

My name is Andi Story. I am a Juneau school board member and testifying on behalf of our Board today.

Thank you for your support of education. I've heard some of you say there is nothing more important than helping kids. Like all states, one of the biggest responsibilities and expenditures in our budget is the necessary funding of our children's education. It's been said, how well we educate our children today will be reflected in the quality of our work force tomorrow. The public repeatedly prioritizes education as a highest value.

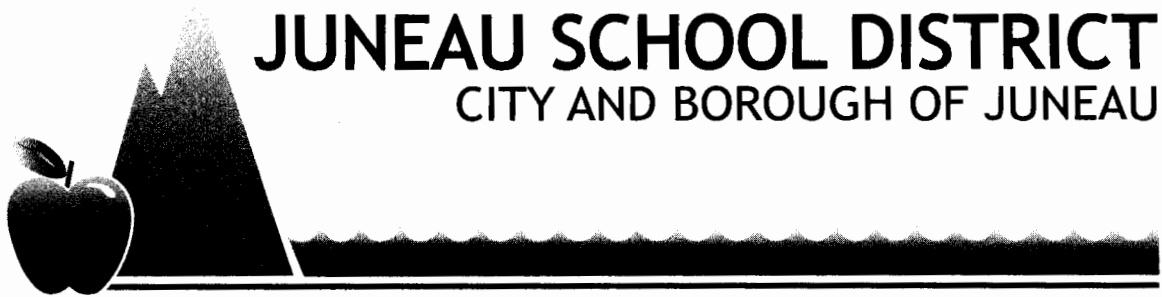
We ask this committee to prioritize, full funding of the Base Student allocation and the scheduled adjustment of \$50 dollars. This amount of funding is critical to keep class sizes reasonable and keep supports for helping children make academic gains. We have a wide variety of children's learning needs to meet. We've made efficiencies by cutting student and staff travel, supplies, consolidating positions & professional development. In the past five years our district has cut 95 positions and is facing further reductions. It's been extremely difficult.

Our Board understands that the state is facing tough financial times. That's why we urge the adoption of a comprehensive state fiscal plan, this year, that maintains services necessary for a strong economy. And make it possible for the Legislature, School Boards and staff to focus strategically, having a sustainable budget to work from.

Our school board relates to your positions, as you work on the budget and make agonizing choices about what effective programs to cut. You are fortunate that unlike our School Board, your Body has the authority to examine fiscal options and implement a state fiscal plan.

It is important to note, that the States that are seeing the most academic gains, have strong early learning programs, make Kindergarten thru 12th grade investments, with an emphasis on Career Technical programs that offer dual credit with Universities.

School Board members are working countless hours to continue improving the education of our children. Thank you for your dedication to ALL the children and youth of this state.



10014 Crazy Horse Drive • Juneau, Alaska 99801-8529 • (907) 523-1700

Board of Education 2015-2016 Legislative Priorities

As a member of the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), we take part in adopting AASB Resolutions¹ and advocate for the following priority resolutions.

2.1 Sustained, Reliable and Adequate State Fiscal Plan

The sustainability, reliability and adequacy of Alaska's funding for public education are of highest concern to the Association of Alaska School Boards. AASB urges the Legislature to develop a state fiscal plan. This fiscal plan would provide a long-term approach to funding the costs of public education and other services upon which Alaska's students and their families depend. The plan should be strategic, sustainable and realistic, providing a framework for balancing budgets while adequately funding public education.

This plan will create a stable economy for families, businesses, government and investors.

2.2 Urging Adequate, Equitable and Predictable Funding of Public Education

AASB urges the State of Alaska to provide adequate, equitable, and predictable funding of public education. AASB believes that adequate funding should include the following:

- State funding of the TRS-PERS retirement liability;
- An increase to the Base Student Allocation to account for both inflation and adequate pre-K through 12th grade education;
- Recognition of the need to keep pupil-teacher ratios to a level in line with research-based best practices;
- Career and technical education.

The scheduled \$50 dollar BSA increase (HB 278) is a total \$12 million investment to children and youth statewide. This is a commitment to their education which is of high value to Alaskans. **The Juneau School District is facing a shortfall for FY 17 and has cut \$10.7 million in services and 96 positions from FY 2011 – 16².**

2.6 Funding for Early Learning Programs in Alaska

AASB supports legislation to add additional funding for the planning and programming of voluntary early learning and family support programs.

Alaska is at the bottom of the fifty states in preparing preschoolers for the skills needed in kindergarten. High state standards are set in math, reading and writing standards for children age 5 through 7. Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, quality preschool programs and Headstart save state revenues over time.

2.22 Provide Reliable and Efficient Service by the Alaska Marine Highway System

School districts in Southeast Alaska and Southcentral Alaska depend on ferry access to provide transportation to and from other communities for academic and athletic activities. **Activities keep youth involved in education and build physical, team and leadership skills.** The lack of frequent and dependable ferry schedules makes it difficult to schedule affordable trips.

¹ AASB Resolutions – *Where We Stand*

² JSD Cumulative Budget Reductions – Operating Fund

Board of Education Members:

Brian Holst, President; Andi Story, Vice President; Lisa Worl, Clerk

Josh Keaton, Emil Mackey, Sean O'Brien, Barbara Thurston

Email the Board at: schoolboard@juneauschools.org