

April 18, 2014

Sent Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Pete Kelly
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The Honorable Kevin Myer
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The Honorable Anna Fairclough
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The Honorable Lyman Hoffman
Member, Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
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Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov

Re: House Bill 278, Education; Base Student Allocations for Fiscal Years 2015–2017

Dear Co-Chairs Kelly and Meyer and Senate Finance Committee Members:

On behalf of the ANCSA Regional Association (the Association), we submit this letter in support of increasing the base student allocation (BSA) for fiscal years (FY) 2015–2017.

By way of background, the ANCSA Regional Association represents the Chief Executive Officers of the 12 land-based regional Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs), as well as the President of the Alaska Federation

of Natives. Our Corporations are owned by over 100,000 Alaska Native people and were formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, 43 U.S.C. 1601, et. seq. (ANCSA). Our mission is to collaborate in the creation of a sustainable socioeconomic future for Alaska Native People.

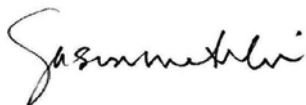
Our schools are at a crisis point. Teaching staff have been cut to a minimum and rural schools who are also battling crippling energy costs are struggling to balance their budgets. We will not be able to address all of our educational concerns during this legislative session; however, the Association believes increasing the BSA formula is a productive and positive step that we can take now as we plan our future. The Association *supports increasing the BSA by \$400 in FY2015, an additional \$125 in FY2016, and \$125 again in FY 2017*. We also recommend including an inflation calculation mechanism added for FY 2018 and beyond to automatically increase the BSA without additional legislative action.

The base student allocation amount has not been raised since 2011. A \$400 increase this coming fiscal year will raise school funding enough to offset the inflation that has occurred over the last three years and will enable schools to retain its current teacher levels and potentially hire back some of the positions eliminated since 2011. The additional \$125 increases sought for FY 2016 and FY 2017 represent 2% increases which will offset inflation and provide a measure of stability to school district funding.

Teaching staff have been cut to a minimum across the state and without a meaningful increase in the BSA, in-classroom positions, such as teachers, counselors, and nurses, will continue to be cut – this is unacceptable. Our children, our schools deserve our best. The surest way to support the long-term economic sustainability of Alaska is make the investment in our children and schools that will pay off in the greatest gains - productive, educated and competitive citizenry and workforce.

The Association urges the Senate Finance Committee to fund the BSA in the manner that proves our children are vital to success of our state. If you have any questions or comments about this letter, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,
ANCSA REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Metrokin", written in a cursive style.

Jason Metrokin
Chair

cc: ANCSA Regional Association Board of Directors