

Charter School Funding: CSSB 57 (FIN)

- SB 57 is about supporting school choice and doing away with the charter school penalty.
- Current law results in charter schools, with fewer than 50 students, receiving 30% to 45% less state funding than neighborhood schools of their same size.
- The root of the problem is the way the foundation formula calculates the “adjusted student count” for charter and alternative schools versus neighborhood schools. Almost all schools have their enrollment adjusted upward by a formula in the state education law that is based on the size of the school.
- The adjusted student count is the basis of school funding. The adjusted count is multiplied by the BSA, the area cost differential and other factors to determine funding.
- Charter schools with an enrollment of fewer than 150 students, and alternative schools with fewer than 200 students, are not treated as separate schools, and the result is their enrollment is adjusted downward. Neighborhood schools are always funded as separate schools, regardless of their enrollment.
- Senate Bill 57 fixes the funding problem in an equitable, fiscally responsible manner.
- SB 57 funds charter schools with fewer than 150 students at the same per-student rate as neighborhood schools with 400 students. This requires charter schools to be significantly more efficient than other schools, but it is a manageable funding level.
- SB 57 also addresses the problem created for school districts, when their charter and alternative schools unexpectedly enroll fewer students than the number required for the state to fund them as separate schools.
- Today, when charter and alternative schools fall just one student below their separate-school threshold, the state cuts funding by \$500,000 - \$700,000. This is a disaster for the school and its district.
- SB 57 contains a one-year, hold-harmless provision for charter schools and alternative schools that unexpectedly fall below the threshold, and are either in their first year of operation or were above the threshold the previous year. For one year, these schools will receive 95% of the per-student rate they would have received at the threshold.
- Finally, SB 57 lowers the separate-school threshold for alternative schools from 200 to 175.
- Alaska has a serious problem with school achievement and high school graduation. One type of school is not best for all students. Charter schools and alternative schools offer parents choice within the public school system.
- SB 57 has received strong support from around the state. The Alaska Association of School Boards, and representatives of the Fairbanks, Nome, Juneau, Anchorage, Lower Kuskokwim, Ketchikan and Mat-Su school districts, as well as numerous parents have testified in favor of SB 57.
- Our school funding system has limited communities’ ability to create and sustain innovative programs. It is essential that this legislature take action this session.

Sectional Analysis CSSB 57(FIN)

Section 1

Subsection (c) states that charter schools with fewer than 150 students will have their student count adjusted by the same per-student rate as neighborhood schools with 400 students.

Under the school size factor statute, AS 14.17.450(a), the per-student rate of adjustment for 400-student neighborhood schools is 1.18, which means their student enrollment is multiplied by 1.18 to determine their “adjusted student count.” The adjusted student count is the basis for the calculation of state funding provided to school districts.

Subsection (d) is an exception to subsection (c) for charter schools that are either in their first year of operation or had more than 150 students the previous year. It grants these charter schools a one-year hold-harmless period, during which they will receive 95% of the per-student rate of neighborhood schools with 150 students.

Under the school size factor statute, the per-student rate of adjustment for 150-student neighborhood schools is 1.45, and 95% of that rate is 1.38. Charter schools in the hold-harmless year will have their enrollment multiplied by 1.38 to determine their adjusted student count.

Subsection (d) requires charter schools that are in the hold-harmless year to submit a plan for the following year to their local school board. The plan must describe what will happen the following year if the school again has fewer than 150 students and no longer qualifies for the hold-harmless provision.

Subsection (e) creates a one-year hold-harmless period for alternative schools similar to the subsection (d) provision for charter schools. Alternative schools that enroll 121-174 students, but are either in their first year of operation or had at least 175 students the previous year, will receive 95% of the per-student rate of neighborhood schools with 175 students.

Under the school size factor statute, the per-student rate of adjustment for 175-student neighborhood schools is 1.40, and 95% of that rate is 1.33. Alternative schools in the hold-harmless year will have their enrollment multiplied by 1.33 to determine their adjusted student count.

Subsection (f) defines the term “student rate.” The student rate is the base plus the multiplier under AS 14.17.450(a) divided by the student count.

Section 2: lowers the number of students that an alternative school must enroll, in order to be funded as a separate school, from 200 students to 175 students.

This section also makes a technical amendment creating the exception from the existing requirement that charter schools have at least 150 students to have their own adjusted student count calculation. Without this amendment, the Department of Education would continue to calculate school funding as if the students at charter schools under 150 attended the largest school in their district.

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 57(FIN)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/1/09

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATORS THOMAS, Elton, Stevens, Davis, Dyson, Wagoner, Ellis, Paskvan, Wielechowski, Huggins, Stedman, Menard

REPRESENTATIVE Kerttula

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to charter and alternative school funding."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 *** Section 1.** AS 14.17.450 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

4 (c) Except as provided in (d) of this section, if the student count in a charter
5 school is less than 150, the adjusted student count for the school shall be calculated by
6 multiplying the student count by the student rate for a school that has a student count
7 of 400.

8 (d) If a charter school has a student count of more than 120 but less than 150
9 for the current year and is in the first year of operation or had a student count of 150 or
10 more in the previous year of operation,

11 (1) the adjusted student count for the school shall be calculated by
12 multiplying the student count by 95 percent of the student rate for a school that has a
13 student count of 150; and

14 (2) not later than February 15, the charter school shall submit for
15 approval of the governing board of the district a plan for the following school year that

includes a statement about whether the school will continue to operate if the student count remains the same that year and, if so, a projection of the funding anticipated from the state and other sources, a proposed budget, and a description of anticipated changes to the school staff, program, and curriculum; if the school intends to close if the student count remains the same the following year, the plan must describe transfer plans for students, staff, facilities, and materials.

(e) If an alternative school has a student count of more than 120 but less than 175 for the current year and is in the first year of operation, or had a student count of 175 or more in the previous year of operation, the adjusted student count for the school shall be calculated by multiplying the student count by 95 percent of the student rate for a school that has a student count of 175.

(f) In (c) - (e) of this section, "student rate" is calculated by adding the base and the multiplier provided under (a) of this section and dividing the sum by the student count.

* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.17.905 is amended to read:

Sec. 14.17.905. Facilities constituting a school. (a) For purposes of this chapter, the determination of the number of schools in a district is subject to the following:

(1) a community with an ADM of at least 10, but not more than 100, shall be counted as one school;

(2) a community with an ADM of at least 101, but not more than 425, shall be counted as

(A) one elementary school, which includes those students in grades kindergarten through six; and

(B) one secondary school, which includes students in grades seven through 12;

(3) in a community with an ADM of greater than 425, each facility that is administered as a separate school shall be counted as one school, except that each alternative school with an ADM of less than 175 [200] shall be counted as a part of the school in the district with the highest ADM.

(b) Notwithstanding (a)(3) of this section and for purposes other than

1 **calculations under AS 14.17.450**, a charter school shall be counted as a separate
2 school if the charter school has an ADM of at least 150 students.

SENATE BILL NO. 57

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS THOMAS, Elton, Stevens, Davis

Introduced: 1/21/09

Referred: Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to charter school funding."**

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5 school is less than 150, the adjusted student count for the school shall be calculated by
6 multiplying the student count by the student rate for a school that has a student count
7 of 400.

8 (d) If a charter school has a student count of more than 120 but less than 150
9 for the current year and is in the first year of operation or had a student count of 150 or
10 more in the previous year of operation,

11 (1) the adjusted student count for the school shall be calculated by
12 multiplying the student count by 95 percent of the student rate for a school that has a
13 student count of 150; and

14 (2) not later than February 15, the charter school shall submit for
15 approval of the governing board of the district a plan for the following school year that

1 includes a statement about whether the school will continue to operate if the student
2 count remains the same that year and, if so, a projection of the funding anticipated
3 from the state and other sources, a proposed budget, and a description of anticipated
4 changes to the school staff, program, and curriculum; if the school intends to close if
5 the student count remains the same the following year, the plan must describe transfer
6 plans for students, staff, facilities, and materials.

7 (e) In (c) and (d) of this section, "student rate" is calculated by adding the base
8 and the multiplier provided under (a) of this section and dividing the sum by the
9 student count.

10 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.17.905(b) is amended to read:

11 (b) Notwithstanding (a)(3) of this section and for purposes other than
12 calculations under AS 14.17.450, a charter school shall be counted as a separate
13 school if the charter school has an ADM of at least 150 students.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: SB 57
 (S) Publish Date: 2/2/09

Identifier (file name): SB057-EED-ESS-01-22-09 Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
 Title: An Act realting to charter school funding. RDU: K-12 Support
 Component: Foundation Program
 Sponsor: Senator Thomas
 Requester: Education, Finance Component Number: 141

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information					
	FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services							
Travel							
Contractual							
Supplies							
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims	714.3	0.0					
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	714.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()							
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF	714.3	0.0					
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	714.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill would increase funding for those charter schools with an Average Daily Membership [ADM] under 150 through the school size adjustment mechanism.

There are two methods to determine eligibility:

1) If the charter school is under 150 ADM, then the ADM count will be multiplied by 1.18.

OR

2) If the charter school has an ADM of 120 but less than 150 and in the 1st year of operation; or had an ADM count of 150 in the prior year but fell below in the current fiscal year, then the ADM count will be multiplied by 1.38.

The GF appropriation capitalizes on the Public Education Fund [PEF].

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, Director
 Division: School Finance
 Approved by: Larry LeDoux, Commissioner

Phone 465-8679
 Date/Time 1/22/09 12:00 AM
 Date 1/22/2009

Department of Education & Early Development
Prepared 1/22/09

Prepared by School Finance

			<u>x 1.18</u>	<u>x 1.38</u>
District/School Name	FY09 Charter School ADM	FY10 Charter School ADM	Cost if Eligible under Sec. 1 ('c)	Cost if Eligible under Sec. 1 (d)
ANCHORAGE				
Alaska Native Charter School [Eff. FY09]	160.70	180.00		
Aquarian Charter	361.15	360.00		
Highland Tech Charter	240.20	260.00		
Winterberry Charter	184.50	200.00		
Eagle Academy Charter	164.00	165.00		
Rilke Schule Charter	209.90	240.00		
FAIRBANKS				
Chinook Montessori Charter School	153.20	153.00		
Star of the North Secondary School (charter)	200.55	201.00		
Effie Kokrine Charter School	140.65	145.00	\$ 350,590	
Watershed Charter School [to open in FY10]	-	155.00		
JUNEAU				
Juneau Community Charter School	68.00	78.00	\$ 194,684	
KENAI				
Aurora Borealis Charter (soldotna)	184.00	185.00		
Kaleidoscope Charter School	233.00	248.00		
Fireweed Academy Charter (Homer)	72.75	76.00	\$ 147,231	
Soldotna Montessori Charter	161.60	161.00		
KETCHIKAN				
Tongass School of Arts & Sciences Charter	152.40	150.00		
Ketchikan Charter School	173.30	170.00		
LOWER KUSKOKWIM				
Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion (bethel)	172.05	172.00		
MAT-SU				
Academy Charter School	228.95	231.00		
Fronteras Charter School	186.85	187.00		
Midnight Sun Charter School	165.00	165.00		
NOME				
Anvil City Science Academy	44.00	44.00	\$ 21,796	
Total Revenue			\$ 714,301	

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
 Bill Version: CSSB 57(FIN)
 (S) Publish Date: 4/1/09

Identifier (file name): SB057-EED-ESS-3-31-09 Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
 Title: An Act realting to charter and alternative school funding. RDU: K-12 Support
 Sponsor: Senator Thomas Component: Foundation Program
 Requester: Senate Finance Component Number: 141

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information					
	FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services							
Travel							
Contractual							
Supplies							
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims	1,314.3	0.0	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	1,314.3	0.0	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()							
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF	1,314.3	0.0	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	1,314.3	0.0	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3	1,314.3

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill would increase funding for charter and alternative schools.

Alternative schools with an Average Daily Membership [ADM] of 175 or greater will adjust through the school size table independently.

If the alternative school has an ADM of 120 but less than 175 and in the 1st year of operation; or had an ADM count of 175+ in the prior year but fell below 175 in the current fiscal year, then the ADM count will be multiplied by 1.33.

If the charter school is under 150 ADM, then the ADM count will be multiplied by 1.18.

Otherwise if the charter school has an ADM of 120 but less than 150 and in the 1st year of operation; or had an ADM count of 150+ in the prior year but fell below in the current fiscal year, then the ADM count will be multiplied by 1.38.

The GF appropriation capitalizes on the Public Education Fund [PEF].

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, Director
 Division: School Finance
 Approved by: Larry LeDoux, Commissioner

Phone 465-8679
 Date/Time 4/1/09 12:00 AM
 Date 4/1/2009

Department of Education & Early Development
4/1/2009

Prepared by School Finance

			x 1.18	x 1.38
District/School Name	FY09 Charter School ADM	FY10 Charter School ADM	Cost if Eligible under Sec. 1 ('c)	Cost if Eligible under Sec. 1 (d)
ANCHORAGE				
Alaska Native Charter School [Eff. FY09]	160.70	180.00		
Aquarian Charter	361.15	360.00		
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Winterberry Charter	184.50	200.00		
Eagle Academy Charter	164.00	165.00		
Rilke Schule Charter	209.90	240.00		
FAIRBANKS				
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Midnight Sun Charter School	165.00	165.00		
NOME				
Anvil City Science Academy	44.00	44.00	\$ 21,796	
Total Revenue			\$ 714,301	

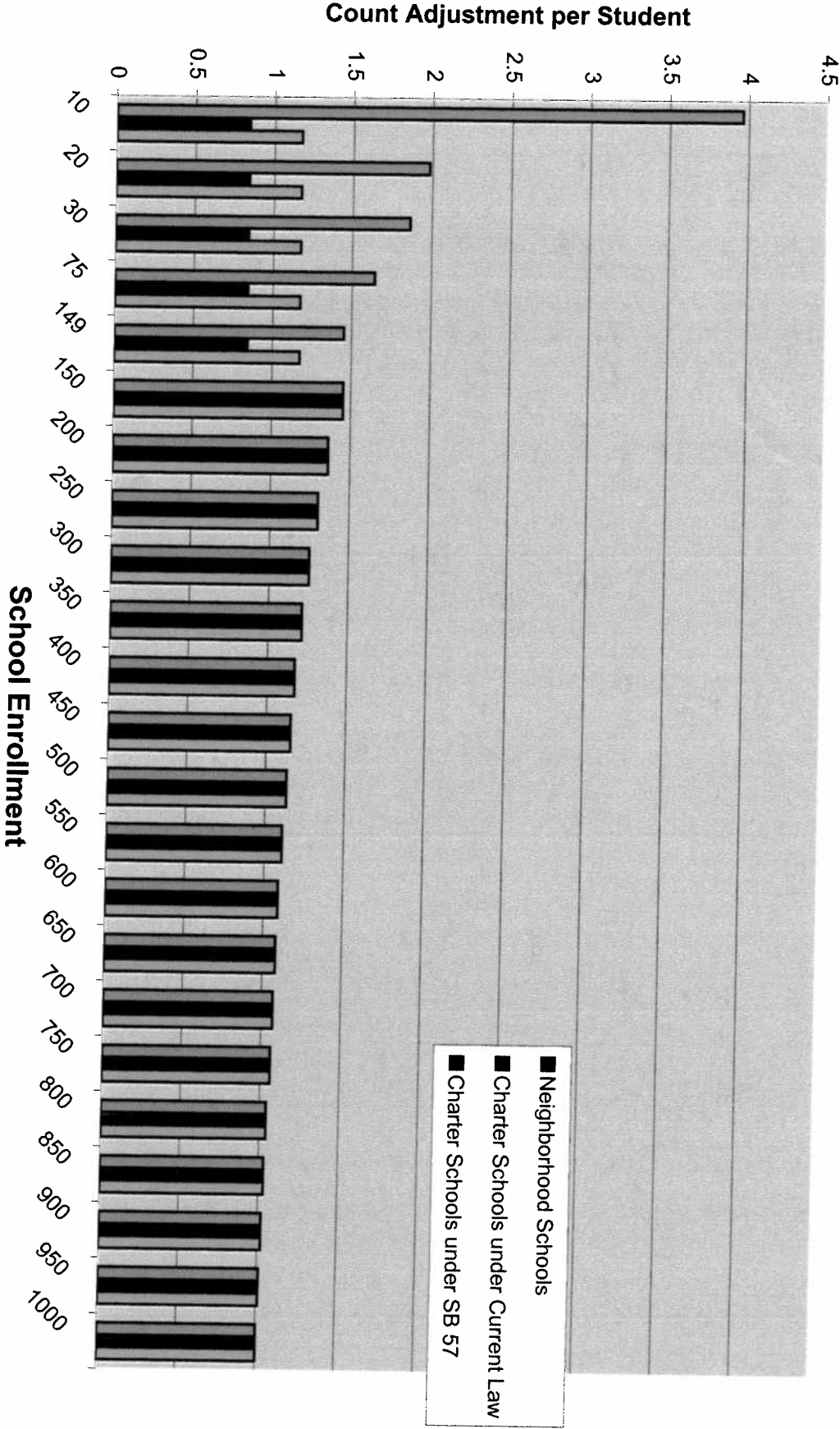
Department of Education & Early Development
Prepared 4/1/09

Prepared by School Finance

District & Alternative School Name			<u>x 1.33</u> <u>175-200 ADM</u>	
	FY09 Alternative School ADM	FY10 Alternative School ADM	Cost if Eligible under Sec. 1 (d)	Cost if Eligible under Sec. 2
ANCHORAGE				
A.V.A.I.L.	59.10	54.00		
Polaris K-12	479.00	480.00		
Steller Secondary	293.25	292.00		
Continuation Program	32.20	26.00		
COHO	40.05	35.00		
Whaley Center	468.83	485.25		
Benny Benson Secondary/S.E.A.R.C.H.	232.75	230.00		
Crossroads School	52.65	51.00		
S.A.V.E.	237.85	227.00		
CRAIG				
PACE Alternative High School	8.50	8.50		
DELTA/GREELY				
New Horizons High School	24.80	24.00		
FAIRBANKS				
Alternative Learning Systems	105.60	107.00		
JUNEAU				
Yaakoozge Daahakidi Alt High School	140.35	150.00		
KENAI				
Homer Flex	36.30	31.00		
Kenai Alternative School	98.20	67.00		
Peninsula Optional HS	37.05	38.00		
KETCHIKAN				
Revilla High School (Alt.)	66.55	86.00		
LOWER KUSKOKWIM				
Bethel Alternative Boarding School	33.80	33.00		
MAT-SU				
Mat-Su Day School	37.55	40.00		
Valley Pathways Alternative School	205.90	204.00		
Burchell Alternative High School	220.75	211.00		
Mid-Valley Alternative High School	193.55	174.00	\$ 600,002	
NORTH SLOPE				
Kiita Learning Community	57.50	53.00		
SITKA				
Pacific Alternative	37.75	35.00		
Total Revenue			\$ 600,002	

Adjusted Student Count for Charter Schools vs. Neighborhood Schools

The adjusted student count of each school is the basis of state funding. The number of students enrolled in a school is increased or decreased according to the formula in AS 14.17.450, to determine the school's adjusted student count. That adjusted student count is then multiplied by the district cost factor, the special needs factor and, finally, by the base student allocation to determine the amount of funding.



* This chart assumes that a charter school with fewer than 150 students has a student count adjustment of .84 under current law, because it is located in a district that contains a school with over 750 students, such as Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su or Juneau. A charter school in a community such as Kenai, Bethel, Ketchikan or Nome would have a student count adjustment of .92 or .97.

Example Adjusted Student Count Calculations

100 Students in a Neighborhood School have an Adjusted Student Count of **154.6**
And a per student adjustment of 1.55.

$$\begin{array}{l} 122.85 \text{ base} + 1.27 \text{ multiplier} \times (100 - 75 = 25) \quad 122.85 + 31.75 = 154.6 \\ 154.6 / 100 = 1.55 \end{array}$$

100 Students in a Charter School under Current Law have an Adjusted Student Count of **84**
And a per student adjustment of .84

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{No base} + .84 \text{ multiplier} \times \text{all 100 students} \quad 0 + 84 = 84 \\ 84 / 100 = .84 \end{array}$$

100 Students in a Charter School under SB 57 have an Adjusted Student Count of **118**
And a per student adjustment of 1.18.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{No base} + 1.18 \text{ multiplier} \times \text{all 100 students} \quad 0 + 118 = 118 \\ 118 / 100 = 1.18 \end{array}$$

The adjusted student count of each school is the root of state funding for school districts. The number of students enrolled in a school is increased or decreased according to the formula in AS 14.17.450, to determine the school's adjusted student count. The adjusted student count is then multiplied by the district cost factor, the special needs factor and by the base student allocation, to determine the amount of funding.

Charter School Funding Statutes

Sec. 14.03.260. Funding for charter school.

(a) A local school board shall provide an approved charter school with an annual program budget. The budget shall be not less than the amount generated by the students enrolled in the charter school less administrative costs retained by the local school district, determined by applying the indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Education and Early Development. The "amount generated by students enrolled in the charter school" is to be determined in the same manner as it would be for a student enrolled in another public school in that school district.

Sec. 14.17.905. Facilities constituting a school.

(a) For purposes of this chapter, the determination of the number of schools in a district is subject to the following:

(1) a community with an ADM of at least 10, but not more than 100, shall be counted as one school;

(2) a community with an ADM of at least 101, but not more than 425, shall be counted as

(A) one elementary school, which includes those students in grades kindergarten through six; and

(B) one secondary school, which includes students in grades seven through 12;

(3) in a community with an ADM of greater than 425, each facility that is administered as a separate school shall be counted as one school, except that each alternative school with an ADM of less than 200 shall be counted as a part of the school in the district with the highest ADM.

(b) Notwithstanding (a)(3) of this section, a charter school shall be counted as a separate school if the charter school has an ADM of at least 150 students.

Sec. 14.17.450. School size factor.

(a) For purposes of calculating a school's ADM to determine state aid, the ADM of each school in a district shall be computed by applying the following formula:

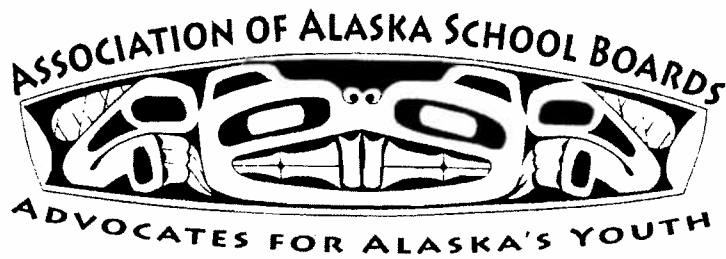
If the student count

The adjusted student count is

In a school is

At least	But less than	Base	Multiplier	The number of Students in excess of
10	- 20	39.6		
20	- 30	39.6	+ (1.62 x	20)
30	- 75	55.8	+ (1.49 x	30)
75	- 150	122.85	+ (1.27 x	75)
150	- 250	218.1	+ (1.08 x	150)
250	- 400	326.1	+ (0.97 x	250)
400	- 750	471.6	+ (0.92 x	400)
750 or over		793.6	+ (0.84 x	750).

(b) If the ADM in a school is less than 10, those students shall be included in the ADM of the school in that district with the lowest ADM as determined by the most recent student count data for that district.



**Position Statement on SB 57
Charter School Funding**

In 1995, AASB supported the creation of charter schools in statute. Over the years, school boards have subsidized and otherwise assisted local charter schools in providing Alaska families with a viable choice in public education.

AASB encourages the Legislature to amend AS 14.17.450 as outlined in SB 57 to establish a more equitable means of funding charter schools.

School boards find themselves caught between local citizen initiatives to create choices within public schools and an inadequate funding stream in statutes that require supplemental funding from local districts.



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
501 N. GULKANA
PALMER, ALASKA 99645
Office of the School Board
(907) 746-9272 Fax (907) 761-4076

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NO. 09-002**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD IN SUPPORT OF
SENATE BILL NO. 57 "AN ACT RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING."

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School Board invites support of Senate Bill No. 57 "An Act Relating To Charter School Funding"; and

WHEREAS, charter schools give opportunities outside of the traditional public schools for innovative programs to be implemented; and

WHEREAS, charter schools gain momentum and interest from a broader larger audience as a program is developed in the initial year of operation; and

WHEREAS, charter schools like all schools have fluctuations in enrollment and losing program gravity because of a slight drop in enrollment below 150 students for one year could have a longer term detrimental impact on the school; and

WHEREAS, a school that is not recognized as a school site for funding purposes receives a reduced financial allocation; and

WHEREAS, being recognized as a school site gives economic relief by bringing a greater dollar amount to the school allowing for more comprehensive and adequate funding; and

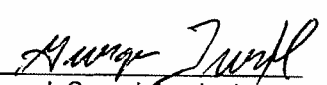
WHEREAS, this Bill offers the initial year of operation for a charter school as an opportunity to build community support and student numbers and ultimately strengthens the quality of the program and the potential for program and student accomplishment; and

WHEREAS, encouragement is offered to add language to this Bill to lower the enrollment for alternative school's recognition as a school site from 200 students to 175 as a measure to support an alternative school's need for a smaller learning community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School Board supports Senate Bill No. 57 "An Act Relating to Charter School Funding."

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School Board this 18th day of February, 2009.


Jim Colver, Board President


George Troxel, Superintendent

ATTEST:


Stacy Escobedo, Board Secretary



Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District

Robert Boyle, Superintendent

333 Schoenbar Road

Ketchikan, AK 99901

phone 907-247-2109; fax 907-225-3870

boyler@kgbsd.org

February 13, 2009

Senator Joe Thomas
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 313
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Senator Thomas:

I am sending you a resolution by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District Board of Education in support of Senate Bill 57, an Act relating to charter school funding.

We believe charter schools are public schools that provide valuable education options to Alaska families in addition to encouraging parent and community involvement in our schools. The current funding system results in a significant decrease in funding for charter schools as compared to other neighborhood schools of their same size, should small changes in student enrollment take place.

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District supports the passage of Senate Bill 57 in modifying the current school funding law as it applies to charter schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Boyle".

Robert Boyle
Superintendent



**KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
RESOLUTION #09-04**

**A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL NO. 57, WHICH IS AN ACT
RELATING TO CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING**

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 57 will modify the current school funding law as it applies to charter schools with fewer than 150 students; and

WHEREAS, charter schools provide valuable education options to Alaska families and encourage parent and community involvement; and


WHEREAS, the current funding system results in a dramatic decrease in funding for charter schools as compared to neighborhood schools of their same size ; and

WHEREAS, adjusted student count as determined under AS 14.17.450 is the basis of state funding for all schools in Alaska; and

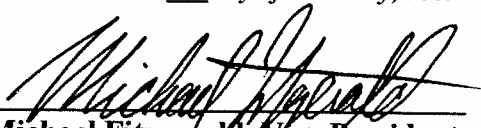
WHEREAS, Senate Bill 57 funds charter schools with fewer than 150 students to an adjusted student count by the same per-student rate as neighborhood schools with 400 students; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District supports passage of Senate Bill 57.

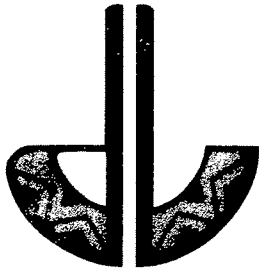
Adopted by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District on this 11th day of February, 2009



Karen Eakes, Board President



Michael Fitzgerald, Vice President



Doyon, Limited

1 Doyon Place, Suite 300
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-2941
(907) 459-2000
www.doyon.com

Norm Phillips, Jr.
President and CEO
E-mail: phillipsn@doyon.com
Direct Dial: (907) 459-2004
Fax: (907) 459-2060

March 25, 2009

Senator Joe Thomas
State Capitol, Room 510
Juneau, AK 99801-1182



Dear ~~Senator~~ Thomas:

Thank you for introducing SB 57, this bill directly aligns with Doyon, Limited's mission statement, which includes promoting the economic and social well-being of our shareholders and future shareholders. The Effie Kokrine Charter School is important to the Alaska Native community in the interior. With almost 25% of our 17,500 shareholders residing in the Fairbanks community we believe that a culturally sensitive school is essential to the well-being of our shareholders.

Therefore, on behalf of our shareholders, Doyon, Limited supports SB 57.

Thank you again and please let me know if we can do anything else to help. I can be reached at (907) 459-2000 or by e-mail at phillipsn@doyon.com.

Sincerely,


Norman L. Phillips, Jr.
President and CEO

cc: Linda Evans, Principal, Effie Kokrine Charter School



TONGASS SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES RESOLUTION

Urging the Governor of Alaska and the Alaska State Legislature to pass Senate Bill 57, "An Act relating to charter school funding."

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE TONGASS SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES:

WHEREAS the Constitution of the State of Alaska and other laws and policies of the State require educational opportunities for all children; and

WHEREAS Charter schools are public schools that provide valuable education options to Alaska families; and

WHEREAS Charter schools increase learning opportunities and encourage parent and community involvement in our schools; and

WHEREAS the current state funding system limits communities' ability to create and sustain these innovative programs; and

WHEREAS current state law results in charter schools receiving 30% to 45% less state funding than neighborhood schools of their same size; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 57 funds charter schools with fewer than 150 students at a per-child rate closer to that of average, urban elementary schools; and

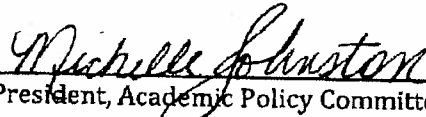
WHEREAS Senate Bill 57 solves the funding problem in an equitable, fiscally responsible manner; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 57 will support our schools and districts as they carry out the legislature's intent in creating the charter school law;

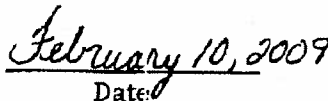
BE IT RESOLVED that the Tongass School of Arts and Sciences Academic Policy Committee supports the passage of Senate Bill 57; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Tongass School of Arts and Sciences Academic Policy Committee urges the Governor of Alaska and the Alaska State Legislature to pass Senate Bill 57, "An Act relating to charter school funding."

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Sara Palin, Governor of Alaska; the Honorable Gary Stevens, Senate President; the Honorable Mike Chenault, House Speaker; the Honorable Senators Hoffman and Stedman, Senate Finance Committee Co-Chairs; the Honorable Senators Ellis, Elton, Huggins, Olson, and Thomas, Senate Finance Committee Members; the Honorable Kyle Johansen, Representative, House District 1; and members of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School Board.



President, Academic Policy Committee



Date: February 10, 2009

Dana Owen

From: Comeau, Carol [Comeau_Carol@asdk12.org]

Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 3:00 PM

To: Dana Owen

Cc: Sen. Kim Elton; Comeau_Carol

Subject: RE: SB 57

Dana,

Thanks for taking my call just now. I am sorry I am unable to testify tomorrow as I had planned due to participation in a conference call with the new Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. I would appreciate it if you could distribute these comments to the Senate Education Committee members tomorrow.

Dear Senate Education Committee:

The Anchorage School Board does not have a position on SB 57 specifically, but we strongly support our charter schools. We have much concern on the "draconian" funding situation for a charter school that does not make the 151 student count through the count period, particularly in the first year of operation. Many of our charter schools have struggled with this issue and the funding problems that ensue.

The Anchorage School District would like to work with your committee on this important issue. Last year, I suggested that maybe a working group could work on this issue over this session and into the summer. If that was ever possible, I would like to ask that the ASD participate. We have participated on many groups over the years and have some good suggestions on how to resolve funding and facility issues for charter schools. We believe that the public school choices, including charters, are important for parents and students.

I appreciate your commitment to education and the opportunity to provide input.
Carol Comeau, Superintendent
Anchorage School District

1/28/2009

Joe Hardenbrook

From: Vickie Erickson [mitchvicky@pci.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 9:46 AM
To: Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Johnny Ellis
Cc: Sen. Kim Elton; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Joe Thomas
Subject: SB 57

Dear Senators,

I would like to thank all of you in your past support of for schools in Alaska, especially those that are small in numbers and therefore needing more support when it comes to funding issues. I am requesting your support for the passage of SB 57.

Charter Schools allow parents, community members, and teachers to be in charge of developing unique educational programs and to be involved in decision making for school policies. As a parent of three Charter School children and two more that will soon be in Charter schools, it means a lot to me to be involved in school policies and the operations of our school. Our educational process is very flexible, which provides for the needs of our children and parents alike.

The Anvil City Science Academy has been in operation for eleven years now, it was created by parents, teachers, and many community members who were interested in a family oriented school characterized by high academic standards and a well-rounded curriculum, with an emphasis in science and math. The Science Academy serves 5th through 8th grade students who come to the school with a wide variety of backgrounds, learning styles, experiences, and needs. We are able to address the individual differences and learning styles, and creativity we see an increase in learning and creativity for all students. Our students at this time are involved in a salmon habitat restoration project grant from the Department of the Interior, and are working with Charlie Lean of Norton Sound Economic Development Company, because of this project the Academy students were nominated and won the "Spirit of Youth" award in the category of Science. Another project that is noteworthy is the Artist in Schools project in which students are interviewing Nome residents in preparation for writing a play about the last 50 years in Nome.

Anvil City Science Academy has 44 students, with two and half certified teachers, no support personnel. This gives the school the needed flexibility to provide opportunities to the students to go beyond the traditional classroom walls in order to utilize community and environmental resources. In addition, in a small community such as Nome, a program like ACSA can't reach a student count of 150 students, without having an adverse affect on the other public schools in the district. Therefore, a smaller program like ACSA is beneficial to the community by providing an alternative education program, while minimizing the possible impact on other schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie Erickson

Sen. Kim Elton

From: payroll@ci.nome.ak.us on behalf of Dana Handeland [dhandeland@nomealaska.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 8:29 AM
To: Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Kim Elton; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: supporter of SB 57

Donny,

I want to thank you any your fellow Senators for supporting Charter Schools in Alaska. We have actively worked for the past several years to provide a more permanent "fix" to the funding dilemma that we face due to the typical charter school enrollment and the current method of funding. We believe that great strides have been taken with SB 57.

Our school here in Nome has an enrollment of 44 which is capped due to space constraints at the current facility. We are paired with the largest school in our district causing concerns each year of whether we still can continue to provide the Nome community with optional educational opportunities. We have a proven program and a waiting list each year.

We work hand in hand with our district, many times providing a venue to try new methods that can later be implemented into the larger district. Providing a more equitable funding formula for charter schools only furthers the endless opportunities that our Alaskan education system can provide all Alaskan children especially in the future.

Thank you again for your continued support. The community of Nome appreciates this most important work for our children.

Dana Handeland
Anvil City Science Academy, APC member

Joe Hardenbrook

From: Lisa Leeper [lleeper@nomeschools.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 22, 2009 9:02 PM
To: Sen. Joe Thomas
Subject: Support for SB 57

Dear Senator Thomas,

I teach at Anvil City Science Academy in Nome. I hope that you will consider the following points in order to help SB 57 pass this stage with the Finance Committee in order that it may be heard by all and voted upon.

Respectfully,
Lisa Leeper
Teacher, Anvil City Science Academy

- Charter schools are public schools that provide valuable education options to Alaska families.
- The existing school funding law results in charter schools that enroll fewer than 150 students receiving 30% to 45% less state funding than neighborhood schools of their same size.
- Inequitable funding limits communities' ability to create and sustain these schools.
- There is a dramatic decrease in funding (\$500,000 - \$700,000 loss) when a charter school's enrollment drops from 150 students to 149, which creates a financial crisis for both the school and its host district.
- Senate Bill 57 solves the funding problem in an equitable, fiscally responsible manner.
- SB 57 funds charter schools with fewer than 150 students at the same per-student rate as neighborhood schools with 400 students.
- SB 57 contains a one-year, hold-harmless provision for charter schools that are either in their first year of operation or had more than 150 students the previous year, reducing the financial damage to their district.
- SB 57 will allow school districts to carry out the intent of the legislature in creating the charter school law, by increasing quality education options available to Alaska families.
- SB 57 is supported by the Alaska Association of School Boards, and superintendents and parents of charter school students from across the state. The bill has been co-sponsored by Senators Thomas, Stevens, Elton, and Davis.

Dana Owen

From: Sen. Kim Elton
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2009 7:45 AM
To: Dana Owen
Subject: FW: Support for SB 57

-----Original Message-----

From: Hubert Angaiak [mailto:hangaiak@gci.net]
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2009 7:40 AM
To: Sen. Kim Elton; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: Support for SB 57

Honorable Senators,

I would like to thank you for your continued support in providing the best education for Alaska's children. I fully support SB 57 and I urge you to pass it. Charter Schools provides a positive alternative in education for our children. We are always looking for solutions in providing what's best in education for our children and Charter Schools are part of the solution.

Thank you.

kind regards,
Hubert Angaiak
Bethel, Alaska 99559
907-543-3074

Sen. Kim Elton

From: Linda Newman [newman@alaska.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 12:35 AM
To: Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Gary Stevens
Cc: Catherine Reardon; Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: Fwd: Thank you for Senate Bill 57

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee: My wife and I are forwarding a copy of this email that we sent to Senator Kim Elton earlier this week. We are sending this to you so that you can see how much we appreciate his co-sponsorship of Senate Bill 57, and so that you will know that we are grateful to you for considering this bill. Thank you for the support you've provided charter schools in the past; we hope you will support this effort to assist Alaska's small charter schools, which currently operate under an inequitable and unsustainable funding scheme. We look forward to the discussion about the bill at your Thursday meeting.

Sincerely,

Tony and Linda Newman
newman@alaska.net

Begin forwarded message:

From: Linda Newman <newman@alaska.net>
Date: January 25, 2009 11:11:53 PM AKST
To: Senator_Kim_Elton@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Thank you for Senate Bill 57

Senator Elton: Every year for the past several we've written to you to ask for your help in trying to fund Alaska's small charter schools, including Juneau's, in a more equitable way. We're extremely pleased and excited to be able to write to you tonight and thank you for taking leadership on this issue right away this session, by cosponsoring Senate Bill 57.

If this bill successfully makes it through the legislative process and passes into law this year it will provide relief to the Juneau Community Charter School just in the nick of time. We know that we've said in my prior letters to you that the situation is already urgent, but this year, for the first year in the seven years that we've been involved as parents of JCCS students, we are operating at a budget deficit and drawing down the school's savings. We probably have less than two years of funding left at the rate we're depleting the savings. The Charter School simply can't operate indefinitely on the unfair funding formula that leaves charter schools funded at a per-student rate that is significantly lower than other similar-sized schools in the district. We've all but resigned ourselves to the fact that our kids' school will likely need to close in a year or two because it will simply run out of money. (Believe us, we've exhausted ourselves trying to fundraise out of this mess.)

The importance of this bill for all of Juneau's kids is demonstrated by the fact that the Juneau School District has made more equitable small charter school funding one of its legislative priorities this year, and has resolved to support us in our efforts to correct the current funding inequity. We've just reviewed the bill and have exchanged a few emails with our fellow Charter School parents, and we are in agreement that the approach outlined

through this bill may be the best one yet. This bill makes it possible for small schools to operate, but still maintains the legislature's intent to encourage the formation of larger schools.

In our prior-year emails and letters to you on this issue we've taken much time and space to tell you about our kids and how much they--our whole family--gain from our participation in Juneau's Charter School. All of those things remain true. Our kids are learning so much and so well, but best of all, the Charter School has become an important part of all our lives because of the community that's grown around it.

Let us know what you would like us to do to assist you in securing passage of this bill this year.

Sincerely,

Tony and Linda Newman
308 Distin Avenue
Juneau, AK 99801
586-2172
newman@alaska.net

Sen. Kim Elton

From: jodi [jodiwynne@verizon.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 1:25 PM
To: Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: Support for our school

Dear Senator Elton,

My name is Jodi Scolamiero. My husband David and I have our 1st grade son at Juneau Community Charter School (JCCS) this year and hope to have our 2nd son start there next year.

First, we would like to thank you for all your past support for our wonderful school. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to send our children to a school such as JCCS. Without an option such as JCCS we fear our child would not be thriving as he has this past year. Due to his personality and learning style we have determined that the type of education JCCS offers is best suited for our children in that the school is smaller, therefore giving a more secure atmosphere. With the class size remaining the same as the district average, children are able to experience learning in smaller groups as well as giving a multi-grade class situation where each child can benefit from student mentoring as well as being a student mentor.

Next, I would like to add to the collective voice asking for your further support for the upcoming bill SB 57 giving smaller Charter schools the same funding as larger neighborhood schools. Without this increase in funding we fear our beloved school will not survive more than a couple of more years. The JCCS is a valuable addition to Juneau's wonderful elementary educational system. The school has proven itself academically with students ranking high on standardized testing scores, and also in that there is a high success rate for students transitioning back into the neighborhood school setting.

SB 57 would not only benefit our existing Charter school but give opportunity for more schools such as JCCS to establish and thrive. This would give parents even more choices when choosing what setting would be best for their individual children. In my opinion giving each child the type of education that works best for him or her is in essence ensuring our future as well as theirs.

Thank you so much for your time and support,
Jodi Scolamiero

Sen. Kim Elton



To: Larry Johansen

Subject: RE: Charter school Bill

Larry--

Thanks. As chair of the education committee, I'm holding a committee hearing on the bill in a half hour and am co-sponsor of the bill.

Kim

From: Larry Johansen [mailto:rowdydog@gci.net]

Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2009 8:05 AM

To: Sen. Kim Elton

Subject: Charter school Bill

Senator Elton,

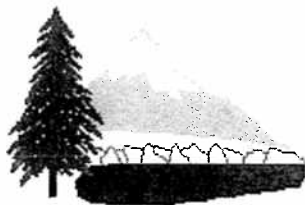
I quick word in support of the funding formula equalization bill. I am a charter school parent. We do school jobs to save our school money to make our program happen. My wife and I perform janitorial service and recess duty to save cost. Its not that we mind doing these jobs but we would like to be able to spend our volunteer efforts on jobs that would directle lead to improving oue children's educational experience. AS it is the Juneau charter school is an educational success meeting core standards and for all social classes. Please help us help our kids.

-Larry Johansen

3010 Foster

Juneau, AK

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Sen. Kim Elton

From: Jeri Kohlin [jeri_kohlin@hotmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 1:35 PM

To: Sen. Kim Elton; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Gary Stevens

Subject: Senate Bill 57

To: The Senate Education Committee

Dear Senators,

First of all, I would like to thank each of you for your past support to increase charter school funding. Secondly, I would like to ask the Education Committee to, please, support SB 57 making it possible for charter schools of 150 or less to receive funding based on the same per student rate as larger schools. Our school, Juneau Community Charter School, offers an educational program that isn't available elsewhere in the school district. Although the overall school size is small, class size is no smaller than elsewhere in the school district. JCCS is able to support *every* child's attitude and enthusiasm towards learning, provides highly enriched curriculum while developing strong thinking skills while implementing increased parental involvement, multi-age classes, trips into the community, teacher autonomy, more opportunities for parent/teacher interaction than if he attended a larger neighborhood school. JCCS is a good "fit" for the needs of my child and family specifically because the curriculum is individualized to challenge each child at their skill level, in all domains, while supporting positive self esteem, diversity, and community involvement.

JCCS has proven itself educationally. Its students perform well on standardized tests and do well when they transition back into the neighborhood school settings. The Juneau school district supports this bill and has included increased charter school funding in its list of legislative priorities as well.

Education isn't one size fits all. It's important for families to have choice. Different settings are a better fit for some children and their families than others. All children should be allowed the opportunity to learn and succeed in a way that reaches their own unique learning style. We value our school, how it impacts our family, and the community of families (which includes staff and volunteers) that make it happen and strongly feel our children should not be penalized by inadequate funding. Currently, the funding situation is so inadequate that our school will have to close within 2-3 years.

Please, support our students and schools by authorizing same per student rate as larger schools receive. If we as parents felt the local neighborhood schools were the best fit for meeting the individual needs of our children, they would be attending those schools now and receiving the funds we are asking for now. But that is not the case, please, support our children now where they are excelling.

Thank you for your consideration and support,
Jeri Kohlin

Sen. Kim Elton

From: jgeselle@gci.net on behalf of Jon Geselle [jgeselle@gci.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 2:47 PM
To: Sen. Kim Elton; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Gary Stevens
Cc: Catherine Reardon
Subject: In support of SB 57

Dear Senators,

We are writing to thank you for your past support for charter schools. Your support is critical to providing educational options for the next generation of Alaskans.

We are also writing to express our support of SB 57. Should this bill pass it would allow smaller school districts across the state to offer charter school options to the families they serve. This is important for many reasons, but foremost is the fact that not all students thrive in a traditional academic setting.

To this, we speak from experience. Our son Ezra has excelled at the Juneau Community Charter School because of the arts integrated curriculum and small overall school size. In this environment his social confidence has steadily grown allowing him to experience successes he did not have in a larger school setting.

I hope that you too will support SB 57, thus providing educational options for the future of Alaska.

Thank you,

Annie & Jon Geselle

Sen. Kim Elton

From: Diane Cathcart [Diane_Cathcart@ci.juneau.ak.us]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 2:53 PM
To: Sen. Kim Elton; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Gary Stevens
Cc: Catherine Reardon
Subject: Support for SB57

Dear Senators and Staff,

Thank you for taking a moment out of your busy schedules to read this email.

I am writing to request your full support of SB57-An Act Relating to Charter School Funding.

As you are well aware; education is not a one size fits all. It is important for families to have a choice and different settings are a better fit for different children and their families. By creating more equitable funding it helps ensure small charter schools will continue to exist. Small Charter Schools are constantly trying to reach out to families with diverse needs for their children; whether it is a smaller overall school size so children don't feel "lost" in the crowd or children that have special learning needs. Small Charter Schools have the ability to help more children that are in danger of falling through the cracks, *if* they are properly funded. In my humble opinion this also helps relieve the stress larger schools may feel from trying to help children in need while maintaining the needs of the general school populous.

Full funding for ALL our children and schools should be every Alaskans priority; we owe it to our children and their future.

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

Sincerely,

Diane Cathcart (Juneau Community Charter School 4/5/6 Class parent)
310 Irwin St Apt B
Juneau, AK 99801
907-523-2166

Sen. Kim Elton

From: Tim and Jeannie [tjmaxa@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 9:44 PM
To: Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: SB 57 - Charter school funding

January 27, 2009

Dear Senator Elton,

I am writing to express my support for SB57. I believe legislation like this will provide more equitable funding for small charter schools. I like SB 57 because it is comprehensive and effectively addresses the very different needs of different types of small charter schools and their host school districts.

I currently have two children attending the Juneau Community Charter School. My eleven year old son has attended the charter school for all 6 years of his education and my youngest son is in first grade.

I believe Charter schools are an important way to provide for school choice in Alaska and support parent involvement in education. We are very happy that the Juneau Community Charter School exists to provide a small school environment (a total of 66 children in the school) and involve parents in the school in meaningful ways. I want my children to be educated in a small environment and want to be involved in their education. We like the multi-age classrooms, the daily interaction between children of different ages, and the whole child view of education.

Since home schooling is not an option for our family due to employment obligations we are happy to have a charter school available to address many of our needs. My older son was born with a serious congenital heart defect that has required many open heart surgeries and has had special physical needs. We have greatly appreciated him being able to attend a small school where his needs are known and met within the regular classroom.

I believe Charter Schools have an important place in Alaska's education system. I hope that through your efforts, solutions to the challenges faced especially by small charter schools can be addressed. The current funding situation means it is very difficult for a charter school with under 150 students to operate. Alaska is a state of small numbers and we need legislation that will allow charter schools of all sizes to thrive. Without this legislation our charter school may have to close in the next 2-3 years. SB57 will make a big difference and allow small charter schools to survive in Alaska and offer valuable educational alternatives throughout the state.

Please support more equitable funding of charter schools to allow educational options around the state. Thanks very much for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Monk
Juneau Community Charter school parent

--

Tim, Jeannie, Max and Aaron

1/28/2009

Sen. Kim Elton

Sen. Kim Elton

From: aukebaybetty@alaska.net
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 8:06 AM
To: Sen. Kim Elton; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Donny Olson
Cc: Catherine Reardon
Subject: SB 57
Attachments: Dear Senator Elton.docx



Dear Senator
Elton.docx (136 K...

Dear Senate Education Committee Members: Senator Elton, Senator Davis, Senator Huggins, Senator Stevens and Senator Olson,

Attached is a letter in support of SB 57. Please share your support with other Senators and House Members to help pass this bill.

Thank you very much for your support.

Beth Rivest

January 26, 2009

Dear Senator Elton, Senator Davis, Senator Olson, Senator Huggins and Senator Stevens; members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 57. It is a well written piece of legislation that would help small charter schools continue to serve students all across Alaska. These students' schools are in need of more equitable funding to support salaries and supplies. I am grateful you support charter schools as an option for parents to meet their child's needs.

I have three children in the Juneau School District public school system. I chose to enroll in the lottery when my eldest child was in the first grade. Luckily she got in the charter school and since the second grade it has been a wonderful educational and social environment for her and her siblings.

While I attended Arizona State University as a college student, I took almost every math class offered. I have always loved math and the sciences. The methods used to teach math at the charter school are rigorous, build solid understandings of number patterns and such strong flexibility in solving problems that I sincerely wished I had had the opportunity to be exposed to and to learn math in such a progressive, skill-building, visual way. It is exciting to see students experience this type of meaningful math.

I attended public school throughout my life and I loved school, however I believe my children are far more comfortable and intensely involved in their projects while also thoroughly enjoying attending school. They are being given an exceptional chance to become all they can. The projects that incorporate writing, research, art, social studies/science and teambuilding are solid methods of fun and learning. The parents of these students become involved as well and work hard to support this small charter school.

The Juneau Community Charter School is in need of financial support. Parents contribute by supporting teachers in the classroom, helping teachers prep for the week to come, we work around the school facility to build shelves, clean and make it work efficiently. Parents also work very hard to fundraise to meet the financial commitments it takes to run the charter school. It is sorely underfunded at present.

The charter school has been part of the Juneau School District, serving a wide array of students for over ten years. It sets high standards and builds leadership, competence and love of our environment in such a compassionate manner.

To be very honest, if it were not for the charter school, I know I would begin a small child-care business and home school my children.

It has been stated, from President Obama to our Governor's State of the State, that education is one of the top legislative priorities. I sincerely hope that funding small

charter schools, through creative use of resources, educate children in a way that many children need, to become successful is also a priority within your committee.

In Alaska, small charter schools are funded dramatically lower per student compared to district counterparts. This bill recognizes charter schools as important options and is an attempt to balance educational funding per student at a reasonable percentage.

Please continue your support and know that small charter schools are doing important works on behalf of students all across Alaska, in particular here in Juneau. Please know that besides the many, many parents and educators who believe in the success of small charter schools and its' students high achievement, test scores and critical thinking skills we have no lobbying force to help other Senators or House members understand this issue. Please I ask each of you to help by sharing your support for SB 57.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Senate Bill 57.

Sincerely,

Beth Rivest, wife of a hard-working, small business owner; loving and caring parent of three wonderful children; and a member of the Juneau Community.

Sen. Kim Elton

From: Rhonda Vaughan [rhonda.vaughan@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 9:38 AM
To: Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: Supporting Charter Schools

Dear Mr. Elton,

I'm a parent at Juneau Community Charter School. I'm writing to you to express my hope that the Charter School funding bill be passed.

If this bill is passed, it would mean a lot to the Charter School families. One major improvement would be the benefit of having buses for the children. Currently, all families drive the children to Charter School. Driving downtown twice a day to Charter School adds many miles to our car and uses a lot gasoline; both have an impact on the environment. In this time of economic and environmental crisis, a small thing like buses would make a great change!

Safety would also be improved if the Charter School received bus service. Students who live downtown can walk to school, but with snow covered sidewalks, they have to walk on the street, which presents a safety hazard. Parking is very limited at the Charter School, making drop off and picks up potentially dangerous. Parents have to find a parking spot that allows space for a car, yet not get hit. Children have to use extra caution when crossing the street, and as is common with young children, they sometimes don't look before they leap.

Thank you for your time in reading this, Sen. Elton. The families at Juneau Community Charter School are eager to see the Charter School funding bill passed.

Regards,

--

Rhonda Vaughan

209-8950

Dana Owen

From: Sen. Kim Elton
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2009 7:55 AM
To: Dana Owen
Subject: FW: SB57

-----Original Message-----

From: sarah hopkins [mailto:hopkins_sarah@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 5:07 PM
Subject: SB57

January 28, 2009

Dear Senators,

This letter is in regards to Senate Bill 57 which will have its first hearing in front of the Senate Education Committee on Thursday January 29th. The bill addresses funding for small (charter) schools.

I support this bill because it will benefit the Juneau Community Charter School. My son is currently enrolled at JCCS. I believe that ALL students can be the most successful in school when they are in an environment that best fits their educational and social needs. This is the case for my son, and daughter, and as parents my husband and I try to find our children's best "fit" educationally. I hope to enroll my daughter as a 7th grader next year at JCCS. If Bill 57 is passed, this may be more possible.

With the funds that Bill 57 would provide, JCCS could be more accessible (in terms of growth) and serve a greater number of Juneau families. A community is more enriched when families have as many educational choices as possible for their children. Students are more successful when they are in an environment where they feel safe and are motivated and interested in their own education. No child is alike, and providing Juneau's students with a choice of educational environments addresses the educational needs of all our children. Juneau Community Charter School plays a vital roll in the school district in meeting these needs.

The Juneau Community Charter School APC members (made up of parent volunteers), other JCCS families, and teachers, have put in many hours of research and work in coming up with a plan of how JCCS can offer additional classrooms and serve a greater number of families. Bill 57 will support these efforts. Please give your support for this bill. Thank-you for your time.

Sincerely,
Sarah Hopkins

Dana Owen

From: Sen. Kim Elton
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2009 7:55 AM
To: Dana Owen
Subject: FW: Please Support Charter School Legislation

From: Elise and Jay Boyer [mailto:ejez_2000@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 5:16 PM
To: Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: Please Support Charter School Legislation

Dear Chairman Elton:

I understand that you will be considering a bill this week to correct the funding inequities that hamper small charter schools in Alaska. I heartily encourage you to pass this bill. My husband and I have been so happy with our sons' charter school experiences, both in Homer (Fireweed Academy), and in Juneau, at the Juneau Community Charter School. Although these schools are different in many ways, they are wonderful examples of how the charter school law can enable our public school system to reach students in ways the traditional programs may not. I have learned that "one size" does not fit all in education, and our children benefit from choices in program. When those choices can be made available to all, regardless of income or test scores, then our state is truly doing them a service.

Treating small programs as if they have the economies of scale of the largest schools in the state has always been an unfortunate glitch in the current law (although there are some who see it as a deterrent to the explosion of small schools). The proposed bill will correct that problem, and enable our students to continue to share in the promise of the charter school system. In fact, in our case in Juneau, it will enable us to achieve even more diversity than we already enjoy, by making it possible to hire employees who can serve students with special needs and to provide bus service to children who need it.

I know times are tough. I hope you will see that this bill is worth the investment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elise Nacht Boyer
780-2528

1/29/2009

Dana Owen

From: Catherine Reardon
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 4:38 PM
To: Dana Owen
Subject: FW: Support for our school

From: jodi [mailto:jodiwynne@verizon.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 1:25 PM
To: Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: Support for our school

Dear Senator Elton,

My name is Jodi Scolamiero. My husband David and I have our 1st grade son at Juneau Community Charter School (JCCS) this year and hope to have our 2nd son start there next year.

First, we would like to thank you for all your past support for our wonderful school. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to send our children to a school such as JCCS. Without an option such as JCCS we fear our child would not be thriving as he has this past year. Due to his personality and learning style we have determined that the type of education JCCS offers is best suited for our children in that the school is smaller, therefore giving a more secure atmosphere. With the class size remaining the same as the district average, children are able to experience learning in smaller groups as well as giving a multi-grade class situation where each child can benefit from student mentoring as well as being a student mentor.

Next, I would like to add to the collective voice asking for your further support for the upcoming bill SB 57 giving smaller Charter schools the same funding as larger neighborhood schools. Without this increase in funding we fear our beloved school will not survive more than a couple of more years. The JCCS is a valuable addition to Juneau's wonderful elementary educational system. The school has proven itself academically with students ranking high on standardized testing scores, and also in that there is a high success rate for students transitioning back into the neighborhood school setting.

SB 57 would not only benefit our existing Charter school but give opportunity for more schools such as JCCS to establish and thrive. This would give parents even more choices when choosing what setting would be best for their individual children. In my opinion giving each child the type of education that works best for him or her is in essence ensuring our future as well as theirs.

Thank you so much for your time and support,
Jodi Scolamiero

1/28/2009

Louie Flora

From: Brad Faulkner [bradalaska08@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 11:49 AM

To: Rep. Paul Seaton

Subject: Charter School Funding

Dear Paul,

The Senate passed out a good bill on Charter School funding. It goes a long way toward improving real structural inequities in the funding formula. I realize you understand this issue as well as anyone in the House. I am hoping you will push this as one of your priorities.

Respectfully,

Brad Faulkner

4/7/2009

Louie Flora

From: Kiki Abrahamson [kabrahamson@kpbsd.k12.ak.us]
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2009 10:53 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Berta Gardner; Rep. Bob Buch; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Peggy Wilson
Subject: Education Committee Hearing Wednesday

Members of the House Education Committee

This week students all over the state will be taking Standards Based Assessments. Students with various needs, abilities and backgrounds will be held accountable to the same measure. Yet one group of public school students will be held to that standard in spite of the double handicap of being members of public schools in our state that have substantially lower funding and no guaranteed access to a facility because of a flawed state statute. Wednesday you will have the opportunity to consider Senate Bill 57 that moves Alaska one step closer to equitable funding for all of its diverse students.

Charter schools and alternative schools are public schools open to anyone who enrolls. They are formed by caring educators who see a specific need in addressing a certain population, philosophy or program. They follow all Federal, State and district laws and regulations. Teachers in charter and alternative schools follow the same requirements for certification, employment, and negotiated agreements. Currently, charter schools and alternative schools are making a tremendous positive difference in educating students all over Alaska. They provide opportunities for innovation and choice, yet the development of new charter schools is hampered by the inequitable funding in AS 14.17.450.

I have never understood why the statute for establishing charter schools Article 2; AS 14.03.260 (a) says: *The "amount generated by students enrolled in the charter school" is to be determined in the same manner as it would be for a student enrolled in another public school in that school district*; yet AS 14.17.450 does not support that intent. In a fiscally responsible manner, Senate Bill 57 seeks to remedy that by funding small charter schools as if they were a school of 400. This provides incentives for educators and school districts to support innovation, choice and equity for Alaskan students.

Please work to pass this bill through the House and on to the Governor.

Kiki Abrahamson
Fireweed Academy
Alaska Charter School Association.

Louie Flora

From: sarah hopkins [hopkins_sarah@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 06, 2009 7:21 PM
To: Paul_Seaton@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: support SB 57

April 6, 2009

Dear Mr. Seaton,

My name is Sarah Hopkins and I am writing to you in hopes that you will support SB 57 with a "yes" vote on Wednesday April 8th, and pass this bill out of committee as soon as possible. SB 57 provides more equitable funding for small charter/alternative schools. This bill directly affects the Juneau Community Charter School where my son attends kindergarten.

With the funds that would come from SB 57, JCCS could expand its program to provide bus services, a part-time counselor and para-educators, thus making our program available to more families in Juneau. I think it is important that parents have a choice in where they want their children educated. The more choices families have when it comes to educating their children, the richer and more fulfilling that education will be. No two children learn the same way, and our schools should reflect that. JCCS provides another educational choice for families. Thank-you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,
Sarah Hopkins



Anvil City Science Academy
Nome, Alaska

Representative Seaton,

On behalf of the Anvil City Science Academy Academic Policy Committee, I would like to express our thanks for your past support for schools in Alaska. At this time we would request your support for the passage of SB 57. Small charter schools throughout Alaska are in need of equitable funding to meet the needs of the diverse students and families they serve. Schools like ACSA offer specialized educational programs that provide choice in education, while promoting public education.

The Charter School Act has allowed parents, community members, and teachers to take the lead in developing unique educational programs and to be involved in the decision making for school policies. The result of which is a flexible education process, which provides for the needs of students and parents alike. This is particularly true in small charter schools, which can create a distinctive school culture in which everyone takes ownership in the program.

Anvil City Science Academy was created eleven years ago by parents, teachers, and community members interested in a family oriented school characterized by high academic standards and a well-rounded curriculum, with an emphasis in science and math. In that time, ACSA has been able to meet the needs of its fifth through eighth grade students who come to the program with a wide variety of backgrounds, learning styles, experiences, and needs. By addressing individual differences and learning styles, there is an increase in the potential for learning and creativity of each student.

The Academy's small size is one of the key factors in its success. ACSA has a student population of 44, with two and a half certified teachers, and no support personnel. This gives the school the needed flexibility to provide opportunities to the students to go beyond the traditional classroom walls in order to utilize community and environmental resources. In addition, in a small community such as Nome, a program like ACSA can't reach a student count of 150 students, without having an adverse affect on the other public schools in the district. Therefore, a smaller program like ACSA is beneficial to the community by providing an alternative education program, while minimizing the possible impact on other schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter,

Todd Hindman, Lead Teacher
Anvil City Science Academy
Nome, Alaska

Nome Public Schools

PO Box 131~Nome, Alaska 99762~Phone: (907)443-2231~Fax: (907)443-5144



**NOME BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION #09-02
In Support of Senate Bill 57
Increased Funding for Small Charter Schools**

WHEREAS, the legislature passed the law authorizing the creation of charter schools in Alaska and

WHEREAS, the legislature has realized the importance of providing varied and excellent educational opportunities for all students and;

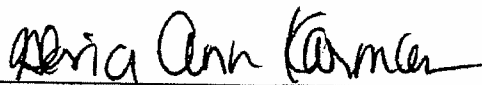
WHEREAS, charter schools have proven themselves to be an effective educational alternative and;

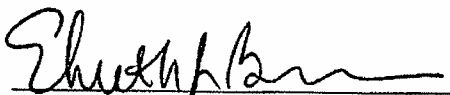
WHEREAS, the Anvil City Science Academy located in Nome Alaska has provided quality service to the students of Nome for over ten years and;

WHEREAS, the population of Anvil City Science Academy is less than 50 students

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Nome Board of Education supports the passage of Senate Bill 57.

ADOPTED by the Nome Board of Education this 10th of February 2009


Gloria Ann Karmun
President, Nome Board of Education


Elisabeth "Betsy" Brennan
Treasurer, Nome Board of Education

Louie Flora

From: payroll@ci.nome.ak.us on behalf of Dana Handeland [dhandeland@nomealaska.org]
Sent: Monday, April 06, 2009 11:25 AM
To: Rep. Richard Foster
Cc: Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Edgmon@legis.state.ak.us; Keller@legis.state.ak.us; Wilson@legis.state.ak.us; Gardner@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Mike Hawker; Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us; Thomas@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Alan Austerman; Rep. Anna Fairclough; Joule@legis.state.ak.us; Kelly@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Harry Crawford; Rep. Les Gara; Chenault@legis.state.ak.us; Salmon@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Supporter of SB 57

Richard,
Thank you for your support over the years for education of choice for Alaska's children. For many years Charter schools have struggled with the existing funding formula and have worked diligently with the legislature to provide a more permanent fix. SB 57 addresses this funding dilemma by providing equitable funding for charter and alternative schools with enrollment under 150.

I have been an avid supporter of Charter Schools in Alaska because they offer alternative educational models. What does this mean to Alaskan children? Options!

Charter schools across the state have demonstrated their worth: Test score achievement, community involvement, unique educational projects, and an educational model targeted directly to the student. As you know not all regions in Alaska can meet an enrollment quota of 150 in a charter school without creating an adverse affect on the local community schools. Anvil City Science Academy in Nome is a perfect example. Our charter school is capped, by the district, at 44 students due to space constraints at the current facility.. This unfortunately creates a waiting list of students wishing to participate in the program who cannot be accommodated.

SB 57 will provide the relief to the annual threat of funding shortages that charter schools under 150 face. Please continue to support educational options for our children and help create the necessary momentum to make SB 57 law.

Thank you for putting Alaskan children first!!

Dana Handeland
APC-Anvil City Science Academy, Nome Alaska