

Madam Chair, members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Dr. Bridget Weiss, and I am the superintendent of the Juneau School District and President Elect of the Alaska Superintendents Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am here in support of HB 272 and inflation proofing the base student allocation for public education.

In the Juneau School district, the effects of inflation have been felt as we prepare our budget each year, and with 7.2 percent CPI increase in Alaska in the last year, public schools are left to make tough decisions again as we prepare our budgets for the next fiscal year without the success of this bill.

Over the last five years, public education has received flat funding while the fixed costs of running our schools have seen significant increases which results in a decline of funding.

In 2017 the price of Water, Sewer and telephone services for the Juneau School District was \$396,148, for FY 22 \$464,200, an increase of 17%.

The cost of electricity and heating oil in 2017 was \$1,258,439. In FY 2022, \$1,527,200, an increase of 21%.

Property, liability, auto and cyber insurance premiums for the school district in 2017 were \$606,588. In 2022, \$995,600, an increase of 64%. Our projected cost for FY 2023 is \$1,545,000. This is a 155% increase since 2017 and a 55% cost increase over the last year.

The current budget proposal for education funding does not account for inflation, which is a budget cut, knowing the cost of basic services continue to rise.

We have made adjustments...we have lost counselor positions, nurse positions, instructional coach positions, administrator positions, etc.

My school district will be expected to find the funds to pay for the increased cost of insurance, utilities, and supplies while ensuring our staff have a living wage—all of this on the same funding we've received since 2017.

We have been doing more with less for years, seeing inflation continue to rise while funding for education remains flat, with a decreasing value. We are hurting Alaska's students and our states' future leaders by not fully funding public education or accounting for inflation in the state's education budget.

I am a product of the Juneau School District. I am now leading our very important work. I am doing that in large part because of the learning opportunities and high quality educators I experienced in this district. Please help us keep delivering a robust education for our future leaders.

Thank you for your consideration.