

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* HB69 support  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 5:01:17 PM

---

I am 71 years old and a lifelong Alaskan m. I attended and graduated from the Haines PO public schools K-12. I attended two of the UA campuses and hold degrees from UA and AMU. I spent my entire professional career working in Alaska.

I am in full support of HB 69. I am grateful for the legislators in both parties who advocate for increases in the BSA, despite the vetos of the well crafted bills that have passed.

Multiple friends and family members are employees of school districts in Alaska. I have heard the impacts to their work from the frozen BSA I have volunteered in local schools and have seen for my self impacts from the frozen funding.

I encourage each and every legislator to consider what their own lives would be like had their income been frozen years ago. Expecting improved outcomes from an underfunded system is merely a smokescreen for a different agenda.

Please support HB69.

Sincerely,

Colleen Bridge RN

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Alaska Association of Student Governments Resolution  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 8:22:41 AM  
**Attachments:** [Resolution #10- Olivia Skan, Sitka HS REVISED \(1\).pdf](#)

---

Dear Honorable Members of the House Education Committee,

We, the members of the Alaska Association of Student Government's (AASG) Legislative Session Committee, are reaching out to bring to your attention a resolution that our AASG General Assembly unanimously passed in October. The resolution titled "State Education Budget Release Date" was authored and presented by Olivia Skan from Sitka High School and won the Resolution of the Conference award.

The resolution, in essence, states that the "Alaska Association of Student Governments supports the Alaska State Legislature being required to pass a finalized state education budget before school districts are required to submit their School District Operating Budgets."

As members of the AASG Legislative Session Committee, it is our duty to share this resolution with the Alaska Legislature as specified in the resolution's Action Statement.

Attached to this email is the link and PDF version of the resolution for your review and consideration.

If the attachment has any issues or if you have any further concerns, comments, or questions, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Thank you for your dedication to educating all Alaskan students.

Sincerely,

The Members of the AASG Legislative Session Committee

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** BSA funding  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 7:01:44 AM

---

You are at a crossroads for public education funding.  
Test scores for Alaska are abysmal after spending close to &20,000 PER STUDENT.

I strongly encourage you to look forward at education trends. Parents are fed up with local school boards who encourage DEI initiatives over teaching our children the basics.

I strongly encourage you to vote NO for future funding until this problem is addressed and repaired.

Districts will continue losing students to education alternatives that are successful: homeschool, charter schools and private education.


If there is an increase in funding, I strongly suggest you implement SCHOOL CHOICE into the budgets so parents can choose the education that best suits their children.

Parents are watching this legislation as much as those in the public education bureaucracy and will VOTE accordingly.

Again, I do not support an increase in BSA until accountability is required!

Thank you,

Sandy

From:   
To: [House Education](#)  
Subject: Budget  
Date: Thursday, January 30, 2025 4:51:28 PM

---

**30 January 2025**

**House Education Committee Members**

**Juneau, Alaska**

**Committee Members, My Representative Frank Tomaszewski,**

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

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

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

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

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

**Regards,**

**Sally Duncan**

**[REDACTED]**

**Two Rivers, Alaska 99716**

**[REDACTED]**

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

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [Senate Education](#); [House Education](#); [Rep. Frank Tomaszewski](#); [Rep. Mike Prax](#); [Sen. Mike Cronk](#); [Jim.matherly@alaska.gov](mailto:Jim.matherly@alaska.gov)  
**Subject:** Education Budget--No Increase to the House Education and Senate Education Committees  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 10:13:51 AM

---

With one of the highest per student funding rates in the country and the lowest academic ratings in the country, we recommend no increase to the current education budget. Our students and teachers in Fairbanks receive DEI training, SEL training, CRT training and gender identity nonsense, all siphoning education money from our schools. Why would we want to increase funding for such programs? If these programs were eliminated, there would be a surplus of funding for teaching academic subjects such as reading, math, and Sciences. Why should we reward an education system with such dismal results. Any funding should follow the student rather than being allocated to government schools. No increase to the education budget.

Any increase in the educational budget will necessarily diminish our Permanent Fund. This is not acceptable.

Respectfully,  
(signed)  
Jon and Ruth Ewig

[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
1-30-2025

Copy to Governor Dunleavy

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Education Funding  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 12:33:30 PM

---

Hello -

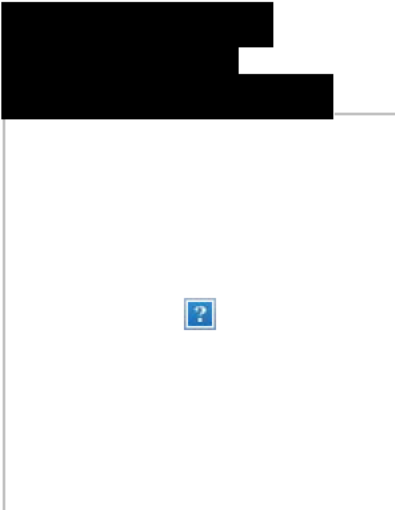
Only 6 of the United States spend more money per pupil than Alaska, yet we rank near the bottom on results. This is not just a money problem.

If so, how could Utah and Idaho score higher when their budget is less than half per pupil?

I remember when I marched to the Capital back in around 2005 or 2006 because I was convinced more money would fix it. Representative Bill Thomas asked a point blank question: "How much money do you need to guarantee results?". None of the people with me, including education professionals had an answer to that question.

Do you?

Debbie White, Broker/Owner  
Southeast Alaska Real Estate  
[REDACTED]  
Juneau, AK 99801



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Education funding  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 10:17:45 AM

---

Doing the same thing over and over without getting results is insanity.

I work within the education system here in Mat-Su. Anchorage could take a few lessons from our school district, in my opinion. I've seen how they've wasted money on the homeless situation in Anchorage and this screaming for more education money just seems like more of the same.

The people I have worked with here in the valley really care about the education of the kids, as I do. I could be working somewhere else making more money, but there are other rewards in having a job like this, which is mostly just seeing how we help kids to learn and grow. Teachers who do a good job teaching should be rewarded more, and those who fail need to be let go. Meritocracy matters. Spending more and more money isn't solving the problem, as history shows.

Stop breaking Alaska Statutes and give families the PFDs as the law states and kids will have a better chance as well. Otherwise, it seems you're just being greedy and finding excuses that you think will tug on people's heart strings. It's not working anymore.

Manda Gershon



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#); [Senate Education](#)  
**Subject:** Funding Education in Alaska  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 5:59:58 AM

---

Being youth in Alaska can be challenging! My children have to FLY in order to compete against other students in sports, academic, and drama events. They are isolated from from one whole half of their family who lives on the East Coast. They aren't afforded the same basic educational opportunities because of the cost of goods, cost of travel to get to some of those educational opportunities, and because it is hard to recruit teachers to live in a remote, isolated environment where the pay doesn't accurately compensate them for the work they do.

If we want to give Alaska youth a chance to have opportunities and educational outcomes equivalent to their peers in the lower 48, we MUST be willing to fund our educational system. We MUST be willing to increase the BSA to accurately reflect the cost of a proper education, including fair wages for the teachers, being able to afford enough teachers that our PTRs are within ranges where teachers can effectively teach and kids can effectively learn.

I understand that poor management of money in the past and near present has caused some concern over increasing the BSA, without seeing new plans to curb that mismanagement. However, we have dug ourselves into an educational hole that is wreaking havoc on the innocent youth of our communities. We can work to improve management practices, but not without more funding to stop the hemorrhage. We don't have any more positions, special programs, or frivolous ideas to cut from our budgets anymore- we have done all that! And yet without an increase in the BSA we will be forced to cut programming that is essential to give our Alaskan youth a chance in the world. We need secondary education programs that are unique and target different educational opportunities and experiences for youth who aren't "book" or traditional school learners. We need to assist them in building skills to achieve their goals in life just as much as we need to ensure our youth have the mandatory math, science and ELA skills to advance to higher education opportunities.

Our youth are our future. If we don't invest in them, we will see our Alaskan communities crumble!

Thank you.

**From:** [Ella Lubin](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 69 - Charter School Principal Support  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:55:31 PM

---

---

**From:** Jarrod Decker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 10:36 AM  
**To:** House Education <House.Education@akleg.gov>; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot <Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov>; Representative.Andi.Story@akleg.gov  
**Subject:** HB 69 - Charter School Principal Support

Co-Chair Rebecca Himschoot  
Co-Chair Andi Story  
Members of the House Education Committee

My name is Jarrod Decker, and I am the principal of Watershed Charter School in Fairbanks, Alaska—a school I helped establish in 2009 and have proudly served as an administrator since 2014. I am writing today to express my strong support for HB 69.

It is critical to increase the base student allocation (BSA) to address the rising costs that all public schools have been facing. Inflation-proofing the BSA will provide schools with adequate and reliable funding, ensuring they can effectively support student learning. Years of insufficient and unpredictable funding, coupled with escalating operational expenses and underfunded legislative mandates such as the Alaska Reads Act, have placed immense strain on all schools, including charters.

Additionally, because “one-time” funding falls outside the BSA foundation formula, DEED has clarified that disbursing these funds is at the discretion of local school districts—leaving charter schools without guaranteed per-pupil funding parity with neighborhood schools. This inconsistency creates further financial instability and inequity.

I urge you to support HB 69 to ensure stable, equitable, and adequate funding for all Alaska students.

Thank you.  
Jarrod

--

Jarrod Decker  
Principal  
Watershed Charter School  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [Ella Lubin](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 69 | Support & School Maintenance Considerations  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 2:26:09 PM

---

---

**From:** Patricia Valerio [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 3:54 PM  
**To:** Rep. Rebecca Himschoot <Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 69 | Support & School Maintenance Considerations

Good afternoon, Rep. Himschoot,

I hope you are doing well. My name is Patricia, and I am a lifelong resident of Kodiak, and have grown up attending our public school system. I strongly believe in supporting our schools to create better environments for both students and teachers.

I have read House Bill 69 regarding the proposed increase to the base student allocation (BSA), and I fully support this effort. I hope it gains the necessary legislative approval to move forward.

As someone working in the engineering department of our local government, I want to bring to your attention an important consideration. I have seen firsthand how many of our schools are falling into disrepair due to lack of proper maintenance funding. While increasing the BSA is a crucial step forward, I urge the legislature to consider designating a portion - or increasing the percentage- of these funds specifically for facility maintenance.

A safe, healthy, and functional learning environment is essential for quality education. When school buildings are not properly maintained, it directly impacts both teachers and students. Teachers cannot perform at their best if they are dealing with structural or environmental issues, and students' health, safety, and ability to learn are at risk when classrooms, cafeterias, gyms, libraries, and playgrounds are not properly maintained.

To be clear, I'm not advocating for extravagant new school buildings, but rather for maintaining and preserving the existing structures so they remain safe and conducive to learning. Investing in regular maintenance now will help prevent more costly repairs in the future while ensuring that students and educators have a stable environment in which to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I appreciate the work you do and hope that school maintenance can be part of the broader conversation surrounding education funding,

Best regards,  
Patricia Valerio



**From:** [Tammy Smith](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB 69: Education Funding - Increase BSA  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 3:48:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [HB 69 Commentary Story.pdf](#)

---

Tammy Smith  
Legislative Aide/Education Committee Aide  
Office of Representative Andi Story  
House District 3  
Alaska State Legislature  
(907)465-3744

---

**From:** Rep. Andi Story <Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 12:58 PM  
**To:** Tammy Smith <Tammy.Smith@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: HB 69: Education Funding - Increase BSA

Cherie Bowman  
Legislative Aide  
Office of Representative Andi Story  
House District 3  
Alaska State Legislature  
(907)-465-3744

---

**From:** Cindi Lagoudakis [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 5:07 PM  
**To:** Rep. Andi Story <[Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** HB 69: Education Funding - Increase BSA

Please see the attached letter for commentary on this proposed legislation.

Thank you,  
Cynthia Lagoudakis  
Petersburg, AK

**From:** [Ella Lubin](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB69 Education Funding  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 2:26:35 PM

---

---

**From:** Terri Stavig [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 4:04 PM  
**To:** Rep. Rebecca Himschoot <Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andi Story <Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov>; Rep. Maxine Dibert <Rep.Maxine.Dibert@akleg.gov>; Rep. Ted Eischeid <Rep.Ted.Eischeid@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jubilee Underwood <Rep.Jubilee.Underwood@akleg.gov>; Rep. Rebecca Schwanke <Rep.Rebecca.Schwanke@akleg.gov>; Rep. Bill Elam <Rep.Bill.Elam@akleg.gov>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** HB69 Education Funding

**Alaska House Education Committee Members:**

Thank you in advance for your consideration in increasing the BSA for Alaska's public schools. I am a member of the Cordova School Board. Here in Cordova we are experiencing a rapid increase in our school population. Many young families are moving to our community because they want to build lives and raise families here in our small, rural city. We find ourselves in need of facilities, teachers, and staff in order to reach the demand before us.

We are fortunate that our local city contribution is consistently generous every year. However, even with a generous contribution this past year, we had to look at cutting both our food service and student activities. Fortunately, the Native Village of Eyak stepped in and contributed funds that covered both the food service and all student activities. That was an amazing contribution, but not one we can assume will be offered every year.

An increase in the BSA would ensure our ability to reach the challenges we face in providing a quality education for the children of Cordova. Thank you in advance for your careful consideration ... our children are worth the investment.

Terri Stavig  
Cordova School Board

**From:** [Ella Lubin](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** FW: HB69 testimony  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:57:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [250129\\_HB69\\_AASB\\_Testimony.pdf](#)  
[2.1 Timely, Predictable, Equitable and Adequate Funding.pdf](#)  
[2.2 Equitable Funding for Alaska Public Schools.pdf](#)

---

---

**From:** Lon Garrison [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 1:18 PM  
**To:** Rep. Andi Story <Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov>; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot <Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB69 testimony

I am attaching a written version of my testimony from this morning supporting HB69. I have also attached several of the AASB resolutions regarding education funding.

Sincerely,  
Lon Garrison

--



**Lon Garrison** | Executive Director  
Association of Alaska School Boards



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

**From:** [Ella Lubin](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** FW: House bill 69  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 11:01:55 AM

---

---

**From:** Diana Colbert [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 9:13 PM  
**To:** Rep. Will Stapp <Rep.Will.Stapp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Justin Ruffridge <Rep.Justin.Ruffridge@akleg.gov>; Rep. Bryce Edgmon <Rep.Bryce.Edgmon@akleg.gov>; Rep. Mike Prax <Rep.Mike.Prax@akleg.gov>; Rep. Rebecca Schwanke <Rep.Rebecca.Schwanke@akleg.gov>; Rep. Andy Josephson <Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jeremy Bynum <Rep.Jeremy.Bynum@akleg.gov>; Rep. Chuck Kopp <Rep.Chuck.Kopp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Julie Coulombe <Rep.Julie.Coulombe@akleg.gov>; Rep. Jubilee Underwood <Rep.Jubilee.Underwood@akleg.gov>  
**Cc:** Rep. Rebecca Himschoot <Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** House bill 69

I am writing in favor of House bill 69, increasing the BSA \$1808 per student over the next three years. I am a mother of two girls that went through the school system and grandmother to a fifth grade student presently in school in Sitka School district.

First, our state needs to attract and keep good teachers and while the state is beautiful, the cost of living and weather don't exactly add incentive to young enthusiastic teachers. The best way to keep the best is to pay them more competitively so they can afford to stay once they find out how beautiful our state is. Our teachers get very little benefits, pay or retirement, let's do what we can to improve that. We need to get back to having specialist teachers as well. One of my daughters is an elementary teacher and while she is passionate about her students, I hear her frustrations with all the responsibility on her plate. Teacher burn out is reality, we can't afford to lose them because they are spread too thin.

Also an enhanced budget would make it possible to expand curriculum. I was shocked to find out they no longer have grade school level science or library teachers. In my opinion, without stimulating the minds of the younger students with a science focus early in their development, they are lost to video games and zombie-fied TV watching. Schools must be able to supply students with supplies to get excited about science. Reading, reading, we all know is fundamental to any success they are to have in the future. In addition, we need reading specialists to meet the Reads Act. If our students don't have good library access and resources they will turn to the misinformation they get online. We need to get these things back in the schools ASAP.

Finally, I hear frequently that our schools have a high drop out rate. If we show our students they are worth it, can have a good education and be exhilarated about going to school they just might. Maybe, just maybe they become our future state leaders and we can sit back and say all is good.

Thank you for your attention to the students and our future.

Diana Colbert  
Juneau, AK  
[REDACTED]



**From:** [Tammy Smith](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Public Testimony by Suzanne Wood related to House Bill 69 -- An Act relating to education funding; and providing for an effective date.  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 3:43:04 PM  
**Attachments:** [2025.0129 sw to Alaska Leg re public school funding.docx](#)

---

Tammy Smith  
Legislative Aide/Education Committee Aide  
Office of Representative Andi Story  
House District 3  
Alaska State Legislature  
(907)465-3744

---

**From:** Rep. Andi Story <Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 3:03 PM  
**To:** Tammy Smith <Tammy.Smith@akleg.gov>; Claire Fordyce <Claire.Fordyce@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Public Testimony by Suzanne Wood related to House Bill 69 -- An Act relating to education funding; and providing for an effective date.

Cherie Bowman  
Legislative Aide  
Office of Representative Andi Story  
House District 3  
Alaska State Legislature  
(907)-465-3744

---

**From:** Suzanne Wood [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:06 PM  
**To:** House Education <[House.Education@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Education@akleg.gov)>  
**Cc:** Rep. Rebecca Himschoot <[Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Andi Story <[Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Maxine Dibert <[Rep.Maxine.Dibert@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Maxine.Dibert@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Ted Eischeid <[Rep.Ted.Eischeid@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Ted.Eischeid@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Jubilee Underwood <[Rep.Jubilee.Underwood@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Jubilee.Underwood@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Rebecca Schwanke <[Rep.Rebecca.Schwanke@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Rebecca.Schwanke@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Bill Elam <[Rep.Bill.Elam@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Bill.Elam@akleg.gov)>; House Finance <[House.Finance@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Finance@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Public Testimony by Suzanne Wood related to House Bill 69 -- An Act relating to education funding; and providing for an effective date.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 69 is sensible, urgent, and necessary  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 5:30:05 PM

---

Dear House Education Committee,

Thank you for considering HB 69 at the start of your session, before school districts must set their budgets. This bill is vital to move Alaska to a more forward-planning educational system by increasing the BSA and forecasting future funding. Funding eroded by inflation is no way to maintain schools and no predictability in the state funding is no way to maintain a local budget.

I want to highlight just a couple of the amazing things schools are doing now that HB 69 will allow them to continue because we have two kids in our neighborhood Anchorage School District school:

Alaska Reads curriculum has been engaging for my youngest daughter, but her teacher had to tap PTA funding for a printer to be able to keep up leveled readers that would engage the kids while matching the new instructional strategies. Those “extras” no longer provided by school districts, are one of hundreds that teachers are buying themselves or turning to parent donations or fundraising, from STEM materials to sticky notes, which is an extra burden for teachers and increases school inequities. The academic enrichment program IGNITE is a catalyst for my elder daughter to engage in school and challenge her learning. She bemoans the weeks her IGNITE teacher is pulled away to conduct other assessment work in the School District, but every year further cuts to IGNITE are likely.

Cuts in the Anchorage School District have shaved too close to instruction. Class sizes are high, but even small-change losses like budgets for basic classroom supplies have been cut. This leads to additional stress and excessive work for school admin assistants monitoring and stretching the pennies. Our local PTA funds the few teacher training/workshops outside of ASD training that teachers receive, which should be more accessible for every school to reach every student. Para-educator positions are going unfilled, further undercutting students and teachers. I am worried we will lose more great teachers sooner than we should, lose more families with volunteer capacity to private schools, and lose out on the future gifts of a generation of students. Please act soon to approve HB 69.

Sincerely,  
Lia Slemons

~~~

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

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 69 Support  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 2:55:44 PM

---

Hello -

As a constituent from Anchorage I wanted to voice my support for HB 69 to increase funding to our schools. Appropriately funding our schools is vital to our community and children and long overdue. I am against specific funding for homeschool and charter schools as all schools and children in the state deserve to have an excellent education, not just a chosen few in a lottery.

Thank you,  
Jake Miss  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone -  
Please excuse any unintended autocorrected or spelling errors

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 69 Testimony  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 5:54:22 PM

---


Thank you for the opportunity to hear my voice concerning this important bill. Every year we hear that our schools need more funding. Alaska has ranked from #3 to #7 out of the 50 states in the last several years for the amount of money spent on each student. However, Alaska ranks in the lowest results in scoring also with 35th out of 50. Our Superintendent has one of the highest salaries in the United States.

I firmly believe that our schools must have an independent audit to account for every dollar spent each year. As taxpayers we have no idea how and where our money is spent. Every wise family will know where and what their money is spent on and learn to live within their budget, as does every wise business owner. As a business owner for over 20 years I knew where every dollar was spent and was wise in utilizing our funds to make our business and employees successful.

Our districts have lower student enrollment due to the schools curriculum incorporating subjects that many families believe should not be a part of their curriculum and focus. Families are choosing alternative choices with homeschooling and schools that focus more on basic education and subject material. This should be the right of every parent; their children's education and the curriculum, not the government's. We have strayed away from teaching and building a strong base for the important basics and preparing them for competition in the working world. Trade schools are also important focusing beyond the basics to skills they can use for jobs they desire to go into.

Thank you again for reading my opinion. I do hope every person that is voting will take the time to hear from the public and not just the school supervisors and staff.

Sue Ahrens  
Eagle River  
Alaskan resident since 1983

**From:**   
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 69  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 11:57:04 AM

---

Dear House Education Committee

I am writing in full support of HB 69 and encourage you to raise the BSA even further than what is currently in this bill. Our education system has leaned into "school choice" and it has failed us. School choice has left the Fairbanks school district with the "choice" of which 5 elementary schools to close just after we got to "choose" which schools to close the past year. Charter schools and home school programs are a luxury. Those luxuries have choked our public schools. Our most vulnerable students, our poorest kids, our special needs children do not have a choice of where they go to school. They need their public schools and we have failed them because we have not funded their schools. Our luxury school choices get to pick who attends those schools. Our public schools welcome all. My kid doesn't have an Art teacher at his K-5 school, neither do any of the other public schools in Fairbanks. Meanwhile, we have charter schools that get that. We have home school students that get even more than that. They get private dance lessons and horseback riding lessons. Why has such inequity occurred? Because of school choice. The rich have gotten richer while we leave the poorest behind.

I implore you to raise the BSA. Then once you are done raising the BSA reform our charter and home school programs. Public schools should not suffer because school choice. Easy steps would be:

1. Limiting home school programs to the district families live in. There is no reason for Fairbanks to have other school districts present within our city borders competing for students. It's created a race towards the least amount of accountability for allotment spending.
2. Require standardized testing for all students receiving public monies.
3. Limit home school allotment spending to core curriculum such as math, science, social studies, and English. If public schools don't have art teachers, why should home school students get those benefits?
4. Require charter schools to offer the same IEP and SPED services as required by our public schools. If school choice is important then it should be available to all children, not just those that charter schools deem "worthy"
5. Allow for charter schools to be consolidated if a school district's budget deficit exceeds a specific percentage of funding (5-10% would be adequate)
6. Remove the statute that requires consolidated buildings to be offered to charter schools
7. Require more school district oversight for charters and home school students including ensuring equitable education between home school/charter school students and public school

students.

8.Require true lotteries for charter schools. Families should not get priority for a charter school just because older siblings are in attendance.

Put our public schools first. They are the most important tool we have in our community. School choice is harming our schools. It is harming our communities. Fund our public schools and reform school choice so our public schools aren't left with more terrible choices to make.

Sincerely

Don Larson

Father of 3 children, 1 currently in elementary school.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 69  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 2:48:30 PM

---

I'm writing in support of House Bill 69. I am a product of the FNSBSD and a parent of children currently enrolled in FNSB public school system. The quality of education has declined over the past few decades for numerous reasons, some are not in our control, while others are. Funding of schools is within our control. WE NEED TO SUPPORT EDUCATION.

The proposed closures in the FNSBSD are alarming. Although, I am aware school consolidation is necessary, it is difficult to no point a finger at state legislators. The student base allocate has not kept up with inflation or has met the needs of the district resulting in the problem at hand.

I can't stomach the thought of us closing Hunter Elementary School and my kids don't even attend Hunter. Shutting down a school where approximately 60% of students are low income and 40% are Alaska Native is heartless and will appear targeted. This is a school where staff members have received specialized training in trauma to provide their students with the skills they need to navigate the cards delt to them. This is a school where the largest portion of the student body walk to school. Closing this school, results in not just limiting access, it results in removing access. Although my children will be affected by the redistricting zones, they will do just fine. I argue that the Hunter students will have a different outcome.

I advocate for House Bill 69 and encourage you to make education a priority in the FNSB. We need to keep schools like Hunter Elementary open and passing House Bill 69 will help do so.

Sincerely,  
Kendra Shaner

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Please increase funding for public education.  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 9:52:52 PM

---

Dear House,

I'm tired. I didn't testify in person on Wednesday, January 29th for HB 59 - Education Funding: Increase BSA because I choose to instead attend my youngest son's 2nd to last home JV hockey game. As a parent I decided seeing him play was more important than spending another hour of waiting in a room to plead for funding for our public schools. You have made feel deflated. I've now been testifying in Juneau for over 11 years. It feels like I will still be testifying when he graduates which is sad, because the work will be too late for him.

Good public education is part of the American dream and a constitutional duty of states. In Juneau a majority of students go to public school. There are not private schools to attend. This state needs to fully fund education!

Please raise the BSA permanently and make the increase inflation proof. One time funding is an ineffective way to fund education. When you vote to raise the BSA also please commit to override our Governor's veto. If you're not committed to vote to override the veto; you might as well not vote for it in the first place and save a lot of time.

This is what one-time funding is like: Imagine trying to make a family budget, but not knowing whether you making \$150K a year or \$60K? Would you sign your kids up for camp or hockey or the reading tutor they desperately need? How disappointed would you be if you didn't and then you got more money and all the spots were filled. How would you feel if you did sign them up, but didn't get the money then couldn't pay.

Please vote YES for a \$1000 increase to the BSA and inflation proofing it. Anything else is hurting our student and Alaska's future.



Sincerely,  
Lisa EaganLagerquist



Douglas AK 99824.

.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#); [House Finance](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Carolyn Hall](#)  
**Subject:** Please support HB69 to raise the BSA  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 10:30:57 AM  
**Attachments:** [Fischbach HB69 Testimony Copy.docx](#)

---

Hello,

The following is a copy of my testimony from the education hearing on Wednesday. I was heartened to hear so many advocates for Alaska's educational system. Raising the BSA will help everyone in the state, and especially, our kids. Nothing is so disheartening to a kid as to try and make that connection with a teacher, but to be dissuaded because they have to compete with a crowd. We've all been there. You want to meet someone or ask a question, but there's a crowd around that person. Are you the kind of person that feels confident enough to push through or do you say, "Wow, they're really busy. I'll try again later." But honestly that later never comes. That's been the case for my kids. They see all the other kids' needs and don't feel like they can push to the front to make themselves heard.

For my son at West High, this has meant almost missing the ability to get the classes he needs for his senior year and not getting credit for classes he took at Steller as a freshman. For my daughter, it means that she leaves her once-a-week night school class at Benny Benson with no input from any teacher. It's not the teachers or counselors faults. There are 7 counselors at West High for over 1600 students. That's one counselor for almost 230 students. My daughter is enrolled in the Night School program because of a medical disability that keeps her from attending all-day classes, but that program is also for students who have young people who work full-time and some of these students have children of their own. Those with high needs take up a lot of time. There is only one teacher to support the students in that evening program and my daughter is highly-gifted with a lot of support at home. She's not the priority in a triage situation. That's just the truth of it. These programs are amazing, but without funding that provides adequate staffing, these programs are not able to fulfill their potential.

And one last point. I have heard people say that they don't want to raise the BSA without knowing that it will be put to good use or that there will be guaranteed results. That is like asking someone to read the eye chart correctly to earn a pair of glasses. It makes no sense. Our schools are full of dedicated, talented, and passionate people. I trust them to make good decisions and I urge you to do the same.

This is my number one funding priority for the state. Yes, that means I value education spending above roads, safety, development, and all the other needs of our state. And that is while also knowing that my kids may not directly benefit from these funding increases.

Thank you for doing all you can to push HB69 to passage and to work together to make it veto-proof.

Tracy Fischbach  
House District 16  
Anchorage, AK

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Rebecca Himschoot](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Maxine Dibert](#); [Rep. Ted Eischeid](#); [Rep. Jubilee Underwood](#); [Rep. Rebecca Schwanke](#); [Rep. Bill Elam](#); [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony by Suzanne Wood related to House Bill 69 -- An Act relating to education funding; and providing for an effective date.  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:10:06 PM  
**Attachments:** [2025.0129 sw to Alaska Leg re public school funding.docx](#)

---

**From:** [Tory Shultz](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** RAISE THE BSA!  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 3:02:44 PM

---

Students, teachers, families and communities are suffering enormous losses due to funding!! Please increase the BSA. Education should be the CENTER of any funding due to the fact that we are raising the next generations to be LEADERS!

--

Damáan ágan hl k'ing,  
(Take care of yourself) ,

**Tory Shultz M.Ed/ECSE**  
**Special Education Resource K-6**  
**Tongass School of Arts and Sciences**  




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

This message is intended solely for the use of the individual and entity to whom it is addressed, and may contain information that is privileged, confidential, and exempt from disclosure under applicable state and federal laws. If you are not the addressee, or are not authorized to receive for the intended addressee, you are hereby notified that you may not use, copy, distribute, or disclose to anyone this message or the information contained herein. If you have received this message in error, immediately advise the sender by reply email and destroy this message.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Re: \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Please, support HB69 and increase education funding.  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 4:57:44 PM

---

Thank you so much Mrs. Smith.  
Do you have any idea why my email ended between SPAM?  
Thank you so much for getting this testimony to the committee.  
Sincerely, Eva Allaby

On Thu, Jan 30, 2025 at 4:31 PM House Education <[House.Education@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Education@akleg.gov)> wrote:

Greetings,

Thank you for your written testimony to the House Education Committee regarding House Bill 69: An Act Relating to Education.

Your testimony will be provided to the members of the committee and will become a part of the record.

Your interest in HB 69 is greatly appreciated.

Tammy Smith

Legislative Aide/Education Committee Aide

Office of Representative Andi Story

House District 3

Alaska State Legislature

(907)465-3744

---

**From:** Eva Allaby [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 27, 2025 10:17 PM  
**To:** House Education <[House.Education@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Education@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Please, support HB69 and increase education funding.

Dear House Education Committee,

My name is Eva Allaby, and I am a parent of a first grade student in Fairbanks, Alaska. I also have two younger children, aged four and two, who will hopefully be future students at this school.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is preparing to address a critical challenge through a comprehensive School Consolidation Plan. The district intends to close five schools, in addition to the five schools already closed over the past five years. I understand that over the last 20 years, student enrollment in the district has fallen by 15%, making it necessary to reduce the number of schools.

However, it is important to consider that the Base Student Allocation (BSA) has been essentially flat-funded since 2011, while fixed costs like health insurance and utility costs have skyrocketed. Alaska public schools are in crisis, with school districts across the state cutting programs, closing schools, and eliminating education jobs **due to a lack of state funding**. Educators are being forced to do more with less, handling increased workloads and spending less time ensuring every student has the opportunity to learn. From 2011 to 2024, the BSA has increased by less than 5%, while Alaska's urban consumer price index has risen by 32% according to Alaska Dept. of Labor.

Just after the threat of our school's closure last year, there was an unsurprisingly huge exodus of staff. Last week, the school nurse announced that it would be her last week, and shortly before Christmas, my son's teacher, with 15 years of experience, quit. My family is seriously considering leaving Alaska to provide our children with better learning opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Eva Allaby

Please, support HB69 and increase education funding.

Thank you,

Eva Allaby

[REDACTED]

Fairbanks, 99709

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#); [Senate Education](#)  
**Subject:** RE: HB69 - EDUCATION FUNDING: INCREASE BSA  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 11:45:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [Alaska Youth Gender and Sexual Health Integrity Protection Act.pdf](#)

---

Alaska Legislature Education Committee Members:

Sadly, I've received no enthusiastic responses to my initial message. Thus, I've taken the liberty to start you off on the right foot with the attached draft bill. I can't take full credit for the content, but frankly, what needs to be addressed is no secret. There's much more to legislate for improving the health and education environment for Alaska youth and I look forward to staying in contact with all of you. Taking the opportunity to advance a bill like this early in the session will indicate the committees' willingness to work towards a solution meeting the needs of youth health and education.

I look forward to witnessing the legislature picking up this torch and running with it.

Again, good luck to you all in rising to the occasion and satisfying this urgent need.

Sincerely,  
Lucas Smith  
Anchorage Resident

---

**From:** Lucas Smith  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2025 2:34 PM  
**To:** [House.Education@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Education@akleg.gov); [Senate.Education@akleg.gov](mailto:Senate.Education@akleg.gov)  
**Subject:** HB69 - EDUCATION FUNDING: INCREASE BSA

Alaska Legislature Education Committee Members:

I encourage the committees to not waste any time aligning necessary education policy reforms with the priorities of our new federal administration as demanded overwhelmingly by the public. This will be important to ensure funding eligibility and associated predictability in the fast-approaching next fiscal year.

Legislation delays due to education committee inaction and failure to act appropriately could have significant impacts to local communities, school districts, and children. The resulting consequences and failure on the committees' behalf would be extremely disappointing.

The committees should pay particular attention to recent Federal Executive Orders. So far these include:

January 20, 2025, ,Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government, and  
January 28, 2025, Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation

I hope the committee acts swiftly to help ensure students are free from existing abuse and mental health risks resulting from guidelines which have remained unchecked for too long.

An example of such guidelines include the Anchorage School District's publication entitled, "Administrative Guidelines: Working with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students and Employees".

Good luck to you all in rising to the occasion and satisfying this urgent need. Many of us look forward to celebrating additional inklings of positive trends in the education of young Alaskans.

Sincerely,  
Lucas Smith  
Anchorage Resident



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** School Funding  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 10:41:55 AM

---

Listening and reading news on FNSB budget shortfall and their attempt to disregard our Tax Cap last year, believe giving them more money and increasing the base student funding won't fix their problem as the latest results in school standings that just came out, put Alaska at the bottom of the list in Reading & Math.

The FNSB School District has known for a couple years that student enrollment has drastically decreased but so incompetent they can't use common sense to close and consolidate some schools. School district and parents don't want "THEIR" schools closed which would save millions of dollars. Also getting back to basics and getting rid of curriculum that doesn't help students in later life.

The school district has the attitude that more money is never enough and expect the property owners to fund their failing schools. They never realize that many homeowners cannot keep on paying these outrageous taxes, especially with my assessment going up over \$40,000 in one year with no improvements. Would rather see a state income tax with stipulations that they have to improve their educational system and whittle down the top heavy administrative offices.

Also, at fault is you representatives in Juneau who also cannot stop this outrageous spending and come up with a balanced budget. Quit taking 3/4 of our dividend to fund these failing schools and all the social programs. The preschool 0-6 is nothing but a free babysitting program; if these parents can't afford kids, don't have them.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** School Funding  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 4:34:20 PM

---

- You know the truth stop throwing away money on Teachers who are not performing up to the standards to produce the outcomes needed for our students to excel in the world they must function in!
- It's a shame!
- Hire the best qualified if that isn't available then let the parents teach their children how God intended it to be!
- Between 2002 and 2020, Alaska saw a 0.7% drop in enrollment from 133,000 students to 132,000 students, yet current spending growth has kept pace with revenue growth, increasing 32% per pupil. 4 Correspondence school enrollment has risen to 16.3% of students.<sup>5</sup>
- Since 2002, Alaska has grown its education revenues and spending by nearly a third while enrollment in brick-and-mortar schools has declined. Increases in support services have quickly outpaced the lean increases in teaching salaries.
- To improve Alaska's dismal education outcomes, funding should be used to directly support students instead of just increasing generalized education funding.
- Alaska is falling behind on all education fronts but one—Alaska's charter schools

Ella Cotter  
North Pole, AK

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Education](#); [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 69 – Investing in Alaska’s Schools  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 10:53:48 AM

---

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate and House,

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Reid Tulloch

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 69  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 3:00:41 AM

---

Good afternoon, my name is Robert Hockema from Anchorage. I'm writing to express my gratitude to Rep. Himschoot and her colleagues in the majority for bringing forward this much needed increase to education funding.

As a proud graduate of Homer High School and UAA, I'm sad to see our schools in such a sad state of disrepair. If it weren't for speech and debate and music programs at Homer High, I'd have never kept my grades up enough to graduate and go to college. In a town with not much else to do, opportunities provided by public schools are critical for keeping students engaged. The vast majority of the opportunities I took advantage of in high school are no longer available for today's students.

I'm frustrated with arguments about accountability, because inflation-adjusted per-pupil state funding has been on the decline for years. Our public school system faces larger class sizes, fewer experienced home-grown teachers, unfunded mandates, and cuts to programs that keep kids in school. If we keep asking teachers to do more with less, we're not going to bring up those reading and math scores.

Our failure to maintain a quality education system is contributing to our out-migration problems. Nobody with kids wants to take a job in a state where schools are falling apart or at risk of getting shut down. A poor K-12 also means university enrollment suffers, meaning we get fewer bright minds staying in-state to help solve Alaska's big problems.

Public education isn't perfect. But voting no on this bill is a lose-lose for Alaska. Please pass this bill through committee. Thank you.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Senate Education](#); [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR HB 69  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:54:54 PM

---

Good afternoon,

I reside in the Fairbanks North Star Borough and my son is a 3rd grade student at our neighborhood public school. I write today in support of HB 69. We must inflation-proof our BSA and provide our children - our future - with sustainable education funding.

I was born in Fairbanks, and educated in the public school system in both Fairbanks and Kenai. The school where I attended Kindergarten closed in 2022, and the school my son attends is on the list for closure this year. The loss of our neighborhood schools is devastating to the Fairbanks community.

Our neighborhood public school, Pearl Creek Elementary, is amazing. It is a supportive and exceptional educational community, as evidenced by its strong test scores, steady enrollment, and frequent collaboration with our nearby flagship University. My family chose to live within the Pearl Creek attendance area, and we twice purchased a home within our neighborhood with plans to send our future child(ren) to the school. Pearl Creek has been every bit as excellent as expected, despite years of funding deficits and budget cuts taking their toll on our school district. Our schools need money to provide the equitable, quality education that our State constitution demands for all Alaskan youth.

Please vote in support of HB 69 and provide Alaska's school districts with reliable, meaningful funding through a permanent BSA increase. Please also consider providing targeted funding for increased transportation costs, deferred building maintenance, and the Alaska Reads Act. Our schools need this funding to operate and continue providing the quality education that our children deserve.

Thank you for your consideration. And thank you for bringing this bill forward early in session to address the immense need for increased education funding.

Sincerely,  
Nikole Schick

[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks, AK 99712

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 69  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 1:13:17 PM

---

I am writing to express my concern regarding recent proposals that focus on offering bonuses to teachers rather than addressing the deeper, systemic challenges within our education system. I'm a lifelong Alaskan, raising 2 kids here and am a former teacher. I left the classroom because the job is undoubtedly the hardest thing someone can do. A bonus won't bring me back and I promise, it won't be the thing that keeps teachers in the classroom. You know what will retain and bring back teachers? Support. Lower class sizes. Essential resources for students. Being surrounded by a community that values education.

While the intention behind a bonus proposal may be to offer some form of relief, it fails to recognize the critical issues that teachers face every day: overcrowded classrooms, underfunded schools, and a lack of essential resources. **Teachers cannot be expected to deliver meaningful results when they are stretched too thin, overwhelmed with large class sizes, and constantly battling against a lack of support.** The proposal is like offering a fisherman a bonus for catching fish, but not giving them a boat, fishing gear, or even access to the water. Without these basic necessities, the fisherman won't be able to do their job. Similarly, teachers cannot meet expectations or achieve results when they're working with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient resources, and a lack of support. A bonus doesn't help if the fundamental tools aren't there to succeed.

The rhetoric that education funding is "throwing money at something that's not working" is misleading. The real problem is not a lack of resources, but the need for a more strategic investment in our schools. Without addressing the foundational needs of the education system—like adequate staffing, smaller class sizes, and the necessary materials—we cannot expect meaningful change. Teachers may appreciate a bonus, but it won't resolve the underlying issues that hinder their ability to effectively teach and support students.

A well-funded and robust public education system is critical to ensuring that all children—regardless of their background or learning style or school choice—have access to the resources and opportunities they need. Supporting our public schools ultimately benefits all educational models, as it provides a strong foundation from which to build.

This is why it's crucial that we continue pushing for the resources and support that Alaska's education system so desperately needs. We cannot afford to settle for temporary solutions when the issues are deep-rooted. Only through sustained, meaningful investment can we begin to address the challenges that hinder the success of our students and educators alike.

Thank you for your time and your dedication to improving education in Alaska. I trust that you will continue to advocate for the necessary resources that will ensure a brighter future for all

of Alaska's children.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#); [Senate Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen. Robert Myers](#); [Rep. Frank Tomaszewski](#)  
**Subject:** Support HB 69 BSA Increase  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 7:09:16 AM

---

Honorable Senators and Representatives,

Thank you for considering HB69 to increase the base student allocation. I support additional BSA increase beyond the levels in HB69, but HB69 is a good start. Educational investment has been neglected in our state for too long.

Our education funding situation reminds me of the recent travails of a friend. My pal had a truck for over a decade that was nice when he got it. He seldom maintained it. Maybe a couple oil changes over the 10+ years he had it. Nothing else. No brakes, no spark plugs, no tire rotations.

Recently he complained to his family about the way the truck was running. His family thought since he hadn't spent more than \$100 on maintenance in 10+ years that he should put \$1500-\$2000 into it and see if that got better performance. After some thought and debate/discussion he decided that the family was right. The best thing to do was have \$1500-\$2000 work done. The mechanic thought it would need \$3000-\$4000, but my pal insisted on the limit of \$2000 (he's anchored to 20th century shop rates). Plus at \$4k his kids wouldn't get new iPhones again this year – which is their birthright.

He dropped the truck off with the mechanic. On the way home he ran into his tall neighbor by the neighborhood mailboxes. It was a little strange, because Tall neighbor usually doesn't talk with him. But this day Tall neighbor asked why he was riding his bicycle. He told Tall about his truck running like crap and that he had just dropped it off at the mechanic to get a bunch of work done. Tall neighbor told him he had made a huge mistake. He should go get the truck back before they start working on it and taking his hard earned money.

Tall neighbor also told him, with much conviction, about an esteemed ivy league institution's recent study that indicated that vehicles don't actually need maintenance. Despite the very promising sounding study, my friend said he had made his decision and that his truck was going to get fixed at the mechanic shop.

For some reason Tall neighbor didn't like my friend's decision. Tall neighbor was angry enough about it that he told my friend that if he didn't go get his truck from the mechanic shop immediately, then Tall would march around to all the other neighbors and tell them about my friend's sub-division covenant violations (my friend doesn't think he has any covenant violations, but he hasn't actually read them). So, bullied into it, my friend relented. He went down to the mechanic and got his truck back before they had started on the repairs.

As you probably can guess, the truck limped along for a few more months, but eventually it quit running altogether (in a roundabout, no less - I'm just glad it didn't



happen in GARS!).

My pal later learned (in the newspaper) that the esteemed ivy league study was conducted on EVs that only rich people can afford. It wasn't really applicable to regular vehicles. Oh well... Despite the fact that Tall worked in a mechanic shop, my pal's pretty sure it was an honest mistake. It's not like anyone reads or understands those science journal studies (and since when do we trust East Coasters?). All the Facebook and X posts about the study sure seemed legit.

My pal's kids now have to walk a few more miles to/from their new charter school after their neighborhood school closed (no bussing to charters). But they are getting smarter along the way by listening to podcasts while walking. Tougher and in better shape too. With more grit. And character (like we all had growing up). So that's a win.

There is some additional good news to the story: my pal is currently in good spirits and isn't too bummed about his current lack of transportation. He read about the \$50M seed money for the Alaska gas line. He's sure his troubles will be over when he sells his property for a hefty profit during gas line construction. After all, it is in one of Fairbanks best school districts (Pearl Creek). [Eventually I'll break the news that Pearl Creek Elementary is slated for closure to him. I really will. But I don't want to ruin his current good vibes. Any suggestions? Wait til the next big AK gas line progress announcement?]

I think there's a lesson in there somewhere. If not for us adults, at least for the kids.

Thank you for your service to Alaska.

Luke Boles

Fairbanks

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Education](#)  
**Subject:** Support HB 69  
**Date:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 4:56:50 PM

---

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

Vera Rutzer  
Cordova, AK

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** SUPPORT of HB69  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 10:35:07 AM

---

Hello, I am a mother of two children. One is in school and the other is brand new. I support HB69 and you should too!

Kimberly Robson

[REDACTED]  
Petersburg, Ak 99833

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [House Education](#); [School Board](#); [wwmas@muni.org](mailto:wwmas@muni.org); [mayor@muni.org](mailto:mayor@muni.org)  
**Subject:** Test Scores Take Another Dive As Schools Pocket \$Billions – -THROWING AWAY MONEY AT YOUR FAILED EDUCATION SYSTEM IS JUST WROMG  
**Date:** Friday, January 31, 2025 7:02:52 AM

---

<https://issuesinsights.com/2025/01/31/test-scores-take-another-dive-will-anyone-be-held-accountable/>

# Test Scores Take Another Dive As Schools Pocket \$Billions

October 6, 2021



Another year, another disastrous National School Report card, the annual checkup on American students' test scores. Yes, it's bad. After predictably plunging during the COVID school-shutdown years, scores show no signs of snapping back. This is child abuse on a national level.

Our good friends at the Committee to Unleash Prosperity [succinctly summed up](#) the past five years: "The massive, unprecedented infusion of federal funds into schools under the guise of COVID recovery has abjectly failed to improve outcomes – but it has enriched the teacher unions."

Yep. And the test scores remain abysmal, with no improvement. Average reading scores for 8th graders (America's future workforce, mind you) have fallen from 263 in 2019 to 258 in 2024, erasing 33 years of slow improvement in reading.

Math is just as bad, if not worse. True, the 274 level is the same as in 2022, but it's *way below* the level five years ago.

Worst of all, those at the bottom of the education performance race are getting worse, while a small cohort at the top are improving. This continues a trend, which began during the Obama administration.

“In 2011 and 2012, the Obama administration began issuing waivers to release states from the most onerous requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act,” [explained Chad Aldeman](#), an education writer at The 74 website. “Congress made those policies permanent in the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act.”

“No Child Left Behind”? Try “Most Children Left Behind.” Lower standards equals lower test scores. It’s that simple. You can expect the future gap between rich and poor to widen.

“If students can’t catch up, the learning loss may impact [their future earnings](#) and even become a drag on the U.S. economy,” noted a CNN piece in 2023.

This is a deadly serious problem. One calculation, made early in the COVID era, [forecast a \\$2 trillion cumulative loss of income](#) for America’s 50 million schoolkids; another more recent report [estimated](#) that “(s)tudents on average face 2 to 9 percent lower lifetime income depending on the state in which they attended school.”

Our schools are failing, despite massive spending. What a surprise. Apart from wringing our hands in despair, what can be done about this?

**First**, recognize we have a problem, and it isn’t the Wuhan virus. It’s bad public school administrators and even worse teachers unions, who have turned once-model institutions of learning into academies of [woke propaganda](#) and academic failure.

This has been going on for a while, but its most severe effects are being felt acutely right now, in the wake of the COVID shutdowns, which stranded millions of kids at home doing “online” instruction from remote teachers.

Despite the massive, unprecedented infusion of [\\$190 billion in federal funds](#) into schools under the guise of COVID recovery, outcomes have worsened – but the spending has enriched and empowered teachers unions while also giving inept school administrators greater power over students’ learning.

Parents are fleeing the system (but still pay taxes for it), while the teacher-administrative complex wants even more. Not surprisingly, since 2019, the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) shows, the number of children attending U.S. schools has *dropped* by 1.3 million, while the number of teachers and administrators has surged 351,000. That’s doubling down on failure.

**Second**, the Education Department, despite its name, has failed to fix education, despite its huge budget. For the first 200 years of this nation, we had no Education Department at all. Yet we led the world in innovation, Nobel Prizes, arts and letters, scientific research, and economic growth during that time.

So why do we have a now-\$90 billion-a-year education bureaucracy? As [Reason](#) put it a while back, “Creating the DoED (in 1979) was (President) Carter’s fulfillment of a 1976 presidential campaign promise, when he earned the endorsement of the largest labor union in the United States — the National Education Association (NEA).”

The Education Department’s function has little to do with education and a lot to do with disbursing money under various laws passed by Congress. It educates no one. The most successful secretary of Education will be the one who shuts it down.

**Third**, from a policy standpoint, it's time to move forward with meaningful school reforms that reinstate the supremacy of parents and the local community and lessen the influence of teachers and administrators.

That means more charter schools, Education Savings Accounts, vouchers, and school choice for parents. Only by creating a functioning marketplace for the consumers of education (parents and their kids) can our dysfunctional educational system ever be fixed. We're spending far too much money on education to have diminishing returns.

A good first step was taken just this week in both the [House](#) and the [Senate](#), a welcome start to the freeing of our public schools from the shackles of bureaucracy and leftist dogma by boosting school choice and making it easier for parents to pay for kids' schooling.

And even the Education Department, under Trump, is doing one thing that should have been done long ago: It's "begun dismantling diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies within its halls," the [Daily Caller](#) wrote.

So let's keep the changes coming. America's future depends on the quality of our children's education. That's too precious to leave in the hands of the leftist teachers unions and administrators who have done such damage to our once best-in-the-world schools.

— Written by the [I&I Editorial Board](#)

## **We Could Use Your Help**

**Issues & Insights** was founded by seasoned journalists of the IBD Editorials page. Our mission is to provide timely, fact-based reporting and deeply informed analysis on the news of the day --

without fear or favor.

We're doing this on a voluntary basis because we believe in a free press, and because we aren't afraid to tell the truth, even if it means being targeted by the left. Revenue from ads on the site help, but your support will truly make a difference in keeping our mission going. If you like what you see, feel free to visit our [\*Donations Page\*](#) [\*by clicking here\*](#). And be sure to tell your friends!