

From: [Jen LaRoe](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Cc: [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#); [Rep. Andi Story](#); [Rep. Sara Hannan](#)
Subject: In support of public education SB 52
Date: Friday, April 07, 2023 6:53:58 PM

Honorable Senators of the finance committee,

Thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Jen LaRoe, 5134 Glacier Highway, Juneau, a resident since 1993. I have raised my two children in the Juneau School District, volunteering extensively when they were young. My second will be a senior next year. I teach a pre K class of 20 students with one .9333 FTE and one .4333 FTE staff. The .4333 position is vacant for the 3rd time this year. The .9333 position is on the second staff for the year. I am writing to ask you to see the crumbling school systems in our state and make the right decision to prevent total breakdown. Every day the office staff at my school sends out an email showing the staff vacancies and the substitutes filling in. The list includes positions that are both vacant positions and absent staff. For as long as I can remember this year, there is an average of 10 to 12 daily substitutes needed for a fully staffed and minimally functioning school. But the norm is at most, 5-6 substitutes filling in, leaving many areas understaffed. Often the school principal substitutes for classroom teachers and the district administrators, yes even the superintendent have to come to fill in.

The underpaid staff are experiencing more and more stressors every day there are not enough adults in the school, in the classes, in the office. The students are struggling to survive not getting enough attention or support, not being heard, not being known. And this is the result of no BSA increases for many many years. It is untenable. This is my first year teaching. I am 55 and have a broad background that supports high quality teaching in my classroom. I chose to leave administrative arts education positions in order to serve students directly for the remaining years I have to offer the working world. I am doubting that choice as I see very little incentive to stay. My district is being forced to cut more and more student support and is now cutting teacher contract benefits, proposing an increase to medical benefit costs with little to no salary increase.

No other profession is disregarded and disrespected like this. We guide the future generations in this modern volatile time! Please support education by making a pledge to every student in the form of a \$1280 BSA increase to bring our Alaskan educational system up present and improve our national rankings!

Sincerely,
Jen LaRoe
5134 Glacier Highway
Juneau

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Jen