

## Sen. Berta Gardner

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**From:** Sen. Berta Gardner  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 18, 2014 3:45 PM  
**To:** Linda File  
**Subject:** RE: Thank you for your leadership

Thank you, Linda. Your letter was a great start to my day!

Berta

Senator Berta Gardner  
Anchorage District H  
Spenard Midtown UMed

(907) 465-4930  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau AK 99801

**From:** Linda File [<mailto:northpolefile@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 18, 2014 8:01 AM  
**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner  
**Subject:** Thank you for your leadership

Hearing your voice in support of education on public radio news this morning gave the boost I needed to realize we do have an advocate in Juneau.

Thank you for standing against the amendment that would gut our public schools. There is so much to be said about the egregious ideology behind it and the consequences it would have in our State, but you get this, and I am grateful. Thank you for being there yesterday for the rally.

Most people do not realize how hard our public education teachers and administrators are working to maintain and go beyond in the quest to do more and more with less. That Governor Parnell would raise the BSA by only \$85 is condescending to those who work so hard to teach all students and to deal with the previous cuts of his administration to one of the major constitutional mandates of state government.

I am grateful for you and your work.

Thank you.  
Linda File  
(AK resident since 1965, voter since 1973, proud Democrat since 2008)

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Financing for Public Education

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**From:** Popovici, Shawna L  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 18, 2014 3:13 PM  
**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner  
**Subject:** RE: Financing for Public Education

Thank you Berta!

As always, I appreciate your response and love seeing your smiling face in town. J Thanks for keeping so close with your constituency.

I did write a letter to the editor and don't think it was used.

I am more than happy for you to use my email in your posting, but initials would be great. I am currently the treasurer for our Charter School so I am trying to keep a lower profile. ...a Fair Funding Bill for Charter Schools, WOW! Great news. I really do hope that education reform can happen and now...this is the most hype I've seen about this in a while and it would be great work to get done (or at least begun).

Yes, my oldest daughter is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade now at Rilke Schule German School (three languages for her), and I have a 2 year old daughter as well. Public education funding, as well as public service (parks and recreation) are all so important to me. However, I feel our natural resources are getting more attention than our human capital is getting... Why? ...in part because we are not educating our little ones (our public) to high standards. I don't wish to see our state have a brain drain to the lower 48. We need to keep them here. I think options and charter schools do provide that! So, in a sense, people are another "renewable resource" we have here in Alaska. Our population is not getting any smaller! J And I do want my daughter to stay here and provide for a family if she can and if she chooses to.

Thank you for your time!

Shawna

**S h a w n a L. P o p o v i c i**

Executive Assistant

Municipality of Anchorage - IT Department

907-343-6889 phone

907-343-6810 department fax

907-249-7599 write fax

*Returned Peace Corps Volunteer - ROMANIA*

**From:** Sen. Berta Gardner [<mailto:Sen.Berta.Gardner@akleg.gov>]

**Sent:** Friday, February 14, 2014 2:59 PM

**To:** Popovici, Shawna L

**Subject:** RE: Financing for Public Education

Terrific letter, Shawna. Thank you for weighing in. Have you considered submitting it as a Letter to the Editor?

Also, we have a website where we are posting education related letters from Alaskans. May we have your permission to include your letter (without email address) but with name, or with just initials?

Berta

P.S. Some of us are working on a fair funding bill for Charter Schools. Is it really true that your kids are old enough for school? It seems just the other day you were attending community council meetings as a presenter  
.....

Senator Berta Gardner

Anchorage District H

Spenard Midtown UMed

(907) 465-4930

Alaska State Capitol

Juneau AK 99801

**From:** Popovici, Shawna L [<mailto:PopoviciSL@ci.anchorage.ak.us>]

**Sent:** Monday, February 10, 2014 11:16 AM

**To:** Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Berta Gardner

**Subject:** Financing for Public Education

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

We appreciate all the hard work you are doing in this legislative session, especially in regards to **FUNDING EDUCATION!**

We are voters, concerned parents, community volunteers and education supporters. We are particularly concerned with the student allocated BSA. Although the governor has promised increases, we feel that they are not enough. With the last few years, the BSA has been 'held hostage' and has remained at a flat rate, all the while operating costs have been on the rise (teacher's wages and benefits, general supplies, security contracts, etc. etc. etc.).

Not only do we want you to **fight for real, meaningful increase in the BSA, we also want it not to be set at a flat rate.** Please consider setting it with an annual-general increase that matches inflation rates. Many conservative states do this, like Texas and Illinois! We may not be fully educated on this issue, but there is one thing we know, flat rates just mean that you are "for" a general "cut in education funding" every year that the rate remains constant. We're appalled that this has not been the norm in Alaska

Also, our children attend Rilke Schule German Schule which is a charter school in Anchorage. We are concerned (and under the strong impression) that charter schools are NOT given equal funding as regular public schools are, even if we ARE part of the public school system. We want you to **consider EQUAL funding for public schools and public charter schools.** However, on this same topic, **we are NOT in agreement that private schools should receive a BSA like public schools.** Private school teachers and administration are not held to the same standards that our public schools are at.

**Shawna and Ovidiu Popovici**

6286 Fairweather Dr.

Anchorage AK 99518

**Rilke Schule German School**

2511 Sentry Drive Suite 100

Anchorage, AK 99507

**Subject:**

FW: BSA

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**From:** Bill and Rachel Galbraith [[galbraithbrs@gci.net](mailto:galbraithbrs@gci.net)]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 09, 2014 3:23 PM  
**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner  
**Subject:** BSA

February 9, 2014

Dear Senator Gardner,

This letter comes as a plea for our children's future, for our future. I write as a mother first and then as a teacher of special needs students for thirty-nine years. I am a strong Christian who believes that to be a strong Christian one needs to be able to withstand the temptations of the world. I do not believe that public funds should be used to support private schools. Public funds belong with public schools. Up to this point in my life, I have not been a political person but this issue changes that fact.

It is amazing the choices available through the public schools today. These choices range from traditional, charter or magnet all the way to home schools, all under the umbrella of public schools. Why do taxpayers need to pay for vouchers for private schools when so many choices already exist within the public school system? For the last four years, the current state administration has demonstrated its lack of care for education while holding the children to more and more stringent testing requirements.

Research supports the need for smaller class size, especially in the lower grades. Why is Governor Parnell insistent in his refusal to support the children of this state? How can our legislators in good conscience support his decisions? I have been told that Governor Parnell does not believe that this issue will be reflected at the voting poles. This thinking appalls me as a mother, teacher, and human being. What could possibly be more important than our children. I do vote and am encouraging other to do likewise. Yesterday, I was talking to a local businessman about the future for his 4 year-old son's education. He was so proud that his son was already learning to read. He was enraged when he learned about Governor Parnell's proposal for giving a mere pittance for his son's educational needs. He is an immigrant from Viet Nam. When I asked if he voted, he said no. He said that he would register and vote for his son. There were eight other American immigrants in that establishment whom I hope will follow this man's lead. I will continue to encourage them to do so.

In order to offer quality education, funds must be forthcoming to finance smaller classes with quality teachers. Don't our children deserve a cost of learning raise. The schools have faced this issue for the last four years resulting in program cuts. These cuts usually come in the areas of the arts where for many students, it is the one area they love and can be successful. Now, the cuts will not only affect the extracurricular but the bare bones of education.

I trust that you will exercise your influence to help others see the plight our education systems face. Thank you for your concern and positive response to this most urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Galbraith

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: NO on SJR9 / YES on BSA increase

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**From:** Staci Cox [[cox.staci@gmail.com](mailto:cox.staci@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 8:59 PM

**To:** Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Anna Fairclough; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Steve Thompson; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Max Gruenberg; Rep. Pete Higgins; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Kurt Olson; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Chris Tuck; Rep. Mia Costello; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. David Guttenberg; Rep. Lindsey Holmes; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Lance Pruitt; Rep. Bill Stoltze; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Les Gara; Rep. Mike Hawker; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux; Rep. Benjamin Nageak; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. Tammie Wilson

**Cc:** [sean.parnell@alaska.gov](mailto:sean.parnell@alaska.gov)

**Subject:** NO on SJR9 / YES on BSA increase

Dear Senators and Representatives,

I was pleased to hear Gov. Parnell declare this the "Education Session" during his State of the State address last month, since education is the most important issue for me as a parent of two young children.

I am absolutely opposed to the use of public funding for private schools, and will not vote for any representative who promotes such legislation. I was disturbed to hear that SJR9 moved another step forward today, and urge you not to pass this bill.

Furthermore, I believe the BSA for public education must be increased immediately. Please do not hold today's children hostage to factors outside of their control: the unfunded retirement liability, spiraling health care costs, and increasing energy costs to name a few.

I hope you support Senator Gardner's proposed legislation that would increase the BSA substantially more than Gov. Parnell's proposal. Senator Gardner's proposal takes into account the losses and cuts that have been felt by Alaskan school districts since 2011. As I am sure you are aware, the Anchorage school district requires a BSA increase of \$251 to avoid this year's cuts alone, and \$400 to make up for the past three years of flat funding. I believe inflation proofing the BSA is another essential component of future legislation.



Please don't let education become a partisan issue; our children are worth too much!

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns.

Most sincerely,

Staci Cox

House District 27/Senate District N

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:**

FW: BSA

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**From:** Bill and Rachel Galbraith [galbraithbrs@gci.net]

**Sent:** Sunday, February 09, 2014 3:23 PM

**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner

**Subject:** BSA

February 9, 2014

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Research supports the need for smaller class size, especially in the lower grades. Why is Governor Parnell insistent in his refusal to support the children of this state? How can our legislators in good conscience support his decisions? I have been told that Governor Parnell does not believe that this issue will be reflected at the voting poles. This thinking appalls me as a mother, teacher, and human being. What could possibly be more important than our children. I do vote and am encouraging other to do likewise. Yesterday, I was talking to a local businessman about the future for his 4 year-old son's education. He was so proud that his son was already learning to read. He was enraged when he learned about Governor Parnell's proposal for giving a mere pittance for his son's educational needs. He is an immigrant from Viet Nam. When I asked if he voted, he said no. He said that he would register and vote for his son. There were eight other American immigrants in that establishment whom I hope will follow this man's lead. I will continue to encourage them to do so.

In order to offer quality education, funds must be forthcoming to finance smaller classes with quality teachers. Don't our children deserve a cost of learning raise. The schools have faced this issue for the last four years resulting in program cuts. These cuts usually come in the areas of the arts where for many students, it is the one area they love and can be successful. Now, the cuts will not only affect the extracurricular but the bare bones of education.

I trust that you will exercise your influence to help others see the plight our education systems face. Thank you for your concern and positive response to this most urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Rachel Galbraith



## Sen. Berta Gardner

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**Subject:**

FW: Pediatrician and Mom Plea for increase BSA in ASD

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**From:** Michelle Laufer [[laufermichelle@gmail.com](mailto:laufermichelle@gmail.com)]

**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 9:30 AM

**To:** Sen. Anna Fairclough; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Peter Micciche; Rep. Alan Austerman; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Benjamin Nageak; Rep. Beth Kerttula; Rep. Bill Stoltze; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Chris Tuck; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. David Guttenberg; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Rep. Kurt Olson; Rep. Lance Pruitt; Rep. Les Gara; Rep. Lindsey Holmes; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Max Gruenberg; Rep. Mia Costello; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Mike Hawker; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Pete Higgins; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Tammie Wilson; Rep. Wes Keller; [sean.parnell@alaska.gov](mailto:sean.parnell@alaska.gov); [Representative.Bill.Stoltze@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Bill.Stoltze@akleg.gov); [Representative.Cathy.Holmes@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Cathy.Holmes@akleg.gov); Rep. Steve Thompson; [Senator.Charlie.Huggin@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Charlie.Huggin@akleg.gov)

**Subject:** Pediatrician and Mom Plea for increase BSA in ASD

I am writing as a pediatrician, mom and concerned citizen requesting you support an increase in the BSA and vote No on a constitutional ammendment authorizing vouchers.

My husband grew up in Anchorage and the ASD schools. We moved here upon completion of our medical training to raise our family and build practices. This move was inspired by the unique opportunities available to us as parents hoping to bring up children connected to the natural world and their community. The quality and diverse educational options in the ASD were a large part of this decision.

I fear for the future of our city. I am afraid we will not attract industry and high quality professionals to a town with struggling public schools and few private school options. If I were reading the paper and considering a move to Anchorage at this point, I would likely make a different choice.

I fear for my children's educational future. I do not know where we will send our oldest, soon to enter middle school. There will be even fewer adults in the building and those who are there will be increasingly stressed by demands of the District, students and administration. This sounds like a set-up for our children to fail. Chugach Optional School has educated our children in ways I never could have dreamed. My children are part of a community where they feel responsible for other children at school and the wider world. In kindergarten, my son brought in an extra pair of gloves for a child who had none. My 10 year old yearns to travel to Malawi where our school sends financial support (through a program started by our incredible school nurse). The custodian high-fives kids on their way into school and knows them by name. Our teachers somehow find a way to make all kids find their "gifts." We can only stretch school staff so far and still expect this level of involvement in children's lives.

Most of all, I fear for my patients. In my work as a pediatrician I see kids daily who rely on their school communities to see the possiblity in the world, to know that there is more than what happens in their often chaotic homes and even for basic human kindness. When I saw a homeless family last month in which all 3 children were infested with scabies, lice and bed bugs picked up at the hotel they were living in, I knew who to call for help. I called their school nurse who sees them daily and helped formulate a plan to be sure they were treated and bathed. She had a stash of fresh clothes for them so they wouldnt have to attend class in an unkempt state.

I fear that the many, many wonderful things that happen in ASD schools each day which do not directly relate to a test score are being at best overlooked and possibly even ignored. It is a reality of our time that schools do

more than educate. As a community we need to own this and fund the employment of people who make the difference in young people's lives.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE take a page out of the elementary school primer and treat others the way you would like to be treated. Please fund the ASD to educate our kids well by increasing the BSA.

Thank you,

Michelle Laufer, MD

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Michelle Laufer, MD

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Raise the BSA

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**From:** Vonice Larsen [vonice.larsen@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:47 AM

**To:** Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Anna Fairclough; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Rep. Alan Austerman; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. Mia Costello; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Lindsey Holmes; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Steve Thompson; Rep. Tammie Wilson; Rep. Les Gara; Rep. David Guttenberg; Rep. Mike Hawker; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux

**Subject:** Raise the BSA

Dear Senators and Representatives,

I have been involved in education for over 30 years. I've watched the dumbing down of our students and the impact funding cuts have on them. We are becoming a nation and state that does not appear to care about the wellbeing of our most precious resource; children.

I'm asking that the BSA for students in public schools be raised. We cannot continue to ignore the facts that socioeconomics impacts a child's future. I have one child left in school he will graduate in 2016. However, I have young nieces and nephews that I am concerned about their educational opportunities when they are old enough to start school. Receiving a superior public education should be the top of the list for this state.

Alaska leads the nation in so many negative things; alcoholism, substance abuse, domestic violence. I believe there would be a significant change in our society if the focus was on education and raising our children so that they know they are important to us. I submit that it isn't oil that is our most valuable resource it is our children.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Vonice Larsen

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Raise the BSA

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**From:** Vonice Larsen [vonice.larsen@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:47 AM

**To:** Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Anna Fairclough; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Rep. Alan Austerman; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. Mia Costello; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Lindsey Holmes; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Steve Thompson; Rep. Tammie Wilson; Rep. Les Gara; Rep. David Guttenberg; Rep. Mike Hawker; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Lora Reinbold; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux

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Alaska leads the nation in so many negative things; alcoholism, substance abuse, domestic violence. I believe there would be a significant change in our society if the focus was on education and raising our children so that they know they are important to us. I submit that it isn't oil that is our most valuable resource it is our children.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Vonice Larsen

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: THANK YOU for preparing a bill that raises the BSA to cover inflation!!

**From:** Alison Arians [<mailto:alisonarians@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 29, 2014 10:25 PM

**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner

**Cc:** 'Valerie Buckendorf'; 'Dawn Williams'; 'Amy Johnson'; 'Jolie Pollet Strohmeier'

**Subject:** THANK YOU for preparing a bill that raises the BSA to cover inflation!!

Dear Senator Gardner,

I'm writing to thank you wholeheartedly for preparing a bill that will raise Alaska's base student allocation (BSA) to cover the costs of inflation, to keep our public schools properly funded.

As I mentioned in my previous email (of January 21st), I am all for increasing the BSA and inflation-proofing it. Of course my main concern is properly funding our public schools. But in addition to proper funding, inflation-proofing the BSA will prevent the thousands of man- and woman-hours every year throughout the state that are spent preparing for all kinds of uncertainties in the budget. Greater certainty in the budget will also help teachers' morale every year, since they won't be constantly wondering if they will be able to keep their positions, or stay in the same schools.

I am a parent of a Rabbit Creek elementary school student, and I have been attending lots of parent meetings. Next week, Rabbit Creek's PTA President, Val Buckendorf, and I are holding three informational meetings for parents, to help get them involved in the fight for our public schools. (See attached document.)

Also, we are planning a meeting (hopefully for February 10th) to bring together all the PTAs in Anchorage, to help spread the word, and to offer our assistance in planning meetings at the individual schools.

Val and I and several other Rabbit Creek PTA members are also planning a Rabbit Creek Parent University for February 25th, which will include presentations by Anchorage School District officials and School Board members. I will also be providing information on how to write letters to legislators.



I just wanted you to know that there is a groundswell of support behind you, and we parents are extremely grateful for the work you are doing on this bill. Please let me know if there is anything specifically I can do to help you in your efforts to support our public schools.

THANK YOU.

Alison Arians

12900 Badger Lane

Anchorage, AK 99516

(907) 677-3712 (h)

(907) 748-3712 (c)

**Are you aware of the Anchorage School District's budget plans for next year?**

**What's all the fuss about, anyway?**

Several Rabbit Creek parents have been attending meetings and gathering information, and we're happy to share what we've learned. Please come and find out how our schools will be affected by the proposed ASD budget for next year.

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We are holding three separate gatherings, to accommodate different schedules.

**Afternoon**

Picking up your child from school? Arrive a bit early, come inside,

and get the scoop just before school dismissal!

Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 2:45 to 3:30pm

in the Rabbit Creek library

**Evening**

Enjoy a piece of pizza while you learn what's happening!

Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 8pm

Uncle Joe's Pizzeria (11700 Old Seward Hwy).

**Morning**

Have a cup of coffee or tea with us right after you drop your child at school!

Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:15 to 10:15am

at SteamDot Coffee (10950 O'Malley Centre, Suite E).

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If you know ahead of time that you plan to attend, please tell us so we can have an idea of how many handouts to prepare. Feel free to contact us with questions! Hope to see you soon!

Alison Arians, Val Buckendorf & Amy Johnson

[alison.arians@gmail.com](mailto:alison.arians@gmail.com) | [buckendorf@gci.net](mailto:buckendorf@gci.net)

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Thank you for your hard work and I am against Vouchers

**From:** Chris and Tina Bernoski [<mailto:ctbernoski@msn.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 04, 2014 7:16 PM  
**To:** Rep. Harriet Drummond; Sen. Berta Gardner; Rep. Les Gara  
**Subject:** Thank you for your hard work and I am against Vouchers

Dear Democrat Legislators,

My name is Tina Bernoski and I wanted to thank you personally for the hard work you have been doing in regards to education and our kids. Although you are not my direct representatives, I trust whole heartedly the decisions that every representative makes effects all Alaskans... on that note I wanted to comment on the hard work you all have put in on behalf of our kids. The actions you have chosen to take, brings me to believe that each of you embodies what all representatives should be.... an advocate for their state and their future; which means our children and their future success.

My kids are 7 years old and I am saddened that they may not have the same great education that I was afforded due to the flat funding in the Anchorage School District. Many teachers and counselors will be laid off, these people have direct impacts in the lives of many and the loss will be long lasting. I know you are working hard to increase the BSA and inflation proof it; which is what Alaska's future needs. I thank you, and I thank you for acknowledging that we do NOT want vouchers in our state. If we truly want to keep "Alaska strong" then we need to mean it and fully fund public education.

I truly appreciate all of you and just wanted you to know that many of us are fighting hard along side you, because we believe our kids are worth it!

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, " a hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer. " Thank you for being there for our kids five minutes longer!

sincerely  
Tina Bernoski

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:**

FW: Base Student Allocation Funding for Alaska Schools

**From:** Danna Grammer [<mailto:danna.grammer@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 05, 2014 1:32 PM

**Subject:** Base Student Allocation Funding for Alaska Schools

Dear Legislatures and Governor,

Thank you for your hard work during this legislative session. As a voter in the State of Alaska and a parent of a child in the Anchorage School District, I'm writing to you today with a concern about how our public schools are being funded, or actually, the lack of funding. Admittedly, the Anchorage School District probably needed to "trim some fat" from their infrastructure and budget, as does most public entities as well as large corporations. However, the continued flat funding for our schools with no inflation proofing is about to impact children in Alaska directly with less teachers, counselors and support staff to help ensure that Alaskan children get the education they deserve--which is the best.

As one of the wealthiest states in the country, it saddens me to hear the statistic that Alaska ranks 47th in the United States of America for the percentage of the state's budget that actually goes to funding our education system. I definitely think the legislature should relook at how the funds are allocated to our public schools. It seems the emphasis has been on capital improvements to schools with very little emphasis on the actual education of our children. Granted, we need to have safe, comfortable schools for our children to be educated in. However, I've seen some of the extreme capital improvements that has been going on in the Anchorage School District, and I feel we need to reallocate a portion of those funds to actually educating our children, especially when we are talking about dismissing teachers and increasing class size and shortening class time. Also, the large percentage of children in Anchorage (I assume the same could be true of other school districts) need school counseling to be successful both now and in the future. Some of these children have no direction and no mentoring from home and by receiving this at school, you give these kids a better opportunity for a brighter future from the kind of life that they have to lead right now.

We cannot continue to short change our public schools, and therefore, short change our children out of the education they deserve. Please search your hearts and do what is right by these children.

Sincerely,

Danna Grammer

1145 I Street

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

907-306-5526

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Education

>  
> -----Original Message-----  
> From: Leah [<mailto:lhdbubber@yahoo.com>]  
> Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 5:26 PM  
> To: Sen. Berta Gardner  
> Subject: Education  
>  
> Senator Gardner,  
>  
> I am writing as a private citizen.  
>  
> I would like to ask you to use your position in the Alaska Legislature to push for increasing the Base Student Allocation so that it at least keeps up with inflation.  
>  
> As you are aware, the Anchorage School District is having to cut 6% of its teaching staff in order to balance its budget, chiefly due to rising health care costs and increases in fuel costs.  
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> These cuts will affect more than first year teachers who have little experience. They will go deeper and affect educators that have developed their expertise over years of work with students as well as professional development, people with Master's degrees and master teachers, the people we want to continue providing high quality educational opportunities for our city's students.  
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> I am so concerned about how all of this will impact Alaskan students and businesses as we go forward.  
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> I am beginning to teach the 7 week civics unit to my history students and I would be remiss if I didn't model in my own life what I teach them: that we, the people, ARE the government and we need to communicate with our legislators about issues that are important to us.  
>  
> Thank you in advance for your efforts on behalf of education.  
>  
> Sincerely,  
> Leah Dubber

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: funding for public schools

**From:** Bob Hadaway [<mailto:hadaway.bob@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Friday, January 24, 2014 12:50 PM

**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner

**Subject:** funding for public schools

Dear Senator Gardner,

As a Fairbanks resident and informed voter I am appalled and outraged over the proposals for educational funding coming from the governor and our legislators in Juneau.

Our state's future success and prosperity lies in having a well educated populace. Misguided attempts at school reform that strip schools of the funding necessary to properly provide education are a recipe for disaster. Worse, ultra conservative agendas that seek to give public money to private schools at the expense of properly funding public schools are abhorrent.

We have great public schools we need to keep them strong. I urge you to stand in opposition to those politicians in our state who refuse to do their duty of helping improve schools through increased funding to public education.

Sincerely,

Bob Hadaway

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Public Schools

**From:** Emily Becker [<mailto:emilyandzeke@yahoo.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2014 10:22 PM

**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner

**Subject:** Public Schools

Sen. Gardner,

I am writing to strongly oppose any efforts to give money to private schools in Alaska. I am opposed to changing the Alaska Constitution for this reason, and I appreciate your efforts on the behalf of public schools. Here is why I am opposing the voucher program.

First, we are facing an estimated \$2 BILLION dollar deficit this year alone. Why you are proposing to give money away in this current fiscal reality is a mystery. Nobody even mentions a price tag, which cannot be good news. We cannot pay for the schools we already have!

Second, school is not a capitalist system that might be improved by competition or "choice." This is because no child can be rejected from public schools. We teach every child that comes. Some of them are difficult to teach, and yet, they will not be turned away.

"Vouchers" would isolate poor and difficult children into apartheid schools. Encouraging people to leave public schools simply makes them worse for the students who remain. Notice that Anchorage already has school choice (charters, optional programs), and it is no accident that the "best" schools also have the lowest rates of economically disadvantaged students. (For example, Chugach Optional: 4% economically disadvantaged while the district rate is 46%) Middle and upper class parents know how to navigate the system, and they can provide transportation. These schools are only "the best" because of who attends them, not because they have a secret formula for success.

What they are proposing will take us back to the days of Plessy v. Ferguson. I support fully-funded, diverse public schools governed by the public and accountable to the public.

Keep fighting.

Sincerely,  
Emily Becker  
2710 E 20<sup>th</sup>  
Anchorage, AK 99508



**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: School Funding Testimony related to: Charter Schools, BSA, and HR 278

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**From:** tanya iden [<mailto:tanyaiden@yahoo.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 12:12 PM  
**To:** Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Harriet Drummond  
**Cc:** Sen. Berta Gardner; 'Tanya Iden'  
**Subject:** School Funding Testimony related to: Charter Schools, BSA, and HR 278

Dear Representatives Gattis and Drummond:

I am a working mother, married to a public school teacher, super voter, educated in the Anchorage School District, and a concerned citizen. I make my home in Spenard (Anchorage) and have one son attending kindergarten at Aquarian Charter School (my daughter is 2 and attends pre-school at Puffin Heights Montessori School.)

While I have a child attending a charter school program, I would like to express my support for funding ALL public schools in our State. I am concerned by proposals being put forward that would possibly reallocate funding to charter schools and away from neighborhood schools. I think all schools need a bigger "piece of the pie" and not just charter schools (I also think we need a bigger pie). I am very happy with Aquarian Charter School, but feel that we should look for solutions that benefit the entirety of our educational system. Much of the data shows, that specialty schools draw a population of families that are more affluent, have the luxury to be more engaged in their children's educational experience, and whose children will have better educational outcomes because of this. I worry that charter schools and other specialty schools become reservoirs of privilege. In fact, if we really support school choice we would offer transportation to students to go to whichever school they want within their school district. I see this as a major barrier to some families who would perhaps like their children to attend a charter school or specialty school (but this is another issue for another time.)

An issue you could tackle with HR 278 is to, at a minimum, raise the BSA to keep up with inflation. If you are interested in being truly visionary and investing in our future leaders, workforce, Alaskans - I would suggest you raise the BSA beyond inflation proofing and really make an investment in Alaska's kids.

I strongly believe that every child in Alaska deserves the opportunity to attend a great, well-funded public school. You can make certain this is a reality by inflation-proofing the BSA!

Thank you in advance for your hard work on this issue. I appreciate your consideration of my views. I would like this e-mail recorded as testimony on HR278.

Kind Regards,  
Tanya Iden  
2303 McRae Rd. Unit #1  
Anchorage, AK 99517  
907-382-8555

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Yes - please add

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**From:** Lo Crawford [<mailto:locraw4d@yahoo.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 06, 2014 8:26 PM  
**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner  
**Subject:** Yes - please add

Sen. Gardner thank you for your support! I have revised the original message a bit since it was originally sent to Bridge Builders.

I am writing this email to elicit your support. As you have read from newspapers and social media or heard from the TV news, ASD is making drastic cuts because of the lack of funding (BSA). One of the areas is in counseling and guidance specifically eliminating ELL (English limited language/English as a Second Language) counselors. These group of professionals work with new to the US citizens and are usually the first contact the families have at a school. Counselors on every level are many things for their students and they wear many hats to complete their jobs: student advocates, voice for students and parents, crisis interventionists, first responders, shoulders to cry on as well as shoulders to lean on, cheerleaders for students, stand-ins for parents, schedulers, career guides who share their expertise regarding the road towards earning a high school diploma and all that entails, sounding boards for our parents, parenting experts, mediators, club sponsors, clearing house for teachers regarding student behaviors and needs, resources for teachers and staff, curriculum experts, classroom teacher, testing coordinators, mentors, 504 coordinators, conveyors of information, etc. - basically the "go to people" at every school. Counselors have also taken on tasks that were associated with the Career Resource Advisors who were cut last year. With the ELL population, the ELL counselor has forged a strong and special bond with students and their families to help them maneuver successfully in this new culture. It would be a disservice to the ELL students and their families to have these positions eliminated. Many of these new to the country families do not know how to access or who to contact regarding these issues that they may not know are happening and impacting them. Counselors again are on the chopping block having to justify their important roles. We are the heart of every school. Please support an increase in the BSA so that these counseling positions remain intact. Please vote against SJR9 that would certainly decrease monies to public education.

Lourdes Linato-Crawford, M.Ed., Ed.S  
ASD counselor, West Anchorage High School

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:**

FW: Education

>  
> -----Original Message-----  
> From: Leah [<mailto:lhdbbber@yahoo.com>]  
> Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2014 5:26 PM  
> To: Sen. Berta Gardner  
> Subject: Education  
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> Thank you in advance for your efforts on behalf of education.  
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> Sincerely,  
> Leah Dubber

## **Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:**

FW: Support Education

**From:** MaryBeth

**Sent:** Saturday, February 01, 2014 7:01 AM

**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner

**Subject:** Support Education

Dear Honorable Representative Gardner:

I am writing to request that you fund public education. Adequately funding education is more important than any other policy issue. Today's children are tomorrow's leaders. Free public education is one of the greatest American institutions and every child deserves an education. Radio storyteller Garrison Keller said the following: "When you wage war on the public schools, you are attacking the mortar that holds the community together. You're not a conservative, you're a vandal."

Please vote against Senate Resolution 9 (SJR 9) that would put an initiative on the November ballot that would change the Alaska Constitution to allow the state to spend public money on private and religious schools. There is separation of church and state in the USA and in Alaska. The Alaska Constitution states: "No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution." I do not want the state's constitution changed.

I live in the highest mill rate area in the city of Anchorage. I absolutely do not want my tax dollars going to support private or religious schools. Churches pay no income tax; why should they receive tax dollars to pay for their schools? Churches should provide a free education to those who want a religious education. Private schools could take funding and disappear in the night like thieves.

In the worst-case scenario, this is what I predict will happen. Public education disappears. Only the rich can send their children to school. But then the government will decide that tax payers again need to subsidize the poor and will expect the tax payers to pay for the education of those who cannot afford private schools. Or those children won't attend school at all, which would lead to more kids roaming the streets and committing crimes, and needed social welfare support. I have observed this situation directly in the private school system in Mexico.

Among ASD teachers, moral is at an all-time low. Why are teachers treated so poorly? I cannot think of another profession where the members are at the whim of others. Every year, teachers cringe, are stressed and worry that they might be displaced. New teachers are already scrambling for jobs because they know they will be cut. That leaves the teachers with years of experience and masters degrees who are the most expensive.

In the 1980's, Alaska used to be the best state for teachers. Now it is one of the worst. Why would anyone want to become a teacher here? What would be the incentive? Low pay, added work load for the same pay, large class sizes, low moral, and annual stress about whether or not a few dollars more might be spent on education.

I have four college degrees, one a masters of fine arts. I am also a middle school teacher. I could teach in college but I prefer to instruct adolescents because I believe that I can make a difference in their lives. Years ago, I taught in a junior high school. The difference between the middle school model and junior high is distinct. Junior high is not student-centered; it is academic centered. Support for adolescent issues was non-

existent. Teaching six classes a day left no time for collaboration between teachers. There were no warm and fuzzy programs like Social Emotional Learning, AVB, and Differentiation. Whatever happened to kids happened.

Middle school is a welcoming, student centered model, where everyone works together to help students make it through the rough adolescent years, to learn that there are consequences to choices, and to achieve academic success. I am an elective teacher and I frequently talk to team teachers to trouble shoot issues with students, and we work together to solve problems.

With the proposed changes to the school day, here are some of the changes that will occur. Think about the impact this will have on the children who are our future and our most important resource. The following is a direct quote from the PTSA at Goldenview Middle School where I teach:

Here are some of the changes that would most likely occur if teachers are asked to teach 25 more students and have half the planning and collaboration time. The public deserves to know of possible changes ahead. We will not be a Middle School anymore (whole student centered). Unfortunately, few noticeable changes will be visible to the public next year. Results of these drastic changes sometimes take three or four years to present their unintended consequences. We may find at that time that the district and state have backed the education of their youth into a seemingly inescapable corner, which will take many years of painful work to reverse.

#### **Changes for students:**

- Higher class sizes
- Lower teacher to student contact time
- Lower individual attention to student needs
- More independent work with less teacher guidance
- Less and slower feedback on performance
- Communication and parent meetings less frequent
- Less time for student interventions, lost in masses
- Student absence follow-up less effective
- Fewer elective choices and higher elective conflicts
- Team projects and collaboration will discontinue
- No field trips or team activities
- Fewer science labs
- Less “fun stuff” (demos, class speakers, etc.)
- Less writing, more book work, more homework, and more whole group instruction
- Teams may only be in common by location, if that is possible
- Feeling of lack of connectedness - SEL drops
- More students will fall through the cracks, less identification of special needs
- More student failures

#### **Changes for Parents:**

- More difficulty in contacting teachers
- Slower feedback in communication
- Less personal teacher-student-parent connection
- Fewer opportunities for teacher meetings
- Lowered availability of counselors
- Lack of ability and flexibility to meet with teams
- No ability to meet with teachers as a team, parents will have to have many individual meetings before or after school
- Less opportunity to participate in school activities (aide/volunteer, chaperone, observe)
- More involvement in planning student academics for the future

#### **Changes for School:**

- More discipline issues - less coverage
- Lowered "family" feel
- Scheduling conflicts and difficulties
- Higher work load with fewer people
- Higher teacher turnover – less experience in district
- Loss of mentor/experienced teachers
- More substitutes
- Aesthetic decline (less classroom care/maintenance/decoration)
- More difficulty in getting extra-curricular sponsors
- Few to no grants or fund raising

**Changes for Community:**

- Higher dropout rate – against 2020 goals
- Lowered student achievement – against district goals
- More community responsibilities in educating our youth
- More community/parent involvement necessary for student success and support
- Lowered faith in public education – against district goals
- Lack of future support for public education
- Increased demand for private education
- Higher teacher burn out

**Changes for Teachers:**

- 20% more work with half the available time (25% more if you are talking about core classes)
- More STRESS
- More preps, some not in qualified disciplines
- More sick days
- Lower morale
- Teachers do not feel the district supports or values them
- Less teacher collaboration

The school district and school board should be obligated to inform the public of the actual changes that will take place due to the current fiscal situation. To not inform the public of these changes reinforces the notion that this district is opaque in its handling of fiscal and policy matters.

Why is education not prioritized? It should be. The State of Alaska has a lot of money, but chooses to throw it away on other 'more important' expenditures. Imagine this: What if schools were fully funded and the military had to have bake sales to buy weapons? This is such a skewed priority system. What if an education fund similar to the permanent dividend fund was established? Then the yearly begging for dollars would not happen.

To quote Lars Danner, whose *Guest Opinion* was published in the Anchorage Press: "A quality public education is important to attract well-educated, skilled workers to live in Anchorage and the rest of the state. We need to build a city where people want to live. Education is the key to personal success and to Alaska's continued economic development. Educated workers are critical to staffing oil fields, banks, and other local businesses. Education reduces poverty and crime while increasing health, life-span, and civic participation. Good education spending is not about building new facilities—it is about keeping good teachers in the classrooms—teachers who can motivate and inspire their students."

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

MaryBeth



**Sen. Berta Gardner**

---

**Subject:**

FW: Education Today

From: Lantz\_Lydia  
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2014 11:02 AM  
To: Sen. Berta Gardner  
Subject: Education Today

Dear Berta Gardner,

A year ago I received a letter from you about an editorial I wrote in ADN about why education is important to everyone in the state. I appreciate your enthusiasm for what was said. Unfortunately things haven't changed and our public schools are once again facing the massive budget cuts that are destroying our chance to make a difference in Title I schools.

As a high school teacher it is easy to see why I have a vested interest in education because of what I see and do on a daily basis. As a future parent I continue to worry about the quality of education my son will have, but it's as a citizen of Anchorage and the state of Alaska that causes this issue to hit me the hardest.

We are not just graduating students from a system; we are creating the future employees and employers in all facets of the job market. They will not only clean, cook our food, build our roads, but they could one day be our future bosses. Ask yourself, how educated do you want your employees, coworkers and bosses to be?

These kids are going to make important decisions for us as voters, legislators and politicians. How educated do we want our general population to be?

The rates of violent crimes being committed have recently gone up in Anchorage and according to Forbes Magazine, with 813 violent crimes per 100,000 residents this city now ranks number 10 on their "America's Most Dangerous Cities List." It is no surprise that dropouts and poorly educated individuals are specifically linked as the perpetrators of these kinds of crimes. Yet the state refuses to focus its attention on education and we are forced to continually make cuts due to flat funding. The money spent on corrections goes far beyond the millions when you take into account the money pumped into prisons, the police, medical facilities, courts, property insurance; not to mention the value of human lives. If we can keep counselors in our Title 1 elementary schools working with children on their social emotional learning and counselors in the high school who can keep at risk kids in school and off the streets, we have a shot at changing this city. Schools don't just teach math, science, reading and writing; we teach many kids how to interact with each other. On a regular basis we teach the skills that can keep these kids employed, out of jail and on their way to becoming contributing members of society.

The kids who need our help the most are not going to benefit from vouchers to private schools, the blanket masses of these students will gain their knowledge from public education. Our future cannot afford another cut due to flat funding. Please increase the BSA and give Alaskans a chance.

Thank you for your support of education, Lydia Lantz



**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:** FW: Public school funding - raise the BSA and stop the teacher cuts

**From:** Rebecca Bernard [<mailto:rbernard.ak@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 28, 2014 12:16 PM

**To:** Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Mike Dunleavy; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Berta Gardner

**Subject:** Public school funding - raise the BSA and stop the teacher cuts

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am a parent of a second-grader in the Anchorage School District. I am writing to urge you to give our wonderful Alaska public schools the funds they need to keep up with inflation and rising costs and avoid making cuts to teacher, counselors and other important resources at the schools. **Please increase the base student allocation by a meaningful amount that will prevent the threatened cuts to school district budgets around the state.** The BSA increases proposed by Governor Parnell in his education bill (HB 278 and SB 139) are far too small and will neither avert the proposed cuts nor stop public school funding from continuing to fall behind inflation and rising costs. My family is very happy with our son's school experience so far, but we are very aware that teacher cuts will lead to larger classes and a worse teacher to student ratio; this will result in teachers having to spend more time on classroom management and student behavior, at the expense of learning and the quality of students' experience. You can prevent this deterioration in the quality of our public schools by giving a meaningful boost to the BSA and adequately funding the schools.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Bernard

1210 St.  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
[907-244-3988](tel:907-244-3988)

[rbernard.ak@gmail.com](mailto:rbernard.ak@gmail.com)

**Sen. Berta Gardner**

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**Subject:**

FW: BSA

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**From:** Justin and Nicole Farr [<mailto:prox13@hotmail.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2014 12:58 PM

**To:** Sen. Berta Gardner

**Subject:** BSA

Senator Gardner -

I want to thank you for proposing a real solution to the BSA. Your increase of \$404 to the BSA is fantastic! Automatically increasing the BSA each year for inflation is just what is needed. Our children and their education is key to our future.

Nicole Farr