

**From:** [Wendy Demers](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2022 1:01:13 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Wendy Demers. I am a parent of two school-aged children in Fairbanks, Alaska. I am also a teacher in FNSBSD for the past 21 years. The BSA has been stagnant for as long as I can remember. There have been some additional funds that have been given from year to year, but this isn't allowing districts to plan ahead from one year to the next.

Our students, teachers, and families are all struggling through a very challenging time in public education. These children are the future workforce of Alaska. If we don't put the money necessary to provide a wide range of opportunities for them, they will not be prepared to be contributing members of our society. If you don't make education funding a priority, more and more families will choose alternative programs outside of public school education. This will continue to create an inequitable learning opportunity for those families who cannot afford to stay at home to educate their children.

By changing the funding formula for the BSA, you would allow this funding to increase as inflation increases, which allows districts to maintain high standards for all public school students. As inflation increases and the BSA stays stagnant, we continue to see classroom sizes increase, and course options decrease. Ask yourself, what kind of education would you want for your child, and then do that for ours!

Thank You,  
Wendy Demers

**From:** [brian.holst@juneauschools.org](mailto:brian.holst@juneauschools.org)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB272 and HB273  
**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2022 2:43:07 PM

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## **House Bill(s) No. 272 & 273, State of Alaska, Thirty-Second Legislature, Second Session**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Brian Holst, Director of the Juneau Economic Development Council and member of the Juneau Board of Education since 2014.

### **The top Legislative Priority of the Juneau Board of Education is: Early, adequate, equitable, and predictable funding of public education (AASB 2.2)**

- From 2011 to 2021, the CPI-U for Alaska rose 17.8%.
- National inflation rose 20.5% (cumulatively), according to the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- In that same period, the Statewide BSA increased only 4.4%, from \$5,680 in 2011 to \$5,930 in 2021.
  
- And since 2011, Juneau schools have reduced 100 positions, and experienced well over \$10 million in cuts.
- Yes, we have experienced some reductions in enrollment, but not near the rate of losing staff.
- We also spend more on health care, though we have fewer employees, as those costs keep rising.

### **Throughout Alaska, schools struggle to recruit and retain teachers. And employers struggle to find the talent they need for the workplace.**

We all are aware, that the education outcomes across Alaska are generally disappointing.

Despite cuts, we have seen improvements in graduation rates in Juneau over the last ten years, primarily by being more successful in supporting minority and low-income students. At the same time, we continue to see too many kids struggle to read and do well in Math and Science.

### **Our state does not have enough workers with college degrees or workforce credentials to meet the demands of the Alaska economy. This means that often better-paying jobs are not taken by Alaskans or Alaskan companies simply cannot find workers!**

If we want a different outcome, we need the State of Alaska to make a much stronger investment in education.

### **The proposed increases in HB272 are steps in the right direction but do not adequately compensate for inflation since 2011 or even 2017. We would need a BSA next year between \$6,400 and \$6,900 to get us back on par.**

### **HB 273, which would allow the BSA to keep up with inflation in the future, will give school districts and communities the ability to build and deliver the education Alaskan families and businesses need and our kids deserve.**

Thank you for your service and for being **accountable** to Alaskans that expect more from our schools. Both of these Bills are needed to strengthen Alaska's economic outlook.

Brian Holst

**From:** [Shannon Dryden](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony, BSA Bills HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2022 1:51:23 PM

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As a parent of three children enrolled in Alaska's public school system I wanted to take a moment to ask for consideration of support for Base Student Allocation Bills HB 272 and HB 273. I believe that these Bills are essential financial support for Alaska's public schools and here are just a few reasons:

Equitable funding for all initiatives, laws, and mandates - in just the past 2 years drastic and rapid inflation alone has impeded our district's ability to fund student experiences and services. My children's school, Haines Borough School District, is on the road system but is extremely limited to access due to the Canadian border. Unreliable ferry services as well as health mandates, and time requirements have all added to spending.

Recruitment and retention of quality educators - without a reliable resolution to rising costs, concessions will be forced, inadequate services will lead to stress for both students and their teachers. Burnout and behavioral issues could lead to retention issues, high turnover. I feel it is important to note, these are not just jobs lost, these are relationships and mentors lost for our upcoming generations.

Many may consider COVID relief and funding to accommodate some of these shortcomings. COVID has taken so much from all of us, our education system did not escape this. Time away due to shutdowns, illness, impeded progress, all have led to educational deficiencies. COVID relief can not be expected to fill a gap that has been growing since 2017, the last time BSA saw an increase. 5 years of stagnant funding can not be pulled from other funding that already serves a very important purpose.

Please support HB 272 and HB 273. These bills are necessary to continue quality and equitable education. Support for these bills will allow for continued success for communities like Haines. Without further restructuring for the funding of public education, I as a parent worry for the stability of Alaska. Will families be forced to look for opportunities for their children elsewhere?

Thank you,

Shannon Dryden  
Parent and School Board Member  
Haines Borough School District

**From:** [Katherine Mullin](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** written testimony in support of HB 272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2022 1:01:43 PM

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Thank you for your time and your service. I am writing today to express my support of House Bill 272 and House Bill 273. An increase to the base student allocation is long overdue. When the BSA does not increase, it is our students, the future leaders of our state, who suffer the most. Funds which should be directed towards enriched and targeted instruction for our students are instead needed to offset the increasing costs of maintaining and heating the buildings in which that learning takes place. As the cost of doing business in Alaska rises, the BSA needs to rise as well to offset those costs or it will be our children who end up paying with a lower quality education. That is something that none of us can afford.

Thank you,  
Kate Mullin  
7<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher  
Sitka, Alaska

**From:** [heather anne](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Base student allocation - writing in support of HB 272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Thursday, February 10, 2022 9:51:49 AM

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Hello,

My name is Heather Coletti and I live in Fairbanks (99708). I have two children in the Fairbanks school district. I am writing in support of HB 272 and HB 273. The lack of funding and instability of funding for our schools is a detriment to all. Fairbanks just had to go through a painful reduction that will impact communities for decades to come. I find it disheartening, discouraging and disappointing that we (AK) continue to fail to support to our schools, educators, staff and kids.

I support these bills, our kids, our communities and I expect our legislature to support these bills as well.

Thank you,  
Heather Coletti

**From:** [Drew Larson](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** BSA Bill  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 10:10:43 AM

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Dear members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Drew Larson and I am in my third year of teaching music at Blatchley Middle School in Sitka, AK. I'm writing to voice my support for both HB273 and HB272. As my district looks at how to budget around rising costs due to inflation, rate increases, and general upkeep of buildings, our funds get stretched further every year. A stagnant BSA means our district is further behind each year. The BSA is the single largest tool that will help our district address its budget deficit, and a sustainable path to keeping BSA's on track with inflation will be the best bet to help keep salaries competitive for staff. This will help ensure more consistency in our buildings for students, who are the real benefactor from funding that keeps up with price indexes.

Thank you,  
Drew Larson

**From:** [Alison Perea](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Sarah Vance](#)  
**Subject:** BSA  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 11:16:39 AM

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I am writing in support of the BSA and our Alaska Schools. As a retired public school teacher I know the significance of having the funds available to educate and support all of Alaskan youth. Please continue to do what is in the best interest of an educated population for the future of our state.

Our public schools are a vital component that powers all Alaskan communities (think about the profound disruption to daily life in 2020 with their closures during the pandemic), and they need predictable funding that keeps up with the costs of doing business in Alaska. HB 272 and 273 are part of the solution.

Thank you  
Alison Perea

**From:** [Bellamy, Margo](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 & HB273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 6:29:46 PM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-nwdi0dpz.png](#)

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Dear Representatives,

The economic impacts of COVID-19 continue to challenge our community. Inflation, the Base Student Allocation (BSA), and the forecasted budget deficit are three key fiscal concerns facing the Anchorage School District (ASD) for the 2022–23 budget. The Anchorage School Board and the District remain committed to working with our state and local partners to responsibly fund education and maintain smaller class sizes.

As inflation hits home in our personal finances, it also hits home for ASD. While costs continue to rise, the lack of inflationary adjustments has caused the BSA to remain stagnant for the last five years. Much has been discussed about the decline in student enrollment and the BSA. We know that declining enrollment is not unique to ASD and is reflective of the declining population in Anchorage. The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) forecasted that the population in Anchorage has declined by 14,000 people in 2021 alone. This presents real challenges for workforce supply, services and ASD enrollment. The BSA must be adjusted for inflation. If not, the forecasted \$67 million plus budget deficit could have real time impacts as early as 2024. Relying on federal funding is not an option and not fiscally responsible.

Our commitment continues to the Board's Goals and Guardrails as well as the District's legislative priorities to best reflect the community's vision and values. We are grateful for the steadfast support ASD receives as we navigate these uncertain times.

The success of our students helps build a better, stronger community.

In Service,

Margo Bellamy, President  
Anchorage School Board

Dena'inaq ełnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu. (Dena'ina)

I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina. (English)



**Anchorage School District**  
*Educating All Students for Success in Life*

**From:** [Jimmy Love](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 3:41:30 PM

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Good afternoon,

[Thank you](#) for providing the opportunity to speak out in favor of HB 272 and HB 273. Education funding, specifically the BSA, has been status quo since 2017. This is unacceptable considering all other costs associated with education have increased during this time. School districts across the state are being forced to do more with less. I feel that these bills are a start to helping solve some of the financial issues districts are facing now and into the future if action is not taken.

Thank you,

Jimmy Love

**From:** [Joclyn Reilly](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Laddie Shaw](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 7:13:27 AM

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I am a mom of three children in the Anchorage School District, and we love our public schools! Education is the most important part of their childhood. Fully funded schools, well-paid staff and teachers are critical for my kids' education, development, and lives.

Please support these bills. Thank you,

Joclyn Reilly

 Anchorage, AK 99516

**From:** [Kelly Buxton](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 3:47:21 PM

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***Hello Education Committee members and Representative Kreiss-Tompkins,***

Our public schools are a vital component that powers all Alaskan communities (think about the profound disruption to daily life in 2020 with their closures during the pandemic), and they need predictable funding that keeps up with the costs of doing business in Alaska. HB 272 and 273 are part of the solution.

In my community of Sitka, We have lost classroom teachers and gained more support staff. Sitka has seen a very high rate of teacher turnover in the last 5 years due to the poor retirement package for Alaskan teachers and the flat funding of our students.

Please let these bills pass to ensure an equitable, effective education for all of Alaskan students.

Thank You,  
*Kelly Buxton M.Ed.*  
*Elementary Science, STEAM and Gifted Educator*  
*Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary*  
*Sitka AK*

**From:** [Rebecca Bernard](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [representative.zach.fields@akleg.gov](mailto:representative.zach.fields@akleg.gov)  
**Subject:** HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 4:05:53 PM

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Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for considering and taking testimony on HB 272 and 273. These are important bills for our children and therefore for our state's future. Alaska's public schools have long struggled with year to year uncertainty about funding levels and with a mostly flat Base Student Allocation that has not kept up with inflation. As a parent of a tenth grader and a sixth grader who have attended public school since kindergarten, I have seen some of the resulting program and staff cuts, as well as teacher turnover, and how these have reduced the ability of schools to meet students' needs.

By boosting the BSA over the next two years and inflation proofing it beginning in 2024, these two bills would provide much needed stability and certainty in funding and ensure that funding does not continue to fall behind rising costs. I urge the committee to pass these bills.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,  
Rebecca Bernard

  
Anchorage, AK 

**From:** [Emily Youcha](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#); [Rep. Grier Hopkins](#); [Sen. Robert Myers](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 2:38:53 PM

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I am writing to express my support for increasing the base student allocation (HB 272 and HB273), which has not been increased for years. Please increase funding for Alaska children's education or we will have a severely under-educated population of this generation. Our schools across the nation are currently in severe financial trouble - attributed to declined enrollment during the pandemic and losing funding due to low enrollment numbers. Parents continue to homeschool due to pandemic fears and the federal related pandemic funds have been used up. It is likely that school enrollment may increase in the future as the pandemic eases. However, this enrollment shortfall is now causing major budget issues at all school districts. 3 elementary schools will close in Fairbanks, as well as large numbers of teacher cuts. The school board is threatening to close more schools next year. The budget shortfall is that huge.

The quality of our Alaska children's education has been negatively affected by the pandemic. Due to "learning losses" associated with the pandemic, many students need additional educational support after 1) being out of school for lengthy periods (sickness, quarantines, year of remote school) and 2) inadequate remote learning / online teaching methods for a year or more. The schools cannot afford to provide additional educational support for these children, they simply don't have the money to decrease class sizes by adding additional teachers and teaching assistants that are necessary to improve educational outcomes.

I am a parent of a 2nd grader who has had to spend nearly half of her school career in remote learning (which was entirely inadequate despite the teacher's best efforts). The current state of public education seems very dire. She came back to a full 2nd grade classroom with nearly 30 students in her class - most other classes in her grade level were also full (the school could not afford to hire another teacher to bring class sizes down). Students are at highly variable educational levels due to inconsistent/inadequate remote education and pandemic issues affecting families. My child's 2nd grade teacher said it was the largest class size she had ever had. They should be decreasing class sizes after the pandemic, not increasing class sizes, so that students can have more one-on-one instruction and additional help from their teachers!

Please increase funding to public education to improve the quality of education for Alaskan children. Most people do not want and cannot afford to send their kids to private school and the vast majority of parents do not want to or cannot homeschool. One thing we do want is for our children to be well-educated at their public schools, and right now, that can't happen due to the school's budget crisis.

Thank you for listening to my comment.

Sincerely,

Emily Youcha, parent

[REDACTED]  
Fairbanks, [REDACTED]

**From:** [Heather Ridgway](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Sara Hannan](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 12:04:17 AM

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If HB 272 and HB 273 builds confidence in students, parents, and teachers by investing more securely in our students' Alaskan futures, I support these bills.

Prone to social anxiety and depression, I didn't much like school, and often begged to stay home "sick."

But my parents were firm, my teachers, administrators and counselors in-tune with me, and supportive - All this confirmed in me, as a student of the Anchorage School District, I was the recipient of a quality service; To shirk participation would be a waste only I would regret and be at a loss for. As a student in the Anchorage School District from 1976 - 1985, I grew up proud to know Alaska cared about it's youth and what they might offer Alaska's future. The Anchorage Times AND the Daily News boasted Alaska attracted and screened for excellent teachers with excellent pupil:teacher ratios, exceptional teacher salaries & retirement benefits, and advanced, experimental programs, compared to most states in the Union. My recollections are supported by this Feb. 14, 1984, UPI Archive quote: "The AFT report found that in 1982-83 the average teacher salary was 86 percent of the U.S. median family income, down from 93 percent in 1971-72... Alaska, where the cost of living is one-third higher than the average for the rest of the country, has the highest average teacher salary, \$35,297." This common belief in the WORTH of my education, coaxed me back to school each morning, until, finally, I had a diploma!

Casting about as a high school graduate, wondering where to invest my potential, I worked as a Biologists' Assistant in Mississippi one winter. I heard so many horrible things about Mississippi schools in 1986 - the deterioration of facilities, lack of supplies, hopeless of students and teachers - I realized much of my own confidence and resilience came directly from my quality public education. I was inspired to "Pay it Forward" and immediately returned to Alaska to enroll in the Education Program at UAA.

As a new teacher(mid 1990s) seeking how to make the most constructive difference with my career, I felt encouraged and powerful as I sought constructive application of my BA of Ed. As I settled into my own high school classroom (2000), I became aware of more griping and grumbling from my teaching peers, and a fresh lack of confidence in student's and parents. I assumed it was my broadening experience showing me the other side of things I couldn't see before. I worked harder to maintain my sense of career satisfaction and to learn from the "failures" complained about. As I strove to hold high standards and accountability, while assuming the benefit of the doubt in others, I began to feel I was standing alone on a crumbling island. The Secondary Art Program I entered in 2008 served a student population of just over 2000, with more than 4 Certified Art Teachers offering 10 schedule-periods of Visual Art per semester at both high-schools. By 2015, we were down to 1 certified Visual Art teacher at each school, offering fewer than 8 schedule-periods. After 12 years, I felt I was alone, trying to do the job of 3 teachers in less than 4 periods a day.

Never one to put a price on things, I began to wonder if perhaps all this noise about contracts, benefits, and pay is important - Maybe heart alone isn't enough to sustain quality education, even in such a beautiful, heart-rich small town. This US Dept of Ed, NCES (2021) excerpt could support a correlation between the loss of wind in my sails, and the loss of fiscal support

for Alaska's public schools and teachers:

"In terms of constant 2018–19 dollars,<sup>4</sup> - the average salary for full-time public school teachers was lower in 2017–18 than in 1999–2000 (\$59,100 vs. \$59,700) but not measurably different in 2017–18 than in 2011–12 (\$59,000)."

I realize I am only one person, with one limited perspective - I'm not even positive my numbers are recalled correctly - but, my 23 years of personal experience with Alaska's public schools, as both a student and a teacher, seem to demand a more reliable system for fiscally sustaining quality, free, public education. The sense of common support for strong investment in the fundamental American Value of QUALITY Free Public Education for all, kept me striving for personal success in Education, as a recipient, and a facilitator.

Please consider this perspective as you consider HB 272 & HB 273. Our students, parents, and teachers need our support to succeed.

Thank you,  
Heather Ridgway

**From:** [Tracy Wirak](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2022 9:41:35 AM

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Base Student Allocation Bills HB 272 and HB 273 are essential to the success of students, staff, schools, communities, and our state.

At the Haines Borough School District, we know how important it is to have reliable, predictable, and generous funding that addresses the rising costs of educating our students. The BSA has not been funded to keep up with inflation which essentially reduces funding year after year. Receiving appropriated funding in a timely fashion assists with staff retention and allows for a responsible and well-planned budgeting process that supports the best interests of our students.

The BSA has not increased since 2017 and that makes it very difficult to afford things like maintenance equipment, shipping costs for essential school supplies, travel for student activities, heating fuel for our school, and food for our lunch program. The prices of all of these have increased significantly and yet we are still asked to work with the same BSA and that is extremely challenging and forces schools to make difficult and unfair decisions about budget cuts.

The students are our future and providing them with the best possible education is our responsibility and in order to do that we need funding that addresses the rising costs of educating our students.

Please support HB 272 and HB 273.

Thank you,

Theresa Wirak  
Haines Borough School District  
School Board Member

Thank you Madam Chair, for the record: My name is Cory Hughes, calling in From Nunapitchuk Alaska in the Lower Kuskokwim School District. I am speaking today in support of HB272.

Increasing the Base Student Allowance is a necessity for all schools throughout our great state. It is especially important for our rural schools- many of which have no local borough or municipality to support their operations. Rural schools rely on state funding. In the five years since the BSA increased, our cost of doing business has soared as prices increase. In my own school, we have seen an increase in price in every single supply our school provides; from pencils to maintenance costs, our school simply cannot summit the mountain of increased financial burden.

I have personally felt the impact that a lack of funding brings to a school. Our school is down 2 full time educators, and multiple classroom aides- resulting in a drastic increase in class sizes. We have direct evidence through research proving that increased class sizes are not conducive to creating the best educational environment for every student. Is this not ultimately our goal? To create the best educational environment for every student, pushing each child to reach success- whatever that may look for them, individually.

An increase in the BSA would allow for schools to provide after-school activities. Many parts of our great state are incredibly rural- where school busses are simply not an option. In our rural communities simple activities such as: sports travel, STEM camps, Art competitions, CTE opportunities all rely on school funding to transport students via plane, boat, or snowmachine. Vehicle parts, and maintenance materials have not been left out of the soaring prices from inflation. Each year, simple tasks such as changing the oil on a schools' snowmachine cost more and more. This leads to a vicious and cyclical cycle where routine maintenance is foregone, leading to much more expensive mechanical failures. Which in turn lead to our students not being able to participate in these after-school activities.

Often these extracurricular opportunities are what we can use to pull at-risk students into the school. Students that may have not bothered to give their best effort in school can often be coaxed into bettering themselves academically, due to the opportunity it provides them to attend these activities. I have watched students within my own high school classroom "come to school for basketball" and end up the valedictorian by their senior year. This sort of transformation and growth of our

youth would not be possible without giving them opportunities that they are interested in.

It is due to these reasons, and many more that I cannot go into with such limited time, that I implore you to move HB272, stand up for the students of Alaska. Our students deserve more, so that they can do the fantastic things that we know they are capable of.

Thank you,

Cory Hughes

6-12 Social Studies Teacher

Dean of Students, Anna Tobeluk Memorial School

Nunapitchuk, Alaska

**From:** [Diane Gubatayao](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 272 HLB 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 8:38:02 AM

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Dear Honorable House Education Committee members,

As a school board member, as a community member, as a citizen of Alaska, I fully support HB 272 and HB 273. Any bill that addresses the need for an increase in the BSA is vital to education not only in Ketchikan but every district in Alaska.

We have had artificial respite with special COVID funds for two years, but that cannot sustain us. There are serious threats to basic quality education due to BSA flat funding and high inflation. It is your responsibility to make the necessary changes to rectify this situation.. We look to you for leadership.

Please support HB 272 and HB 273.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Diane Gubatayao, KGBSD School Board member



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

**From:** [Amber](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** HB 273 & HB 272  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 2:20:38 PM

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Dear House Education Committee,

I am emailing in support of HB 273 & HB272. I believe this bill will address the rising costs of Juneau School District (JSD) operational costs, such as health insurance, maintenance, utilities, and transportation. At this moment, our schools are not able to provide schools with chromebook cars due to lack of funding. Although our community graciously supplemented costs for 1-to-1 chromebooks during the height of the pandemic, when students need a chromebook or charging cord during school hours, schools are unable to readily supply a temporary chromebook or charger. Such a situation disrupts the student's and teacher's time/learning plans. This is just a small example of how we are not able to fully support our students.

I ask you to support an increase of funding to our K-12 children.

Thank you,  
Amber Frommherz  
JSD Parent and JSD School Board Member

**From:** [Katherine Prussian](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#)  
**Subject:** HB272 and HB273  
**Date:** Thursday, February 10, 2022 9:18:15 PM

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To Representatives and members of the House Education Committee,

I encourage you to enact the Base Student Allocation and include increases to account for inflation. As an Alaska resident and parent of two students in Alaska schools, I support full funding for students and encourage you to find ways to further increase funding for schools and education in Alaska. I have watched school libraries close, academic opportunities decrease, extra-curricular opportunities go away, and excellent educators leave Alaska due to reduced budgets and decreasing support to education. Supporting increases to account for inflation will reduce the stress on these programs and provide some stability to our education system. Please invest in our future by supporting the base student allocation and the proposed rate of inflation needed to budget for schools and education.

Thank you for your leadership and support.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Prussian

**From:** [jeff budd](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** I support inflation proofing the BSA  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 9:05:38 AM

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Thank you. Jeff Budd

**From:** [Emily Demmert](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Increase the BSA  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 3:40:39 PM

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Dear Policymakers,

Thank you for hearing the thoughts of your constituency on this topic. Having been a public school teacher in Alaska for over ten years, I have felt the effects of our regressive BSA in cuts to the schools in our district and in the consistency of education for my own children who have felt the effects of teacher turnover.

Please support HB272 and HB273 to ensure a more secure future for Alaskans who will benefit from the good education that we provide our children now. They are our most valuable natural resource and deserve the best we can give them. They will be our future policymakers and problem solvers. Increasing the BSA and making those increases sustainable is an investment for every Alaskan.

Sincerely,  
Emily Demmert  
Sitka, AK

**From:** [Patrick Heuer](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#)  
**Subject:** Increasing BSA - HB 272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Thursday, February 10, 2022 8:49:16 PM

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Dear Alaska House of Representatives Education Committee,

I am writing as a parent of a teenager in Sitka in support of HB 272 and HB 273 to increase Base School Allocations to keep up with inflation.

Base school allocations have not kept up with inflation and this has caused a tremendous strain on our school the last several years. Specifically in supporting quality teachers and funding our school programs both in and outside the classroom.

I am very pleased to see these two bills to inflation-proof the BSA and would like to offer total support for both and encourage the State legislators to please pass them.

Thank you,

Patrick Heuer

Sitka

**From:** [Carolyn Gove](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Inflation Proof BSA  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 1:27:31 PM

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I am hopeful that the Legislature will pass a bill to inflation-proof the Base Student Allocation. There is no more important State resource than an educated citizenry, and yet Alaska's schools are perpetually fighting for adequate funding.

Please stabilize funding at a sustainable level to invest in our children's future.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Carolyn Gove  
Anchorage

**From:** [Cindy Lelake](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Laddie Shaw](#)  
**Subject:** Inflation proof the BSA!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 5:57:33 AM

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Dear House Education Committee members:

I am writing to express my full support for HB272 and HB273. Inflation proofing the BSA is one meaningful step we can take to invest in the future of Alaska's public schools and Alaska's children.

Sincerely,

Cindy Lelake

**From:** [Nancy Lehnhart](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Andi Story](#); [House Education](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Rep. Sara Hannan](#)  
**Subject:** please provide for our schools  
**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2022 11:12:56 AM

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Dear legislators,

I am the one elementary visual art teacher for all of the elementary schools in Juneau and have the privilege of going in and out of every elementary classroom. It gives me a unique opportunity to see and feel the pulse of our classrooms as a whole.

The number one challenge is large class sizes and diverse needs of students. Children need to be seen and supported as individuals and this is near impossible with 25-30 students in classrooms.

House bills 272 and 273 begin to remedy this issue with a stronger and consistent BSA. Please move these bills forward for the sake of our student's learning and well being!

Another issue we can't ignore is the loss of attractiveness in becoming a teacher and staying with teaching. We are already facing a teacher shortage and it's going to get worse. My daughter is an Alaska-raised young teacher and she is so discouraged about Tier 3 teachers not having a retirement that will amount to anything, she is considering leaving the field for other work. Our future depends on strong teachers joining our work force and sticking with it. We have to give them a reason to do that. Please include teachers in a defined benefits retirement!

Thank you for your work and considering our feedback,  
Nancy Lehnhart,  
Juneau  


**From:** [Caitlin Woolsey](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Please Support HB 272 and HB 273  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 8, 2022 7:31:22 PM

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**Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:**

For the record, my name is Caitlin Woolsey, Blatchley Middle School STEAM teacher in Sitka, AK.

I'm writing in support of HB 272 and HB 273 because:

- Stable, predictable funding is necessary to ensure districts can attract and retain high-quality educators.
- Research shows high teacher turnover has a direct negative impact on student performance, as measured through standardized assessments.
- Reliable funding is the key to improving student outcomes through stabilizing schools and reducing teacher turnover.
- Forward funding allows schools to properly plan and prepare for upcoming school years, and early funding is crucial to sound financial management, as well as educator recruitment and retention.
- Our district is in a huge budget deficit. We will struggle to meet our students' needs without increases in state funding that match the increases in cost of living and inflation.

Please support HB 272 and HB 273.

Thank you,  
Caitlin Woolsey

**From:** [Becky Moren](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Priority funding for Education  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 8, 2022 4:23:34 PM

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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:

My name is Becky Moren and I represent both a parent and am an elementary principal in Talkeetna, AK. I am writing to support HB 272 and HB 273.

Providing a stable, predictable funding source/plan is necessary to ensure school districts can attract and retain high-quality educators. Reliable funding is instrumental in improving student outcomes through stabilizing schools and reducing teacher turnover. Forward funding allows school districts and individual schools to properly plan and prepare for upcoming school years, and early funding is crucial to sound financial management, as well as educator recruitment and retention.

My children were born in and are being raised in this great state of Alaska. Our small, rural community mirrors many of the rural communities that the citizens of Alaska choose to live in. My children, our community's children, our state's children deserve a robust education that is competitive with our nation's public education system and produces contributing citizens that, in turn, can and will give back to our communities and our state.

Thank you,  
Becky Moren

**From:** [Beth Short-Rhoads](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins](#)  
**Subject:** Support for HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 9:02:56 AM

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Dear members of the House Education Committee,

I'm writing to encourage you to vote yes on HBs 272 and 273 today. Static BSAs over the last few years have caused the loss of so many important school programs, and students have suffered as a result. Unthinkably, our middle school even closed its library in 2018. Every year, municipalities scramble to come up with funding to cover district shortfalls. In Sitka, we were "lucky" last year that the municipality was able to take funds out of emergency reserves, but that is not a long term solution. Other districts are simply forced to make more cuts to school programs and staff.

Funding Alaska's schools shouldn't be an emergency situation every year. Everyone benefits when schools can focus on preparing our students for the future instead of pounding the pavement for dollars and arguing over what to cut next. Please inflation proof the BSA.

Thank you for your service,

Beth Short-Rhoads  
Sitka

**From:** [Laurie Hueffer](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [Rep. Grier Hopkins](#)  
**Subject:** Support HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 7:26:52 AM

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Dear Representatives,

I am writing in support of two bills (HB 272 and HB 273) that would inflation proof the BSA. The BSA is so essential to our public schools and yet has essentially been flat-funded year after year as costs continue to rise.

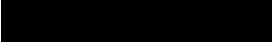
My effectiveness as an elementary school teacher is directly impacted by school funding and resulting numbers of students in my classroom. In order to effectively serve students, we need reliable funding of schools. These bills help towards that effort.

Our public schools are a vital component that powers all Alaskan communities and we need predictable funding that keeps up with the costs of doing business in Alaska. HB 272 and 273 are part of the solution.

Thank you for your support.

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Laurie Hueffer



**From:** [Emma Melkerson](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Support of HB272  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 5:09:37 PM

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My name is Emma Melkerson, I am a teacher of 16 wonderful Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> graders in Kivalina Alaska and I am speaking in support of HB 272. I spend my days teaching kids to sound out words, add, subtract, about the world around them and the world beyond the edges of our tiny island 130 miles above the arctic circle. I have been a teacher at McQueen School for 11 years, every group of children in our building has spent time in my classroom in their educational career. I have watched them grow from small curious 1<sup>st</sup> graders to strong high school seniors that go from a classroom learning the slope intercept form to the town's watering point to haul gallons of water for their families use in their homes, and back to school in the evening to practice with their teammates on the court or the mat. To say I am proud to be a teacher and McQueen School is an understatement.

Since 2017 I have watched programs in the Northwest Arctic Borough School district get cut due to the increasing costs to do business here and the ever stagnate BSA. In the last round of cuts to our district budget we have watched programs such as CTE, Prek, trained mental health professionals full time in every one of our 13 buildings, and district sponsored student activities for elementary and middle school students cut.

Educators are asked to now take on the role of teaching vital social emotional skills to our students with very little training. The training we do receive pales in comparison to that of a school counselor.

Teachers whose focus has always been English or social studies are asked to now teach computer programming and mechanical drawing again with little training. The only opportunity village high school students in our district have to get a real hand on CTE experience is for 2 weeks at a time in their junior or senior year at the district's Technical Center as many as 155 miles away, as the shops in their schools have had to close.

Basketball is king here. Our high school teams that typically have competitions every weekend of their season are cut down to just a handful. Communities thrive on watching their kids wearing hometown colors compete in their hometown gyms multiple times in a school year. Now schools are lucky to get 1 home game for each sport and only for their high school kids. Younger students must wait even longer for their turn.

As I mentioned I teach Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade this year. I have some 5 and year old's that have never been to school before due to the district having to cut preschool. Imagine walking into kindergarten, the expectation is that you should already know all your letters, sounds, colors, shapes and be able to count to at least 20. Now imagine that you have never been into the school building before, that you have never used a sink with running water, or a toilet that flushes let alone have the academic skills to hit the ground running like the standards expect. These are the realities for the children in my classroom. In PreK they would have had exposure to all the school things but also learned how to be a student in our buildings.

Class sizes in our secondary classrooms are even larger than my 16, this is not an adequate learning environment for our students to learn and grow.

The BSA has not increased since 2017, for years teachers have been asked to do more with less, our kids have had to go without. Our kids deserve more. Please pass HB272. Thank you



**From:** [Tam Agosti-Gisler](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Cc:** [School Board](#)  
**Subject:** Ten years  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 7:31:55 AM

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Dear Representatives,

It's been **ten years** since I first traveled to Juneau to speak to many of you to request adequately funding the Base Student Allocation. It's been **ten years** that school boards and administrations across Alaska have been juggling balls in order to balance their budgets due to the ever fluctuating funding of the BSA. In those ten years, I know from my board service, that many cuts that have been made to increase efficiency and trim any fat that did exist in the Anchorage School District budget. In those **ten years**, there have been other challenges resulting in financial strains like an earthquake, a pandemic, and inflation greater than the perennial healthcare inflation which all impact funding for the classroom. There have been temporary inflows of money from the state and federal government that have cushioned some of these blows, but **ten years** later the ASD and other districts are still dealing with the same funding challenges of the BSA. We know from research and in-depth studies that to improve overall 3rd grade reading proficiency, we need to invest in smaller class sizes in K-1, we need to invest in pre-K, and we need to invest in training and supporting our current teachers while attracting new educators who know how to implement the literacy research. This target was being met, particularly in smaller class sizes, until inadequate funding drove those numbers higher once again. And here we are, **ten years** later, still grappling with the same issue. Will I be writing in another **ten years** bemoaning the fact that funding is not still not adequate to meet educational goals? Will another generation of our children not have had their educational needs met? These are questions to ponder.

Sincerely,

Tam Agosti-Gisler  
Concerned citizen, educator, and former Anchorage School Board member

  
Anchorage, AK 

**From:** [Barb \(QasuGlana\) Amarok](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Date:** Monday, February 7, 2022 7:51:47 AM

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Having been a school board member for twelve years and worked for a school district for twenty years, I understand issues and needs related to ensuring success and achievement for and by our students.

I support HB 273 and HB 272 and their purpose to increase the base student allocation, and I request your support.

***Barb (QasuGlana) Amarok***  
Director, UAF Northwest Campus



*We acknowledge the Indigenous peoples upon whose customary lands our campuses reside. In the Bering Strait region, the Northwest Campus is located on the customary lands of the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, and Yup'ik peoples.*

**From:** [marla statscewich](#)  
**To:** [House Education](#); [Sen. Scott Kawasaki](#)  
**Subject:** Vote YES on HB 272 and 273  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 9, 2022 10:52:09 AM

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Please make HB 272 and 273 a reality and protect our public schools and our teachers. I live in Fairbanks just a quarter of a mile from our local elementary school. I see the teachers who work at the school on our trails and in the store. They are a part of our community and belong here. If they are concerned about funding year after year, it's impossible to set down roots and want to remain in the city, let alone the state. There aren't very many incentives for teachers these days and I'm concerned that teacher retention is at risk. Please protect the schools and the teachers (and in turn the students and the community) by voting yes on 272 and 273

Marla Statscewich  
Fairbanks, AK