



Anchorage School District

Education Center

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March 10, 2023

Dear Senator Tobin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for your leadership and vision in amending SB 52 so as to increase the BSA by \$1000 to \$6,960 in FY24 and by an additional \$348 to \$7,308 in FY25, and so as to use the U.S. Department of Labor Consumer Price Index to calculate an "inflation adjustment" percentage increase to the BSA in FY26. Thank you for also responding to interest in accountability by requiring DEED—not individual districts—to create a public website to report annual progress toward high academic performance by all Alaska students, schools, and districts, and for directing the Department of Labor and Workforce Development—again, not individual districts—to collaborate with DEED to gather data on career, postsecondary education, and residency data for each graduating student.

These strategic adjustments to SB 52 are closely aligned with the scope and scale of need that the Anchorage School District has identified for its upcoming fiscal years, and would expand upon the model of transparency and accountability that ASD has long offered: our [data dashboard](#) contains up-to-date assessments of students' progress toward Board goals as well as attendance and graduation rates. However, we understand that many smaller districts could struggle to put something similar in place, so we thank you for envisioning the work of reporting as a State-level responsibility.

Your committee's amendments are timely and necessary. **ASD educates nearly 44,500 students through 130 schools and programs and employs 5,900 full time positions.** But this year, **ASD has \$80 million less in purchasing power than it did during the 2016-2017 school year.** This is due to seven years of an unchanged Base Student Allocation, declining enrollment, and inflationary drivers.

Although ASD has closed schools, generated new revenue streams, promoted a variety of efficiencies to balance its budgets since the 2016-2017 year, **ASD largely balanced its FY21-FY24 budgets by allocating more than \$100 million from its three rounds of federal relief funds to maintain longstanding classroom staffing ratios.** This current school year, relief funds are being used to retain 477 classroom teachers and prevent massive class size increases. Below, please find a table summarizing ASD's relief fund expenditures towards teachers.

Federal relief allocations for retaining classroom teachers			
Year	Amount	Relief fund name	# Teachers retained
FY 21	\$2.5 m	CARES	29
FY 22	\$23.6 m	CRRSA	235
FY 23	\$56.2 m	ARP	477
FY 24	\$19.9 m	ARP	164

The last of ASD's federal relief funds—approximately \$20 million—will be allocated towards retaining 164 teacher positions during FY24, but these cannot compensate for ASD's entire deficit. To balance next year's budget, ASD will also use an additional \$16 million in State one-time funds saved from FY23, \$29 million from its fund balance (which is being spent down to the Board minimum), cuts to district

administration and ASD’s virtual options, two school closures (Abbott Loop and Ursa Major), and a “+1” increase to the pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) districtwide.

The PTR formula divides the total number of students in the school, by grade level, by a ratio (e.g. 1 teacher to 23 students in 1st grade); this creates a baseline to establish the total number of teachers allocated per school. The following charts, taken from the FY23 and FY24 budget books, show the +1 increase in next year’s staffing ratios:

School Type	FY 2023 <i>GENERAL FUND + ESSER</i> PTR – Grade Level Groupings							
	K	1	2	3	4-5	6	7-8	9-12
Secondary Schools								30.25
Middle Schools						30.25	30.25	
Elementary Schools	21	22	24	25	26	27	27	

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	K	1	2	3	4-5	6	7-8	9-12
Secondary Schools								31.25
Middle Schools						31.25	31.25	
Elementary Schools	22	23	25	26	27	28	28	

Although increasing PTR by 1 across all grades will save ASD approximately \$7.3 million in FY24, next year’s **class sizes will increase in schools represented by every single Anchorage legislator**. ASD principals have already identified the **62 teachers who will not be replaced** should they retire or resign at the end of this year, and/or will be involuntarily displaced for the 2023-2024 school year.

Below, please find a list of ASD schools that will be losing teacher positions for FY24, organized by legislative district/legislator, due to the PTR +1 staffing formula change. The combination of enrollment changes and the new PTR formula means that although many schools are losing ½ or 1 teacher “Full Time Equivalent” position (FTE), others will lose more. Ocean View Elementary will lose 2.5 FTE, for instance, while Chugiak High School will lose 3.4 FTE. For more information on each school’s staffing changes, please see Appendix G, “Combined General Fund and ESSER Teacher FTE Comparison,” found in the Anchorage School District’s [FY24 Budget Book](#) (p 476-477).

District	Legislator	Schools losing classroom teacher FTE in FY24 due to PTR +1 staffing formula change
E	Giessel	Dimond, East, Klatt, Mears, Ocean View, Service
F	Kaufman	Bowman, East, Service, Spring Hill, Stellar (+ *Abbott Loop closing)
G	Gray-Jackson	Airport Heights, Dimond, East, Gladys Wood, Inlet View, Lake Otis, Mears, Romig, SAVE, Stellar, Willow Crest
H	Claman	Dimond, Gladys Wood, Kincaid, Mears, Romig, Sand Lake
I	Tobin	Airport Heights, Bartlett, Begich, Denali, East, Inlet View, Mirror Lake, Muldoon, PAIDEA, Romig (+ Ursa Major remaining closed)
J	Dunbar	Airport Heights, Bartlett, East, King Tech, Lake Otis, Nunaka Valley, Russian Jack, Williwaw, Wonder Park
K	Wielechowski	Bartlett, Begich, Chester Valley, Muldoon, Nunaka Valley, Ptarmigan, Scenic Park
L	Merrick	Bartlett, Begich, Chugiak High, Fire Lake, Mirror Lake, Muldoon
9	Shaw	East

10	Johnson	Dimond, Klatt, Mears, Ocean View, Service
11	Colombe	Bowman, Service, Spring Hill (+ Abbott Loop closing)
12	Schrage	East, Lake Otis, Service (+ Abbott Loop closing)
13	Josephson	Dimond, East, Gladys Wood, Mears, Romig, SAVE, Scenic Park, Service
14	Galvin	East, Inlet View, Lake Otis, Romig, Stellar, Willow Crest
15	McKay	Dimond, Gladys Wood, Kincaid, Mears, Sand Lake
16	Armstrong	Dimond, Kincaid, Lake Hood, Mears, Romig, Sand Lake
17	Fields	Airport Heights, Denali, East, Inlet View, PAIDEA, Romig
18	Groh	Bartlett, Begich, Denali, East, Inlet View, Muldoon (+ Ursa Major remaining closed)
19	Mina	Airport Heights, Bartlett, East, Russian Jack, Williwaw, Wonder Park
20	Gray	Bartlett, East, King Tech, Lake Otis, Nunaka Valley, Russian Jack
21	Mears	Bartlett, Begich, Chester Valley, Nunaka Valley, Scenic Park
22	Wright	Bartlett, Begich, Muldoon, Ptarmigan, Wonder Park
23	Allard	Bartlett, Begich, Chugiak High, Mirror Lake, Muldoon
24	Saddler	Chugiak High, Fire Lake, Mirror Lake

As we look to the future, an unadjusted BSA will mean that ASD's structural deficits will increase from \$68 million in FY24 to approximately **\$85 million during FY 25, \$91-105 million during FY 26, and \$104-125 million during FY 27**. If the BSA remains unadjusted through February of 2026, which is when the Board will adopt a balanced budget for the FY27 year, **ASD will have to cull 1,200 positions**. This would likely result in additional school closures, the elimination of many extracurricular opportunities, language immersion programs, and/or gifted services, and unprecedented increases to our PTRs / class sizes.

None of those outcomes are desirable. None of them will support student growth. But you have identified a path forward! To that end, please know that the Anchorage School Board stands with you, as we have prioritized an increase to the Base Student Allocation, as well as inflation-proofing the BSA, as legislative priorities for this current session. We recognize—as do you—that prioritizing and investing in public education is critical to our students’ success and to a thriving community.

Thank you for your commitment to that future.

Sincerely and In Service,

Margo Bellamy
 President, Anchorage School Board

Carl Jacobs
 Vice President, Anchorage School Board

Kelly Lessens
 Treasurer & Finance Committee Chair, Anchorage School Board