kara Clemens [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 22, 2025 4:57 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Education funding

Hello Senate Education Committee members.

My name is Kara Bakken Clemens. I live in Homer Alaska and have been working for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) as a Special Education Aide for over seven years while raising a family and going to school to become a teacher. This May, I will be graduating from UAS with a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in Special Education and will work as a Special Education Resource Teacher for KPBSD starting in August 2025. My daughter graduated from Connections Home School (KPBSD) and my son currently attends Homer High School.

I am big beleiver in public education. Please give students and teachers the support needed to provide an excellent education by increasing the BSA by \$1000 this year. I would argue for an \$1800 increase if it were an option because that amount would actually bring the BSA to a level that would be closer to paying the real cost of educating a child in Alaska. While that cost may sound high, I think the cost of NOT adequately education our chidren is far higher.

Consider it an investment in Alaska's future.

Thank you for your service to all Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Kara Bakken Clemens

[REDACTED]
Homer, AK 99603