

Michael Mason

From: Madisen Lundamo <mclundamo04@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 7:10 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Written Testimony in Support of SB 52

Madam Chair and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am Madisen Lundamo from Ketchikan and a senior at Ketchikan High School. Today I am writing to represent myself as a student in Alaska and a child of an educator. I am in full support of Senate Bill 52 because education is the very foundation of our communities and society. My mother has taught for 23 years in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District as an elementary teacher, and now is the Dean of Students at Houghtaling Elementary. Through her, I have witnessed the dedication every great teacher gives to every unique student in their school.

In the case of my mother especially, school is much more than a building full of classrooms, but rather a second home. Her classroom is bursting with flairs of her personality and embellished with seasonal decorations. Every seat is different and offers unique comforts. She has a large tank with two red-ear slider turtles swimming about. The overhead lights are never used as the room is illuminated with holiday twinkle lights and lamps. There's an essential oils diffuser going off every so often, filling the air with calming scents. For some time she even had a reading loft in a corner of her room! What an amazing environment to learn in, right?

Every single one of these items was paid for out of pocket by my mom because her stipend barely covered the extra comforts of an excellent classroom. This is the case with every single beyond-typical classroom in that elementary school. My mom's colleagues have used their own personal funds to improve the educational environment of their students for years.

Every single classroom in Alaska could be as comfortable and prosperous as those in the elementary school I grew up in with sufficient funding.

In my high school, students' education is taking a drastic hit due to underfunding. Teachers are in and out. Programs have uncertain futures. While my generation has been labelled as "resilient," we are seeing more and more struggles to bounce back after each hit. There is a stark shortage of substitute teachers which leads to classes being held in the library, overburdening our librarians. I have sat in the library with at least four other classes and it is not a civil picture. The environment is headachingly loud, the librarians are stretched so thin that administrators are in and out checking on the students, and there certainly is no learning happening. Programs such as Advanced Placement or AP classes are at risk to be cut due to a lack of qualified teachers. Our language classes are subpar at best due to poor quality teachers. I, a passionate and dedicated student, have found myself dreading the eight hours a day I spend at school.

There is a butterfly effect caused by a lack of funding in our education system. The school district is doing as much as they can with the little money they have, teachers are unable to provide opportunities to students, the students dread school, their education takes a hit, and in the years to come we will be made fully aware of the negative impacts. Students and teachers thrive in fully funded schools, causing our society itself to thrive. We cannot fight nor prevent great tragedies and societal illnesses such as violence, mental health crises, bullying, racial and cultural injustices, suicide, abuse, addiction, and more without prosperous schools.

Thus I urge you to remain in support of SB 52, an act to increase the BSA, and consequently an act to ensure the future of our education system and Alaska as a whole.

Thank you and Sincerely,
Madisen Lundamo

mclundamo04@gmail.com
(907) 617-0417

237 Cranberry Road
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Michael Mason

From: Mara Sheakley-Early <marakearly@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 14, 2023 12:22 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: Raise the BSA

Dear Education Committee:

Our students and public schools are in crisis. Schools are closing, Alaska students are losing educational opportunities, and our state is no longer competitive in the national educator job market. I urge you to take bold and immediate action to provide relief to school districts through a Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase and develop long-term education funding solutions.

Since 2017, inflation has risen by 15% which has steadily diminished school districts' buying power. Meanwhile, the BSA has only increased by 0.5% over that same period. Some estimates have suggested that in order to keep up with inflation, the BSA should be \$1,300 more than it is right now. Regardless of how we calculate inflation or the right amount for the BSA, one thing is clear: our public schools need help now.

I urge you to do everything in your power to set aside political differences and focus on providing relief to our public schools. Governor Dunleavy and legislators of all political persuasions have indicated their openness to increasing the BSA. I hope I can count on you to join them in finding common ground to pass a meaningful budget increase.

You can be a hero for Alaska's public schools this legislative session. Please don't let us down.

Sincerely,

Mara Sheakley-Early, teacher at Thunder Mountain HS in Juneau, Alaska and mom of two young children

Michael Mason

From: Marilyn Guhl <marilynguhl721@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:46 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Make Alaska's School the Very Best

Dear Senators of Alaska,

I am writing to you to express my support for raising the BSA for the public education program in Alaska. Our children are in great need of receiving the best education possible. They are Alaska's future citizens!

Covid has been a major setback to the education received by our students and our education program is lacking the ability to improve and enhance their learning to give them the attention they deserve. This inability, or choice, to not fund schools at the funding at least equal to or better than the level from 8 years ago, is a tragedy!

I urge you to do what is best for Alaska's students, raise the BSA to at least the amount equal to 8 years ago, and give our students the opportunity to excel and fulfill their potential!

Sincerely,
Marilyn Guhl
Sitka, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Mary Krusen <maryclarakrusen@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 7:59 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Education testimony

Dear Senate,

- I support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaskan Students.
- I support the Jan. 30th 2023 memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago.
- Continuing to flat fund our education system is punitive and is akin to expecting better morale and performance in a workplace while treating one's employees with disrespect while simultaneously demanding that your employees work more hours for the same pay.

Thank you for your time,

-Mary Krusen

907-395-7022
1521 Atkinson drive
Anchorage, AK 99504



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Sent from Gmail Mobile



SEWARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

304 Sea Lion Ave, Seward AK 99664
(907) 224-9000

February 8th, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Matt Potter and I am the Principal at Seward Middle School and Moose Pass K-8 School. I would like to simply say that with the increasing cost of education and the need for better educational outcomes, it is essential to increase the BSA in Alaska.

One of the main benefits of increasing the BSA is that it would provide more resources for teachers and students. Additionally, schools would be able to hire more support staff, such as guidance counselors and tutors, to provide students with the individualized attention they need to succeed. Another benefit of increased BSA funding is the ability for schools to provide more diverse educational opportunities for students. With additional resources, schools can offer more advanced courses, extracurricular activities, and vocational programs. These opportunities can help students explore their interests and develop the skills they need to succeed in the workforce. Moreover, schools would also be able to offer programs that address the unique needs of different student populations, such as English language learners and students with special needs.

At Seward Middle School, we have no dedicated Elective Teachers. Any electives that are offered, are taught by our classroom teachers on top of their core classes. While it is positive that our students get to see teachers in a different setting it stretches even more teachers who are already being asked to do more than ever before. We also split a counselor and an interventionist between Seward High and the middle school in a time where we know students are struggling with their mental health and suffering from learning loss and gaps, both of which need to be addressed.

For all these reasons, I would like to ask the Senate to move forward with SB 52 and approve a long overdue increase in the BSA.

Thank you

Matt Potter
Seward Middle School Principal
mpotter2@kpbsd.k12.ak.us
(907) 224-9025- office
(907) 570-1505- cell

Michael Mason

From: Senate Education
Sent: Wednesday, February 22, 2023 7:22 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: In Support of HB 65, or SB 52 in lieu of HB 65

From: Megan Martz <meganmmartz@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 9:22 PM
Subject: In Support of HB 65, or SB 52 in lieu of HB 65

Dear Legislator,

My name is Megan Martz. I am a resident of Cantwell, in the Denali Borough, where my husband and I recently purchased land and built a home. I am a former educator, and the parent of an 11-month-old baby girl.

I am writing in support of HB 65, proposing to increase the BSA by \$1,250 to \$7,210. In lieu of an ability to increase education funding that significantly, I would strongly advise passing SB 52, which proposes to increase the BSA by \$1,000 to \$6,960, as a minimum allocation for the 23/24 school year.

Education should be our state and nation's number one priority. Children are our future, and there can be no greater investment than to support them and encourage them to grow and become educated, contributing members of our society. I was disappointed to learn that the Denali Borough School District was considering closing the Cantwell school, located in our local community for next school year, as a direct result of funding that has not kept up with inflation or supported increased school costs in recent years. **Such a school closure would be devastating for the entire community of Cantwell.**

A community that is already struggling economically, Cantwell continues to have a draw for new residents such as myself because the vistas are amazing, the outdoor recreation opportunities are unmatched, the community is a supportive and interesting place, and land/home purchasing opportunities are few and far between in the borough as a whole. If the school were to close, real estate prices in Cantwell would drop further, children would need to be bussed more than a one hour drive each way to Healy for school (10 hours/week!), and there would be less incentive and draw for others to come and revitalize our area.

At a recent school board meeting I saw so much hope. There are several new parents in the area; there is young, enthusiastic and entrepreneurial blood in the room, but even we - who have a significant investment in the area, having just built our own home here, will think about moving on if there is not a local school option as our daughter gets to be school aged. The school is the heart of this community. There are real and present impacts to not funding education at a rate that will maintain spending levels, and I'm writing to beseech you to please not only increase funding, but increase it significantly to help revitalize the schools that have been making cuts and making do since the last raise in 2017.

Residents and former attendees of the Cantwell School detailed what staffing levels used to be like when they were in school - they told of a school with several teachers, with extracurriculars, with newly painted and cared for facilities and updated playground equipment. Now we are staring at a school that will have only one teacher for K-12 next school year, and no other teachers, principals, or adults with whom to interact in that giant, quiet school. We have a chicken and egg situation here where if we can bring back staffing and show a vibrant school with resources, energy, and opportunities for direct interaction in a small setting, I feel sure the community could attract more residents and attendees. But as the resources at the school dwindle, so too do the prospects of attracting new attendees who will

bring increased funding. The fate of this entire community truly rests in the legislatures' hands and decision to fund (or not fund) education in the years ahead.

Please buy into our children and support HB 65 to increase the BSA significantly and show our priorities are in the right place. I recognize there are challenges with ensuring the state's financial future remains stable, but this is one fiscal responsibility that cannot bear compromise.

Thank you for taking the time to review my thoughts and many thanks to you for serving your community and state in the legislature. I know only a small piece of the pressures and challenges you must face in that seat and appreciate that you're up to the task of keeping these many plates spinning.

Sincerely,
Megan Martz

Introduced By:
Date:
Action:
Vote:

Hutchings
March 22, 2023
Adopted
6 Yes, 0 No

CITY OF SOLDOTNA
RESOLUTION 2023-022

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE STATE OF ALASKA MAKE A MEANINGFUL
INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION (BSA) FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is constitutionally obligated to establish and maintain a system of public schools; and

WHEREAS, as per AS 29.35.160, the Kenai Peninsula Borough is required to constitute a borough school district and establish, maintain, and operate a system of public schools on an areawide basis; and

WHEREAS, AS 14.17.470 currently states that the base student allocation, provided by the State, is \$5,960; and

WHEREAS, at current funding levels the State will only provide 59.5% of fiscal year 2024 Kenai Peninsula Borough School District education funding and local government contributions will make up a majority of the balance; and

WHEREAS, education is the single largest budgetary item for the Kenai Peninsula Borough; and

WHEREAS, the base student allocation amount per student has slowly degraded due to an upward inflationary trend in the cost of student education; and

WHEREAS, requiring the Kenai Peninsula Borough to continually increase local contributions to keep pace with rising costs resulting in decreased spending on other essential programs; and

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is facing a \$13.1 million budget deficit for FY24 requiring an increase to class size and the elimination of programs important to our students and community members; and; and

WHEREAS, the State has not made meaningful base student allocation increases since fiscal years 2015 through 2017 totaling an additional amount per student of \$250; and

WHEREAS, Alaska State Senate members have proposed Senate Bill 52 which would increase the base student allocation by \$1,000 and Alaska State House members have proposed House Bill 65 which would increase the base student allocation per student by \$1,250; and

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2023, the Legislative Finance Division Director stated to the House Finance Committee that "today, the base student allocation is the lowest it's been in the last 20 years — adjusted for inflation";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOLDOTNA, ALASKA:

Section 1. That the Council requests a meaningful increase to the base student allocation for Alaskan students in an effort to bridge the fiscal gap created by a lack of inflationary increases to the BSA over the last several years.

Section 2. That copies of this resolution be sent to Governor Dunleavy and the Kenai Peninsula legislative delegation, the President of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education, the Education Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate, the Finance Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate, and other interested parties.

Section 3. This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL THIS 22ND DAY OF MARCH, 2023.


Paul J. Whitney, Mayor

ATTEST:


John Blankenship, MMC, City Clerk

Yes: Carey, Chilson, Hutchings, Nelson, Parker, Wackler
No: None

Michael Mason

From: Stefan Johnson <f367590@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 6, 2023 11:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; House Finance; House Education; Senate Education
Subject: In Support of the BSA

My name is Stefan Johnson and I am a US History teacher in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

I am writing to you in support of House Bill 65. We are in desperate need of an increase in the BSA.

Yesterday at our staff meeting we discussed scheduling. Because of the district's funding issues, we may lose 2 full-time teachers. This directly impacts the classroom numbers for every teacher at the school. My colleague faces the potential of class sizes of up to 40. Teachers in other buildings face class sizes of over 40. This is an issue that hinders both students and teachers.

Education in Alaska has not had a significant increase in funding for several years and the inflation rate has increased. Schools in Alaska are currently surviving, rather than thriving. For example, I work at Hutchinson High, a career and technical education school. Both CTE and general ed teachers struggle to afford materials for their classroom, which reduces the effectiveness of instruction.

Funding is crucial for Alaskan students moving forward. Teachers will not stay in education and students will not receive quality education if this is not addressed soon.

Thank you for your time,

Stefan

--

Stefan Johnson
Social Studies Teacher
Hutchinson High School
Fairbanks, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley <north.coast.camp@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 8:51 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; House Education; Rep. Ben Carpenter; House Finance; senate.finanace.committee@akleg.gov; Senate Education
Subject: Support HB65 increase in Base Student Allocation

We are in support of a large increase in the Base Student Allocation. Please pass HB65. Our children deserve better.

Stephanie Presley & Nate Crossley

Michael Mason

From: Steven Shannon <steven.shannon@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 11:07 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Public Testimony HB 52

Dear Alaska State Senators,

I am writing in regards to House Bill 52 and the proposed increase in the Base Student Allocation. I have been a teacher in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District for 15 years. For nearly half of that time, there has been NO CHANGE in the BSA. We have seen every aspect of providing a quality education to our students rise in cost.

From feeding them, to keeping the lights on, to retaining quality educators in the classroom, the prices are rising, and our state is failing to meet those needs. We are teaching in buildings that are falling apart. Literally, this fall our school, Hutchison High School had to wait to open our school in August because of the failure of old electrical parts that burned out due to a windstorm in JULY. We are finding out that all of our school buildings are also relying on this same outdated equipment. Buildings' roofs are failing, mold is growing, and equipment is rotting, and quality teachers are moving on to greener pastures. What is that leaving behind for our students when the people that teach and the places where they learn are simply left on the back burner for our state's budget? I can tell you, it leaves a state that is ranked 49th in the nation for PreK-12 education.

Every year we have managed to wring water from a rock, but we can't do it anymore. My own classroom budget has nearly been cut in half since I started, while the cost of goods and class materials has done nothing but rise. Please support the SBA increase by voting for House Bill 52. Schools, teachers, students and their families need this help.

Signed,

A teacher that's tired of being overlooked.

--

Steven Shannon, M.S., NSCA-CPT

Spanish/Physical Education/English

Hutchison High School

(907) 479-2261 ex. 35144 (email preferred)

*Susan B. English School
Parent Advisory Committee Site Based Decision-Making Council
PAC-SBDMC
Kenai Peninsula School District
PO Box 171 Seldovia, Alaska 99663*

April 1, 2023

RE: Full Support of Increasing Alaska's Base Student Allocation

Dear Honorable Alaska Legislators,

At our most recent meeting held on Thursday March 30th, the Susan B. English School Parent Advisory Committee Site Based Decision Making Council unanimously voted to make this letter of request on behalf of our members, students, community members, parents, and teachers to implore the 33rd Alaska State Legislature to vote and show indisputable support by passing the proposed increase to Alaska's Base Student Allocation in both House Bill 65 and Senate Bill 52.

As our school's site-based decision-making council, we believe that our youth needs to be supported, advocated for and prioritized. We are asking, in the most direct way possible, that our lawmakers and legislatures also prioritize our students' educations, foundational opportunities and invest into the systems that strengthen our state's future – our youth.

From 2012 to 2022 Alaska's consumer price index has increased by 24.6% while the BSA for Alaska's students has only increased by 4.2%. School districts statewide are facing employee retention challenges, deferred maintenance costs and increased costs of operations; investing in our school districts and their objective to provide our students with safe, equitable, accessible, and competitive educational opportunities is in the best interest of each of us, to strengthen our economic infrastructure, bolster our workforce and enrich our communities through supporting our youth.

By increasing the BSA by the proposed \$1250 (HB 65) or \$1000 (SB 52) the school districts will have additional resources to reduce or maintain class size, increase student educational opportunities, and maintain quality teachers. The return on investment in our youth has infinite possibilities and it starts with passing both bills. Conversely, if there is not an increase passed on BSA this year, additional schools will close and over 1200 teachers will lose their jobs.

We appeal, urge, ask, and request that you completely support our youth, their education, and our state's future by voting yes for both HB 65 and SB 52. We appreciate your consideration of this request and will be watching closely the outcome of your decisions – please support education, our youth, and our state's future.

Kindest Regards,

*Susan B. English School Parent Advisory Committee Site Based Decision-Making Council
Current Members: Heidi Geagel, Allison Miller, Cassidi Cameron, Dianne Gruber, Karen Bornheimer, Lisa Stanish*

Cc: House Education Committee

Representative Justin Ruffridge, Co-Chair

Representative Jamie Allard, Co-Chair

Representative Mike Prax

Representative CJ McCormick

Representative Thomas McKay

Representative Rebecca Himschoot

Representative Andi Story

Representative Dan Ortiz

Representative Louise Stutes

Representative Sarah Vance

Representative Ben Carpenter

Senate Education Committee

Senate Finance Committee

Senator Loki Tobin

Senator Gary Stevens

Senator Jesse Bjorkman

Senator Jesse Kiehl

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

Clayton Holland, Superintendent Kenai Peninsula School District

Scott Jonsson, Principal Susan B. English

Debbie Cary, President Kenai Peninsula School Board

Zen Kelley, Vice President Kenai Peninsula School Board

Michael Mason

From: Susan Brandt-Ferguson <srjf Ferguson@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:46 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: BSA Increase

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am a life-long Alaskan, the parent of a school-aged Alaskan, and I have been a teacher for over 25 years in Sitka. I am so encouraged by SB 52! By raising the BSA by \$1,000 we will simply be putting education funding back to levels that have been eroded by inflation. Our schools need this funding to teach the children of Alaska! Thank you for making education a priority right off the bat in this legislative session. Passing this bill quickly will help schools budget appropriately for next year!

-Susan Brandt-Ferguson
1603 Sawmill Creek Rd
Sitka, Alaska 99835

Michael Mason

From: Susan Litman <litman.susan@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:24 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 52

Good Morning Members of the Senate Education Committee-

I strongly support Senate Bill 52 that would increase the BSA by \$1,000.

It has been years since the BSA was increased while inflation has continued to soar. We owe it to our students in this state to make sure their education is adequately funded.

Thank you,
Susan Litman
Sitka

Michael Mason

From: Terri Pauls <terri.alaska@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 1:32 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Raise BSA

Senate Education Committee,

A quality education of Alaska's youth is a wise and important investment, not only for a knowledgeable and innovative workforce in the future, but also for a citizenry that can think critically, which is necessary to maintain and improve democratic governance.

Therefore, I support the Jan. 30th 2023 memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago. Teachers can only be effective with a reasonable number of students in a class.

SB 52, a bill proposing to raise the Base Student Allocation by \$1,000, is a good step toward ensuring that Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaskan students.

Thank you,

Terri Pauls, Alaskan resident since 1991

Michael Mason

From: Tiffany Damota <t.damotasupplee@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 6:28 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: I do not support increasing

I do not support increasing the amount given, simply because we are highly funded with horrible outcomes and scores already. I will not allow my children in public school at this point, so raising the amount and taking away more money from PFD's is taking away from my student's education when we already help pay for everyone else's education and don't get to use public schools ourselves. I would love for my kids to be able to enjoy public's schools, but it's simply not an option at this point with how horrible the Fairbanks schools are. My children received a poor education when they were there, and my oldest daughter was bullied and tormented by support staff. There's propaganda in the schools, and bottom of the barrel for testing scores. They need to re focus, not throw more money at it. My kids don't get to enjoy sports and music in public schools and quite frankly no one is owed that. We can be responsible for our own children's extra curricular activities, if it means giving them another dime for a failing system. I already pay property tax on 3 properties and do not get to use schools for public education I don't need my dividend and my kids dividends stolen to give a failing system MORE money. Top 2 in the nation for funding and bottom 2 in test scores, it's time to figure something out because it's not a lack of money problem. People are walking away from public education, it's time to make them be held accountable for the money they waste already.

Thank you
Tiffany Supplee
Fairbanks district 34

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Ayla Walker <aylawalker@dbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:11 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52 Student Testimony

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Tri-Valley Student Council, we strongly support the SB52 proposed House bill. As students within the Denali Borough School District, we understand the outcome of this bill will affect our school district drastically. Similarly to many other districts in Alaska, our district and school are facing a budget crisis that will significantly impact each student. There are three proposed plans for the upcoming school year, which include closing schools within the district. The first option consists of keeping all schools open with major staffing cuts at all three schools. The second option involves closing one school while keeping the remaining two open with budget cuts at both locations. Lastly, the third option would close the two smaller schools and consolidate all students and staff into one brick-and-mortar site. This proposal requires the students to bus for at least 45 minutes in winter road conditions. There is a small school within our district that is at the largest risk of closure, as it contains the least amount of students. This school resides within an Alaska Native village, and the students share a strong connection with their land and community. Consequently, closing their school and forcing the students to enroll in a different system will have a tremendous impact on their way of life and culture. Therefore, the proposed house bill will significantly benefit the Denali Borough School District and its students. Please put student education in the state as priority number one. We are counting on you for a bright future.

Sincerely,

Tri-Valley High School Student Council

Michael Mason

From: Tyler Smoker <tyler.smoker@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2023 9:39 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Testimony of a former JSD employee

I was a student in the Juneau School District for 13 years and graduated from JDHS in 2004. After college I worked as a substitute teacher for 5 years, and during that time covered almost every job in the district at least once. Most days were spent in Special Education classrooms, ranging from Pre-K through Transitions. The time spent working in SpEd classrooms inspired me to pursue a Doctoral degree in Occupational Therapy, and I returned to JSD to put that degree to work in 2018. After just 4 years, I've left the district. In total, I've spent 22 of my 36 years as either a student or employee of JSD.

I left for a lot of reasons. Among them is the fact that since I started as an OT, I continually had an excessively large caseload (50-70 students) that prevented me from providing quality services. This issue has been raised with administration repeatedly by many related service providers (including OTs, Speech Language Pathologists, and Physical Therapists), with no discernable action. One of the most effective coworkers I had moved to a public school in Colorado, where their caseload is capped at 25. I know that teachers are experiencing the same problem, as their classrooms become more crowded and less manageable. It's no surprise that administration has been ineffective in addressing these issues, as there has been little opportunity for leadership from Student Services.

Most of the time I was at JSD, there was no director of Student Services. Dr. Weiss may have been the director in title, but the idea that any person could do that job effectively while also being superintendent is ludicrous. There were two other people that tried to take on that role, but neither stayed long enough to learn how to do the job effectively or make any real positive change in the department.

There has been little opportunity to engage with Student Services (my former supervisors and leaders) for at least the last two years, because their entire staff has been covering full-time teaching positions that the district has been unable to fill. It's no accident that teachers don't stay in the DEC classrooms, because the case management and paraeducator supervision workloads take up all their time. Students with intensive needs require substantial skill and time to work with safely, and perpetual vacancies in SpEd have created unethical, dangerous environments for staff and students.

There is little financial reason to make a career out of teaching in Juneau. Tier 3 retirement is a cruel joke, and the consequences of it are evident in staffing. There are many Tier 2 staff that are motivated to stay until retirement, as they've been in long enough to have climbed the pay scale and their retirement is worth staying for. Tier 3 employees have no reason to stay other than their dedication to this community's children and their love of the profession. Those only go so far, particularly when systemic issues chisel away at the reasons people wanted to become teachers in the first place. In the 4 years I worked for the district, I saw no real increase in my take-home pay, as health insurance costs rose enough annually to eclipse the meager salary increases. One of the saddest facts I encountered on beginning my career as an OT is that Anchorage educators make 10k more per year than JEA members. The fact that every state job pays more in Juneau than Anchorage should illustrate how ridiculous that disparity is.

I recognize that all these problems are not unique to Juneau. What's unique about Juneau is that we know each other, that administrators and teachers see each other at the grocery store, on trails, at parks. We are all members of the same community. What we need is administration standing with JEA to demand appropriate funding from the legislature. Many administration level staff have been working hard to keep Special Education afloat, but make no mistake, the ship is sinking.

Sincerely,

Michael Mason

From: Uran Christensen <upiedra@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 9:22 AM
To: assemblyclerk@kpb.us; boardofeducation@kpbsd.k12.ak.us; Rep. Sarah Vance; Sen. Gary Stevens; House Education; Senate Education
Subject: KPBSD Budget Cuts

Good morning,

I am writing as a parent regarding the funding cuts proposed for next year. The cuts proposed will negatively impact our community, and I am proposing that they not be made.

To tell you a little about myself - I am a parent of two school-age children in Homer. My oldest son is a junior at Homer High School and my middle son is a 3rd grader at West Homer. I also have a 4 year old who will join the public school system in 2024. I am a volunteer within the schools, and I am passionate about public education.

I also work in this community helping to fuel the local economy. I am CFO of Seldovia Village Tribe and my husband and I own and operate our own air taxi business (Kachemak Air Service).

As a parent and an involved member of the Homer community, I am directly impacted by the funding decisions for our schools. As a finance person, however, I understand the need to have enough funding to perform at the level needed.

Therefore I am writing to show my support for an increase of \$700 to the base student allocation. I am also requesting that the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly fund KPBSD to the cap. Finally, I am requesting that we keep our district pools and theatres open. These resources are critical to our children's wellbeing.

Thank you for considering my position as a parent and proud member of the wonderful Homer community

Regards,
Uran Christensen
770-331-3162

Michael Mason

From: U Hoffmann <uwehoffmann@dbsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:20 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52 Base Student Allocation Increase by \$1000

Dear Senate Education Committee,

An increase in the BSA of \$1000 will help especially small community schools with operating costs, as district budgets are tied and the danger for closing schools is real. It would be devastating for communities to lose their school. It would also close the communities to families with children to move in. In addition students would have to travel for hours to attend school in neighboring communities, cutting them out from after school activities and community involvement.

I urge our legislators to do everything to assure students can attend schools in their community by increasing the BSA to help with increased cost for schools and school curricula. Students are the future of Alaska.

Thank you,

Uwe Hoffmann

Teacher

Anderson School

Anderson, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Velvet Ivers <wvivers@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:23 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52 Comment

February 8, 2023

Velvet Ivers
PO Box 42
Yakutat, AK 99689

Dear Alaska Legislators,

My name is Velvet Ivers, and I am a retired elementary school teacher from Yakutat, Alaska. I continue to work part-time with Yakutat School District. I am writing to express my wishes for an increase in the base student allocation, under SB52. I understand that it has not had an increase since 2017, and we are definitely in extraordinarily challenging times.

When I started teaching in 1998, our school was flourishing with two school buildings filled with kids who had opportunities to learn music, art, band, computer lab, and many other classes to boost their chances at academic success. We had staff to cover the library and the computer lab, and we ran many extra-curricular programs. We were even once able to offer a school lunch program, and bus service.

Over the past decade, we have lost almost all of that. When we started losing programs, we started losing students, since families want more opportunities for their kids. The more students we lost, the more funding we lost. It is a vicious cycle. We started to lose teaching positions. Some of us had to take on three grades, and most teachers took on two grades. I can assure you it is a tremendous amount of work to give a child what he or she deserves: a quality education.

The COVID pandemic took a serious toll on our education system. Our students lost a notable amount of direct instructional time. Now that we are back full time, we need more resources to help bring students back up to meet and exceed standards.

My heart still beats for quality education for our students. I am writing to ask you recognize how vital our schools are to the future of Alaska. These students deserve our best efforts to cultivate their vast potential. These students are our future.

Please put our children in Alaska first in your budget and increase the base student allocation.

Respectfully,

Velvet Ivers

Michael Mason

From: vicki vermillion <bveaalaska@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 2:37 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: School funding

Dear Ma'am and Sir,

There is NOTHING more important than appropriately increasing public school funding.

Thank you, Vicki Vermillion
52 year resident of Alaska and mom of 2 public school graduates

Sent from my iPad

Michael Mason

From: victory lavalle <victory.lavalle@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 3:12 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: I support raising the BSA for our children.

Dear Alaska senate,

I support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaskan Students.

I support the Jan. 30th 2023 memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago.

As a parent of a special needs twice exceptional child; I have seen many angles of this lacking budget.

My daughter went from the highly gifted classroom to a general education program. Her class increased from 13-28!

My daughter became the "bad kid" that no one could deal with. The classroom toxic for all students, teachers, aids.

That all changed when she was moved into the SBBS program. She now loves school, she is thriving, succeeding, winning awards. Teachers and staff have the opportunity to meet her needs and it is beautiful. We actually now have a hope that she may go further than high school in life.

Our family is safe, healthy, and hopeful due to the amazing coaching and staff at Kasuun elementary. It's only been one year but our daughter is thriving!!!! I fear that with her moving into 6th grade the reinforcements and supports will be taken away if all middle school starts at 6th grade. If there is no increase in funding there will be more need for SRO (SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS).

Continuing to flat fund our education system is punitive and is akin to expecting better morale and performance in a workplace while treating one's employees with disrespect while simultaneously demanding that your employees work more hours for the same pay.

The BSA hasn't been meaningfully raised since 2012. This is known as flat funding. When inflation goes up but your paycheck doesn't, you have less money to spend. This is why flat funding is really a budget cut.

Please increase the BSA, keep our children safe and healthy.

Victory Cheney

1041 e 26th Ave Anchorage AK 99508

9079526200

Michael Mason

From: Windy Thorn <windythorn@dbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:06 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52 Support

I am contacting in regards to the SB52 bill. I am a parent and paraprofessional at Cantwell School in Cantwell, Alaska. I am in support of the bill.

The Denali Borough School District has been talking about closing the Cantwell and Anderson School's since before Covid-19. The district can't afford to keep the schools in the district open with the funding they have. It may be a problem of their own making, but it still doesn't sit right that schools are closing and you have the ability to change that. I am a parent to two young kids. My family is building our forever home here. I feel that all kids in Alaska should have access to quality education in their place of residence. We have come too far to take steps back. We shouldn't be taking kids from villages and sending them anywhere. We have seen the toll that can take on the student and family for years.

You have the power, use it.

Help keep our kids on track, don't continue to derail them.

Raise the BSA and help the kids of Alaska continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

Windy Thorn
907-841-4018

Michael Mason

From: Zoe Grace <fosheezoelove@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 10, 2023 12:28 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52 Support

Dear Chair Tobin and Committee Members,

My name is Zoe Foshee and I am a senior at West Valley High School in Fairbanks Alaska. I am writing to support raising the BSA by \$1,000 as proposed in SB52. In my four years at West Valley, I have seen firsthand the effects of decreasing school budgets due to unaddressed inflation. This year, I was scheduled to take AP Language, a class I had been looking forward to after learning the skill of analytical writing the year before in AP Composition. As a result of budget cuts the student-teacher ratio in my district was increased, causing class sizes to skyrocket. On the first day of classes this year, I walked into classrooms with over 30 kids. There weren't enough desks or chairs for the number of students and for 20 minutes three students learned Trigonometry seated on the floor. In the days following, we found enough chairs, but the effects of increased class size didn't stop there. My AP Language class was cut, and only 20 students had signed up. This year I have relearned things I already knew in level English classes, wasting hours of my time on topics I was already proficient at. Not only have increased class sizes left advanced students uninterested, but it has also made our school district uncompetitive in the larger educational arena. This year I have begun applying to colleges. After being accepted into the University of Columbia Barnard, and speaking with other accepted students, it has become evident that our state's devaluation of education for years and years has left its students in the dust. Therefore I urge you to please consider increasing the BSA so that Alaskan students can begin to find their footing.

Sincerely,
Zoe Foshee