

Michael Mason

From: wxjunkie@juno.com
Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 8:19 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: I oppose SB 52

Dear Senators,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 52, raising the BSA by \$1000. I have followed the trend in per pupil spending and proficiency rankings for several years now and find it appalling that there is a lack of accountability in the State education system. Alaska routinely ranks in the top seven states in the amount of money spent per student. However, it ranks in the bottom 5 states in proficiency rankings

(<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile?chort=2&sub=RED&sj=AL&sfj=NP&st=MN&year=2022R3>).

With such a discrepancy noted by the Federal Government, I cannot help but question where all of the money is currently going in the State's school systems. Having worked in the local school district, I know a lot is spent on administration, yet teachers sometimes have to go without essential supplies. This crisis needs to be addressed before any additional funding is granted to school districts. Each district must be held accountable and audited to make sure that the vast majority of funding goes toward a student's education, rather than lavish benefits for administrative staff.

Sincerely,

Aaron Stierle
6515 Reconstruction Rd.
Fairbanks, AK 99709



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April 9th, 2024

Anchorage Legislators
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Governor Mike Dunleavy
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: Support for Anchorage School District (ASD) Education Funding

Dear Governor Dunleavy and Anchorage Legislators,

Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) writes to urge your support in permanently increasing K-12 public education funding through the base student allocation.

AEDC's strategic plan, Choose Anchorage, emphasizes the importance of investing in talent retention and attraction efforts that build a labor force with skills that meet the needs of current and future employers, leading to a more resilient and diversified economic base. AEDC believes that a quality K-12 public education system is a critical component to building this robust talent pipeline.

Additionally, one of Anchorage's chief economic concerns is the net outmigration of its population, and especially the decline in its working-age adult population. This outmigration has contributed to the loss of nearly 20,000 working age adults from Anchorage in the last decade, or approximately 13% of the labor force, which can be partially attributed to former residents moving to cities that had lifestyle factors that met their needs, such as a well-funded education system.

Lastly, it is evident that Anchorage is becoming less competitive in attracting new investments from both outside the state and within Alaska, partially due to the size and trajectory of the labor force. This observation is reinforced by the fact that when site selectors are considering relocating a business or expanding into a new geographic region, the most important factor they consider is the availability of skilled labor. Without investing in the beginning of the labor force pipeline, the K-12 public education system, Anchorage will not be able to compete with other U.S. cities in a national competition for limited talent, further hindering our ability to attract new capital investment.

Meaningful investment in the K-12 public education system will be a significant step towards improving the competitiveness of Anchorage in attracting both new investments and outside talent that are critical to the future economic growth and prosperity of Anchorage. This predictable investment will allow school districts to innovate and transform education through programs such as ASD's Academies program that has been shown to increase graduation rates, academic achievement and preparation for postsecondary education in other communities.

AEDC strongly urges the Alaska Legislature to support increased, stable education funding for the future success of Anchorage and Alaska.

Ryan Strong
Board Chair

Jenna Wright
President & CEO

April 19, 2023



Dear Members of the Senate Finance and Education Committees,

The Alaska School Nurses Association supports full funding of the Alaska Base Student Allocation. We know that school districts around the state are facing budgetary crises related to flat funding of the BSA since 2017.

We thank the Senate Education Committee for its dedication to education and its robust increase in funding and inflation-proofing of the BSA in **SB 52, Sections 4 – 6**.

We believe that full funding of the BSA, allocating from the general fund and not with a special appropriation, is the correct approach, and we appreciate the experienced and knowledgeable actions of Senate Education and Senate Finance toward supporting our constitutionally-mandated government functions in Alaska.

We urge Senate Finance to forward SB 52 to the Senate Floor with a *Do Pass* recommendation.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sonja Mack, President, Alaska School Nurses Association

alaskaschoolnurses@gmail.com 907-232-7988

Michael Mason

From: Allison Brooking <aabrooking@alaska.edu>
Sent: Thursday, April 6, 2023 5:18 PM
To: House Education; House Finance; Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Vital BSA increase

Hello.

A BSA increase is absolutely vital to the future of our state. Alaska already faces a massive teacher shortage that will only get worse without intervention. When being a teacher comes with no benefits at all, people will be pushed out of a career that they would otherwise love and students will lose vital opportunities for education. Education is one of the most vital areas of government spending and we cannot afford to let schools fall victim to inflation. The less funding schools are given, the less of a future our young people will have.

Thank you,

Allison Brooking



Anchorage School District

Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • www.asdk12.org

March 10, 2023

Dear Senator Tobin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your leadership and vision in amending SB 52 so as to increase the BSA by \$1000 to \$6,960 in FY24 and by an additional \$348 to \$7,308 in FY25, and so as to use the U.S. Department of Labor Consumer Price Index to calculate an "inflation adjustment" percentage increase to the BSA in FY26. Thank you for also responding to interest in accountability by requiring DEED—not individual districts—to create a public website to report annual progress toward high academic performance by all Alaska students, schools, and districts, and for directing the Department of Labor and Workforce Development—again, not individual districts—to collaborate with DEED to gather data on career, postsecondary education, and residency data for each graduating student.

These strategic adjustments to SB 52 are closely aligned with the scope and scale of need that the Anchorage School District has identified for its upcoming fiscal years, and would expand upon the model of transparency and accountability that ASD has long offered: our [data dashboard](#) contains up-to-date assessments of students' progress toward Board goals as well as attendance and graduation rates. However, we understand that many smaller districts could struggle to put something similar in place, so we thank you for envisioning the work of reporting as a State-level responsibility.

Your committee's amendments are timely and necessary. **ASD educates nearly 44,500 students through 130 schools and programs and employs 5,900 full time positions.** But this year, **ASD has \$80 million less in purchasing power than it did during the 2016-2017 school year.** This is due to seven years of an unchanged Base Student Allocation, declining enrollment, and inflationary drivers.

Although ASD has closed schools, generated new revenue streams, promoted a variety of efficiencies to balance its budgets since the 2016-2017 year, **ASD largely balanced its FY21-FY24 budgets by allocating more than \$100 million from its three rounds of federal relief funds to maintain longstanding classroom staffing ratios.** This current school year, relief funds are being used to retain 477 classroom teachers and prevent massive class size increases. Below, please find a table summarizing ASD's relief fund expenditures towards teachers.

Federal relief allocations for retaining classroom teachers			
Year	Amount	Relief fund name	# Teachers retained
FY 21	\$2.5 m	CARES	29
FY 22	\$23.6 m	CRRSA	235
FY 23	\$56.2 m	ARP	477
FY 24	\$19.9 m	ARP	164

The last of ASD's federal relief funds—approximately \$20 million—will be allocated towards retaining 164 teacher positions during FY24, but these cannot compensate for ASD's entire deficit. To balance next year's budget, ASD will also use an additional \$16 million in State one-time funds saved from FY23, \$29 million from its fund balance (which is being spent down to the Board minimum), cuts to district

administration and ASD's virtual options, two school closures (Abbott Loop and Ursa Major), and a "+1" increase to the pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) districtwide.

The PTR formula divides the total number of students in the school, by grade level, by a ratio (e.g. 1 teacher to 23 students in 1st grade); this creates a baseline to establish the total number of teachers allocated per school. The following charts, taken from the FY23 and FY24 budget books, show the +1 increase in next year's staffing ratios:

School Type	FY 2023 <i>GENERAL FUND + ESSER</i> PTR – Grade Level Groupings							
	K	1	2	3	4–5	6	7–8	9–12
Secondary Schools								30.25
Middle Schools						30.25	30.25	
Elementary Schools	21	22	24	25	26	27	27	

School Type	FY 2024 <i>GENERAL FUND + ESSER</i> PTR – Grade Level Groupings							
	K	1	2	3	4–5	6	7–8	9–12
Secondary Schools								31.25
Middle Schools						31.25	31.25	
Elementary Schools	22	23	25	26	27	28	28	

Although increasing PTR by 1 across all grades will save ASD approximately \$7.3 million in FY24, next year's **class sizes will increase in schools represented by every single Anchorage legislator**. ASD principals have already identified the **62 teachers who will not be replaced** should they retire or resign at the end of this year, and/or will be involuntarily displaced for the 2023-2024 school year.

Below, please find a list of ASD schools that will be losing teacher positions for FY24, organized by legislative district/legislator, due to the PTR +1 staffing formula change. The combination of enrollment changes and the new PTR formula means that although many schools are losing ½ or 1 teacher "Full Time Equivalent" position (FTE), others will lose more. Ocean View Elementary will lose 2.5 FTE, for instance, while Chugiak High School will lose 3.4 FTE. For more information on each school's staffing changes, please see Appendix G, "Combined General Fund and ESSER Teacher FTE Comparison," found in the Anchorage School District's [FY24 Budget Book](#) (p 476-477).

District	Legislator	Schools losing classroom teacher FTE in FY24 due to PTR +1 staffing formula change
E	Giessel	Dimond, East, Klatt, Mears, Ocean View, Service
F	Kaufman	Bowman, East, Service, Spring Hill, Stellar (+ *Abbott Loop closing)
G	Gray-Jackson	Airport Heights, Dimond, East, Gladys Wood, Inlet View, Lake Otis, Mears, Romig, SAVE, Stellar, Willow Crest
H	Claman	Dimond, Gladys Wood, Kincaid, Mears, Romig, Sand Lake
I	Tobin	Airport Heights, Bartlett, Begich, Denali, East, Inlet View, Mirror Lake, Muldoon, PAIDEA, Romig (+ Ursa Major remaining closed)
J	Dunbar	Airport Heights, Bartlett, East, King Tech, Lake Otis, Nunaka Valley, Russian Jack, Williwaw, Wonder Park
K	Wielechowski	Bartlett, Begich, Chester Valley, Muldoon, Nunaka Valley, Ptarmigan, Scenic Park
L	Merrick	Bartlett, Begich, Chugiak High, Fire Lake, Mirror Lake, Muldoon
9	Shaw	East

10	Johnson	Dimond, Klatt, Mears, Ocean View, Service
11	Colombe	Bowman, Service, Spring Hill (+ Abbott Loop closing)
12	Schrage	East, Lake Otis, Service (+ Abbott Loop closing)
13	Josephson	Dimond, East, Gladys Wood, Mears, Romig, SAVE, Scenic Park, Service
14	Galvin	East, Inlet View, Lake Otis, Romig, Stellar, Willow Crest
15	McKay	Dimond, Gladys Wood, Kincaid, Mears, Sand Lake
16	Armstrong	Dimond, Kincaid, Lake Hood, Mears, Romig, Sand Lake
17	Fields	Airport Heights, Denali, East, Inlet View, PAIDEA, Romig
18	Groh	Bartlett, Begich, Denali, East, Inlet View, Muldoon (+ Ursa Major remaining closed)
19	Mina	Airport Heights, Bartlett, East, Russian Jack, Williwaw, Wonder Park
20	Gray	Bartlett, East, King Tech, Lake Otis, Nunaka Valley, Russian Jack
21	Mears	Bartlett, Begich, Chester Valley, Nunaka Valley, Scenic Park
22	Wright	Bartlett, Begich, Muldoon, Ptarmigan, Wonder Park
23	Allard	Bartlett, Begich, Chugiak High, Mirror Lake, Muldoon
24	Saddler	Chugiak High, Fire Lake, Mirror Lake

As we look to the future, an unadjusted BSA will mean that ASD's structural deficits will increase from \$68 million in FY24 to approximately **\$85 million during FY 25, \$91-105 million during FY 26, and \$104-125 million during FY 27**. If the BSA remains unadjusted through February of 2026, which is when the Board will adopt a balanced budget for the FY27 year, **ASD will have to cull 1,200 positions**. This would likely result in additional school closures, the elimination of many extracurricular opportunities, language immersion programs, and/or gifted services, and unprecedented increases to our PTRs / class sizes.

None of those outcomes are desirable. None of them will support student growth. But you have identified a path forward! To that end, please know that the Anchorage School Board stands with you, as we have prioritized an increase to the Base Student Allocation, as well as inflation-proofing the BSA, as legislative priorities for this current session. We recognize—as do you—that prioritizing and investing in public education is critical to our students’ success and to a thriving community.

Thank you for your commitment to that future.

Sincerely and In Service,

Margo Bellamy

President, Anchorage School Board

Carl Jacobs

Vice President, Anchorage School Board

Kelly Lessens

Treasurer & Finance Committee Chair, Anchorage School Board



Anchorage School District

Education Center

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March 21, 2023

Dear Governor Dunleavy, members of the Senate, and members of the House of Representatives,

Thank you for continuing your efforts to support public education in Alaska and to fix our current education funding challenges. This is a problem that will be fixed through partnership.

The Anchorage School District (ASD) would like to express its support for education funding bills, including SB52 and HB65, which seek to address the negative impacts from years of base student allocation (BSA) flat funding. SB52 would provide a \$1,000 increase in FY24's BSA, while HB65 contains a BSA increase of \$1,250.

As you know, our Alaska Constitution prioritizes education across our great state. Specifically, the legislature is directed by law to "establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions."

The disappointing truth is, for decades, the State of Alaska (SOA) has struggled with providing consistent inflationary increases to funding. Instead, it has focused on occasional increases and intermittent one-time funding. We applaud this legislature's focus on providing an inflationary increase to the BSA.

In addition to advocating for inflation adjusted funding, we retained Piccus Odden and Associates (please see attached document) to conduct a study to apply the evidence-based method to assess school finance adequacy in our community. Evidence-based methods are supported by research as being effective at improving academic outcomes. If the SOA were to provide school funding at the level of the evidence-based model, and our schools implemented those research-based practices, student achievement in Alaska would dramatically rise. This study provided 29 recommendations, along with the cost to implement evidence-based practices across numerous dimensions including: special education, English-language learners, educator compensation, and instruction. **The study shows that an evidence-based Base Student Allocation is estimated to be \$13,612 to implement every evidence-based improvement across the District.**

The magnitude of this recommended BSA increase will give significant weight to the bold vision expressed in HB 65 and SB 52. Without action to adjust the BSA, we along with other partner districts across Alaska will face enormous and

Educating All Students for Success in Life

Anchorage School Board Margo Bellamy, President

Carl Jacobs, Vice President

Dora Wilson, Clerk

Kelly Lessens, Treasurer

Dave Dortley

Pat Higgins

Andy Holleman

Superintendent Dr. Jharrett Bryant

unprecedented deficits. It will lead to increased class sizes, staff shortages, layoffs, and even worse academic outcomes. We cannot allow this to happen.

SB52 and HB65 will allow districts to provide education at the same level it did seven years ago. However, that can't be the new normal. Education funding must be continuously adjusted to account for inflation and to support evidence-based practices. More work needs to be done if we are truly committed to creating the finest state education system in our country. An evidence-based BSA would be a profound investment in student outcomes, and the study commissioned by ASD makes a compelling case for doing so.

We continue to advocate for an updated state-wide study to modernize the District Cost Factor within the Foundation Formula. Continuing to use outdated data may be negatively impacting Anchorage-area youth and hampering the Legislature's ability to accurately target much needed funding. Upon passage of the BSA legislation, we urge you to make this a top priority.

Thank you for your commitment to create solutions for the education funding challenges in Alaska. SB52 and HB65 are a positive step in the right direction, and it is imperative that the SOA implement a multi-year plan to ensure that those investments in our students are maintained. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



Jharrett Bryantt, Ed.D., Superintendent



Carl Jacobs, School Board Vice Chair



Dora Wilson, School Board Clerk



Kelly Lessens, School Board Treasurer



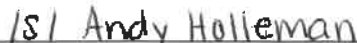
Margo Bellamy, School Board President



Dave Donley, School Board Member



Pat Higgins, School Board Member



Andy Holleman, School Board Member

Michael Mason

From: Andy Cizek <and.czk@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 15, 2023 12:32 PM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen Mia Costello; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Senate Education; House Finance; governor@alaska.gov; House Judiciary; attorney.general@alaska.gov
Subject: SB 52

Why do you all continue to steal from the people of alaska to support a public school system that is so top heavy and defunct that there's no way money will ever fix it. I've seen the public school system in alaska continually get mega funding for decades and it continues to make it more defunct with ever worsening outcomes. Try following the law for once and quit thinking you're above the law. You should be the most upstanding citizens ever produced! What an example you set for the peons. Especially you so called republicans like Steven's who has been sucking off the system for years with a good old boy attitude spending tax dollars like there's way too much. Open your eyes and cut the budget and control your special interests spending with other people's money. You don't know how to spend my money better then I do so stop and if you can't then please resign and let even a kindergartener take your place who can understand spending better then you bought off blind guides can! That was for those of you who try to throw christianeze in your little info letters but still do what's against the law. Wow. What upstanding citizens!!! Oh and yes. Now you get to cost the state more money by your shenanigans with the house majority and running into extra legislation time. Just remember the house is put there to have an equal voice and not just to be run over GARY!!!! MR SENATE LEADER!!! Whose been in position way too long AND HAS HELD THAT POSITION BEFORE. Please retire and move to a communist country since that's what you're obviously pushing for. Maybe that'll change your mind on the way you do things! Thanks Jesse for helping give the senate this power even though you represent the most conservative district in the whole state! What a hero! Please have the balls to run as the democrats you all are instead of hiding behind the Republican veil until elected. It's too bad people are that stupid to keep falling for that age old trick. Bottom line. DO YOUR JOB ACCORDING TON THE OATH YOU TOOK UPON ENTERING OFFICE! Simple huh?

Keep looking up!!!!

Andy Cizek
33060 Baylor Street
Soldotna Ak 99669
9072521704

Michael Mason

From: Angela Head <angela.a.head@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:21 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support the Senate Bill to increase BSA for our Schools

Hello,

My name is Angela Head and I am a parent and community member in Homer, AK. I have three children, one who is a Paul Banks Peanut and two pre-schoolers that will be starting next year in Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. My husband and I are business owners who live here year round. We own two residences here and love our community.

Our schools need all the financial support they can get. Operating at a 44.4 million deficit for next school year will impel many negative cuts to our resources. I value our educators not only for the job they do 8-5 with my kids but for the community members they make. Please keep their jobs here in the District.

The increase in BSA is critical AND fair. Taking into account the inflation rate over the past 7 years (date of last increase), all of our schools have LOST money. The overhead costs remain the same, but the BSA hasn't changed. The pandemic was so harmful to our schools and our students; the only saving grace was the Federal money that bailed out our district over the past 2 budget cycles.

Please show that you value education at the state level by voting for this increase. My family is depending on quality public schools for the next 18 years as well as all the wonderful resources we enjoy by having a healthy and robust educational system.

Thank you for your time and service,

Angela

Michael Mason

From: Angel Hayes <angelhayes@dbbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:52 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Literally on my knees begging

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you on behalf of all Alaskan school districts. Never have we needed help financially than now. I believe the one time BSA increase of \$1000 needs to be voted in, for such a time as this.

Teachers are quitting jobs they were born to do because of burnout, and frustration. As the cost of living has risen over a year ago my district has not been able to give pay increases to meet the need, show their appreciation or show that they value their staff members. Students are suffering from the loss of some of the most gifted instructors in the United States of America. Students are not meeting their full potential and going the route of homeschooling. They are not being challenged to critically think and to strive for high quality work. Their education from home is a basic Abc, 123, rhetoric. New concepts and ideas are being excluded leaving students at a huge disadvantage. Alaskan students matter, and so do their teachers! Help alleviate the load off of the teacher's backs so that they can focus on what they do best; TEACH! And help Alaskan students by providing them with the very thing Alaska promises them; HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION!

Increase the BSA. Alaska is depending on you to do the right thing!

Angelica Hayes
Paraprofesional

Michael Mason

From: Marka Anne Brooks <brooks.markaanne@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:16 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Marka Anne Brooks
Subject: Alaska Education Funding

Senate Education Committee

First of all, thank you very much for your work on behalf of Alaskans. I am writing to encourage you to raise the base student allocation by at least \$1000. I would very much like the increase to make up for the years of cuts and inflation, but understand it is a challenging proposition. Our most important resource are our children. Our most important service to those children is to provide them with an education. We need to attract the best, brightest and most innovative teachers. Without providing them a competitive salary and benefits, we cannot keep them in Alaska. We need to continue to provide a strong public school system.

The need for funding does not end with public schools, but also extends to the University and beyond. I am an engineer and years ago worked to increase engineering and STEM education funding so we can grow our own engineers. At the time, it was estimated that it cost thousands of dollars (\$75,000 comes to mind) to recruit and train an engineer to work and move them to Alaska. As employers quickly found out, these engineers often did not stay in Alaska, but moved back to the lower 48. The reasons were many, but it became obvious that we needed to educate our own.

The same is true for teachers, truck drivers, engineers, scientists, health care workers, lawyers and many other essential jobs in Alaska. We need a comprehensive review of wages and salaries to find a way to pay competitive salaries and benefits.

We have become a state of its all about me, it's all about me getting the largest pfd. If we lowered the size of the pfd and funded services, especially the important employee benefits that retain people in Alaska, we would greatly help Alaska and future generations.

To find the money, let's not fund another mega project, or buy into the carbon credits idea. Let's find a way to get our fair share of our oil and mining resources. Perhaps not is not the time to increase salaries to key state officials when we've cut or eliminated so many jobs.

Anne Brooks, P.E.,
1704 Rogers Park St, Anchorage, AK 99508
brooks.markaanne@gmail.com
907-242-6405

Michael Mason

From: Anna Polonowski <annawaan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:47 PM
To: gov.alllegislators@alaska.gov; Education; gov.pressoffice@alaska.gov
Subject: Please Raise the BSA!!!!

I support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaskan Students.

I support the Jan. 30th 2023 memo from the

Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago.

As a parent, I have deep concerns about the impact that large class sizes, teacher shortages, and program cuts like language immersion will negatively have impact my children as students and your community.

Continuing to flat fund our education system is punitive to students, teachers, parents and our communities at large.

Do you expect better morale and performance in your workplace while treating your employees with disrespect and demand your employees work more hours for the same pay???

Please raise the BSA!

Anna Polonowski

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Ashley Dewey <ashley.dewey@k21schools.org>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2023 12:19 PM
To: Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson; Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Rep. Julie Coulombe; Rep. Mike Cronk; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Andrew Gray; Rep. Cliff Groh; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Donna Mears; Rep. Genevieve Mina; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. George Rauscher; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Rep. Laddie Shaw; Rep. Will Stapp; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Jesse Sumner; Rep. Cathy Tilton; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Stanley Wright; Senate Education; Senate Finance; House Education; House Finance
Subject: What's the Point?

What is the point of anything?

What is the point of eating?

What is the point of working?

What is the point of exercising?

What is the point of educating?

What is the point of learning?

What is the point of building?

Building our homes, our families, our communities?

The point is tomorrow. People carry on, to be ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow is the immediate future, but there is a distant future. That distant future has our Kindergarteners grown and running businesses and towns. They will be your medical providers, your military members, your teachers...

Is the future important to you? Do you care about the place you call home? The country as a whole? It all starts with that Kindergartener. And every day and every year- counts. It is not just about SEEING the value. You must INVEST in the value for it to reach full potential.

Alaska schools are sorely under-funded. Inflation hasn't been considered. It doesn't matter who you are, what you do, your future will be impacted if we don't take the investment in our children's education seriously.

Basic Student Allotment needs to be raised.

--

Ashley Dewey
Fawn Mountain Elementary - Health Aide
(907) 228-2201

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 Kwaan and Taanta Kwaan.

Michael Mason

From: pastorino@gci.net
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 8:24 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SB52

I am a retired educator and have personally experienced the year-to-year chaos brought about by lack of and uncertain educational funding. My kids and grandkids all attended schools in the Juneau School District, and I have taught both in Juneau and Anchorage; and I can assure you that our students would do better if the stress for teachers regarding funding was not an issue and they were able to actually adequately plan from year-to-year. Crisis management for education must end. Raising the BSA is not only a wise decision, it is long over-due. Raising it \$1,000 would provide stability that is so desperately needed. Using general funds meant for the classroom to fun other needs should not be an option. The classroom is where teaching and learning happens for our children. They need to be our number one priority; they will be making these difficult decisions in the future. So, I ask you to consider and support SB52. Thank you for your service, and, particularly, for your interest and support for education.

I hope I am not too late for this; I was traveling.

Barbara Pastorino

Juneau Resident

907-500-2390

Michael Mason

From: btyndall <btyndall@protonmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 5:15 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52

Dear Senator:

I am contacting you today in opposition to SB 52. Throwing money at our ineffective education system has not helped in the past and will not do so at this time. We need accountability and proof of outcomes attached to any money we send to our schools. Most of the allocated funds go for administration rather than the classroom and that is a travesty.

Alaskans continue to pull their children out of our public schools and are moving toward homeschooling with much better outcomes.

Please reject raising the BSA this year and put in place a system that will actually fix the problems.

Thank you,
Barbara Tyndall
North Pole

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

Michael Mason

From: Rhonda Bohart <rhonda.bohart@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:25 PM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens
Cc: Rep. Louise Stutes; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Senate Finance Committee; Senate Education; House Finance; House Education
Subject: HB65 - In favor of increasing the Base Student Allocation

I am writing in support of HB65. We need to increase the Base Student Allocation. We need to support our kids, our future of Alaska, and our teachers. If our kids do not receive great educations in Alaska, families will leave to find other states with better education systems, and we will lose our current and future work force. If we do not support our teachers and staff we will lose great educators and staff to other states.

We live next to the ocean. Our kids need to know how to swim, which they will only get if they have access to a pool. Our community also needs an outlet for swimming during the dark, windy days of winter. The pools supports our students and our community.

Our current teacher/student ratio is already on the high end. Covid hit schools hard. We have a lot of kids who need extra help catching up. Having fewer staff will only hurt the students, as they will not be able to have the extra help.

We need to keep our Student Success Liaison. With so many students taking distant education classes because of the lack of options at our high school, we need to keep the person who is overseeing these students. We cannot expect high school students to be able to navigate online classes on their own. They need the guidance and accountability of an adult.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ben and Rhonda Bohart (Parents of two students at Seward Elementary)

Seward, AK

907-229-1759

Michael Mason

From: Benjamin White <whiteb@sitkaschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:54 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 52

Hello Education Committee,

My name is Ben White and I wanted to send a quick message **strongly encouraging** you to support senate bill 52. Alaskan schools and their students need this funding to provide the best education possible for the future of our state! I also asked that you support the January 30, 2023 memo from the legislative budget and audit committee that indicated that the BSA would need to be raised by **MORE** than \$1000 to restore public education funding to levels from eight years ago!

Please, please, invest in the future of our great state by investing in the students of our great state! Thank you for your time and commitment, it is greatly appreciated.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Michael Mason

From: Beth Short-Rhoads <bethshortrhoads@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:10 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Bert Stedman
Subject: Please support SB 52

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I'm writing with strong support for SB 52 and raising the BSA for Alaska's schools. As a parent who has seen the impact that education has on the entirety of a child's life, it is astonishing that the BSA has been stagnant since 2017. Inflation alone has made the current funding level shockingly outdated and equivalent to not merely flat funding but a sizable funding cut.

One real-life casualty of this cut to education funding in Alaska is our middle school library here in Sitka. This library no longer has a librarian and is open for a very limited amount of time each day. At a time when students should be learning how to do research and use new technologies for the 21st century, children at Blatchley Middle School have almost no library access and zero access to a trained librarian.

Alaska's schools can't continue to lose funding year after year and still educate our kids in a way that makes them competitive with the rest of the country. Please pass SB 52 and raise the BSA.

Thank you for your service,

Beth Short-Rhoads
Sitka

Michael Mason

From: Billeen Carlson <billeenc@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 5:45 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52

Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee.

I am writing to you today as a mother, a teacher, and a 3rd generation, lifelong Alaskan.

I am the sole certified teacher at Nikolaevsk K-12 school in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. This year we have 37 students from kindergarten to 11th grade and we have managed with just me, my instructional aide, and a SPED aide on our instructional staff. We have shared our administrator with Ninilchik school, so this year I have also been acting admin four out of five days a week.

I'm sure you've heard that our district, state, & nation are experiencing a crisis-level administrator & teacher shortage. Nikolaevsk, with its remote location and tumultuous, poverty stricken community, has a particularly hard time attracting and retaining educators.

Our school has had an open elementary teacher position all year and has been unsuccessful in attracting a qualified applicant. With the funding deficit facing our school district next year, our district administration has proposed making the elementary position only a .4 FTE. We will most certainly be unable to attract a qualified applicant.

I believe that my work is my calling. My hope is that every child that I serve will have a greater capacity for resilience, health, and productivity. I am devoted to my school and the students in it because I am a born and bred, 3rd generation Alaskan who hopes to make our communities healthy and strong. Two of the students in my school are my own children.

That being said, this year has been a grueling trek. My team and myself have been stretched beyond reason to provide a quality education for our students. I have consistently worked 10 hour days with no lunch or prep periods. I have covered lunches & recess duties all year. I am the teacher of record for every child, kindergarten through 11th grade and am personally responsible for teaching every subject and every elective for my 17 6th-11th graders. My instructional aide has 20 students from Kindergarten to 5th grade. She is absolutely brilliant but as an uncertified undergraduate, she is working way beyond her pay grade. We do not believe we can manage another year this way.

I believe that many legislators are seeking to dismantle our public education system. Since our nation's founding, a solid public education system has been the cornerstone of a healthy nation and a functional democracy.

I implore you, for the sake of our communities, state, and nation, please support a robust and well-funded public education system and vote yes on SB 52. I would tell you that we owe it to our children, but honestly, we owe it to ourselves to be able to grow old in a safe and healthy community.

Thank you for your time.

--

Billeen Carlson
"Bravery, creativity, curiosity."
907-201-1254

[Visit my website!](#)

Michael Mason

From: Robert Love <bjmelove@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:53 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Re: Senate Bill 52

Alaska Legislators ,
Just want to communicate what big supporters of the \$1000.00 per student for the BSA. As retired Alaskan Teachers who put in three decades in working with students we see the need for increased resources.
Thank You for what you do!
Bob & Jan Love

Sent from my iPad

My name is Brandy Harty, and I am life long resident of Fairbanks and a proud product of its local public schools. I am a mom to two elementary-aged students enrolled in our local public schools, a certified Special and Elementary education teacher, and a current member of our local School Board.

My husband is a civilian medivac pilot and member of the Alaska Army Guard. As an aviator, we had many options as to where we could choose to live and raise our family. He was not originally from Alaska, but due to the excellent education I was afforded as a student here and the access to world-class outdoor recreation, we chose to raise our family here.

However, that choice to remain in Alaska becomes harder to make each year. As both the product of our local schools, an educator in them, and now a parent, I have had a front-row seat to the steady decline in the services and quality of educational offerings due to seven years of flat funding our schools. As a child, I had a robust offering of music, art, and after-school sports and activities. I came from a low-income home, accessed our free and reduced lunch program and still was able to play the drums in band starting in 3rd grade, learn the fundamentals of art from teachers like Mr. Lentine and be a member of a competitive jump rope team started by our PE teacher... and all of this was just in elementary school! It was this amazing world-class education that inspired me to become a teacher myself.

The current reality of our schools stands in stark contrast to what I received as a student in Fairbanks 30 years ago. The school where I attended elementary, Joy School, was closed last year due to budget cuts. The elementary art program I remember so fondly was eliminated last year as well. There is no more Orchestra or Band in our elementary schools. Programs like my jump rope team are few and far between because we cannot pay educators well for the additional contract hours needed to sustain them. In short, my own children are receiving an education nowhere near the caliber that I did.

The proposed \$1000 BSA increase is an excellent start, but even an increase of that size will just cover current programs without providing any needed funds to bring back what was lost or provide meaningful and well-deserved pay increases to our educators. Alaska has a teacher recruitment and retention problem, and we will not be able to find staff for our schools without being willing to invest in our educators both through salary and retirement. I thank you for your time and commitment to Alaska and its students. Please know that the decisions you make here will have a profound impact on every community in Alaska. Please put Alaska's children first by increasing the BAS to no less than \$1860.

Michael Mason

From: Brian Smith <brmsmith6@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 3:25 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for increasing the Base Student Allocation

Hello,

I tried to call in to give my testimony, but the provided phone number didn't work, so I am emailing my testimony instead.

I just wanted to add my voice to those calling for increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$1,000 or more. Our great state needs to fund education as a priority, and we can't expect to maintain a strong education system without at least funding it to a level to keep up with the pace of inflation.

To provide our personal perspective: My wife and I moved our family from Washington state to Alaska two years ago. She is a (phenomenal) public school teacher, and she had to take a pay cut to move jobs from WA to AK at that point in time.

In the two years since we moved, the pay gap between her previous position in WA and her current position in AK has widened significantly because WA has increased teacher pay to try to keep pace with inflation, whereas AK has not.

If we as a state want to attract and retain high quality educators in the long term, we need to properly fund education. Increasing the BSA is the way to do this.

Thank you for your time.

Brian Smith
405 S Nordic Dr.
Petersburg, AK

Michael Mason

From: Carly Lehnhart <calehnhart@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 6:23 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Increasing BSA

To whom it may concern,

My name is Carly Lehnhart, and I have been a kindergarten teacher for the Juneau School District for 10 years. I was born and raised in Juneau, I got my masters in Education at the University of San Francisco, and came back to Juneau to teach. I chose to come back to Juneau, because I love the unique qualities of Southeast Alaska, and the connectedness of this community. I would love to stay here in my community and continue to teach in the place I was raised. I love teaching and come from a multi generational family of teachers, but in the last 2 years I have found myself questioning if this job is sustainable for me. I am not alone in this. Teachers are leaving, leaving the profession, or leaving the state to go teach somewhere else. With flat funding for education and inflation rising 21% since 2017 it is breaking our school systems down. Wages have not kept up with inflation, teacher retention is low, programs are being cut, support staff is being cut, and prices are rising for every item on the schools budgets. We are at a breaking point. The continued cuts to education funding are unacceptable. I have watched our class sizes rise to 40 in our middle schools, and to 28 in my kindergarten class with very limited para professional support if any at all. These are our babies, they are 5 and they deserve to have an adult who has the capacity to listen to their stories, zip their coat, tie their shoes, help them learn to read write, etc. This is not what is best for our kids, and not sustainable for our state and our future. Teachers can't sustain these levels of stress, and the students are seeing it and feeling it every day. Is that what we want for our children and the future leaders of our community? This is directly connected to the BSA. I support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaskan Students. I support the Jan. 30th 2023 memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago. We need to value our future, and to do that, we need to fund our schools.

Thank you,
Carly Lehnhart

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Carol Carman <d29@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2023 3:21 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: BSA

House and Senate Education Committee Members,

I have recently learned the Senate Education Committee plans to increase the BSA by \$1000 this year, which would increase the education funding by more than \$500M. The increase is actually more per student because there is a decrease of 2000 students.

Our state doesn't have the extra money to spend especially during a recession. The State Education department has requested a \$30 per student increase, which is still more than I like but definitely more reasonable.

How about holding School Districts accountable to successfully educate our children rather than continue to give them more money?

A good thing for you to do would be to reorganize districts. We have 56+ districts and administrative costs for each. Hawaii has 1 district with twice our population. I think we should have 2 districts: rural and bush (road system and off road communities), as their needs are so different, but similar to other communities in those two types of region.

Sincerely,

Carol Carman
D29 Chair
d29@mtaonline.net
907-746-8670 (home / msg)
[Facebook](#)

Michael Mason

From: Carey Carpenter <carey@carpenterprogramming.com>
Sent: Friday, April 28, 2023 7:27 AM
To: House Finance; House Education; Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA Increase for Education Funding

Hello Alaska State Education and Finance Committees, I'm writing to let you know that I will not settle for insufficient one-time funds for education. The \$680 BSA one-time increase is not enough to save programs that the school district thrives on and needs to keep kids successful and engaged. The \$680 BSA being proposed is not acceptable. Please fight for a meaningful, permanent, inflation-proofed increase to the BSA of at least \$1,000. I will not accept anything less and neither should you if you care about Alaska and its future.

Sincerely,
Carey Carpenter
907-764-8117

Michael Mason

From: casey mapes <YAK2YOU2@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 3:45 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Yvonne Baker; Carol Pate
Subject: SB 52 comment

Hello,

My name is Casey Mapes, I am a member of the Yakutat school board of education in Yakutat, and I am a concerned parent of an Alaskan student .

I wish for my comment to be considered regarding SB 52, which moves to increase the base allotment per student. AASB's request for an increase of not less than 860.00 per student, is the barest of minimums that should be considered. It is my personal feeling it should be a good deal more than this amount. Inflation has more than doubled nearly all expenses in Yakutat in just one year's time, meanwhile, the per student base has remained flatlined without a raise at all since 2017. This is absolutely unacceptable. We have a responsibility as Alaskan adults whom, many of us were given an opportunity to receive a good quality education here in this state. We owe it to paying this forward to the next generation, and we absolutely are not doing so at this time. I can attest that without this proper funding, our school budget has suffered tremendously. We are forced as a district to not fill much need positions, that would have diversified the classes offered to students, or has caused us to double, even triple classes under one teacher. This is just not the right way at all for us as a people. Education simply HAS to become paramount in your budget planning, if we are to remain a functional society into the future. Give our kids the best education we possibly can, and it will pay in spades, every time.

In addition to giving a fair and solid raise to the base per child allotment, I feel proper consideration should be given towards an additional offset to outlying bush communities that have less children enrolled than bigger schools, and also have an even much steeper inflation rate. Because these kids come from small districts, does not, and should not mean that they should receive less opportunities to access quality education. Fuel is many times more expensive here, housing for teachers is also, our district is struggling. As a result, so are our students testing scores. They aren't given a fair chance to succeed in the secondary schooling system.

Please, make Alaskan kid's education first, Thank you in advance for taking my comment to heart, and giving it fair consideration.

Casey Mapes

Mar 21, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for increasing the state base student allocation for public education in the state of Alaska. As you know, providing a high-quality education is crucial to the success of our children and the future of our state. However, our current level of funding for education falls far short of what is needed to ensure that every student has access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

According to the National Education Association (NEA), Alaska ranks 38th in the nation for per-pupil spending in public schools. The state's base student allocation, which is the amount of funding allocated per student from the state government, has remained stagnant for over a decade. In 2011, the state base student allocation was \$5,680, and in 2021 it was still \$5,680. This lack of increase in funding has made it challenging for schools to keep up with rising costs, such as teacher salaries, benefits, and classroom supplies.

At the elementary level specifically, Alaska's student-teacher ratio is higher than the national average. According to the NEA, Alaska has a student-teacher ratio of 17.8 to 1, compared to the national average of 15.8 to 1. This means that Alaska's elementary school teachers are responsible for more students than their counterparts in most other states, making it harder to provide individualized attention and support to each student.

Given these statistics, it is clear that Alaska is not currently providing its students with the resources and support they need to succeed in school and beyond. By increasing the state base student allocation, we can ensure that our schools have the funding they need to provide a high-quality education to every student, regardless of their background or zip code.

At the elementary level, in particular, we need to provide our students with a strong foundation in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. This requires adequate resources for textbooks, technology, and classroom supplies, as well as highly qualified teachers and support staff who are able to provide individualized attention and support to each and every student. Unfortunately, our current level of funding for education in Alaska does not provide for these critical needs.

Increasing the state base student allocation would go a long way toward addressing these issues. By providing more funding for education, we can ensure that our students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed in school and beyond. This investment in our children and our state's future is essential if we are to build a strong, vibrant, and prosperous Alaska.

Increasing Alaska's Base Student Allocation (BSA) can also have a significant positive impact on the state's economy. By increasing the BSA, Alaska can attract and retain highly qualified teachers, provide better resources and facilities to schools, and ultimately improve student

outcomes. These improved outcomes can lead to a more highly skilled workforce, which can attract new businesses to the state and help existing businesses expand.

In addition, increasing the BSA can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Improved education outcomes can lead to higher graduation rates and better-prepared graduates, which can result in a more highly skilled workforce. This, in turn, can attract businesses and industries that require highly skilled workers. As these businesses and industries grow, they can create new jobs and spur economic growth throughout the state. Furthermore, increased funding for education can lead to new investments in research and development, which can lead to new innovations and new businesses in a variety of sectors, such as technology, healthcare, and energy. Overall, increasing Alaska's BSA can create a virtuous cycle of economic growth and prosperity for the state.

I urge you to take action to increase the state base student allocation for public education in Alaska. Our children deserve nothing less than the best education we can provide, and we owe it to them and to our state to invest in their future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Casie Warner
907-491-0544
Po Box 1964
Seward Alaska
9664

Michael Mason

From: Martin Niemi <cmniemi@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:05 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Public School Funding

I support raising the BSA by at least \$1,000 as the LBA Committee reports is needed to restore Public Education to funding levels from 8 years ago. Flat funding is not supportive of our students & thereby unacceptable. Also, I support restoring defined benefit retirement plans for teachers (TRS) & other school employees (PERS) to recruit & retain staff. It's time to stop punishing our public school students & staff.
Thank you.

Christine Niemi from Douglas, Alaska
& grandmother of 3 young children who are future Alaska public school students.

Michael Mason

From: CJ Koan <CJ.Koan@pm.me>
Sent: Saturday, February 18, 2023 11:18 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Stop the BSA increase!

Senate Education Committee Members,

Please stop the increased spending!

I have recently learned the Senate Education Committee plans to increase the BSA by \$1000 this year, which would increase the education funding by more than \$500M. The increase is actually more per student because there is a decrease of 2000 students! Why do the schools need more money with less students? Why do we keep rewarding poor outcomes? Why are you not looking for ways to hold the school districts accountable for poor performance?

Our state doesn't have the extra money to spend especially during a recession. The State Education department has requested a \$30 per student increase, which is still more than I like but definitely more reasonable.

Sincerely,

CJ Koan
Wasilla

P.O. Box 1330
675 Second Street
Cordova, AK 99574



(T) 907-424-3265
(F) 907-424-3271
www.cordovasd.org

**RESOLUTION OF THE CORDOVA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION**
Resolution No. 2023: 03

**A RESOLUTION ADVOCATING FOR AN INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION TO
CONTINUE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

WHEREAS, Cordova City School District is thankful for the support of education stakeholders in our community; and

WHEREAS, the success of the education system in Cordova is dependent on community members, parents, students, teachers, administrators, and the School Board, along with adequate funding support provided by the State of Alaska and the City of Cordova; and

WHEREAS, public education available to all students without exception is foundational to our democracy and is required by the state constitution; and

WHEREAS, Cordova children deserve to be invested in because they define the future success of our community, the state, and our country; and

WHEREAS, the School Board governs with a philosophy that aims at providing the best possible education for our students, not the minimum education due to variables and constraints outside the Board's locus of control; and

WHEREAS, the state's foundation budget formula, which determines state aid to each district, has been woefully out of date for years, thereby underfunding school districts for essential educational services; and

WHEREAS, despite flat state funding, increased costs of living, and rising costs of goods and services, the District is still expected to appropriately educate students while having no means, itself, to generate revenue; and

WHEREAS, the District has analyzed its operational budgetary needs and has estimated a shortfall of approximately \$926,000 for FY24 in order to maintain the status quo; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 65's proposal of a \$1,250 increase to the Base Student Allocation closely aligns to meeting the shortfall needs of the District for FY24; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as the governing board responsible for ensuring a high-quality public education for each student in our community, the Cordova School District Board of Education is resolute in strongly advocating for an increase to the Base Student Allocation in order to continue providing a quality education for our students.

Approved by the Cordova School District Board of Education on March 22, 2023.

_____, Board President

On Apr 10, 2023, at 10:47 AM, Daniel Seiser <dans@bdsak.com> wrote:

I support increased funding of public education. I operated a professional business in Alaska for 40 years and have recently retired. But, I have 3 grandchildren attending public schools and have seen the increasing class size and diminished elective choices they are being offered at school. My Grandchildren are the future workers and wealth builders for Alaska. Stagnant funding also makes teaching a financially dubious career choice in Alaska. Stagnant funding reduces resources in the classrooms as operating costs continue to increase. Lack of appropriate funding levels for schools is inequitable for smaller communities with few resources to supplement reduced programs and to provide competitive employee compensation. Please increase the education support funding to support a prosperous future for Alaska.

Dan Seiser AIA A4LE LEED AP
Senior Architect

BDS ARCHITECTS ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING | ROOF TECHNOLOGY

3330 C Street, Suite 200, Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Main: 907-562-6076 | Direct: 907-771-3716

www.bdsak.com | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Michael Mason

From: D A <davidcharlesalexander@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:30 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Public Comment Bill SB52

I am writing in support of increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$1,000. The BSA has not had a significant increase in many years. As a direct result, our schools are currently underfunded and our borough (Denali) is being forced to consider closing two community schools.

A quality public education system is a key element in attracting and retaining residents to our community and to our state.

Please support this increase to the BSA.

David Alexander
Denali Park, Ak 99755

Michael Mason

From: Linda Boyle David Boyle <pennyak@earthlink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 3:29 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Fw: Be truthful on the BSA increase

Honorable Senators,

As you know, SB52 does NOT just increase the per student funding by a mere \$1,000. Once the \$1,000 increase is run through the Funding Formula it results in an increase of more than +\$2,000 per student.

Most of the public is being fooled by the Education Industry's misinformation. In addition, you are also bailing out the irresponsible fiduciary actions of many Alaska school boards. They have spent one-time federal Covid money on recurring costs and now expect you to bail them out.

If you pass this increase and put it into the BSA, you will put the funding in concrete--it will be extremely difficult to back it out of the formula. If the Alaska economy stumbles even more in the future, you will be responsible for a very difficult downward spiral.

Additionally, this huge increase will not even guarantee any substantial increase in student performance.

Please seriously consider this excess funding and do not agree to bail out failing school boards.

Request this email be made part of the documents for SB52.

Thank you.

David Boyle

Michael Mason

From: Dawn Adams <dawnadams@dbbsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:53 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SB 52 and BSA increase

Dear Senators -

Thank you for your service to the current and future citizens of Alaska.

As a school board member in the Denali Borough, our board like many others is struggling with balancing our annual budget with our commitment to doing what is best for the students.

I am writing to advocate for increasing the Base Student Allocation and tying future increases to inflation. The AASB resolution for an increase of at least \$860 would go far in helping our district to meet our commitment to students and teachers.

Without a BSA increase we are faced with the reality of needing to close schools which will crush the hopes of families in those communities. No community school will diminish the interest of future families to move into those areas if their children are faced with long bus rides to attend a brick and mortar school.

Please make up for the impact of inflation after 6 years of flat funding. Our borough assembly has maxed out it's financial support, we have to look to the state to fulfill its responsibilities to the children.

Respectfully yours,

Dawn Adams
Seat G, District 4
Denali Borough School District

Michael Mason

From: deb.naspinsky@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Deborah Naspinsky
<deb.naspinsky@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 25, 2023 11:00 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please vote YES on SB 43: Sex Ed

Dear Alaska Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support SB 43, the bill to require sex ed in Alaska schools.

Young people deserve age-appropriate, medically accurate information about sex, reproduction, and concepts like consent, respecting boundaries, and who to turn to for help. However, many students in Alaska do not have access to the information and skills they need to protect their health and safety because public schools in Alaska are not required to provide comprehensive or medically accurate sexual health education.

Over 90% of Alaskan voters agree that sex education should be medically accurate, age-appropriate, and should cover healthy relationships, consent, and communication skills.

Please support young people in Alaska by voting YES on SB 43.

Sincerely,
Mrs Deborah Naspinsky
23345 Muley Cir # 670088 Chugiak, AK 99567 deb.naspinsky@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Dominic Canale <dcanale@denaliborough.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:32 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Written Testimony Public Hearing SB 52

To the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Dominic Canale and I live in the community of Cantwell, AK. I also serve on the Denali Borough Assembly representing the community of Cantwell, District 1 seat A.

Please accept this email as written testimony in SUPPORT of SB 52, increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$1,000 to \$6,960. This increase in funding is critical for the Denali Borough to maintain viable public education for all communities served by the Denali Borough School District (DBSD). Without this increase, DBSD is faced with a critical shortfall in funding for FY2024 that could likely result in the closing of not only the one school here in Cantwell, but also the school in the community of Anderson 75 miles to the north.

The closing of the school in Cantwell (and Anderson for that matter) will have potentially devastating consequences for our community as families that cannot afford to transport their children to Tri-Valley School in Healy approximately 45 miles to the north will have no other option but to move out of the community in order to seek viable public education. People should not be forced to move from a community due to a lack of available public education as a result of the State of Alaska not fulfilling its obligation to appropriately fund public education. With a priority of providing higher PFD checks to Alaska residents rather than directing those funds to providing critical services like education, it is apparent these priorities are not aligned to what residents of Alaska truly need. If the logic is that higher PFD checks will provide residents the income they need to pursue private education, that logic is sorely misguided.

The Denali Borough has fully maintained its commitment to provide its share of annual funding capped by federal statute at 23% of annual revenue despite a significant down turn in our revenue base (overnight accommodation taxes driven by seasonal tourism) during the pandemic years 2020-2022. But without the State of Alaska as true funding partner, the Denali Borough alone cannot close the funding gap with a flat Base Student Allocation year over year.

So I respectfully request the State Legislature pass SB 52 and increase the Base Student Allocation by \$1,000 to \$6,960. Doing so will not only maintain viable public education throughout the Denali Borough but also ensure our rural communities like Cantwell and the city of Anderson can thrive as well.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Dominic Canale
Assemblyman District 1, Seat A
Denali Borough

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Michael Mason

From: Dona Helmer <dona@helmer-dr.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 30, 2024 7:42 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Educational funding

Importance: High

Dear folks,

First of all, thank you for all the hard work that you have been doing for Alaskan kids this year. Thank you for not giving up on education!

I am deeply concerned about the status of educational funding in the state.

I will be brief. The SBA needs to be raised to at least \$680----I am no math major, but I think that is an increase of only about \$3.75 per instructional day. Seriously, what can you get for less than \$5.00 per day?

Also, the state needs to forward fund education—I know you have heard this all before but let me put it this way. There is no stable funding for districts. Every district is “budgeting by suspense”. This means they are constructing budgets that are not connected to reality. Everyone is concerned about hiring and retaining teachers and educational staff. It is no joke that we have a critical shortage but you must ask why does no one want those jobs?

Well, just maybe they heard about the whimsical way education is funded in this state.

Remember, that old phrase “last hired, first fired”? Well, that happens every year in Alaskan education—the teachers and support staff we hired in July are laid off this time of the year. Ask yourself, are they going to hang around hoping they will be rehired in late August or will they pack up, leave, and find employment elsewhere.

The governor wants to provide bonuses—well, how about some stability instead? I frankly, do not care that he thinks he knows it all because he was a school superintendent in the dark ages. This is the 21st century and the problems are different.

I have other ideas for incentives for teachers.....but we need to take care of stable funding first.

Sincerely,

Dona Helmer
11620 Alderwood Loop
Anchorage, AK 99516
(907) 248-0803

Michael Mason

From: Edelweiss Serlin <edubak82@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2023 9:21 PM
Cc: Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson; Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Rep. Julie Coulombe; Rep. Mike Cronk; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Andrew Gray; Rep. Cliff Groh; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Donna Mears; Rep. Genevieve Mina; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. George Rauscher; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Rep. Laddie Shaw; Rep. Will Stapp; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Jesse Sumner; Rep. Cathy Tilton; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Stanley Wright
Subject: Increase BSA

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am writing to ask that you support and vote to increase the Base Student Allocation. The BSA has not been raised since 2017 and has NOT kept pace with inflation. To not raise the BSA is short-sighted and creates consequential long-term impacts. Without increased funds, my district is looking at significant losses in student learning and well-being due to layoffs of highly talented young teachers and program cuts, a brain drain of talent and skill in teaching when laid-off teachers leave the state or profession, and long-term cost increases caused by deferred building maintenance. It is absurd that in a district and state where there is a teacher shortage in the best of times, we are facing layoffs. I humbly say that I have a talent for teaching and have invested significant time and resources into my own growth as an educator as I strive to be the teacher I want for my own children. But I am facing the harsh reality of possible layoff as a non-tenured regular education preschool teacher. My district has put forth a plan to lay off non-tenured staff if funding doesn't come through from the state. This presents a huge brain drain of talent and enthusiasm for teaching. I can't afford to sit around in layoff status and will be forced to look for employment elsewhere. What then? I absolutely love teaching and it would break my heart to have to tell my students' families I cannot be their teacher next year. It is high time the legislature increases the BSA and now more than ever it is needed. I am asking you to increase the BSA and consider the value of public education and show your support for the future of our students and communities through a quality education that can only be achieved through proper funding.

Thank you, Gunalchéesh, Háw'aa, Nt'oyaxsn!

Edelweiss Serlin
Preschool Teacher
Fawn Mountain Elementary School
Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District
907-523-5266
edubak82@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Elizabeth Bagley <elizabeth.a.bagley@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 8:02 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for raising the BSA

Dear elected officials,

Thank you for serving Alaskans.

I write to you today to ask you to support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources needed to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaska's students.

I support the January 30, 2023 memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than \$1000 to restore public education funding levels from eight years ago.

As a parent of 10 and 13-year-old boys, I ask that you support their educational opportunities and the opportunities of all Alaskan students.

With gratitude,
Elizabeth Bagley

510 O Cain St, Sitka, AK 99835
608-358-0664

Michael Mason

From: Eric and Tricia Miller <millerstead@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:29 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Increase student base allocation

I am writing in support of increasing the student base allocation. We would like to see class sizes decrease and more aides and counselors available to help the teachers who have an incredibly difficult job. Providing for the myriad ways that individual students learn and process cannot be achieved with large class sizes and no aides. I do not want to see an exodus of amazing teachers from the profession because we choose not to support them. I would rather my PFD support my family's school than support snow machine and gun sales. Thank you. --Eric Miller, Fairbanks, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: PSD Superintendent <supt@pcsd.us>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 11:56 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SB 52

Good morning from Petersburg, Alaska. My name is Erica Kludt-Painter and I am the superintendent in the Petersburg School District. I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 52, which would provide a \$1,000 increase to the Base Student Allocation for the upcoming 23-24 school year. Thank you for your forward thinking and strong acknowledgment of the financial challenges school districts are facing around the state. The BSA has only seen a \$30 increase from the \$5930 amount in FY17 to the projected \$5960 amount in FY 24. Your support in raising the BSA will provide the necessary resources to recruit and retain quality teachers, implement lasting intervention services and enrichment programs, meet the requirements of the READS Act, and sustain academic growth for all Alaskan students. This additional funding is a powerful step toward leveling the playing field for students struggling to recover from Covid learning loss, and will provide relief for districts facing astronomical fuel and electricity costs.

Thank you for your courageous leadership in supporting Alaska's public schools during this challenging time.

Respectfully,

Erica Kludt-Painter, Superintendent

MISSION: Petersburg Schools will advocate for continuous growth, promote a healthy environment, and provide diverse educational opportunities where all students achieve.

Erica Kludt-Painter
Superintendent
Petersburg School District
P.O. Box 289
Petersburg, AK 99833

Phone and Fax: 1-877-526-7656

E-mail: supt@pcsd.us

Website: www.pcsd.us

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Michael Mason

From: Erin Hollingsworth <e_holli@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 1:02 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52 base student allocation

Dear Senators,

I am writing in strong support of SB 52. Alaska is in the midst of an educational crisis. Districts are not financially supported at a level that is sustainable. Inflation has driven up the cost of everything and it is Alaskan students who are being hurt. The funding has only increased \$30 in the past 5 years. In today's dollars, \$30 does not purchase much, even less in the bush.

A failure to increase student base funding will have detrimental impacts on the state in the future. The potential brain drain and economic toll is huge. Families are leaving the state, looking to find educational advantages for their students. Alaska used to have the highest paid teachers, with only the most qualified professionals tasked with educating our students. Now, it feels like we are lucky if our schools are mostly staffed and our children have the ability to ride a bus a few days a week. This is not how the system should function. Our children deserve better.

Base allocation needs to be addressed. Children need to be our priority. This is a bipartisan issue. All parents want what is best for their children. All parents want their children to have the most advantages heading into life. I am not a parent, but I see the benefit in funding education. Today's students are going to be my doctors, lawyers, senators - they are the future and I strongly support investing in Alaska's future. Please move forward with properly funding Alaska's public education system.

Quyanaq. Thank you.

Erin Hollingsworth
Utgiaġvik, AK 99723

Michael Mason

From: Gaye Wright <piglet_1956@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 10, 2023 11:50 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: PFD

We already have a portion of the state budget that is for the education budget. So now instead of tightening your education belt, like the rest of us have to do, you are stealing more money from the PFD amount!!!! Our Education is going downhill and all you people know how to do is give them more money!! Some of us don't have kids in the school system and we are still being gouged by a group of people who have no clue how to spend money wisely or cut their budget like the rest of us need to do from time to time!!! Instead of acting like no one depends on the PFD to pay bills or buy fuel for the winter, how about realizing that a lot of Alaskans need that PFD to actually make it through the winter!!

Stop playing games with money and care about the effect it will have on the rest of the citizens of this state!!

Gaye Wright
Piglet_1956@hotmail.com

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S22+ 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Michael Mason

From: Glenn Cravez <Glenn@cravezlawak.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 6:35 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support SB52

I support increasing the SBA by at least \$1000. Alaska vastly underfunds education, which undercuts our future. If we're serious about growing our economy we must make Alaska an attractive place for young families to live, as it once was.

Thank you. Glenn Cravez. 2810 Kingfisher Drive, Anchorage 99502.

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Michael Mason

From: Grant Guy <gguyak@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 3:18 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support SB52

To Whom it May Concern,

I am in support of Senate Bill 52 and raising the BSA. While I would like to see an increase of 1200 dollars to at least keep education funding in line with inflation, I recognize that our state's revenue is limited. As a parent with two students in public school, I am very concerned about the huge increase in class size over the past ten years. Class sizes have increased by an average of 4 students over the grade level bands. I have a daughter at West Valley High School and next year the PTR will be 32. My son is a middle schooler and his PTR will be 30. That is entirely too many students to have in a single class period. Not only does it become untenable for the teachers trying to manage the behaviors of that many students, they can not provide meaningful, exciting instruction. How can we continue to expect teachers to do more with less and then wonder why our test scores are lower? Having visited classrooms in both of those schools, the physical space hasn't changed and yet we want to try to shove 32 students into a classroom. My son had a class where there is not enough room for every student to have a desk and students are forced to sit on the floor. My daughter rushes to her classes at the High School so she can have a desk as well. This is unacceptable and not what I want for my kids or any other student in Alaska. We need to increase the BSA and while 1000 dollars is not enough, it is a huge step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Grant Guy
1211 Tammy Terrace
Fairbanks, Alaska
99712

Michael Mason

From: Hannah Dolphin <HDolphin@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2023 4:39 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: BSA Increase

Good Morning,

I am writing to you as the assistant principal of Mountain View Elementary in Kenai, Alaska. Like many schools, we have been appreciative of the additional funding that came with COVID relief and Governor Dunleavy's one-time additional funds. As you may know, these funds cannot sustain us moving forward in Alaska's education.

Anyone who is paying attention to the climate of education nationwide knows that teacher recruitment and retention is at an all time low. We are battling with states and districts all over the country for teachers. Teachers are leaving the profession before retirement. Our high-quality veteran teachers are still recovering from the effects of a global pandemic. Teacher stress levels are at an all time high. The state is doing some wonderful things for education including the passage and implementation of the Alaska Reads Act. However, with changes comes more load on teachers' backs. My teachers are looking at a new literacy curriculum, new assessment system, and new record keeping practices, which are all great things, but the learning process takes time and effort.

My district's greatest cost is in paying employees a livable wage and providing benefits. When we are operating with a deficit in the budget, positions are lost and the pupil/teacher ratio goes up.

Teachers are already striving and working relentlessly to ensure students are learning. At the start of the year, my fifth grade teachers had students who were just starting to learn how to read and students who are reading at an 8th grade (or higher) reading level. We have students who are transferring in who have never been to school before. We had third graders start who could not identify their letters. My teachers are experts at differentiating instruction, providing intervention support, and personalizing learning, but at some point the lift is too heavy, and students don't get the highest level of instruction they can. As class sizes rise, and teacher numbers decline, student learning will decline as well.

We need adequate funding to ensure teachers are supported in their positions. They need a reasonable class size. We need specialists like interventionists, tutors, and counselors to help negate the negative academic and social/emotional effects that stemmed from the previous years of functioning in a global pandemic. Teachers need a livable wage in the face of inflation. Teachers are taking on a lot to ensure that students' needs are being met. It is time that we look at teachers' needs so that we can retain these quality teachers and continue to provide high-quality education to our students in a rapidly changing world.

Please help Alaska retain and recruit high-quality teachers and staff members by approving an increase to the BSA. The future of our students depends on it.

Hannah Dolphin

**Assistant Principal
Mountain View Elementary**

(907)283-8600

Michael Mason

From: Heather Bardarson <hbardarson@protonmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 11:08 AM
To: Senate Education; House Education
Subject: Advocacy for Seward's Pool

March 12, 2023

Greetings from Seward,

I have lived in Seward all my life. My husband also. Like most Alaskans we were born in Anchorage but Seward has and always will be our home. In the time that we have grown up here we have seen many things come and go from our community. Lately, it seems, most things are leaving creating less and less opportunities for our community and the next generation of Seward children. My husband and I have three beautiful children: Freja (10), Bjorn (8), and Elsa (6). Our entire family has learned how to swim in the Seward High School Pool thanks to Miss Sylvia Ingram who was a constant and steady pool manager until her recent retirement this last year. Thanks to Miss Sylvia, I am the first woman in my family to learn how to swim. Now all of my children know how to swim thanks to opportunities provided by Miss Sylvia's persistent swim lessons and the presence of the Tsunami Swim Club. My two oldest children, Freja and Bjorn, have been on the Tsunami Swim Club since 2021. This last Friday, Elsa, my youngest, swam a full lap across the pool for the first time AND jumped off the diving board. Elsa has recently excelled after multiple swim lessons, and will be able to tryout for the team later this month. I cannot tell you how much joy it brings my husband and I to see all of our children swimming in the pool! It took a lot of time, money, and dedication to get to this point. Neither of us were good swimmers and we were never in the Tsunami Swim Club ourselves. The fact that we can provide something for our children that we didn't have or didn't have the financial means to be able to experience is also a big accomplishment for us. We chose swimming for our children for a number of reasons: swimming is a lifelong sport, it can save a life, if not your own, and a big plus for us Alaskan parents is that it is a activity that can be done year round regardless of the weather outside. In Seward, the Tsunami Swim Club is the only after school sport for my children's age group that is available nearly year round. For a mom of three high energy children, this was the only activity that I could find that was consistent for my children, safe, and appropriate for the developmental stage that they were in.

In the last ten years, I can recall three times that the Kenai Peninsula School District has threatened to close our pool due to lack of funds. Despite the excellent management of our local pool, the abundant use of it by community members, the opportunities for teaching generations of Sewardites how to learn a life saving skill, AND the fact that our little pool produced a Olympic Gold Medalist, Seward's only pool is yet again on the chopping block due to financial constraints. Seward Schools provided a wonderful education to my husband and I. As alumni and long Seward residents, we both agree that Seward Schools cannot afford to loose anything else. Loosing the pool would be a HUGE blow to our community and may very well be the catalyst for many families to leave Seward for good. In addition to being the first woman in my family to learn how to swim, I am also a first generation college student all thanks to the opportunities that the Kenai Peninsula School District provided for Seward Schools. My husband and I are so thankful for the opportunities that we both got to experience at school and we hope that our voices will help bring strength to all leaders on the Kenai Peninsula who are in a place that can fiercely advocate further for our community at a state level. It is clear that the Kenai Peninsula School District needs further funding in order to meet the needs of our region's next generation of Alaskans. In conclusion, I implore you to be strong, courageous, and steadfast on pursuing further funding for future Alaskan educational opportunities. Seward, in particular, can no longer continue to persist in this constant state of cuts that will limit access to a better future. Please do not close or discontinue more educational or sport related resources in Seward Schools.

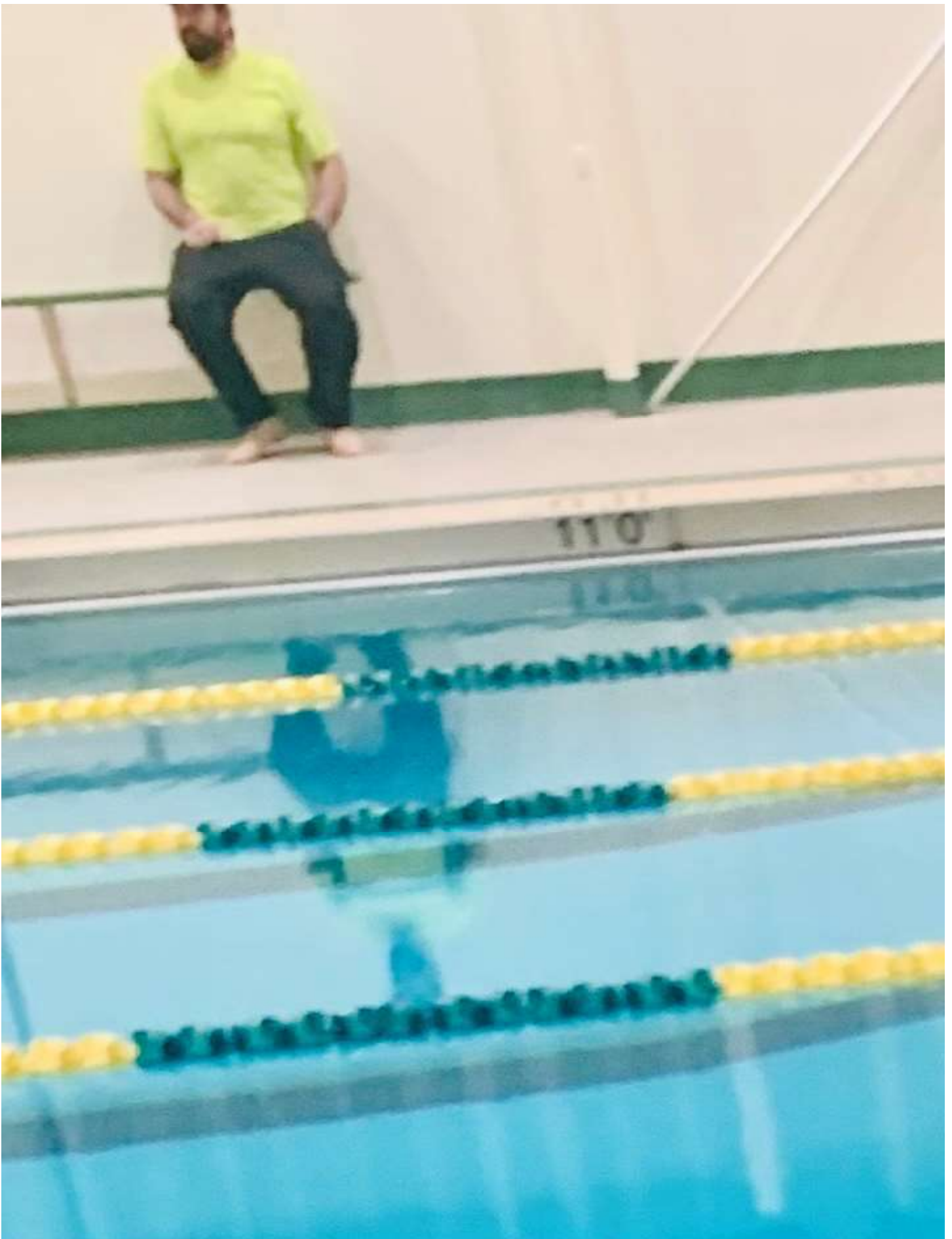
Thank you for all that you do for all the communities on the Kenai Peninsula,

Leif and Heather Bardarson

Seward High School Alumni 2005 and 2004

P.S. I attached a picture of my two oldest children, Freja and Bjorn, right before starting the Tsunami Swim-a-thon. The Tsunami Swim Club raised over \$30,000.00 this year thanks to the Swim-a-thon! I also attached a picture of my youngest daughter, Elsa, jumping off the diving board for the first time.





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

Michael Mason

From: Heather Conn <hconn@pcsd.us>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:11 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support SB 52

Good morning from Petersburg, Alaska. My name is Heather Conn and I am the principal at Stedman Elementary in the Petersburg School District. I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 52, which would provide a \$1,000 increase to the Base Student Allocation for the upcoming 23-24 school year. Thank you for your forward thinking and strong acknowledgment of the financial challenges school districts are facing around the state. The BSA has only seen a \$30 increase from the \$5930 amount in FY17 to the projected \$5960 amount in FY 24. Your support in raising the BSA will provide the necessary resources to recruit and retain quality teachers, implement lasting intervention services and enrichment programs, meet the requirements of the READS Act, and sustain academic growth for all Alaskan students. This additional funding is a powerful step toward leveling the playing field for students struggling to recover from Covid learning loss, and will provide relief for districts facing astronomical fuel and electricity costs. Thank you for your courageous leadership in supporting Alaska's public schools during this challenging time.

Respectfully,
Heather Conn, Principal

--

Heather Conn, Principal

Stedman Elementary School

hconn@pcsd.us

877-526-7656

<http://www.pcsd.us>

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Michael Mason

From: heathermcgee.ak@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Heather McGee
<heathermcgee.ak@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 26, 2023 8:19 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please vote YES on SB 43: Sex Ed

Dear Alaska Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support SB 43, the bill to require sex ed in Alaska schools.

Young people deserve age-appropriate, medically accurate information about sex, reproduction, and concepts like consent, respecting boundaries, and who to turn to for help. However, many students in Alaska do not have access to the information and skills they need to protect their health and safety because public schools in Alaska are not required to provide comprehensive or medically accurate sexual health education.

Over 90% of Alaskan voters agree that sex education should be medically accurate, age-appropriate, and should cover healthy relationships, consent, and communication skills. If the state feels compelled to regulate abortion, the least it can do is take the steps to require the type of education that reduces the need for abortion in the first place.

Please support young people in Alaska by voting YES on SB 43.

Sincerely,

Ms. Heather McGee

7635 E Woodview Way Palmer, AK 99645-8956 heathermcgee.ak@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Irene Bortnick <ibortnick@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 7:02 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.go; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson
Subject: Support for SB 52 INCREASE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION

My name is Irene Bortnick and I live in Anchorage.

I'm writing in support of SB 52.

In my 20 years of teaching for ASD, my Kindergarten class size varied from 25 students (and a full-time teaching assistant) in my first few years, to 17 students (and a part time teaching assistant) in the lowest year. Even with full-time help and daily parent volunteers, 27 bodies was just too many in the amount of space we had. I was very aware of the difference in the amount of attention I could give each student in the years that my class size was below 20.

Today, after a pandemic and disrupted education, with families struggling with inflation and a myriad of other things, children need more attention than ever and we cannot afford to increase class sizes.

When I first started teaching, mine was one of the elementary schools that had a full-time counselor. That was immensely helpful. In the last years of my teaching career, counselors' positions were cut and we were reduced to a part-time counselor. Not having a trained person on hand to deal with a crisis was problematic. Today, after the pandemic and disrupted education, and all the stresses families are experiencing, counselors are even more important than ever.

Increasing, as well as inflation-proofing the BSA is crucial to keeping class sizes reasonable and to being able to hire, support and retain the excellent teachers our students and families deserve.

Please vote to support SB 52 and increase and inflation-proof the Base Student Allocation.

Michael Mason

From: Jasmine Maurer <jazmaurer@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2023 7:45 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Increase K-12 school funding

Hello,

I am writing to express my support of increasing K-12 school funding. Our students and Alaskas future deserve access to funding to support excellence in education through well trained and supported staff, music, art, and STEM classes activities.

The Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage concluded that by 2019, even though Alaska pays more than any other state on a per-student basis, the cost of living here is so high that once that factor is included, public schools here received less money than the national average.

Don't delay another year increase school budgets now.

Thank you

Jasmine

Michael Mason

From: Jason Gasper <jgasper0114@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 4:31 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Rep. Andi Story
Subject: Responsibility to the future generation of Alaskans

Dear Committee Members,

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of funding education to the maximum possible amount. I moved to Alaska in 1997 and found the Alaskan community to be great for families and it was clear State politicians generally seemed to value education at that time. Alaska was heading in a good direction. However, having attended the university system during a long-period of fiscal/political change (UAF PhD 2011, UAS BS 2002, and 1 year at UAA) and now having a family of my own, I feel that support for education has eroded. This is demonstrated by a reduction in funding for our public schools (once inflation is considered), leading to a university and public school system in crisis and annual crisis management at both the State and local levels.

I believe this crisis is, in part, fueled by political rhetoric I hear from certain State reps and past actions by the Governor. For example, the recent statement by Representative Eastman about child abuse is appalling and could not believe what I was reading (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-64726727>), but was also, sadly, not surprised to see this come from an Alaskan republican. While that is an extreme example, less extreme examples abound, such as the horrible forward-funding lawsuit that happened because K-12 wasn't going to be adequately funded (e.g., <https://www.dermotcole.com/reportingfromalaska/2019/11/8/dunleavy-counts-on-alaska-amnesia-as-his-strongest-political-ally>). Clearly forward funding was a problem based on the court ruling, but the fact it got to that point demonstrates the dysfunction. All this self-serving political rhetoric sure suggests that families are held in contempt by some conservative parts of this State (assuming their representatives are representing) because families require both funding support and constitutionally mandated government services. Unfortunately, the message that we all benefit from our education institutions doesn't seem to make it into the rhetoric or dialog I hear from some Representatives.

Taking care of our future and our families requires funding beyond just distributing a PFD or sending kids to private/home schools. The "accountability" argument I often hear conservatives use when linking to funding holds no water either- I see what goes on in the classrooms. We have many dedicated and excellent teachers that need funding, and I see the growth in kids due to the work of these teachers, support staff, and our education institutions everyday. It sure would be refreshing to hear discussions from the hill about supporting above the baseline amounts, to fund

these institutions at levels beyond the bare minimum, rather than toxic rhetoric that uses schools and families as political weapons and is aimed at tearing down rather than building towards our future. What an amazing world that would be to live in! Make no mistake, the "accountability" argument when paired with funding needs is aimed at tearing schools down and marginalizing families rather than building them up.

The Governor said in his State of the State that he wanted to make Alaska a pro-family state. I can confidently say that this State is not yet pro-family. If he hopes to go beyond abortion issues and actually support families, we need well-funded education from early childhood all the way through the University system. Alaska's future depends on it. I have a 5 year old in kindergarten and my hope is to keep my family in Alaska, but if the education crisis continues, we'll have no choice but to leave the State of Alaska. I am not the only parent with these thoughts (I know a few who have left) and clearly this cannot be the way forward for Alaska. Even the conservatives have to admit the population growth and economic conditions in Alaska are not great- we need to help ourselves towards the future.

In closing, funding schools is not discretionary and they should be funded to the full extent based on expert advice. This is something in your power to fix: please fund teachers, school programs, and child care providers; they form the backbone of our support systems and future. These things must be a priority. Alaska is a difficult environment for many reasons to attract and keep people: we need all the help we can get to attract and retain the best!

Thanks for your time,

Jason Gasper

Michael Mason

From: Jason Tauriainen <jatauri@outlook.com>
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 7:40 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52, HB 105 and HB 27

Senate Education Committee,

I am going to provide support for some bills that you may not believe go together, but I believe they are inseparable and vital. SB 52 needs to pass as is because it is the true solution to the fiscal crisis that faces school districts around the state. The house one time funding bill is not a solution and basically states that we know there is a problem, but lets kick it down the road some more. SB 52 is well-crafted and solves the Education funding now and into the future. It is a Constitutional obligation that the State of Alaska provide adequate funding for public education. Please work with the Senate to pass SB 52.

So now I would like to speak to HB 105. I also support this bill. I believe parents should be informed as to what their children are doing and they should have choice about their education. I know some are viewing this as hate but I do not. This is about respecting parents and allowing them to be part of the process. Parent trust in public education is at an all time low and after the horrible Covid policies and other issues plaguing schools they are understandably frustrated. Parents feel marginalized and they should not feel that way. We need this bill to help restore trust.

OK next I would like support HB 27. It is very important that we protect women's and girl's spaces and make sure that our athletic programs are a fair playing field for our girls. As a former girls' coach I would have been appalled to be forced to have a biological male compete against only girls' teams and athletes. Please support this bill and stand up for the female athletes in Alaska.

To sum up please support SB 52 its critical for the success of our schools. Support HB 105 as it's important to recognize parents as a critical component of their child's education and they have the right to know about the lives of the children they are responsible for. HB 27 is critical to protecting female athletic and the spirit of Title IX. Women have come so far since Title IX was passed please protect fair athletics in our State. I support SB 52, HB 105 and HB 27.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony

Jason Tauriainen
Nikiski, AK
907-398-1024

Father of 8 former and current public education success stories

Michael Mason

From: Jeanne Anderson <anderson.jeanne87@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 12:30 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: It's time to increase funding!

To whom it may concern,

I just read an article that indicates the per student allocation has not been raised since 2016. Our students deserve better. They are growing in a rapidly changing world in the time of a pandemic and classroom teachers are worried about trying to share boxes of crayons. Our teachers need to be able to buy supplies and support their classrooms in order to focus on giving kids the care and attention they need while we address the residual effects of schooling during COVID. PLEASE increase the per student allocation. PLEASE.

Thanks for the consideration,

Jeanne Anderson (occupational therapist in a KPBSD school)

Michael Mason

From: jeff budd <jbudd3500@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:55 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: I support Senate Bill 52

Dear Senate Education Committee, I support Senate Bill 52. Please make sure our children all across Alaska get the best education they can possibly get. This is a great start. Thank you. Jeff Budd, Sitka, AK

Michael Mason

From: Jeni Mason <jenimason@dbbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:22 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am a mother, leader, educator, and community member. I have been in education for 22 years and a mother for 14 years. Being a principal in our small district, I have felt the impact of the flat funding for the past six years. We are geographically spread out in our district with three brick and mortar schools minimally 45 miles apart and then two homeschool offices residing outside of our borough. Even through our district is small, flat funding had already affected our schools. We have very small schools, ranging from less than ten to 30 students as well as a larger school of less than 200 students and a homeschool program with less than 900 students. Our staff is exceptional, and we find resources that work for us as well as resources that are financially affordable. Each year, we have to look at how we can continue to keep all the schools open and have the staff and resources we need for all of our students. Sadly, this upcoming year, two of our three brick and mortar schools are in jeopardy of being shut down. These schools are a hub for our small communities. These students would need to transfer to another school, in another town for next year if our doors cannot be left open. Staff would need to uproot their work locations and either move or drive daily to work in the school(s) that remain open. This is very hard on each individual person and as a whole community. With an increase of base student allocations, we could perhaps be able to keep our small schools open in order for the community that the kids grow up in, to continue to learn in. As a leader, I want what is best for all of our students. I want them to have a rich and rigorous education, grow to be responsive and responsible humans with rich character that is tied to their communities. As a parent, I also wish for the same; a vibrant educational experience that is rigorous and culturally deep within the community we reside. With flat funding, all of our students suffer. Our students might have to be uprooted to a new community to learn and feel the fall out of program cuts and staffing decreases across all sites. With flat funding, our communities will suffer. Flat funding has to come to an end. AASB has resolved for an increase of not less than \$860. Increase the base student allocation.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity for voice.

Sincerely,

Jeni Mason
Regional Principal and Special Education Director
406-460-0629
Denali Borough School District
PO Box 280, Healy, AK. 99743

jenimason@dbbsd.org

Working together to nurture, empower, and inspire today's student to positively shape tomorrow's world.

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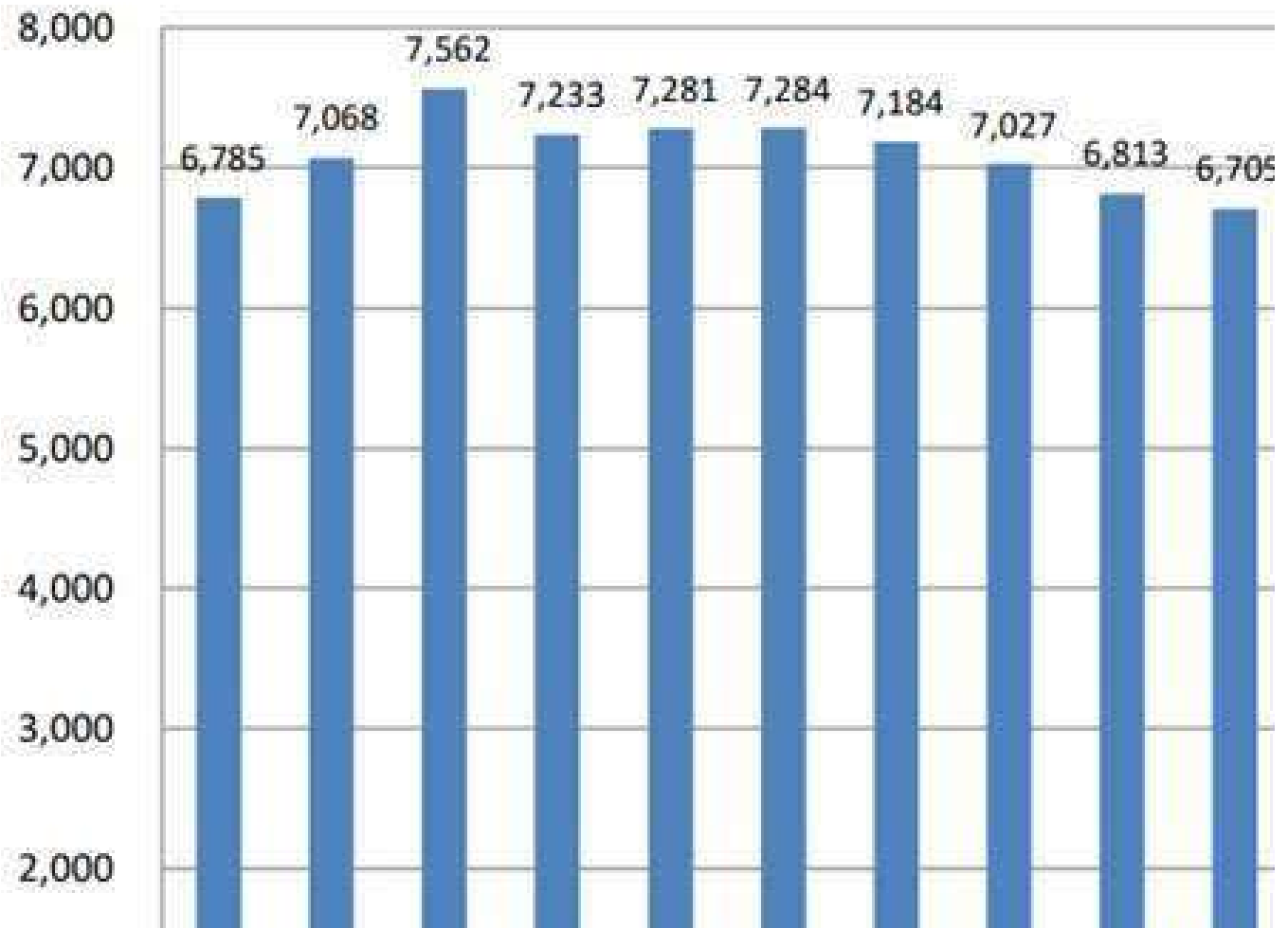
Michael Mason

From: Kirk & Jenn DesErmia <kirkandjenn_des@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 3:53 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance; Senate Education; House Education
Subject: Support HB 65/SB 52 - Increase the BSA!

Senators and Representatives,

I am writing today in support of HB 65 and SB 52 to increase the BSA for Alaska's public schools. Our schools and students desperately need more resources to be successful. They haven't seen any substantial or lasting relief since 2017, and when adjusted for inflation, the statistics are even more bleak. It is unreasonable to think that schools can operate today on less money than they did in 2005!

Base Student Allocation (FY22 data)



When budgets don't increase while costs continue to rise, the easiest place to make cuts and balance budgets is directly in the classroom. Here in Seward, what that looks like is cutting 5 teachers in our schools. That's where the dominoes start to fall...increased class sizes (some classes are already over the set PTR), less offerings for core classes (this drives students to distance education classes), minimal elective offerings (no art/music/library teacher at all for our 3 schools), no Student Success Liaison (making distance education/OJT/internships difficult), closing our pool (which has produced an Olympian),...the list goes on. This is too much for our community to carry. We need an increase to the BSA to happen now, so that we can keep our teachers, class offerings, electives, pool, and keep our students interested in going to school.

I am the parent of a Seward High and Seward Middle School student. I've had my kids enrolled in public school for their entire educational careers. That's 10 years of watching their schools be systematically dismantled to the point of barely being able to offer the bare minimum needs to their

students to graduate. I wonder what it will be like by the time my kids graduate in 6 years if schools have to continue to cut staffing? My freshman is already taking 3 out of 6 of her classes via distance ed. At some point, one has to ask, what's the point of attending our community school? I do it to support my community and help make opportunities available to ALL of my community's students through enrollment numbers. We could certainly homeschool and take matters into our own hands, but that does not align with my community-minded outlook.

Funding the education budget needs to be a top priority! If you don't invest in a school, then you are starving a community. Families move away to pursue better jobs and educational opportunities elsewhere. The whole community slowly starts to dissolve. Please act now to prevent this from happening to Seward and towns around Alaska like us. I ask you to please support HB 65 and SB 52.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jennifer DesErmia

Michael Mason

From: Jennifer Grant <grantj@sitkaschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:05 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 52

To the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing as both a parent and an educator. I've been teaching in the Sitka School District for the past 16 years, and EVERY year it seems that we face budget shortfalls and cuts to staff. The process is always extremely stressful for teachers. This year, again, we have been told by our superintendent that we are looking at a deficit of more than \$2.5 million in our small district. This translates to larger class sizes, fewer resources for students, cuts to programs, limited access to reading and math intervention, and so much more.

Last year at my school we lost our science program, and we've been told that we likely won't ever get it back. This put the burden of teaching science on classroom teachers (grades 2-5), yet we were given no materials or curriculum with which to teach science. The result was teachers spending a lot of time and our own money finding quality science lessons and materials. This is just once small example of how we are continually being asked to do more, with less.

As a parent of three children, I am concerned about the future of education funding. My youngest is a freshman in high school; my older two graduated in 2018 and 2021. Even though that is a relatively short span of time, I have noticed a more limited selection of classes at the high school level. I feel we could be doing more to prepare our high school students for college and the workforce.

I support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaska Students. I support the Jan. 30th, 2023, memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

Jennifer Grant

5th Grade Teacher
Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary
(907) 966-1711

Michael Mason

From: Jerry Babcock <jbabcock@nenanalynx.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 9, 2023 10:13 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52 INCREASE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Nenana City School District School Board Legislative Liaison in order to address our education funding needs. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read my thoughts.

Our current funding levels have been flat for far too long. Our board finance committee has worked with our district leadership to work some miracles to keep us educating our children in this funding environment over the past decade, but this is an unsustainable method of operating. I have outlined some of the most glaring impacts of loss in buying power in the attached word document. Our school not only educates our local children, but through our boarding component, children across the state in many of our state's legislative districts. Our programs are influencing the children of Alaska in ways which impact not only their individual preparation for adulthood, but the health and welfare of our state as well. In her recent address to state legislators, Senator Lisa Murkowski highlighted that Alaska is currently #49 in the nation for keeping folks here in the state. Education experiences creating opportunities for our children DIRECTLY impacts their decisions to out migrate. In Senator Murkowski's words, "We shouldn't be 49th in anything except statehood!"

We have been asked to do more with less for entirely too long. We ask you to help bring our purchasing power back to levels we had two decades ago. We also ask you to encourage your colleagues to work to forward fund education so we are not guessing at our annual budgets. Please support SB52 and push hard to pass it! Our children deserve our best efforts and they haven't gotten that in these times of wild inflation.

I am available to discuss anything you may have questions about or to help in any way. Please feel free to contact me at:

jbabcock@nenanalynx.org
(cell) 321-863-1800

Thank you!

Jerry Babcock
School Board Member
School Board Legislative Liaison
Nenana City School District

Michael Mason

From: JOSHUA ROCKEY <Joshua.Rockey@matsuk12.us>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 12:10 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52 Written Public Testimony

Esteemed Senate Committee,

Thank you for considering my submission. I write to you as the principal of a K-5 public school in the Mat-Su Borough. Now could not be a more important time to raise the Base Student Allocation. As an administrator, I have seen my staffing reduced in various areas each of the last 5 years as a result of the budget while working at the same school. Enrollment has not significantly changed, but the money coming is being “flat” means that there is less to go around because costs have increased. We have reached the point where we essentially cannot weather any further reduction in funding/staffing because there is nobody left to absorb the duties that fall outside of what is expected.

We have all kinds of staff members that are helping out in extra ways to cover duties just to make sure that the day moves along. We have a PE teacher and a custodian helping with lunch, SPED PreK Aides helping with reading interventions for kids not at their level, office staff and the principal covering as Nurse when they need to work at another building, and due to an unforeseen bubble that has grown as the year has gone on, a single 2nd grade class of 31 students.

Couple this with the addition of duties during COVID, some of which have remained (like sanitation), lack of bus service (not just for our district), lack of substitutes, lack of applicants for positions (we currently have 4 vacant positions in the building with no applicants), and a growing frustration from the public with the job we are doing, it is no wonder that teachers and education staff are burned out in our profession.

We love and care about students and continue to do what is needed, but anytime something gets added, our heart breaks for the lack of effective education that is delivered to the students, and we groan with the duties being piled on top of what we already were expected to accomplish.

When that is all added together with the current retirement situation, it is no wonder that we are not attracting staff to fill these vacancies, and that folks who can are leaving to either retire, or find work in other fields.

While I would love to advocate for further support on the transportation side and the retirement side as well, I realize that those are separate issues. However, they do impact our ability to do our jobs on a daily basis.

Thank you for your humble consideration.

Please call me if you would like further details on difficulties, or further details on ways we are trying to adjust even further on our end to continue to meet needs (not just asking you to fix it for us).

Educationally,

Joshua Rockey

Joshua Rockey – *Butte Elementary School, Principal*
Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District
Ph: 907-861-5200 | Direct: 907-861-5202
www.matsuk12.us/bte

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Michael Mason

From: Judy Carstens <perfectparents@ak.net>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2023 9:58 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: BSA

Thank you all for listening when we as school board members and students met with you all in early February.
Thanks to all for working for
All of us as we try to
Provide a top quality education to all students in our wonderful state

Judy Carstens
Board of Education Vice President
Kodiak island Borough School District

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Julie McBrien <unixchix@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2024 10:57 AM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Education Funding

Greetings fellow Alaskans. Thank you so much for your service to our state. I am writing to you today because I am absolutely exasperated with the state of education funding in Alaska.

Let me summarize how fiscal responsibility is looking from where I sit. You are draining the Permanent Fund Dividend to pay for the government, which will destroy that amazing fund if we keep going like this. You are paying for executive branch lawsuits that Alaska keeps losing because they make no sense. And then when it comes time to actually invest in our citizenry, you fail to fund the most basic and important function of our social contract: EDUCATION.

It is frustrating to watch the circus play out again this year, and right off the bat!

It is shit like this that makes ranked choice voting incredibly important. At least that is one way we can force accountability. Of course, I am sure that also won't last. I thought I saw a recent headline where a new workaround has been found to remove Ranked Choice Voting.

This is all turning into a huge disappointment, and the session has been going for one month now. Please fund Alaska's schools and stop wasting Alaska's money.

Sincerely,
Julie McBrien

From: Juliet Eames <eamesjuliet@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 7:27 PM

To: senate.finance@akleg.gov

Cc: Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Lyman Hoffman

<Sen.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Click Bishop <Sen.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov>; Sen. Donny Olson

<Sen.Donny.Olson@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Wielechowski <Sen.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>; Sen. David

Wilson <Sen.David.Wilson@akleg.gov>

Subject: SB52 -My testimony

Can help me get this to where it can still be heard? Life is far too busy and keeping up with deadlines in the legislature is difficult.

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Juliet Eames. My husband and I moved to Fairbanks 10 years ago. We have six children that have attended Barnette Magnet School (K-8 lottery school) and Lathrop High School. My husband is a physician at FMH and I devote my time to our home and family. My kids' ages range from 7-18. We have both been very involved in the community, and especially, within the schools themselves. I am currently serving as PTA President for the second year, for our K-8, nearly a full time job.

By having a large family, kids in all the various age groups, and varied involvement, I feel like I have a pretty good handle on how the lack of budget is affecting our schools and children.

My husband and I value education very highly and put a lot of energy into trying to give our kids the best opportunities for their growth and development. The quality of education in an area is one of the top two deciding factors in where we live.

Fairbanks can be a very difficult place. It's a land of extremes. It gives a lot, but demands its fair share. Those first few years were very difficult, for me, especially. On the hardest days, the thing that got me through, was the phenomenal education opportunities at Barnette Magnet School. It was worth the cost to hear the kids, enthusiastic about their learning, and all the different things they were both experiencing and being exposed to.

As they grew and entered high school, I found that Lathrop had many unique offerings as well. There were several languages to choose from, a variety of STEM experiences with nationally recognized teachers. They had an excellent choir and drama program, and a good variety of AP offerings with quality teachers.

There were also classes such as building trades, ground school pilot courses (at West Valley) and small engines (Hutchison) that they were able to take advantage of. These are the kinds of programs that breathe life, energy, and interest into their education, and develop them as people. They also offer more diversity, as they appeal to kids with all abilities.

In the last two years, especially, we've seen quite a few hits. First it was a half position here or there. Then a full position and some reshuffling or class size increases. Then, entire classes. Last year, entire schools.

Offerings are becoming pretty fundamental now. Language in K-8 is gone. There is only one language left at Lathrop, despite the fact that many colleges require 2 years of foreign language for admittance. That nationally recognized teacher I mentioned, was pulled last year from some of his exceptional STEM offerings, to teach basic math classes. He currently teaches 3 STEM classes, concurrently, in the same classroom, multiple periods of the day, just to make them available with the cuts.

In our K-8, another excellent teacher is teaching Advanced math to the middle schoolers for 15 minutes (4 times a week) during either her break, or at the beginning of other classes she teaches, in order to make it available for the kids who need it. They give up an elective class to be able to do this because otherwise, they can't get into the higher math track they need in high school. Though quite young, she will be leaving teaching after next year due to the high stress load.

Last Fall, 6 weeks into the school year, (after teachers had been cut so drastically to match budgets) kids at Lathrop found themselves being pulled from their core English and Math classes to be placed in with an entirely new teacher and class, disrupting the entire flow that had been established with that teacher and as a cohort. What a ridiculous disruption and unnecessary setback! That doesn't even address the question of what quality of teachers were available to teach, after schools nationwide, were already in full swing.

This week, for state testing, my daughter's 5th grade class had to alter their testing around other classes, to have enough computers to use. Their classroom set isn't large enough for the increased class sizes. Lathrop has had no daytime custodian this year and has begged the students to help keep the school clean to make up for it.

There are countless other things I could offer as support, but the bottom line is this--we have been stretched as far as we can go. It is no longer just a stressor, nor an inconvenience, it is a breaking point. It is affecting...everything! It is affecting the quality of education that these kids are getting and it has me, as a parent, looking into other options. Offerings have become so fundamental, there is almost nothing left to help the kids compete nationally.

The stress of the staff is palpable. Quality teachers have been leaving right and left or changing jobs to find something less exhausting. Those left are trying to carry the burden, and it's just too much. The budget must change, or the system will break.

My family loves Alaska and all that abounds here. But if we don't increase funding for education, it is headed for destruction. **This is not sustainable and I urge you to increase the BSA.**

Thank you for your time, consideration, and the service you render our great state-

Juliet Eames

Michael Mason

From: Justin Mason <justinmason@dbbsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:52 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am a father, tech employee, and community member in the Denali Borough. I have been in education for 4 years and a father for 14 years. Being a tech employee in our small district, I have seen the impact of flat funding for the past number of years. We are geographically spread out in our district with three brick and mortar schools minimally 45 miles apart and then two homeschool offices residing outside of our borough. Even though our district is small, flat funding has already affected our schools. We have very small schools, ranging from less than ten to 30 students as well as a larger school of less than 200 students and a homeschool program with less than 900 students. Our staff is exceptional, and we find resources that work for us as well as resources that are luckily financially affordable. Each year, we have to look at how we can continue to keep all the schools open and have the staff and resources we need for all of our students. Sadly, this upcoming year, two of our three brick and mortar schools are in jeopardy of being shut down. These schools are a hub for our small communities. These students would need to transfer to another school, in another town for next year if our doors cannot be left open. Staff would need to uproot their work locations and either move or drive daily to work in the school(s) that remain open. This is very hard on each individual person, student, and community. With an increase of base student allocations, we could perhaps be able to keep our small schools open in order for the community that the kids grow up in, to continue to learn in. I want what is best for all of our students. I want them to have a rich and rigorous education, grow to be responsive and responsible humans with rich character that is tied to their communities. As a parent, I also wish for the same; a vibrant educational experience that is rigorous and culturally deep within the community we reside. With flat funding, all of our students suffer. Our students might have to be uprooted to a new community to learn and feel the fall out of program cuts and staffing decreases across all sites. With flat funding, our communities will suffer. Flat funding has to come to an end. AASB has resolved for an increase of not less than \$860. Please increase the base student allocation.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity for voice.

--

Justin Mason
Tech Aide
Denali Borough School District

Michael Mason

From: Karen Severson <fvodinfamilie@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 12, 2024 1:12 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Educaton Funding

Please support our Schools, Teachers and children by raising the BSA by at least the \$680. The student walk out last week across this great state was a powerful statement that not funding Education is a top priority and will not be taken lightly. School closures, class size increases, and cuts to vital programs are not acceptable!

This should not be a one-time funding but law that insures school districts funding that they can count on.

Buses for pupil transportation are vital to ensuring our children are able to attend school and should be fully funded in addition to the BSA increase.

Please put in additional reading funding for our Kindergarten through Third Grade. It is so important to the young children who need that extra support to gain confidence in these crucial years of learning!

We oppose the Governor –appointed State Board of Education to authorize charter schools rather than locally-elected school boards. This would take away local control and collaboration and could pave the way to further siphon-off public education funds for private interests!

Please do the right thing, FULLY FUND ALASKA EDUCATION, before we lose more Teachers and Families who will be forced to leave the State of Alaska.

Thank you for your time,
Karen and Mark Severson

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Michael Mason

From: kathleen shoop <kathleenshoop@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:16 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52 NO!!!

Dear Senate;

I live in Alaska and I DO NOT want SB52 to pass, this is a terrible idea and completely unsustainable and corrupt!
You already waste too much money and the people need their PFD!
SB52 is evil and will make Alaska even a worse place for people to live.

Public education has no accountability and all the money you steal from the people goes for administration that we do not need.

Public education in Alaska is not preparing students with quality education.

Cut the number of school districts from 54 to one!

I hope everyone starts to use the homeschooling programs because they provide quality education and the public sector is very corrupt, and no place for children.

NO on SB 52!

The 844-586-9085 is not working.

I believe this was conspired to not work.

Kathleen Shoop
907-746-7769
907-727-6566

Michael Mason

From: kathleen shoop <kathleenshoop@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:43 PM
To: Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52 = NO

Dear Senate Finance;

Alaska public schools are a failure and already spend far more than any other State and has the worst scores for every subject in the country.

Do not take more money from the people to support the losing, failing schools.

I do not support SB 52!

Kathleen Shoop
Alaska resident since 1992

Michael Mason

From: Katie Aspen Gavenus <katie.aspen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 2:07 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Increase Student Base Allocation

To the Members of the Senate & House Education Committees:

My name is Katie Gavenus, of Homer, AK. **I am writing to urge you to increase the student base allocation for Alaskan schools.**

Alaskan students deserve effective teachers, reasonable class sizes, and extracurricular activities that build their character, confidence, and community. This isn't only the right thing to do -- research shows that the investments we make in youth and education pay huge dividends not just in future contributions to our state but also in short-term (and long-term) savings in costs associated with things like violence, petty crime, drugs, and alcohol.

As others have said much more eloquently than I have, resources like pools and theater enrich our schools, communities, and lives in ways that are meaningful and often life-saving. I remember going to the pool in both elementary school and again in high school to practice putting on survival suits, treading water in a group, and clambering aboard a rescue raft pod. When I think about how many of us work in commercial or charter fishing, on water taxis or research vessels, I realize the critical work and life skills these classes taught. Even for those that don't work regularly on the water, so many head out on the Bay or the Inlet to catch food or have fun with friends and family. Closing the pool - and losing training like that -- is a dangerous choice.

While it might be a little more indirect, I know that theater too has probably saved a few local lives and definitively made so many lives better. All you have to do is attend a community ballet performance, elementary school holiday concert, or during the dark dreary months to see the smiles the theater brings to audience and performers alike. I had classmates for whom music, theater, or dance were the only things that kept them coming to school. And for some, it was a lifeline through struggles with depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges.

Our schools need to be funded sufficiently so that students have good teachers, reasonable class sizes, sufficient support staff, extracurricular activities, and facilities like pools and theaters. Closing the pool to pay the teachers is not a viable option. Closing the theater to ensure there is a nurse on-site is not a viable option. To function well for most students, most of the time, all of these pieces need to be in place. And in order for that to happen, the state needs to increase the student base allocation.

That is the big picture. I'd like to also share a personal story.

I grew up in Homer and attended Paul Banks Elementary, the Homer Intermediate School for 1 year before it closed and the new West Homer Elementary opened up, Homer Middle School, and Homer High School. During that time, I benefited from amazing educators, committed school staff, excellent field trips, and wonderful extracurricular activities.

After graduating with good grades and good test scores, and with a resume full of cool activities and meaningful service, I was accepted at a number of universities/colleges and chose a college that was able to provide much of what I needed to mature into a well-rounded, thoughtful, kind, and contributing adult. And I was able to secure financial aid and scholarships so that I had \$0 in loans when I graduated from college.

My degree and activities in college solidified my interest in outdoor and science education. I've worked across many states, but choose to return year after year to Homer and to the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies.

7 years ago, I left Homer to complete a Master's Degree in science education through the University of Washington. In the first year of my degree, I met my now-husband. I knew I wanted to make Homer our home, but that move has been slowed by some family situations and the exorbitantly high property prices in the area. For the past 4 years, I have been spending about 7 months of the year in Homer (away from my family except for short visits they make to Homer) and 5 months working remotely from Washington while I spend time with my husband and stepdaughter.

We have finally saved up enough to make the big move. We are excited for the move. I am eager to be able to contribute more to Homer -- being there year-round opens up possibilities as a coach, a mentor, and serving on local committees/councils/commissions that I haven't been able to commit to in the past few years. My husband has a variety of salient skills: building/construction, boats, farming, videography, basketball referee. He will be a great addition to Homer. Now, as we prepare for the long-awaited move I am beginning to doubt that KPBSD is where I want my stepdaughter to go to school. She, like all students, deserves a good education that goes beyond the barebones of a teacher, a desk, and a textbook.

My husband and daughter will go ahead and move to Homer, partly because we have no other choice at this point, partly because I love Homer and do very much want to contribute to this community that has given me so much, and partly because I am choosing to believe that you and others in the state will do the right thing and increase the SBA. But my very real concerns about the education system should be a warning to you -- if the state doesn't invest more in K-12 education, young Alaskan families will move away and other young families will choose not to move to the state. Our economy and communities will suffer the consequences.

So please, **increase the SBA at least \$400 this year and \$700 next year.** That is what is needed to avoid closures of important facilities, increasing class sizes to unreasonable numbers, or stripping schools of critical support staff like nurses and counselors.

Sincerely,
Katie Gavenus

P.O. Box 1752
Homer, AK 99603
907-299-0983

Michael Mason

From: K <novcaskir@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:08 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 52

Please do not support Senate Bill 52.

There are thousands of less students in the Anchorage School District. That happened for a reason, a large part because of the dismal scores showing a broken education system. In 2019, that last year I could find data, we ranked the 5th lowest in 4th grade Math and last in 4th grade reading. That is appalling! We spend much more per student than most other states and yet here we are in the ranking.

Money will not solve this problem. We need to reach out to the teachers and aids, the workers on the ground, for suggestions/ideas on creating a more effective education system. Many admin people just do not have the experience to be effective in seeing what is most effective with the students.

The following can also help solve the problem of low education outcomes in our public schools.

1. Good teachers being allowed to use effective ways of teaching, like maybe going back to phonics (a process most students excel at) and whatever else they have found to be effective.

2. Teachers need more support from the administration to stand up and be the adult in the school where there are disciplinary issues. I've talked to a few teachers who have been physically assaulted in the class room. They also talk about the few unruly children in the classroom that make it difficult for the other children to pay attention to learn. Those disciplinary issues also can take up massive amounts of classroom time while the teacher tries to find a way to deal with that student in a way the administration will allow and support. Again, the administration needs to stand up and be the adult in the school instead of rolling over when confronted by a pc issue or an irate parent. I've spoken to a vice principal who acknowledged the challenge of disciplining kids and not having parents support the discipline. The administration needs to stick up for the effective running of the school and then over time those trouble makers will either have to find some other place to go or they will grow up and decide to become a functioning part of the school.

If one looks around society, we see that improvements usually come from areas where there is some competition. Then everyone wants to do better so they can capture a larger part of the community in whatever they are participating. The education system of our children is no different.

By giving the failing schools more money per student we are enabling a broken system and increasing the chances of things staying the same or getting worse. Let the admin/teachers become more innovative, show how those innovations have become successful over a period of at least a year and then if they need more money to continue and build on that path, then consider increasing funding.

I truly hope you will consider what is in the best interest of the education of our Alaskan children.

Sincerely,
Katie Novcaski

Senate Education Committee,
Distinguished Senators

For the record my name is Kevin Shove, I am a school board member for the Haines Borough School District and constituent of Senator Kiehl

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on education funding for Alaskan children. SB 52 would be a game changer for Alaskan schools. Increasing the BSA by \$1000 would show Alaska's commitment to education and future generations of Alaskans. This would help fund the programs, activities and salaries needed to keep pace with other states. Also, this would attract educators and families looking for a place to raise their children. People are leaving the cities and moving to more rural areas. I have met a few that have moved to Haines. A lot of these folks work from home and want safe neighborhoods and superior school systems.

Inflation, as you know, is at a forty year high. I work in the grocery industry and it has not showed any sign of slowing down. Eventually it will, but the need to "inflation proof" the BSA is very important. Inflation ran 1-2% for years until the recent astronomical increases, I would assume this would be the norm again in the future. It would be better to do this and have smaller increases on a yearly basis than a huge increase in five years like now. Reliable, Consistent funding would also help school boards better plan and set goals.

I want to commend you on your commitment to Alaska's children and the future of education in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration
Kevin Shove

Michael Mason

From: Kimberly Bakkes <kbakkes@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:08 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Bill 52

I strongly support passing Senate Bill 52.

Costs have climbed significantly since school funding was last increased in 2017.

As a parent with two kids in school, this issue is very important to me. Currently, I feel satisfied that I can live in Alaska and work a professional job in medicine related to the fact that they are getting what they need from school in education and development. But they cannot afford additional cuts.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Bakkes, MD

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Kimberly Leslie <KLeslie@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:36 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 52 Testimony

Public school students grow up to BE the community, to BE the workforce, to BE the neighbors, to BE the leaders, to BE the solution finders, to BE the productive, kind, citizens of Alaska. Of course we should throw every resource we can at our schools. Of course we should provide ample time and consistency in our support.

Thank you,

Kim Leslie

Pronouns: she, her, hers
Science Teacher
High School iChoice Team
KPBSD
907-224-9082
Twitter: @KNRLEsleie



Michael Mason

From: jenn des <kandjdes@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 6:40 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Senate Finance Committee; House Finance; Senate Education; House Education
Subject: Support HB 65/SB 52 - Increase the BSA!

Senators and Representatives,

I am writing today in support of HB 65 and SB 52 to increase the BSA for Alaska's public schools. Our schools and students desperately need more resources to be successful. They haven't seen any substantial or lasting relief since 2017, and when adjusted for inflation, the statistics are even more bleak. It is unreasonable to think that schools can operate today on less money than they did in 2005!

When budgets don't increase while costs continue to rise, the easiest place to make cuts and balance budgets is directly in the classroom. Here in Seward, what that looks like is cutting 5 teachers in our schools. That's where the dominoes start to fall...increased class sizes (some classes are already over the set PTR), less offerings for core classes (this drives students to distance education classes), minimal elective offerings (no art/music/library teacher at all for our 3 schools), no Student Success Liaison (making distance education/OJT/internships difficult), closing our pool (which has produced an Olympian),...the list goes on. This is too much for our community to carry. We need an increase to the BSA to happen now, so that we can keep our teachers, class offerings, electives, pool, and keep our students interested in going to school.

I am the parent of a Seward High and Seward Middle School student. I've had my kids enrolled in public school for their entire educational careers. That's 10 years of watching their schools be systematically dismantled to the point of barely being able to offer the bare minimum needs to their students to graduate. I wonder what it will be like by the time my kids graduate in 6 years if schools have to continue to cut staffing? My freshman is already taking 3 out of 6 of her classes via distance ed. At some point, one has to ask, what's the point of attending our community school? I do it to support my community and help make opportunities available to ALL of my community's students through enrollment numbers. We could certainly homeschool and take matters into our own hands, but that does not align with my community-minded outlook.

Funding the education budget needs to be a top priority! If you don't invest in a school, then you are starving a community. Families move away to pursue better jobs and educational opportunities elsewhere. The whole community slowly starts to dissolve. Please act now to prevent this from happening to Seward and towns around Alaska like us. I ask you to please support HB 65 and SB 52.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kirk DesErmia

Michael Mason

From: Kirstin Hills <savethesquirrels@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:52 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52

I am writing against stealing the PFD to raise the BSA for education. It is unfair to steal the PFD from those who do not have children in public education. If the legislature plans to raise the BSA, 1. Find it from a different source, and 2. Restructure education so that the parents are in charge of how their money is spent instead of school districts frivolously wasting it on a subpar education.

Sent from [Outlook](#)

Michael Mason

From: Krista West <kristadawnwest@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 9, 2024 5:10 PM
To: LIO Fairbanks; LIO Anchorage; LIO Juneau; LIO Mat-Su; House Education; Senate Education
Subject: increase the BSA by \$1200

To Alaska lawmakers,

Alaska must support public schools by permanently raising the Base Student Allocation by nearly \$1200 per student, as requested by our expert educators. Anything less will continue to bleed our schools dry and truly kill any hopes of providing education for future Alaskans.

Support of home school programs and charter schools does not eliminate our responsibility to fund our traditional public schools.

Something must be done and done now.

Please help.

Krista West

Mom of three in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

Michael Mason

From: Kristi Wood <bikemoredriveless@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 3:21 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please inflation proof the BSA

Please increase the BSA. The proposed \$1,000 is a good start, however I don't think that is enough, as it doesn't bring up the BSA to match our historic inflation. As a long term resident of Alaska who loves it here and has always assumed I would remain here, I'm very concerned about the outmigration of working age Alaskans. Will I want to retire in Alaska if this outmigration continues and the lack of investment in Alaskan's education further contributes to the shrinking of our skilled workforce? What will happen to the value of my home if my neighborhood school closes due to lack of funding? Why should my teenage son remain in Alaska if there isn't a robust local university system for him and why should he return to Alaska to raise his own family if there isn't a robust school system for his children? How on earth can we expect Alaska to have a healthy economic future if we aren't willing to invest in that future?

Thank you,
Kristi Wood
Anchorage resident

Michael Mason

From: Log Cabin Creations <Logcabincreationsak@outlook.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:03 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Testimony SB 52

Mr/Ms. Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Krystie DePue, from Eagle, AK and I am representing myself as a parent with 2 school aged children. I am opposed to adding extra funds to the Department of Education. We need reform not added funds, if we can see some real changes being made to the education of our Alaskan students then more money maybe beneficial. At this present time I urge you not to deplete our state or PFD coffers to further this fiasco.

Respectfully,

Krystie DePue
PO Box 123
Eagle, AK. 99738
907-547-2306

KUSPUK SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 49
Aniak, Alaska 99557
(907) 675-4250
Fax (907) 675 4305

Dr. Madeline Aguillard
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
(907) 675-4250, Ext.#123

February 10, 2023

RE: SB52 – Increase Base Student Allocation

Members of the Senate Education Committee:

For the record, my name is Dr. Madeline Aguillard, Superintendent of the Kuspuk School District. The Kuspuk School District is located along the Kuskokwim River and includes nearly 350 students in 7 communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today.

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 52.

This bill is a step in the right direction, to increase the BSA for sufficient and sustainable funding. As I listened to public testimony lately, I realized an important voice seemed to be missing, and that's the voice of rural and remote Alaska educators.

Kuspuk School District supports a BSA increase in order to address overarching challenges across our remote district. Experiences and perspectives unique to rural and remote educators that a BSA increase would positively impact include: current loss of purchasing power, retention and recruitment strategies, and improving school facility conditions.

A loss of purchasing power is exacerbated for those individuals living in a village in remote Alaska. For example, in Aniak, our district hub, *one gallon of milk is \$15.00, one apple is \$5.99, and fuel is projected to be more than \$12.00 per gallon by this coming summer.*

For comparison, a first-year teacher in KSD is projected to earn \$54,575 and a first year Instructional Aide is projected to earn \$15.00 per hour. The current BSA hinders KSD's ability to pay livable wage.

With the national teacher shortage and our district's inability to pay a competitive, livable wage, we have had to recruit internationally. Right now, ***more than half of our district's teachers are international teachers on a J-1 visa.***

KUSPUK SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 49
Aniak, Alaska 99557
(907) 675-4250
Fax (907) 675 4305

The Kuspuk School District is working to foster relationships with Alaska's Universities to develop "grow your own teacher programs," however, many of their programs are in the developmental stages. Additionally, to retain and recruit educators we offer some grant funded incentives such as a longevity bonus and this year a resiliency bonus, but those grants come and go and they are not permanent, sustainable retention and recruitment options and without available grants, the district is unable to maintain hiring incentive programs due to flat funding.

The lack of adequate teacher housing in rural districts, such as ours, further exacerbates teacher retention and teacher recruitments. Many of our communities do not have the infrastructure available to provide the space for teachers to secure housing. Thus, the district must provide housing, but often times the same issues exist. Sometimes the district is unable to provide housing in communities which leads to teachers living in the schools. ***We have had teachers living in our schools for two years!*** Not only are students spending the majority of their day in our school buildings, but our teachers are literally spending their entire day and night in the building.

Many of our school buildings are more than 40 years old, and have withstood harsh winter conditions. These buildings require extensive repairs, in order to be in acceptable condition to facilitate student learning. As an example, our school in Sleetmute, AK, Jack Egnaty Senior School, has been on the Major Maintenance list for 13 years! We are happy to report the project is now listed #15 on the FY2024 Major Maintenance Priority list and we fully support legislative funding for the project.

In closing, thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to enter this testimony.

Please support Senate Bill 52 as a starting point to increase the BSA for sufficient and sustainable education funding.

Sincerely,



Dr. Madeline Aguillard
Superintendent
Kuspuk School District

Michael Mason

From: Lars Hansen <lars.hansen@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:21 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please increase the BSA!

Hello

I've been a Fairbanks chemistry and physics teacher at Hutchison High School for the past 15 years, and have seen the number of teachers in my school steadily decrease, while the number of students remains the same (or has increased).

In science, that means larger lab groups, and more resource consumption per year. I have been cutting back on chemical purchases by repurposing those chemicals that can be reused, as well as finding local sources for some of them. I would continue to do this regardless, because it just makes sense, but what to me doesn't make sense is the cutting of teacher positions as time goes on.

Whatever can be done to maintain at least a constant population of teachers in the schools must be done, and if increasing the BSA helps to achieve this, then that's a step in the right direction.

Please help our schools!

Thanks,
Lars Hansen

Michael Mason

From: Laura Gregersen <laura_silliphant@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 8:32 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Increase the base student allocation rate

Please increase the base student allocation rate in a sustainable fashion this session.

My son's education depends on it!

Sincerely,

Laura Gregersen

Sent from my iPhone

> On Mar 18, 2024, at 7:36 AM, Laura Silliphant <laura_silliphant@yahoo.com> wrote:

>

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

>

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

>

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

>

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

>

> Anchorage has exhausted nearly all of the District's emergency savings, increased class sizes, and eliminated teaching positions. I have witnessed a cut to a Spanish teacher position at my son's charter school. The \$680 BSA increase offers a lifeline to preserve vital positions and programs essential for the educational well-being of our students.

>

> Please override the veto to Senate Bill 140. Please fund Alaska's public education in a sustainable manner.

>

> Sincerely,

>

> Laura Gregersen

> 4021 Woronzof Drive

> Anchorage, AK 99517

>
>

Thank you Madam Chair, President Stevens, and the rest of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Lem Wheelles and I am a lifelong Alaskan. I grew up in Anchorage, and graduated from AJ Dimond High School, where I met my wife, Lyndsay. I used my UA Scholars scholarship to earn a BA in Political Science, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from UAA. I then returned to Dimond High, where I have taught US Government and History for 19 years. Our two daughters are currently a freshman and a senior at Dimond High. Suffice to say, I am a product of the Alaska public education system, and I am highly invested in it.

I'm appearing before you today to testify in support SB52. Alaska's schools are in dire need of a significant increase in the BSA, and the \$1000 increase proposed in SB52 would go a long way toward correcting the damage done by flat funding for the last several years.

I have enjoyed working at one of the best high schools in Alaska over the past two decades. However, in the past 4 years, my school has lost $\frac{1}{3}$ of its teaching FTE due to flat funding, and in that time period, more than half of the staff positions at Dimond have turned over. In talking to my colleagues as they have departed, I've heard three common reasons:

1. Increasing workloads
2. Inadequate wage increases relative to inflation
3. Lack of a pension

I'd like to briefly address each of these today.

The past few years have been the hardest of my career. First there was the year of the earthquake. The next two years, it was the pandemic, requiring major adjustments to how we teach and supporting students through unprecedented anxiety, depression, illness, and uncertainty. This year, things are starting to get back to normal, but class sizes have increased year after year due to budget shortfalls, caused mostly by flat funding of the BSA. Even with the federal COVID funds, rising costs due to inflation mean fewer teachers, larger class sizes, more papers to grade, and ultimately more work for every educator.

Meanwhile, educator wages have not kept pace with inflation. The last several years, I've seen raises of 1-2% a year, against inflation rates for 3% in good years, or 9% in bad years. Regardless, my real wages have decreased, even as my district gives me more students to teach. Other professionals get raises when they are given more responsibility in their jobs. Teachers are told "do more with less" as if that is even possible.

Finally, while I am fortunate to have been hired in 2004 and have a defined benefit plan myself, most of my colleagues do not. More than half of all teachers in Alaska are in TRS Tier 3, with neither a guaranteed pension, nor social security as an option. We call it "the death tier," as you essentially have to work until you die, or risk running out of money in retirement. This needs to change.

Senators, I'm tired of seeing great teachers leave my school, my district, and our state, because we are not investing adequately in our schools. I applaud you for taking the lead on a BSA increase, and I hope you will work with your colleagues in the House to get this bill passed and to the Governor's desk. The time to invest in education is now!

Michael Mason

From: Lila Lee Little <lilaleelittle@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 6, 2023 11:01 AM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Sarah Vance; House Education; Senate Education; boardofeducation@kpbsd.k12.ak.us
Subject: School Funding

Dear Members of the KPBSD School Board, the Assembly, and State Legislators,

As parents, we are directly impacted by funding decisions for our schools. We encourage you to reach out to us to learn our stories and understand what school funding decisions mean in our lives. Together we agree on the following priorities:

- * We support and encourage an increase in the Base Student Allocation that, at a minimum, maintains the status quo for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD). We understand from the District that this would require a \$700 increase once federal covid money is gone next year.
- * We support and encourage the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly funding KPBSD to the cap.
- * Please do not increase classroom sizes for elementary grades.
- * Our teachers are the most valuable asset in our schools. We strongly support timely signing of contracts and whatever other tools the District has to not only attract but **retain** teachers. Consistent teacher turnover is costly on just about every level.
- * Schools do not just teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. In school, our kids learn to work with others and solve complex problems - including social and emotional ones! In an ideal world, all of our kiddos would have full support and resources at home and in the broader community to help navigate growing up in a social world. Unfortunately, that just isn't reality and whether we want it or not our schools and our classrooms are the common denominator where all of our kids come together - regardless of their resources at home, traumatic experiences, anxieties, etc. Providing school counselors, sports and extracurriculars, swimming pools, theater, and other outlets for learning and supporting our kids in multiple ways creates a stronger community and a better overall school environment for learning and success.

Finally, please remember that we parents are the working families that help fuel the local economy. We work at grocery stores and restaurants, in the marine trades and fishing industries, we are your doctors and lawyers, we are building houses and fixing your plumbing. Supporting quality schools supports quality towns by supporting families and showing dedication to helping Alaska be a place where we not only want to raise our children, but where we feasibly *CAN* raise our children for a bright future.

Thank you for considering increasing the BSA, funding schools to the cap, and making hard decisions to prioritize spending with our voices in mind.

Sincerely,

Lila and Nate Johnson

Michael Mason

From: Lin Davis <lingilbertdavis@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 9:07 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: It's time to boldly and fully support Alaska schools

Dear Senate Education Committee:

Thank you for taking testimony.

For many years Alaska has been failing our teachers and students. It's embarrassing that our state has not adequately funded our schools. Too many years of low to no increased BSA.

Likely you are fully aware of all the sinking ship details about increased class size, demoralized exhausted teachers, crumbling facilities, and removal of favored programs that offer a full range of student learning and engagement.

These sad summaries of underfunded Alaska schools collide with the extra challenges of student learning goals delayed and depressed by the pandemic. Our schools need your wise SB 52 funding.

It's time for a bold increase in BSA. Alaska needs bright engineers, medical providers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, business developers and the full range of technical workers. Please quickly pass SB 52.

Lin Davis
3120 Nowell Ave
Juneau
30 year resident

Michael Mason

From: Lisa Paesani <lpaesani@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:23 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Increase the BSA

I am writing in support of increasing the BSA for our schools. I am wanting you to listen and abide by the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee to raise the BSA by at least 1000.

If Alaska does not insure our schools are properly funded, in order to acquire and keep good teachers and have smaller class room sizes, our population will continue to decline, especially those in educated fields. Already we have a worker crisis in Alaska. People will not move here or stay here if they see their children can not get a good education here. This issue applies to all Alaskans. Please find our schools by increasing our BSA by at least 1000.

Thank you,
M Lisa Paesani, MSW

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Lolita <lolitagrace@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 27, 2024 1:04 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: education funding

Dear Senators

PLEASE listen to the testimony of the Alaskan citizens that are begging for funding to keep our schools functioning. If we do not support our educators, our students will fail and we will find ourselves without an educated workforce. We risk losing more young people who will leave the state to find better educational and work opportunities.

I beg you to restore the BSA to 2017 levels, which, in my opinion, is still barely sufficient.

I worked for 50 years in education; 30 of them in AK. I know the importance of strong early education programs all the way through excellent technical, vocational and University level options for all students. Our state is weak in ALL areas. We are “shooting ourselves in the foot” thinking that this is some sort of financial wizardry that saves the state money. Pennies pinched in education will result in dollars spent in prisons, homelessness, mental health care, and welfare subsidies.

Our teachers deserve sufficient resources to do their jobs. I think the “retention bonus” suggested by the Governor is an absolute insult to our professionals. They want teaching supplies, well maintained buildings, functional technology, and decent benefits. A “bribe to stay” does not help.

I also urge you to keep the decision making about charter schools at the local level. I do not believe state funds should be given to private schools; but if a local group of educators and parents want to create a charter school within the districts’ guidelines, they should be able to do so via local school boards.

Please do what you can to provide our students with a decent, no—an excellent education which they so deserve.

Thank you

Lolita Brache

Homer AK



Senate Education Committee Support for SB52 - Testimony

**Lon Garrison, Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards.**

February 8, 2023

Good afternoon madam chair and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Lon Garrison, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Association of Alaska School Boards.

I am here today to express the firm support of the Association of Alaska School Boards for the passage of SB 52, which would increase the Base Student Allocation for FY24 by \$1,000.

AASB's Resolution #2.2 URGING EARLY, ADEQUATE, EQUITABLE, AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION supports Senate Bill 52, which specified an increase to the BSA of "not less than \$860."

AASB just finished hosting its annual legislative fly-in and Youth Advocacy Institute, which was attended by 170 school board members, students, and superintendents. Some of the most compelling stories and testimony we heard was from students that described the loss of learning opportunities and those programs or activities that build strong connections between the school and their commitment to learning.

AASB thanks you for introducing SB 52 and looks forward to continuing to strongly advocate for this critical financial support of Alaska's public education system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Lon Garrison,
Executive Director, AASB

Michael Mason

From: Lori Thomson <lcthomson18@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:41 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please increase school funding

Dear Senate Education Committee members,

I strongly urge you to increase the base student allocation by \$1,000 for both economic and educational reasons.

As a parent, every week I hear about my seventh-grade daughter having to spend one to three hours a day in the gym doing absolutely nothing because of a lack of substitute teachers. Warehousing children in the gym due to the sub shortage occurs one to three times a week. Increasing substitute pay and staff positions is critical. It's not uncommon to hear that more than 50 students are in one class because one teacher is out sick and there is no one to replace him or her. Sub shortage aside, class sizes are frequently 35 to 40 kids in each middle school classroom. We all know that large class sizes seriously diminish learning and contribute to teacher burnout, which is at an all-time high.

As an economic researcher involved in workforce and employment studies, I can also attest that Alaska employers frequently have great difficulty finding qualified employees at all levels, from trades to upper-level management. I have interviewed many employers who struggle while running their businesses because of the shortage of employees with even the most basic of skills.

Investing in education is investing in Alaska businesses. We cannot have a strong workforce without having strong schools.

Thank you so much for your consideration of this important issue. Please increase school funding.

Sincerely,
Lori Thomson

610 W. 9th St.
Juneau, AK 99801

Michael Mason

From: Lynn Bernheim <alaskalynn1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 12:24 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Education funding

To whom it may concern,

I have been a teacher in high school for 14 years. When I first started the typical amount of students in a class was 24. If you added just one or two more, you would not be able to get through the same amount of content as in a smaller class. This is because just adding a few more students, you have more opinions, and more distractions so you cannot get through as much content. Last semester I had a class with 33 students. I had to find more desks and chairs because they could not all fit in. The students had to have more people to a table or desk than it was designed to hold. I also could not get through as much content as I wanted and expected to get through. On top of that, due to Covid, many of the students are years behind in their writing skills. Of that 33 students, I had 4-5 who could write at their grade level. If we do not increase funding we are setting up our study for failure.

Thank you,

Lynn Bernheim (Fairbanks)