



Anchorage School District

Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • www.asdk12.org

March 21, 2023

Dear Governor Dunleavy, members of the Senate, and members of the House of Representatives,

Thank you for continuing your efforts to support public education in Alaska and to fix our current education funding challenges. This is a problem that will be fixed through partnership.

The Anchorage School District (ASD) would like to express its support for education funding bills, including SB52 and HB65, which seek to address the negative impacts from years of base student allocation (BSA) flat funding. SB52 would provide a \$1,000 increase in FY24's BSA, while HB65 contains a BSA increase of \$1,250.

As you know, our Alaska Constitution prioritizes education across our great state. Specifically, the legislature is directed by law to "establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions."

The disappointing truth is, for decades, the State of Alaska (SOA) has struggled with providing consistent inflationary increases to funding. Instead, it has focused on occasional increases and intermittent one-time funding. We applaud this legislature's focus on providing an inflationary increase to the BSA.

In addition to advocating for inflation adjusted funding, we retained Piccus Odden and Associates (please see attached document) to conduct a study to apply the evidence-based method to assess school finance adequacy in our community. Evidence-based methods are supported by research as being effective at improving academic outcomes. If the SOA were to provide school funding at the level of the evidence-based model, and our schools implemented those research-based practices, student achievement in Alaska would dramatically rise. This study provided 29 recommendations, along with the cost to implement evidence-based practices across numerous dimensions including: special education, English-language learners, educator compensation, and instruction. **The study shows that an evidence-based Base Student Allocation is estimated to be \$13,612 to implement every evidence-based improvement across the District.**

The magnitude of this recommended BSA increase will give significant weight to the bold vision expressed in HB 65 and SB 52. Without action to adjust the BSA, we along with other partner districts across Alaska will face enormous and

Educating All Students for Success in Life

Anchorage School Board Margo Bellamy, President

Carl Jacobs, Vice President

Dora Wilson, Clerk

Kelly Lessens, Treasurer

Dave Donley

Pat Higgins

Andy Holleman

Superintendent Dr. Jherrett Bryant

unprecedented deficits. It will lead to increased class sizes, staff shortages, layoffs, and even worse academic outcomes. We cannot allow this to happen.

SB52 and HB65 will allow districts to provide education at the same level it did seven years ago. However, that can't be the new normal. Education funding must be continuously adjusted to account for inflation and to support evidence-based practices. More work needs to be done if we are truly committed to creating the finest state education system in our country. An evidence-based BSA would be a profound investment in student outcomes, and the study commissioned by ASD makes a compelling case for doing so.

We continue to advocate for an updated state-wide study to modernize the District Cost Factor within the Foundation Formula. Continuing to use outdated data may be negatively impacting Anchorage-area youth and hampering the Legislature's ability to accurately target much needed funding. Upon passage of the BSA legislation, we urge you to make this a top priority.

Thank you for your commitment to create solutions for the education funding challenges in Alaska. SB52 and HB65 are a positive step in the right direction, and it is imperative that the SOA implement a multi-year plan to ensure that those investments in our students are maintained. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



Jharrett Bryantt, Ed.D., Superintendent



Margo Bellamy, School Board President

/s/ Carl Jacobs

Carl Jacobs, School Board Vice Chair

/s/ Dave Donley

Dave Donley, School Board Member

/s/ Dora Wilson

Dora Wilson, School Board Clerk

/s/ Pat Higgins

Pat Higgins, School Board Member

/s/ Kelly Lessens

Kelly Lessens, School Board Treasurer

/s/ Andy Holleman

Andy Holleman, School Board Member



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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 GENERAL FUND + ESSER 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	

School Type	FY 2024 GENERAL FUND + ESSER PTR – Grade Level Groupings							
	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

Doniece Gott

From: Casie Warner <casierw@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 6:07 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52-BSA Increase

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for increasing the state base student allocation for public education in the state of Alaska. As you know, providing a high-quality education is crucial to the success of our children and the future of our state. However, our current level of funding for education falls far short of what is needed to ensure that every student has access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

According to the National Education Association (NEA), Alaska ranks 38th in the nation for per-pupil spending in public schools. The state's base student allocation, which is the amount of funding allocated per student from the state government, has remained stagnant for over a decade. In 2011, the state base student allocation was \$5,680, and in 2021 I was still \$5,680. This lack of increase in funding has made it challenging for schools to keep up with rising costs, such as teacher salaries, benefits, and classroom supplies.

At the elementary level specifically, Alaska's student-teacher ratio is higher than the national average. According to the NEA, Alaska has a student-teacher ratio of 17.8 to 1, compared to the national average of 15.8 to 1. This means that Alaska's elementary school teachers are responsible for more students than their counterparts in most other states, making harder to provide individualized attention and support to each student.

Given these statistics, it is clear that Alaska is not currently providing its students with the resources and support they need to succeed in school and beyond. By increasing the state base student allocation, we can ensure that our schools have the funding they need to provide a high-quality education to every student, regardless of their background or zip code.

At the elementary level, in particular, we need to provide our students with a strong foundation in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. This requires adequate resources for textbooks, technology, and classroom supplies, as well as high qualified teachers and support staff who are able to provide individualized attention and support to each and every student. Unfortunately, our current level of funding for education in Alaska does not provide for these critical needs.

Increasing the state base student allocation would go a long way toward addressing these issues. By providing more funding for education, we can ensure that our students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed in school and beyond. This investment in our children and our state's future is essential if we are to build a strong, vibrant, and prosperous Alaska.

Increasing Alaska's Base Student Allocation (BSA) can also have a significant positive impact on the state's economy. By increasing the BSA, Alaska can attract and retain highly qualified teachers, provide better resources and facilities to schools, and ultimately improve students outcome. These improved outcomes can lead to a more highly skilled workforce, which can attract new businesses to the state and help existing businesses expand. In addition, increasing the BSA can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Improved education outcomes can lead to higher graduation rates and better-prepared graduates, which can result in a more highly skilled workforce. This, in turn, can attract businesses and industries that require highly skilled workers. As these businesses and industries grow, they can create new jobs and spur economic growth throughout the state. Furthermore, increased funding for education can lead to new investments in research and development, which can lead to new innovations and new businesses in a variety of

sectors, such as technology, healthcare, and energy. Overall, increasing Alaska's BSA can create a virtuous cycle of economic growth and prosperity for the state.

I urge you to take action to increase the state base student allocation for public education in Alaska. Our children deserve nothing less than the best education we can provide, and we owe it them and to our state to invest in their future.

Thank You,
Casie Warner
Po box 1964
Seward AK
99664
Cell (907)-491-0544
casierw@gmail.com

Doniece Gott

From: Patricia Perry <iscream4me@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 5:19 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

I am emailing my comments, as I'm currently outside of Alaska and will not be able to testify.

As a Life-Long swimmer, and one of the reasons I moved to Seward "for its GREAT pool", I'm in shock it's on the chopping block heading to closure! I have swam in the pool 2-3 times weekly for the past 15 years.

I've watched each Spring as the individual grade level classes come to the Seward pool for 1-1/2 hour lessons given daily for a week. I can't begin to imagine how many young lives were saved from potential drowning due to learning to swim at a convenient school program, in a seaside community. The kayak service companies rent the pool for training their staff to handle emergency situations - thus potential adventure kayaking accidents prevented. The appreciation of aquatic sports heightened through competitive swimming at school and club sport levels. Our little pool produced Alaska's ONLY Olympic Swimming Athlete and she WON Gold! She continues to encourage aquatic fitness and sport competition through youth camp programs that draw in children and young adults from across the state and beyond. Last summer I met a young high school girl who came to our local pool to be able to swim in a camp with the opportunity to meet our Golden Athlete, Lydia Jacoby. The amount of PURE JOY can easily be heard in the decibel level of youth enjoying an open swim session on any day it occurs! Living in a community within the Northern Boreal Rainforest it's a HUGE plus to have an activity available for the entire family to enjoy - swim lessons, lap swimming, individuals coming to do their physical therapy rehab in various swim sessions, mom and tot swim time, club swimming, open swim fun... all very much needed when the wind blows the rain sideways and outside sports are bleak!

The pool is used regularly for an exercise/recreation/rehabilitation for mentally and physically challenged individuals who are engaged with a professional assistant as part of their treatment.

Swimming has long been known to be the BEST all around sport for a healthy body!

PLEASE pass Senate Bill 52 to increase the Base Student Allocation which is sadly lacking due to substantial inflation!

Sincerely, Patricia Perry - 73 year old Swimmer and Voter

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Great place to rest your head - www.BearLakeLodgings.com in Seward, Alaska - proudly top rated on TripAdvisor. Online booking & availability service to "BOOK DIRECT" on our website.

Doniece Gott

From: Ann Fineman <907hikerann@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 5:08 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA increase

We desperately need to increase the bSA allotment in anchorage. My grandson's math class of algebra II doesn't have enough seats for everyone assigned. This is terrible for my grandson and the teacher. Please put the bickering aside and get things done.

Speak for our children 🙏

Ann Fineman

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Katy Ruff Soden <k7ruff@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 3:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB 52

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

I am a voter in Anchorage, a parent of children in the Anchorage School District, and the spouse of an educator in the Anchorage School District. I am writing to express my support for SB 52 and urge you to increase the Alaska BSA. Our family has seen firsthand the worsening situation in Anchorage over the past few years with increased class sizes, teacher burnout, and loss of opportunities for students. We want to stay in Anchorage because we love it here but I have grown increasingly worried about the state of the public schools. This legislature needs to act now to revive our educational system by adequately and sustainably funding our schools. Adequately funded public education is essential not only for the well-being of Alaskan children but also to encourage economic development and growth in our state. Please pass SB 52 through the Senate.

Thanks for your consideration,

Katy Soden

Doniece Gott

From: Daniel Seiser <dans@bdsak.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 10:48 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin
Subject: I Support SB 52

I support increased funding of public education. I operated a professional business in Alaska for 40 years and have recently retired. But, I have 3 grandchildren attending public schools and have seen the increasing class size and diminished elective choices they are being offered at school. My Grandchildren are the future workers and wealth builders for Alaska. Stagnant funding also makes teaching a financially dubious career choice in Alaska. Stagnant funding reduces resources in the classrooms as operating costs continue to increase. Lack of appropriate funding levels for schools is inequitable for smaller communities with few resources to supplement reduced programs and to provide competitive employee compensation. Please increase the education support funding to support a prosperous future for Alaska.

Dan Seiser AIA A4LE LEED AP
Senior Architect

BDS ARCHITECTS ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING | ROOF TECHNOLOGY

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Doniece Gott

From: Walt Sonen <ijit31@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 12:14 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA increase

greetings:

i would like to weigh in here concerning my support for the bill before you to increase the state support for the per-pupil funding for alaskan kids. it is my belief that more funding will help retain teachers, attract good teachers and increase the educational well being of our kids; and thus increase these kid's chances of success and the well being of alaska and beyond. it's a win-win for everybody. i think the school administration is well paid and i would certainly hope that they will direct these additional funds to support the education of our kids in the best and most efficient manner possible. with inflation upon us, certainly \$100 per year, per student doesn't seem like too much to ask.

thank you, walt sonen, seldovia

Doniece Gott

From: mary griswold <mgrt@xyz.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 11:20 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

(support for funding source added)

I support a significant increase to the basic student allowance not a temporary increase to education funding as proposed by the House. We need sufficient funding to catch up with inflation and a long-term funding commitment. We cannot successfully educate our children when we lose good teachers and programs.

I support a 75/25 split of 5POMV with 75% going to essential government services, including education. It is past time to develop a sustainable fiscal plan. We must not bankrupt the CBR before dealing with this situation.

Mary Griswold
Homer

Doniece Gott

From: Maggie Matheson <maggie.b.matheson@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 11:05 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Concerns of BSA

I thank you all of your tireless work and I just wanted to voice my concerns. We have sat stagnant on BSA increase since 2017. The same way that we need to budget our household incomes we should be doing the same with our school BSA increases. It's pertinent that we have a BSA increase this year to match where we should be if we were not stagnant.

Fairbanks is looking at losing our ELP program which caters to our brightest and smartest students. And our district is also looking at losing our library assistants. We are taking away from our most vulnerable population when we should be catering to this population.

My biggest concern, though, is retention of quality, teachers and staff. We need to remain competitive, and with the BSA, not increasing for over five years, makes it, so that we are no longer competitive. Fairbanks is a really harsh environment that requires quality teachers that will require competitive wages.

I hope this reaches you well. I thank you for your time and consideration.

Tlazohcamati,

Maggie Matheson, MBA
(907) 978-5012

Doniece Gott

From: mary griswold <mgrt@xyz.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 8:58 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

I support a significant increase to the basic student allowance not a temporary increase to education funding as proposed by the House. We need sufficient funding to catch up with inflation and a long-term funding commitment. We cannot successfully educate our children when we lose good teachers and programs.

Mary Griswold
Homer

Doniece Gott

From: Alix McKee <alix@alaskan.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 7:50 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: permanent increase to the BSA

Dear Senators:

Thank you for your commitment to service to the people of Alaska. I am writing to urge you to support a permanent increase to the Base Student Allocation for public education funding for K-12 schools in the State of Alaska.

School districts can be better stewards of these funds when know what to expect and can plan ahead. One time funds prevent districts from being able to commit to projects that require a long term commitment. They are loathe to hire staff, adopt multi-year strategies for improving services, or invest in training for curriculum or programs that unfold over multiple years. As a result, one time funds are used for one-off items - capital projects, furniture, technology purchases, materials stockpiling and so forth. These are also important expenditures, but they aren't likely to lead to increased teacher retention and improved student performance.

I strongly encourage you to support a large, permanent increase to the BSA.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth McKee
4761 Sportsman Drive
Anchorage, AK 99502

Doniece Gott

From: Billeen Carlson <billeenc@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 7:08 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee.

I am writing to you today as a mother, a teacher, and a 3rd generation, lifelong Alaskan.

I am the sole certified teacher at Nikolaevsk K-12 school in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. This year we have 37 students from kindergarten to 11th grade and we have managed with just me, my instructional aide, and a SPED aide on our instructional staff. We have shared our administrator with Ninilchik school, so this year I have also been acting admin four out of five days a week.

I'm sure you've heard that our district, state, & nation are experiencing a crisis-level administrator & teacher shortage. Nikolaevsk, with its remote location and tumultuous, poverty stricken community, has a particularly hard time attracting and retaining educators.

Our school has had an open elementary teacher position all year and has been unsuccessful in attracting a qualified applicant. With the funding deficit facing our school district next year, our district administration has proposed making the elementary position only a .4 FTE. We will most certainly be unable to attract a qualified applicant.

I believe that my work is my calling. My hope is that every child that I serve will have a greater capacity for resilience, health, and productivity. I am devoted to my school and the students in it because I am a born and bred, 3rd generation Alaskan who hopes to make our communities healthy and strong. Two of the students in my school are my own children.

That being said, this year has been a grueling trek. My team and myself have been stretched beyond reason to provide a quality education for our students. I have consistently worked 10 hour days with no lunch or prep periods. I have covered lunches & recess duties all year. I am the teacher of record for every child, kindergarten through 11th grade and am personally responsible for teaching every subject and every elective for my 17 6th-11th graders. My instructional aide has 20 students from Kindergarten to 5th grade. She is absolutely brilliant but as an uncertified undergraduate, she is working way beyond her pay grade. We do not believe we can manage another year this way.

I believe that many legislators are seeking to dismantle our public education system. Since our nation's founding, a solid public education system has been the cornerstone of a healthy nation and a functional democracy.

I implore you, for the sake of our communities, state, and nation, please support a robust and well-funded public education system and vote yes on SB 52. I would tell you that we owe it to our children, but honestly, we owe it to ourselves to be able to grow old in a safe and healthy community.

Thank you for your time.

Michael Mason

From: btyndall <btyndall@protonmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 5:15 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52

Dear Senator:

I am contacting you today in opposition to SB 52. Throwing money at our ineffective education system has not helped in the past and will not do so at this time. We need accountability and proof of outcomes attached to any money we send to our schools. Most of the allocated funds go for administration rather than the classroom and that is a travesty.

Alaskans continue to pull their children out of our public schools and are moving toward homeschooling with much better outcomes.

Please reject raising the BSA this year and put in place a system that will actually fix the problems.

Thank you,
Barbara Tyndall
North Pole

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

Michael Mason

From: pastorino@gci.net
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 8:24 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SB52

I am a retired educator and have personally experienced the year-to-year chaos brought about by lack of and uncertain educational funding. My kids and grandkids all attended schools in the Juneau School District, and I have taught both in Juneau and Anchorage; and I can assure you that our students would do better if the stress for teachers regarding funding was not an issue and they were able to actually adequately plan from year-to-year. Crisis management for education must end. Raising the BSA is not only a wise decision, it is long over-due. Raising it \$1,000 would provide stability that is so desperately needed. Using general funds meant for the classroom to fun other needs should not be an option. The classroom is where teaching and learning happens for our children. They need to be our number one priority; they will be making these difficult decisions in the future. So, I ask you to consider and support SB52. Thank you for your service, and, particularly, for your interest and support for education.

I hope I am not too late for this; I was traveling.

Barbara Pastorino

Juneau Resident

907-500-2390

Michael Mason

From: Ashley Dewey <ashley.dewey@k21schools.org>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2023 12:19 PM
To: Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Forrest Dunbar; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Shelley Hughes; Sen. James Kaufman; Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Robert Myers; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Mike Shower; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Sen. David Wilson; Rep. Jamie Allard; Rep. Jennie Armstrong; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Rep. Julie Coulombe; Rep. Mike Cronk; Rep. Maxine Dibert; Rep. David Eastman; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Zack Fields; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Alyse Galvin; Rep. Andrew Gray; Rep. Cliff Groh; Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Rebecca Himschoot; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. DeLena Johnson; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Kevin McCabe; Rep. CJ McCormick; Rep. Thomas McKay; Rep. Donna Mears; Rep. Genevieve Mina; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Josiah Patkotak; Rep. Mike Prax; Rep. George Rauscher; Rep. Justin Ruffridge; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Calvin Schrage; Rep. Laddie Shaw; Rep. Will Stapp; Rep. Andi Story; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Jesse Sumner; Rep. Cathy Tilton; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Rep. Sarah Vance; Rep. Stanley Wright; Senate Education; Senate Finance; House Education; House Finance
Subject: What's the Point?

What is the point of anything?

What is the point of eating?

What is the point of working?

What is the point of exercising?

What is the point of educating?

What is the point of learning?

What is the point of building?

Building our homes, our families, our communities?

The point is tomorrow. People carry on, to be ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow is the immediate future, but there is a distant future. That distant future has our Kindergarteners grown and running businesses and towns. They will be your medical providers, your military members, your teachers...

Is the future important to you? Do you care about the place you call home? The country as a whole? It all starts with that Kindergartener. And every day and every year- counts. It is not just about SEEING the value. You must INVEST in the value for it to reach full potential.

Alaska schools are sorely under-funded. Inflation hasn't been considered. It doesn't matter who you are, what you do, your future will be impacted if we don't take the investment in our children's education seriously.

Basic Student Allotment needs to be raised.

--

Ashley Dewey
Fawn Mountain Elementary - Health Aide
(907) 228-2201

Gunalcheesh, to the first people of this land. We pay respect to those, past and present, who have stewarded Tlingit Aanii since time immemorial. I respectfully acknowledge the traditional first people of this land, the Saanya Kwaan and Taanta Kwaan.

Michael Mason

From: Anna Polonowski <annawaan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:47 PM
To: gov.alllegislators@alaska.gov; Education; gov.pressoffice@alaska.gov
Subject: Please Raise the BSA!!!!

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, I have deep concerns about the impact that large class sizes, teacher shortages, and program cuts like language immersion will negatively have impact my children as students and your community.

Continuing to flat fund our education system is punitive to students, teachers, parents and our communities at large.

Do you expect better morale and performance in your workplace while treating your employees with disrespect and demand your employees work more hours for the same pay???

Please raise the BSA!

Anna Polonowski

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Marka Anne Brooks <brooks.markaanne@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:16 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Marka Anne Brooks
Subject: Alaska Education Funding

Senate Education Committee

First of all, thank you very much for your work on behalf of Alaskans. I am writing to encourage you to raise the base student allocation by at least \$1000. I would very much like the increase to make up for the years of cuts and inflation, but understand it is a challenging proposition. Our most important resource are our children. Our most important service to those children is to provide them with an education. We need to attract the best, brightest and most innovative teachers. Without providing them a competitive salary and benefits, we cannot keep them in Alaska. We need to continue to provide a strong public school system.

The need for funding does not end with public schools, but also extends to the University and beyond. I am an engineer and years ago worked to increase engineering and STEM education funding so we can grow our own engineers. At the time, it was estimated that it cost thousands of dollars (\$75,000 comes to mind) to recruit and train an engineer to work and move them to Alaska. As employers quickly found out, these engineers often did not stay in Alaska, but moved back to the lower 48. The reasons were many, but it became obvious that we needed to educate our own.

The same is true for teachers, truck drivers, engineers, scientists, health care workers, lawyers and many other essential jobs in Alaska. We need a comprehensive review of wages and salaries to find a way to pay competitive salaries and benefits.

We have become a state of its all about me, it's all about me getting the largest pfd. If we lowered the size of the pfd and funded services, especially the important employee benefits that retain people in Alaska, we would greatly help Alaska and future generations.

To find the money, let's not fund another mega project, or buy into the carbon credits idea. Let's find a way to get our fair share of our oil and mining resources. Perhaps not is not the time to increase salaries to key state officials when we've cut or eliminated so many jobs.

Anne Brooks, P.E.,
1704 Rogers Park St, Anchorage, AK 99508
brooks.markaanne@gmail.com
907-242-6405

Michael Mason

From: Angel Hayes <angelhayes@dbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:52 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Literally on my knees begging

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you on behalf of all Alaskan school districts. Never have we needed help financially than now. I believe the one time BSA increase of \$1000 needs to be voted in, for such a time as this.

Teachers are quitting jobs they were born to do because of burnout, and frustration. As the cost of living has risen over a year ago my district has not been able to give pay increases to meet the need, show their appreciation or show that they value their staff members. Students are suffering from the loss of some of the most gifted instructors in the United States of America. Students are not meeting their full potential and going the route of homeschooling. They are not being challenged to critically think and to strive for high quality work. Their education from home is a basic Abc, 123, rhetoric. New concepts and ideas are being excluded leaving students at a huge disadvantage. Alaskan students matter, and so do their teachers! Help alleviate the load off of the teacher's backs so that they can focus on what they do best; TEACH! And help Alaskan students by providing them with the very thing Alaska promises them; HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION!

Increase the BSA. Alaska is depending on you to do the right thing!

Angelica Hayes
Paraprofesional

Michael Mason

From: Angela Head <angela.a.head@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:21 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please support the Senate Bill to increase BSA for our Schools

Hello,

My name is Angela Head and I am a parent and community member in Homer, AK. I have three children, one who is a Paul Banks Peanut and two pre-schoolers that will be starting next year in Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. My husband and I are business owners who live here year round. We own two residences here and love our community.

Our schools need all the financial support they can get. Operating at a 44.4 million deficit for next school year will impel many negative cuts to our resources. I value our educators not only for the job they do 8-5 with my kids but for the community members they make. Please keep their jobs here in the District.

The increase in BSA is critical AND fair. Taking into account the inflation rate over the past 7 years (date of last increase), all of our schools have LOST money. The overhead costs remain the same, but the BSA hasn't changed. The pandemic was so harmful to our schools and our students; the only saving grace was the Federal money that bailed out our district over the past 2 budget cycles.

Please show that you value education at the state level by voting for this increase. My family is depending on quality public schools for the next 18 years as well as all the wonderful resources we enjoy by having a healthy and robust educational system.

Thank you for your time and service,

Angela

Michael Mason

From: Allison Brooking <aabrooking@alaska.edu>
Sent: Thursday, April 6, 2023 5:18 PM
To: House Education; House Finance; Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Vital BSA increase

Hello.

A BSA increase is absolutely vital to the future of our state. Alaska already faces a massive teacher shortage that will only get worse without intervention. When being a teacher comes with no benefits at all, people will be pushed out of a career that they would otherwise love and students will lose vital opportunities for education. Education is one of the most vital areas of government spending and we cannot afford to let schools fall victim to inflation. The less funding schools are given, the less of a future our young people will have.

Thank you,
Allison Brooking

Michael Mason

From: Carol Carman <d29@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2023 3:21 PM
To: House Education; Senate Education
Subject: BSA

House and Senate Education Committee Members,

I have recently learned the Senate Education Committee plans to increase the BSA by \$1000 this year, which would increase the education funding by more than \$500M. The increase is actually more per student because there is a decrease of 2000 students.

Our state doesn't have the extra money to spend especially during a recession. The State Education department has requested a \$30 per student increase, which is still more than I like but definitely more reasonable.

How about holding School Districts accountable to successfully educate our children rather than continue to give them more money?

A good thing for you to do would be to reorganize districts. We have 56+ districts and administrative costs for each. Hawaii has 1 district with twice our population. I think we should have 2 districts: rural and bush (road system and off road communities), as their needs are so different, but similar to other communities in those two types of region.

Sincerely,

Carol Carman
D29 Chair
d29@mtaonline.net
907-746-8670 (home / msg)
[Facebook](#)

Michael Mason

From: Carly Lehnhart <calehnhart@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 6:23 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Increasing BSA

To whom it may concern,

My name is Carly Lehnhart, and I have been a kindergarten teacher for the Juneau School District for 10 years. I was born and raised in Juneau, I got my masters in Education at the University of San Francisco, and came back to Juneau to teach. I chose to come back to Juneau, because I love the unique qualities of Southeast Alaska, and the connectedness of this community. I would love to stay here in my community and continue to teach in the place I was raised. I love teaching and come from a multi generational family of teachers, but in the last 2 years I have found myself questioning if this job is sustainable for me. I am not alone in this. Teachers are leaving, leaving the profession, or leaving the state to go teach somewhere else. With flat funding for education and inflation rising 21% since 2017 it is breaking our school systems down. Wages have not kept up with inflation, teacher retention is low, programs are being cut, support staff is being cut, and prices are rising for every item on the schools budgets. We are at a breaking point. The continued cuts to education funding are unacceptable. I have watched our class sizes rise to 40 in our middle schools, and to 28 in my kindergarten class with very limited para professional support if any at all. These are our babies, they are 5 and they deserve to have an adult who has the capacity to listen to their stories, zip their coat, tie their shoes, help them learn to read write, etc. This is not what is best for our kids, and not sustainable for our state and our future. Teachers can't sustain these levels of stress, and the students are seeing it and feeling it every day. Is that what we want for our children and the future leaders of our community? This is directly connected to the BSA. 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. We need to value our future, and to do that, we need to fund our schools.

Thank you,
Carly Lehnhart

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Brian Smith <brmsmith6@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 3:25 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for increasing the Base Student Allocation

Hello,

I tried to call in to give my testimony, but the provided phone number didn't work, so I am emailing my testimony instead.

I just wanted to add my voice to those calling for increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$1,000 or more. Our great state needs to fund education as a priority, and we can't expect to maintain a strong education system without at least funding it to a level to keep up with the pace of inflation.

To provide our personal perspective: My wife and I moved our family from Washington state to Alaska two years ago. She is a (phenomenal) public school teacher, and she had to take a pay cut to move jobs from WA to AK at that point in time.

In the two years since we moved, the pay gap between her previous position in WA and her current position in AK has widened significantly because WA has increased teacher pay to try to keep pace with inflation, whereas AK has not.

If we as a state want to attract and retain high quality educators in the long term, we need to properly fund education. Increasing the BSA is the way to do this.

Thank you for your time.

Brian Smith
405 S Nordic Dr.
Petersburg, AK

My name is Brandy Harty, and I am life long resident of Fairbanks and a proud product of its local public schools. I am a mom to two elementary-aged students enrolled in our local public schools, a certified Special and Elementary education teacher, and a current member of our local School Board.

My husband is a civilian medivac pilot and member of the Alaska Army Guard. As an aviator, we had many options as to where we could choose to live and raise our family. He was not originally from Alaska, but due to the excellent education I was afforded as a student here and the access to world-class outdoor recreation, we chose to raise our family here.

However, that choice to remain in Alaska becomes harder to make each year. As both the product of our local schools, an educator in them, and now a parent, I have had a front-row seat to the steady decline in the services and quality of educational offerings due to seven years of flat funding our schools. As a child, I had a robust offering of music, art, and after-school sports and activities. I came from a low-income home, accessed our free and reduced lunch program and still was able to play the drums in band starting in 3rd grade, learn the fundamentals of art from teachers like Mr. Lentine and be a member of a competitive jump rope team started by our PE teacher... and all of this was just in elementary school! It was this amazing world-class education that inspired me to become a teacher myself.

The current reality of our schools stands in stark contrast to what I received as a student in Fairbanks 30 years ago. The school where I attended elementary, Joy School, was closed last year due to budget cuts. The elementary art program I remember so fondly was eliminated last year as well. There is no more Orchestra or Band in our elementary schools. Programs like my jump rope team are few and far between because we cannot pay educators well for the additional contract hours needed to sustain them. In short, my own children are receiving an education nowhere near the caliber that I did.

The proposed \$1000 BSA increase is an excellent start, but even an increase of that size will just cover current programs without providing any needed funds to bring back what was lost or provide meaningful and well-deserved pay increases to our educators. Alaska has a teacher recruitment and retention problem, and we will not be able to find staff for our schools without being willing to invest in our educators both through salary and retirement. I thank you for your time and commitment to Alaska and its students. Please know that the decisions you make here will have a profound impact on every community in Alaska. Please put Alaska's children first by increasing the BAS to no less than \$1860.

Michael Mason

From: Robert Love <bjmelove@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:53 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Re: Senate Bill 52

Alaska Legislators ,
Just want to communicate what big supporters of the \$1000.00 per student for the BSA. As retired Alaskan Teachers who put in three decades in working with students we see the need for increased resources.
Thank You for what you do!
Bob & Jan Love

Sent from my iPad

Michael Mason

From: Beth Short-Rhoads <bethshortrhoads@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:10 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sen. Bert Stedman
Subject: Please support SB 52

Dear members of the Senate Education Committee,

I'm writing with strong support for SB 52 and raising the BSA for Alaska's schools. As a parent who has seen the impact that education has on the entirety of a child's life, it is astonishing that the BSA has been stagnant since 2017. Inflation alone has made the current funding level shockingly outdated and equivalent to not merely flat funding but a sizable funding cut.

One real-life casualty of this cut to education funding in Alaska is our middle school library here in Sitka. This library no longer has a librarian and is open for a very limited amount of time each day. At a time when students should be learning how to do research and use new technologies for the 21st century, children at Blatchley Middle School have almost no library access and zero access to a trained librarian.

Alaska's schools can't continue to lose funding year after year and still educate our kids in a way that makes them competitive with the rest of the country. Please pass SB 52 and raise the BSA.

Thank you for your service,

Beth Short-Rhoads
Sitka

Michael Mason

From: Benjamin White <whiteb@sitkaschools.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:54 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 52

Hello Education Committee,

My name is Ben White and I wanted to send a quick message **strongly encouraging** you to support senate bill 52. Alaskan schools and their students need this funding to provide the best education possible for the future of our state! I also asked that you support the January 30, 2023 memo from the legislative budget and audit committee that indicated that the BSA would need to be raised by **MORE** than \$1000 to restore public education funding to levels from eight years ago!

Please, please, invest in the future of our great state by investing in the students of our great state! Thank you for your time and commitment, it is greatly appreciated.

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Michael Mason

From: Rhonda Bohart <rhonda.bohart@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:25 PM
To: Sen. Gary Stevens
Cc: Rep. Louise Stutes; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman; Rep. Ben Carpenter; Senate Finance Committee; Senate Education; House Finance; House Education
Subject: HB65 - In favor of increasing the Base Student Allocation

I am writing in support of HB65. We need to increase the Base Student Allocation. We need to support our kids, our future of Alaska, and our teachers. If our kids do not receive great educations in Alaska, families will leave to find other states with better education systems, and we will lose our current and future work force. If we do not support our teachers and staff we will lose great educators and staff to other states.

We live next to the ocean. Our kids need to know how to swim, which they will only get if they have access to a pool. Our community also needs an outlet for swimming during the dark, windy days of winter. The pools supports our students and our community.

Our current teacher/student ratio is already on the high end. Covid hit schools hard. We have a lot of kids who need extra help catching up. Having fewer staff will only hurt the students, as they will not be able to have the extra help.

We need to keep our Student Success Liaison. With so many students taking distant education classes because of the lack of options at our high school, we need to keep the person who is overseeing these students. We cannot expect high school students to be able to navigate online classes on their own. They need the guidance and accountability of an adult.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ben and Rhonda Bohart (Parents of two students at Seward Elementary)

Seward, AK

907-229-1759

Michael Mason

From: Mackenzie Pope
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2023 9:00 AM
To: Michael Mason
Subject: FW: Be a Hero for Alaska's Public Schools

-----Original Message-----

From: betterwithart@everyactionadvocacy.com <betterwithart@everyactionadvocacy.com>
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2023 11:33 AM
To: Sen. Löki Tobin <Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov>
Subject: Be a Hero for Alaska's Public Schools

Dear Senator Loki Gale Tobin,

Budgeting is not my strong suit and I do not envy the work needed for changes to occur but I can tell you that the expectations of a teacher in a room with 30 or more 5th graders is absolutely UNATTAINABLE. There is no way to know, connect with, provide for, and properly engage and teach that many students in rooms designed to hold 20-24 students. We have no room for belongs, not to mention their personal lives and how they impact learning. We as teachers have more and more expectations and less and less support in our buildings. We are having students write messages of self harm in their notebooks and have literally no one to support them, no counselor, no assistant principal, no school psychologist, and for the lucky few we might have a nurse that if not busy can at least provide a safe room for the student to be. This is just one example of how our schools are under performing due to lack of funding that can very much lead to loss of life not to mention loss of interest in learning, personal growth, and an inability to create equitable healthy futures for our community citizens.

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.

Thank you for your consideration and service to our great state.

Sincerely,
Meghan Bundtzen
600 W 11th Ave Anchorage, AK 99501-4331 betterwithart@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Melissa Burnett <melissa.burnett@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 3:01 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SB52

Hello,

My name is Melissa Burnett and I am currently a member of the Board of Education for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. I am writing in support of SB52 – Increase Base Student Allocation. Education as a whole is currently suffering. School Districts are facing drastic measures statewide when it comes to budget. Closing of schools. Losing valuable and much needed Teachers and support staff. Statewide teacher retention and recruitment is struggling. This year the Fairbanks North Star Borough School district is facing cuts to our teaching staff, our support staff, our safety and library assistants, our admin, and curriculum just to name a few. Last year we closed 3 schools.

Without properly funding education and increasing our BSA our education and test scores will continue to dwindle as teachers will continue to become hall monitors and babysitters rather than educators.

We in Fairbanks believe in providing an excellent, equitable, education, in a safe and supportive environment so that all students will succeed. A belief that every year is getting harder and harder to believe due to the cuts and budget problems we are facing with the loss of revenue. We have amazing Teachers, We have amazing programs, and to cut them further is a disservice to our community and to our children, who will one day maybe sit in the very seat which you hold.

The Alaska Constitution Article 7 section 1 states “The legislature shall maintain public schools”. Please, don’t make the same mistakes of short selling the future of Alaska.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board calls on every single one of you to help fund education by increasing the BSA by no less than \$6960. We also ask Governor Dunleavy to quickly sign and distribute increased funding to each school district in time for the 2023-2024 school year.

--
Melissa Burnett
Board of Education
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
907-699-7034
melissa.burnett@k12northstar.org

"Be the change you wish to see in the world" - Ghandi

Michael Mason

From: MICHAEL RIPKE <Michael.Ripke@matsuk12.us>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 1:01 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52

To Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Michael Ripke and I am a special education teacher in the Matanuska Susitna Borough School District. I am speaking in favor of passing SB 52. Speaking as a special education teacher I'd like to give a little background information about why it's important to fund public education in Alaska.

In 1975 congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that provides a free and appropriate public education to students with a disability. With passage of IDEA the federal government committed to pay 40 percent of the average per pupil expenditure for special education. That pledge has never been met, and from a current estimate funding is at just 15.7 percent. According to the National Education Association, last year's shortfall for funding nationwide was \$23.58 billion.

For every dollar for which our federal and state government falls short of funding here in Alaska, that leaves local education agencies having to pay more than their fair share to keep pace with rising costs and inflation from year to year.

Knowing where current funding is at for IDEA, let's look at what could happen if base allocation funding was increased for public schools next year and into the future. School districts may not have to pull as much money from their general education budgets to meet the law mandates for IDEA. Also, school districts may not have to combine special education and general education money to offset the shortfall of previous funding from the state's base student allocation formula.

What would this mean for education here in Alaska if Alaska's base allocation was increased? School districts could fund special education and general education programs at a more proportionate level. School districts would have the opportunity to develop and increase needed school programs, decrease class sizes while increasing the ratio of teachers to students in the classroom by competitively attracting and retaining qualified school personnel.

What does this mean for special education if base student allocation funding was increased? Special education teacher caseloads could be reduced. Student individualized education programs (IEPs) and their plans could be appropriately formed to meet student needs. The type and number of services students receive would not be based on the availability of personnel, programs, or resources.

By increasing the state's base student allocation funding this year, it will increase educational funding at a local level and help our educators continue to provide a quality education to all our students. These are the reasons I am in favor of SB 52.

Respectfully,

Michael Ripke
Special Education Teacher
Butte Elementary
Matanuska Susitna Borough School District

Michael Mason

From: Michael Wald <info@arcticwild.com>
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2023 4:03 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52

Hello Senators

Thank you for making education funding a priority at the start of the legislative session. This is a critically important issue not only for students but for our entire state. We desperately need to increase the BSA by a minimum of \$1000.

Education funding has not increased for years and the cost of nearly everything has increased dramatically. The state has slowly defunded our schools and many are now at a breaking point. Districts that have been solvent and responsible for decades are unable to pay utility bills. Our urban schools are moth-balling buildings. We have hundreds of unfilled job vacancies for teaching positions across the state. Our school districts need more money from the state. The funding is over due and a \$1000 increase will not even keep up with the accumulated inflation.

I urge you to increase the BSA by at least \$1000. What is more important for the future of Alaska than our youth?

Thank you for serving on the legislator.

Michael

Michael Wald
Owner Arctic Wild
Michael@arcticwild.com
907-479-8203
www.arcticwild.com

Michael Mason

From: michal <michal_1939@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 3:30 PM
To: Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman
Subject: I support increased funding for our public schools

Dear legislators:

Please support our students and teachers. Our students fare very poorly in standardized testing. School funding has been flat for a decade. Increasing funding for our public schools gives our kids a better education and invests in their future and that of Alaska. Please know that I support increasing funding for our school, at the expense of other government programs and the PFD dividend. I would also support state taxes to have excellent public schools in Alaska. As a parent of two elementary school kids in Anchorage, quality public education is a priority for me.

Thank you for your time.

Michal Stryszak
Anchorage, AK 99517

Michael Mason

From: Michele Elfers <michele@alaskaflyfishinggoods.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 3:36 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52 - Raise the BSA

Good afternoon,

Please vote to support raising the BSA a minimum of \$1000 per student. We need more funding than this for our students.

I have a daughter in middle school and one in elementary school. Their class sizes are 28-35 students per class with one teacher. I hear stories from my middle schooler of kids jumping on tables and breaking them, balls being thrown, basically chaos in class because the teacher cannot control the class with so many kids. She is not being challenged because the teachers are not able to address all the varied needs and learning levels in such large classes. She sits in the gym on many days because teachers are out and there are no substitute teachers.

Next year, she goes to high school and the highschool closest to us has a part time art teacher and kids can't get into art classes. She wants to be a designer - engineer/architect, so she is looking for math and art classes. In this same school, they are struggling to keep their CAD program.

Our schools are in crisis and there is nothing I can do for my kids, we don't have any other options. Please provide more funding now.

Michele Elfers

Michael Mason

From: thusual@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Michelle Weaver
<thusual@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 25, 2023 4:38 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please vote YES on SB 43: Sex Ed

Dear Alaska Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support SB 43, the bill to require sex ed in Alaska schools.

Please provide Alaskans with the opportunity to be well rounded and as educated as possible. This benefits people individually and Alaska as a whole. Young people deserve age-appropriate, medically accurate information about sex, reproduction, and concepts like consent, respecting boundaries, and who to turn to for help. However, many students in Alaska do not have access to the information and skills they need to protect their health and safety because public schools in Alaska are not required to provide comprehensive or medically accurate sexual health education.

Over 90% of Alaskan voters agree that sex education should be medically accurate, age-appropriate, and should cover healthy relationships, consent, and communication skills.

Please support young people in Alaska by voting YES on SB 43.

Sincerely,
Miss Michelle Weaver
4520 Eagle St Apt 2 Anchorage, AK 99503-7328 thusual@gmail.com

Testimony notes, February 8, 2023

Hi, I'm Mike Bronson, speaking on behalf of the education committee of the Anchorage branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I'm a volunteer with the NAACP here in Anchorage, and to make it clear, I'm not related to the mayor.

The NAACP is concerned because instruction levels are leaving students statewide at the bottom of the barrel when it comes to reading and math performance. On average, Alaska students are a year behind kids in the Lower 48. To catch up in one year, for example, they'd have to gain two years of academic growth.

As part of the solution, we're interested in Senate Bill 52's proposal for an additional \$257 million dollars per year for the Base Student Allocation.

However, I'm sure the Senate will get questions about it. Like, "How do you know it's the right amount?"

Here are a couple answers if you're interested in trying them on for size:

An education adequacy study was done for the Anchorage School District in 2016. Based on that study, Dr. Bishop, the superintendent, reported that adding teachers and support staff to raise academic proficiency up to successful schools Outside would cost an additional \$109 million dollars per year. If you extrapolated from Anchorage's 43,000 students to all 128,000 Alaska students, you'd find that academic improvements statewide might cost in the neighborhood of \$300 million per year. That's pretty close to SB 52.

Another way to approach SB 52's proposal is to ask how many new teachers could it hire to raise students' reading and math proficiency? For extra hours of remedial reading instruction for first, second and third graders alone, you'll need 600 or 700 new teachers statewide. That's because 20,000 kids need Tier II and III small-group reading instruction. You'll also need hundreds of new pre-K teachers for many of the 10,000 four-year olds that could use pre-K. That many new early elementary and pre-K teachers alone will cost roughly \$100 million per year.

That says nothing about helping the 50,000 older students who've fallen to less-than-proficient. It also leaves out teacher housing improvements, bus transportation, or major changes in teacher retirement you've been hearing about.

Let me finish with the question how we'll know the BSA is right? The NAACP suggests that the BSA will be enough when you see Alaska public school students reach the middle of the pack in the United States in reading and math proficiency.

Thank you.

Please see slides 5 and 6:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/ASEVRR81A1CC/\\$file/10.23.2017%20Superintendent%20Update%20Funding%2C%20Staffing%2C%20Class%20Size%20pptx.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/ASEVRR81A1CC/$file/10.23.2017%20Superintendent%20Update%20Funding%2C%20Staffing%2C%20Class%20Size%20pptx.pdf)

Michael Mason

From: Molly Hayes <mollymul@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 11, 2023 5:54 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52

Please support an increase to the student base allocation. As a parent and is an educator I am concerned about the future of our educational system. Lack of funding, makes it difficult to retain teachers and provide a high-quality education to our children. Teachers have no incentive to stay, and families have no reason to stay in the state without educational opportunities for their children.

Thank you for doing what is needed to support the future of the State of Alaska!

Sincerely,

Molly Hayes

Anchorage, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Molly Krehlik <mollyannekrehlik@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 1, 2023 4:12 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Fund our schools!

I support a significant increase to the Base Student Allocation, in an amount that will adjust for inflation and end a decade of effective flat-funding.

Fund our schools, fund our students, fund Alaska's future!

Molly Tarby

Michael Mason

From: Nancy Mendenhall <mendenhallnancy01@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:26 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB52

This is the most important Education bill for you to get passed. I have lived in Western AK since the early Sixties and most of this time in Nome School District, associated with teachers through my work on boards, committees and jobs. It is obvious how low funding has affected maintenance of our old buildings, classroom numbers size, and teacher retention. The retention problem is also related to lack of adequate housing for teachers as well as salaries not keeping up with COL. Some vacant positions funded could not get applicants this fall. The message families are getting is that the state doesn't care about the children, the working citizens of tomorrow. I know that's not true, but that's how it comes across. Thank you for fighting hard to get a significant bill passed to relieve this situation.

Nancy Mendenhall
<http://nancydanielsonmendenhall.strikingly.com>

Michael Mason

From: Nathan Erfurth <nerfurth@kpea-kpesa.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 5:09 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52 Testimony

Senators of the Education Committee:

Below is my written testimony since the meeting had to be adjourned. Thank you all for your work.

Good afternoon. I am Nathan Erfurth, President of the Kenai Peninsula Education Association.

I am testifying today in favor of SB 52 because for once, we educators are starting to see a glimmer of hope. You know the reasons why we need this, and I really want to address the way that we talk about assessment and student data in this state so that we can better capture reality, but let me share why today matters.

Educators operate on what can be made from what we have. I can sum that up into three categories; resources, passion, and hope. All of these are finite.

Our tool boxes are full of resources of many kinds. These include our initial training, our creativity, our supportive friends and family, and the strengths of our colleagues. We must also rely on what our districts are able to offer us in terms of facilities, curricula, support, and of course, competitive salaries and benefits. There are far too many educators, and *especially* support staff, that will be heading off to another employer sometime this week to make up the difference in the economy we live in.

Our passion consists of our love for the craft of education, our sincere belief in the societal and individual benefits of public education, and our sheer determination and willpower. These are the things that brought us to work for our students in the first place, and they're what make us resilient in the face of endless challenges.

All of these factors interlock with each other to create the net that we land on when things are going poorly. Whether that's a tough lesson, or it's learning about a student's challenges and struggling to help them, or it's the simple day-to-day grind of seemingly non-stop lessons and grading. It's also the meetings and hundreds of parent contacts, changing district expectations, or the ebb and flow of the public's love and hate for public educators. As we hear complaints about best practices because they're different from what some folks want education to be cut down to. Our net of support helps us weather much of this - though I'd argue much of it could be fixed or limited. Our unions are another resource that we rely on for that. But as our districts have tightened, as our officials have kicked us around, as our willpower has slowly drawn down and our hope has waned, more and more of us have left the profession and many more are poised to do so.

That's because we've been running out of hope. Hope has suffered as we've seen cuts and threats of cuts, either directly to budgets or through attrition as the base student allocation remained flat and inflation continued to strangle our districts. It has been in short supply over the last several years as elected officials at every level have lambasted education and kicked it around for sport. The public has bought into every manufactured crisis and has generated secondary crises as a result, tearing our focus from our mission. We have heard over and over of the supposed and contrived evils happening in our public

schools, and despite our full knowledge that none of that nonsense is happening, and that our students are growing not just as students but as people *every day*, we have persisted and advocated. Our hope has taken quite the beating.

That's why today matters.

This bill - and comments like Senator Tobin's that we don't just want to stop the bleeding but inject life into our education system - have begun to refill our reservoirs of hope in ways that water might refresh someone walking across the desert. We might have a chance to properly support our students - bring back arts and music, actually provide what our special education students are legally entitled to, and start building the schools we could have had this whole time.

This struggle is in no way over, and we don't know what the ultimate outcome will be, but I want to thank the committee for not only saying our students and educators are worth the investment, but also for acting on it.

That concludes my testimony.

Thank you, and have a great evening. I am always available to converse on these topics, and can be reached at 907-420-7707. I hope to see you in Juneau soon.

Best,

--



Nathan Erfurth | President
Kenai Peninsula Education Association

nerfurth@kpea-kpesa.org
kpea-kpesa.org
fb.com/KenaiEducators

Michael Mason

From: Mackenzie Pope
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2023 2:21 PM
To: Michael Mason
Subject: FW: Education Funding

From: Nina Faust <aknina51@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2023 10:48 AM
To: Sen. Löki Tobin <Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Bjorkman <Sen.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Kiehl <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>; Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson <Sen.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov>
Subject: Education Funding

P.O. Box 2994
Homer AK 99603

March 17, 2023

Legislators
Alaska State House and Alaska State Senate
Juneau AK

Dear Legislators:

As a retired high school teacher, I have watched the slow dismantling of Alaska's once celebrated and proud, quality educational system that attracted excellent educators from all over the country. Now I think our schools are less than constitutionality adequate. Funding for Alaska's educational system, K-12 and university, has been cut and underfunded for years and is now showing just how inadequately funded our schools are.

One of the first things to go was the employee pension system. Now the State's school districts are finding it very difficult to attract certified teachers, principals, and support staff. Alaska can no longer compete for the best candidates because we have no pension system nor are teachers allowed to participate in Social Security. Furthermore, salaries are no longer competitive.

Deferred facility maintenance is crippling school districts and causing unsafe conditions, as well as serious damage to facilities (roofs leaking water into school libraries). In many communities, school closures are under consideration. Counselor and nurse positions have been cut when our children are at serious risk for suicide and other mental health problems or are vulnerable to drug and alcohol addiction. Many families are still dysfunctional due to the pandemic, job loss, and financial woes. To be adequate for the level of student needs, schools should be adding counselors and nurses, not letting them go.

Wildly fluctuating energy costs have strained school budgets. Inflation has made the cost of classroom supplies, books, computers, and all that is necessary to keep up with technological changes beyond currently funded budgets.

We cannot keep cutting programs or staff after all the past cuts and the lack of any increases to keep up with cost of living and inflation. The Kenai Peninsula School District, once a district with nationally distinguished schools of excellence, is now contemplating cuts to theater programs, pools, music, art, and sports. I believe that if these cuts stand, the State will be violating the constitution. Surely we should be teaching the whole student and be including life skills like swimming and providing for those students who are artistically inclined or kinesthetically talented. For these students, the classes now on the chopping block are the reason many even come to school.

The State of Alaska is constitutionally required to provide Alaskans with an adequate educational system, not a diminished, struggling, underfunded system as we have now. We should not be having to choose between offering just basic academics or a full curriculum that includes arts, theater, swimming, and sports. We need to education the students in all areas because if we do not, those who are motivated by their artistic and kinesthetic talents that are met by these so-called "expendable classes" will be left to fall through the cracks. These cuts will be countered by higher costs to the community from increased crime, drug and alcohol problems, mental health issues, and domestic violence.

We also cannot keep increasing class size. Smaller classes means that a teacher will not have time to work individually with each student. Having worked in a classroom with more than 30 students, I know how difficult it is to even have a chance to talk individually with each student during a classroom period. Increasing class size reduces quality education.

Additionally, our university system needs to have funding restored. Scholarship programs should be fully funded and need to be predictable. Students cannot plan their educations if we keep cutting programs students need for their degrees. We should beef up our nursing program so we have more locally educated nurses here in Alaska. Provide scholarships or grants that will be forgiven if they work in state. A good university system will help bring in young people who will want to work here, especially if we make sure our system is competitive with other state universities.

Rather than continuing to avoid making the hard choices, it is time for the Legislature to devise a plan to provide stable revenue sources to fund needed state services, especially education. The out migration of skilled workers should be a warning to Legislators that folks want good schools, and they must be funded fully to meet the standard of an adequate educational program. We are at a point where we have fallen far short of that.

So I urge you to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Given all the monetary shortfalls, inflation, and continuing increased costs due to supply chain issues, energy, labor shortages, and more, I suggest raising the BSA to \$1000. To pay for this, I recommend a modest PFD because good adequately funded schools benefit each community. Change the oil tax system so the oil and gas industries pay a fair share back to the state. Institute a flat rate income tax based on a percentage of how much a taxpayer pays to the federal government. Increase the tax on vaping. We cannot cut our way to a balanced budget on the back of education or other necessary community services. We need to contribute to maintaining and providing services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Nina Faust

Michael Mason

From: Norman & Toby Campbell <ak.campbells@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:42 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SB 52

Hello dear Legislators:

I am a retired school teacher and my husband is an artist. We are thrilled about the bipartisan Senate majority vote on Senate Bill 52 to increase the Base Student Allocation by \$1000 per student.

We are in great support of this so that schools will not have to cut important programs and staff, keep class sizes reasonable, as well as helping the City of Sitka with the amount allocated from their budget for our schools.

Thank you for ALL of your incredibly hard work and for supporting this important bill.

Best regards,
Toby and Norm Campbell
123 Knutson Drive
Sitka, Alaska 99835
(907)738-2684

Michael Mason

From: Pamela Samash <christloveheals123@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 8:39 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Another idea for SB 52

Good morning 🙏

Thank you for your service to the great state of Alaska.

Regarding SB 52, I wasn't able to testify yesterday because of the Yukon Dog race here in Nenana, so I'm writing to you today.

It seems to me that many people have pulled their kids out of the public schools for one reason or another, and that has contributed to the decreased money going to the districts.

Before throwing money back into something that the public doesn't want, why not do a public survey like we did on the Aging Commission?

You can ask questions like,

- 1) What are your concerns with public school?
- 2) What method of education do you prefer for your kids?
- 3) Why do you prefer that type of education?
- 4) How can education be improved in the state of Alaska?
- 5) What areas in education should public funding go to and why?

Also, Alaska has a low score on private schooling options as compared to Nationwide.

And last, as a Homeschooling parent with my daughter enrolled in a state correspondence program, the allotment I get for my daughter is heavily regulated and I don't personally appreciate that because I'm the teacher and if that money is available as so much per child, I feel like I shouldn't have to explain what I do with it, penny by penny. I should have full access to do what I want for her education without constantly having to get permission for every dime of it.

So overall, my testimony is to wait on distributing that money until the public has a chance to express their ideas and concerns in a public survey like the Aging Commission did in the senior survey. Then the money can be sent to the areas that it can be the most beneficial. And above all, please do not touch the PFD because that's necessary for the rural people, seniors and families alike. There's no reason to strip everyone of their PFD for a school system that's clearly failing the parents and their kids.

Listen to the people of Alaska.

Thank you for your time.

Pamela Samash
Nenana, AK
907-322-2201

Michael Mason

From: Patricia Dick <sooktushaa@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:18 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 52 BSA

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am writing this to strongly support your approval of Senate Bill 52 for raising the BSA to at least \$1,000 per student. Alaska, like all states is going through a covid inflicted education crisis where we are playing the "catch up" game with many students that fell behind academically during the pandemic. In addition to that, BEFORE the pandemic Governor Dunleavy and the Alaska Legislature chose not to fund education by raising the BSA blaming it on the price of oil. Every year that the BSA has not been raised to meet the cost of inflation, our Sitka School District has lost teachers, programs, and educational opportunities for our students. The BSA has not been raised since 2017 that means for the 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 school years prices of educating Alaskan students have gone up but the state has abandoned our Alaska educational system.

How did Alaska education get tied to the price of oil? So if the price of Alaska's oil decreases then the Alaska students have less of a need for education? That's not right. **Education funding, specifically the BSA needs to have a built in education increase that matches the inflation for each year!** I could sit here and list all the education services that our Sitka students no longer receive like the middle school librarian/technology person, all 2-5 grade science classes CANCELLED forever, and I could go on and on. Voting for Senate Bill 52 raising the BSA AND putting in place an inflation proofing system so we don't find ourselves in this situation again is a **MUST DO!!**

The success of our state depends upon the success of our educational system! Thank you for all the Senate Education Committee Members do every day to improve the education of our Alaska students.

Sincerely,
Patricia L. Dick
Retired Alaska Teacher (that is still teaching)
907-321-1927
sooktushaa@gmail.com

Michael Mason

From: Eric and Tricia Miller <millerstead@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:56 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please raise the base student allocation

Dear members of the Alaska legislature,

I'm writing as a parent to urge you to raise the base student allocation this session. Kids in Alaska NEED YOUR HELP. Our children have fallen behind since Covid and the only thing that can help them get back on track is more support. And support is not free. I have two school-aged students in Fairbanks. My son suffers from a sensory processing disorder that makes it very hard for him to function in school. He's not alone. There are many kids who have similar challenges that make it more difficult and more work for them if they are to succeed. My son's school and his teachers are amazing. But they can't provide extra support because the school doesn't have funding to provide extra classroom aides. They do the best they can with what they have, but it isn't enough. Children who aren't receiving the extra support they need in the classroom suffer, but so do the rest of the kids, because their learning experience is constantly disrupted.

Because the base student allocation has remained frozen despite the enormous challenges of the last few years, education is being hamstrung in this state. Class sizes are ballooning. Cuts are affecting every single student in this state. Since children ARE the future, we are shorting the future of Alaska by this massive disservice to our kids.

Yes, I know, money is tight everywhere. But let's look at the long approach- supporting education for our kids has got to be our number one priority.

I urge you to do the right thing and vote to increase the base student allocation.

Sincerely,
Patricia Miller
Fairbanks, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Patty Wisel <pwisel07@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 11:59 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Senate Bill 52

Good morning:

My husband and I OPPOSE SB52. We do not believe that adding \$250 million into our failing public education system will help. And NOT at the cost of our PFD. Without accountability, i.e. dollars spent = increased graduation rates, testing scores, reading scores etc., there is no reason to throw more money after something that is already failing. Again, we OPPOSE SB52.

Respectfully,
John & Patty Wisel
Fairbanks, AK
907-460-4344

Michael Mason

From: Paul Rioux <paulg.rioux@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:03 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52

Committee members,

I'd like to offer non partisan praise for SB52.
Alaska education system is currently hamstrung by inflation.
Please support this bill.

Yours,
Paul Rioux
Sitka, Alaska

Michael Mason

From: Peter Daley <f355262@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 6, 2023 11:03 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: HB 65 BSA Funding

My name is Pete Daley and I am a welding instructor representing the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

I am writing in support of House Bill 65 to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

Stable, predictable funding is necessary to ensure districts can attract and retain high quality educators. The BSA has only been increased by \$30 since 2016, and the impact of inflation during that time has created a significant loss of purchasing power for school districts.

At Hutchison High School where I teach welding, we have seen the impact of insufficient funding to purchase the basics like steel, welding electrodes, and basic tools to run the welding program.

Alaska is a blue collar state with many excellent high wage, high skill, in demand construction jobs. If we cannot adequately fund training programs like welding and grow our own workers, we will have to continue to hire people from outside of Alaska to fill these jobs.

Reliable funding is key to improving student outcomes by stabilizing schools and reducing educator turnover.

Please consider increasing, as well as inflation proofing the BSA to ensure Alaska schools can continue to serve students with the quality education they deserve.

Sincerely,
Pete

Peter C. Daley M.Ed./CWI
Welding & Drafting Instructor
Hutchison High School
3750 Geist Road
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
(907)479-2261 Ext.35139
peter.daley@k12northstar.org

Michael Mason

From: Ralph Crosslin <ralphc@yakutatschools.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 9:52 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB 52 – Increase Base Student Allocation

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

It is the sincere wish of the YSD Board of Education, staff, parents, community members and students that the Committee will endorse a minimum of \$860.00 to the SBA. Among the most pressing needs our district faces are:

- Teacher recruitment and retention - two of our 7 teacher staff are serving under a retirement or emergency teacher certificate.
- Yakutat has inadequate housing to attract and retain new teachers.
- Funding basic programs is increasingly difficult.
- The district cannot afford a school lunch program.
- The district cannot afford a music or art program as it did in the past. The lack of these programs has caused parents to leave our community.
- The district does not have a school counselor to address the expanding needs of our students.
- Our school buildings are in desperate need of roof drain repairs.

Despite these deficiencies, we are proud of our accomplishments and remain optimistic that after several years of flat funding, the Senate Education Committee will endorse a significant increase in the SBA. Such an increase will, at a minimum, allow our district to continue existing programs with the hope of addressing the needs highlighted above.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph Crosslin, Superintendent
Yakutat School District

--

Ralph Crosslin, Temporary Superintendent
Yakutat School District

Michael Mason

From: Donald Trometter <drtrom@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 3:39 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Education

Dear legislators,

Please do not take our PFD funds to enhance the education budget. If you go back to the basic education of science, math, reading, etc. We do not need all the extra money into the education budget If you would get rid of the non-essential curriculum in the schools.

Kindly,

Rita Trometter
907 978 0768

Rogers Park Community Council Resolution in Support of Full Funding of Public Education

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska Constitution provides that one of the core responsibilities of State and Local Governments is to provide for public education,

WHEREAS, State Statutes provide that home rule municipalities have the authority and responsibility to provide support for public education,

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage, under its home rule authority, has accepted the authority and responsibility to act on behalf of the people in its community to ensure full funding of public education up to the State of Alaska imposed funding caps on local public education funding,

WHEREAS, investments in public education, including pre-K and smaller class sizes with high quality teachers, have increasingly been found to be a cost-effective investment in providing students and their families with the foundation they need to both help extend their education and secure larger economic opportunities¹,

WHEREAS, investments in public education have increasingly been found to be associated with measurable improvements in student achievement results²

WHEREAS, increased investments in public education will be critical to help remediate the wide range of learning losses that arose during the pandemic³

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has fallen way behind Washington State where they have been increasing their investment in public education and significant investments are needed to catch up with salaries across Washington State where Anchorage competes to attract and retain highly qualified and effective teachers,

- ❑ WA State Avg. Teacher Salary Increase FY1718-FY2223 (5 years) = 50%
- ❑ Anchorage CPI-U Inflation Increase FY1718-FY2223 (5 years) = 20%

¹ R. Chetty, "Opportunity Insights: Education: How Do We Amplify Education as an Engine of Mobility? Using big data to help children get the most from school," <https://opportunityinsights.org/education/>, retrieved November 27, 2022

² C.K.Jackson, C. Wigger, H. Xiong, "Do school spending cuts matter? Evidence from the Great Recession", American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, 12(3), 304-335, (2021); C.K. Jackson, C. Mackevicius, "The distribution of school spending impacts", Annenberg Institute at Brown University, Education Working Paper 21-357

³K. Shores, M. Steinberg, "Fiscal Federalism and K-12 Education Funding: Policy Lessons from Two Educational Crises" (Great Recession and COVID-19), Educational Researcher Policy Forum (2022)

- AK State Avg. Teacher Salary Increase FY1718-FY2223 (5 years) = 8%, rapidly falling behind local inflation

WHEREAS, Governor Dunleavy, in his February 16, 2019, revised budget submission to the Legislature, eviscerated public education funding levels [cut State K12 Aid to School Districts by 24%] while proposing minuscule support for early reading [cut \$10.00 in K12 Budget for each 1c proposed for early reading], setting the stage for a dramatic decline in the real, inflation adjusted state financial support of public education over his first term in office,

WHEREAS, declining state financial support of public education simultaneously lowers the State of Alaska imposed funding caps on local public education funding (Anchorage), unduly limiting our local community's ability to increase funding to address local challenges,

WHEREAS, Governor Dunleavy, lead the successful effort to eliminate state support of school bond debt reimbursement which had helped enable local communities to sustain local school facilities with major component replacements, roofs, heating/ventilation systems, seismic upgrades, aging water/wastewater system, sprinkler and lighting system replacements, and increasing space to meet the needs of the students whose needs were formally recognized in the George W. Bush Administration's Americans with Disabilities Act, exacerbating a growing backlog of needed facility repairs and replacements which have led to compromises in local classrooms, e.g, leaking roofs, aging heating and ventilation systems, old lighting systems.

WHEREAS, inflation in Anchorage has increased by 14.4 % over the past four years [BLS, Anchorage CPI-U, October 2018-October 2022 percentage increase] and dramatically eroded local purchasing power for our schools, teachers, students and families in our community,

WHEREAS, several States have significantly increased their support of public education over the past four years and are looking to continue to do so, including making major investments in teacher compensation to enable them to attract and retain highly qualified and effective teachers

- Education Week, Teaching Profession, "Teacher Salaries Aren't Keeping Up with Inflation", April 27, 2022:
 - "When adjusted for inflation, the average teacher salary decreased by an estimated 3.9% over the last decade"
 - "Some states have passed significant pay raises this year...Mississippi teachers... an increase of more than 10 percent...Alabama will receive raises that range

from 4 percent to nearly 21 percent...**New Mexico teachers will see their base salary levels increase by an average of 20 percent**

- National Association of State Budget Officers, Budget Blog, July 29, 2022:
 - **“The strong growth in tax collections and revenues exceeding forecasts led many states to report their largest surplus in state history, with governors calling for...additional investments in areas including education and infrastructure...”**

WHEREAS, the most recent University of Alaska Institute of Social and Economic Research Teacher Compensation Study [UAA ISER, Salary & Benefits Schedule and Teacher Tenure Study, Table 2, 2014 data, November 13, 2015] indicated that Anchorage needed to increase teacher salary schedules by 10% [from 1.24 to 1.38 X Washington State’s average teacher salary, adjusted for Alaska and Washington State purchase power parity]; extending the findings of that teacher compensation study to 2022 teacher salaries, indicates that Anchorage *now needs to increase the local teacher salary schedule by 44% in order to become competitive with Washington State teacher salaries* [MAFA Analysis of Alaska and Washington Teacher Salaries, 2014-2022]

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the Rogers Park Community Council supports the full funding of public education to the level required in Alaska to enable our teachers, students, families and communities to recover from:

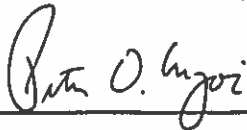
- the significant decline in real inflation adjusted loss of purchasing power for our schools,
- the significant decline in real inflation adjusted Alaska and Anchorage teacher compensation levels, especially as compared to Washington State, which has historically provided Anchorage and Alaska with a supply of new highly qualified and effective teachers,
- the decline in student learning growth rates and complications arising from mental health challenges that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- the increase in class sizes to:
 - 50% above recommended levels in the critical early K-3 Elementary grade levels
 - 28% above recommended levels in 4th – 12th grade levels

- o which significantly hinders aggregate class instructional pace and effectiveness⁴
- a decline in teacher professional development and classroom support services which enable our teachers to help our students learn and grow,
- a decline in support staff salaries and benefits relative to competitive alternatives which has led to high staff vacancy rates which have had a negative impact on students and their families, e.g., bus driver compensation failed to attract/retain an adequate supply of drivers leading to significant and disruptive rationing of bus service this fall in Anchorage

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) requests that the Anchorage School District advocate for the full funding of the preK-12 public education budget required to meet the needs of our students and families with the Governor, Legislature, Assembly and Mayor to enable Anchorage students and families to recover from funding and pandemic deficits and get back on track for strong, sustained academic growth and preparation for success in life,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) requests our Anchorage Assembly and Mayor advocate for full funding of public education with the Governor and Legislature to enable our children, families and community to begin to recover from funding and pandemic deficits and get back on track for strong, sustained academic growth and preparation for success in life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) requests our Anchorage Legislators advocate for full funding of public education with the Governor and their colleagues in the Legislature to enable our children, families and community to begin to recover from funding and pandemic deficits and get back on track for strong, sustained academic growth and preparation for success in life. The Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) would anticipate full funding of education to be a first priority of bills passed by the legislature this session.



Pete Mjos, Rogers Park Community Council President

Date: December 12, 2022

Votes For: 32

Votes Against: 2

Abstentions: 2

⁴ MAFA Comparison of Fall 2022 class size to ASD Evidence Based Public School Funding Model (2016); MAFA Review of R. Chetty, et al, Opportunity Insights and referenced education research on benefits of smaller class size/ challenges of larger class sizes presented to Alaska State Senate Finance Committee and joint meeting of the Alaska State House/Senate Education Committees, 2019

Michael Mason

From: Sandi Trumbower <strumbower@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2023 12:13 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52

Committee Members,

I am writing asking for your full support for Senate Bill 52 which proposes to raise Base Student Allotments by \$1,000.

Student Allotments have not been since 2016. Inflation has increased, cumulatively, 24.65% since that last increase. It is astounding to me that even if the full \$1,000 is passed it still will not meet the level of inflation since the previous increase. Our students are our future. Invest in them!

Thank you for your attention.

Sandra Lee Trumbower
246 A St
Anderson, AK

Michael Mason

From: Sandy Blomfield <aksandyb@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 7:07 AM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Sandy Blomfield
Subject: BSA Funding

Senators,
(Education Committee)

Your committee has the opportunity to change the role of education in Alaska.

As you consider the increase in BSA per student funding, I respectfully request that you consolidate all education funding to follow the student rather than the local school districts.

We have all witnessed the dramatic decline in educational scores for Alaskan kids despite more legislative funding. Elementary students are subjected to a liberal and dangerous agenda from many local school boards.

Now is the time to TIE the BSA funding allotments and district monies directly to the parent/students for SCHOOL CHOICE!

You have the power to make positive changes in our youth statewide with funds appropriated directly to students. The Senate Education committee must take this bold stand now to ensure we offer our Alaskan children the best education possible by allowing SCHOOL CHOICE through funding.

I have been an education advocate for many, many years and will continue to work on behalf of our vulnerable children. If you need assistance, please refer to the lower 48 states that have already allowed, through statute, funding following the student.

This is our responsibility and I hope you take it seriously.

Thank you,

Sandra Blomfield

Michael Mason

From: Sandy Blomfield <aksandyb@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2023 2:21 PM
To: House Education
Cc: Senate Education
Subject: SB52/HB65 BSA FUNDING

Legislators,

I would strongly encourage you to strengthen educational opportunities in Alaska for all students.

You have been tasked to change the BSA amount per student during this legislative session. Be courageous! Take this opportunity to tie student funding to the student rather than the school district.

The time has come, post Covid, to digest what has taken place for our students over the past few years. The local public school may not be the most prudent educational system for some students. This was certainly apparent in the standardized testing results where Alaskan kids are falling far short of reading and mathematics; at some public schools students don't even register on the chart for competency and literacy.

So many opportunities are now available for parents and students to choose the educational method that works best for them along with promoting their own family value systems.

By you directing the money to the STUDENT every student will be at the same level for education opportunities. This creates equity in education!

Where there is competition, the best programs will strive and survive. We all want our children to have the best educational opportunities available to them.

I strongly encourage you to take the step, as many other states have already done, and increase BSA funding and allotments tied directly to the Students in the great state of Alaska.

I await your email responses and will be available for further discussion.

Sincerely,
Sandy Blomfield

Michael Mason

From: fam randall <907randalls@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2023 5:05 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Increase the BSA

Hello,

As a mother of 6 ASD students, a past foster mom and Anchorage resident for 11+ years I support and encourage you to increase the Base Student allotment.

This increase to match inflation is long overdue.

Because the BSA hasn't been increased ASD is now forced to close 5 Elementary schools in the poorest parts of town further limiting these most at-risk kid's support systems putting them in a larger school farther from their home also making it harder for them to get to school or forcing some kids to walk through dangerous parts of town past homeless camps.

ASD is also now forced to choose between which sports to drop (swimming and diving currently on the chopping block which if it is only offered as club then that will further limit at-risk kid's abilities to get to and pay for their only chance to swim on a swim team).

Now 6th grade band and orchestra is also on the chopping block which will limit numbers of musicians feeding into middle school.

As my son who swims and plays the trombone said when he learned about these possible cuts-"they're cutting all the ways we cope!"

The list goes on and on.

Please do all in your power to do what's best for kids- especially those most at-risk, increase the BSA!

Sincerely, Sarah Randall

Sent from my iPhone

Michael Mason

From: Scott Hayden <scotthayd@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2023 2:35 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: I support raising the BSA by over \$1,000

Thank you for taking up the BSA increase. We as a State have to commit to a meaningful, robust education for every child in Alaska.

Right now we are not doing that.

It is long past time for an education funding increase for Alaska. The Base Student Allocation has fallen far behind inflation, and our schools are showing it. A friend started teaching 6th grade this year at a Title 1 school with 38 kids in her 6th grade classroom. About 1/3 of those kids are special needs kids, and because of unfilled positions at the school they were not receiving their legally mandated support.

Ask yourself what kind of education those special needs kids are receiving. Without extra help on math, will they learn how percentages work? Without extra help in reading, will they even learn what a sentence is? And what about the smartest kids in that class -- with a teacher occupied by students (*who should legally* have aids assisting them) throwing tantrums on the floor, is that teacher able to teach the rest of the class to their full potential?

The Anchorage School Board is grappling with ways to solve these problems, but without adequate funding they struggle in vain. My kids are in the Anchorage School District. I do not believe they are able to reach their full potential when class sizes are over 30 kids in a classroom.

At a minimum the BSA has to be adjusted to catch up with (and keep up with!) inflation. I support an increase of *at least* \$1000 per student to the BSA. We don't just need to stop the bleeding, we need to repair the damage.

Class sizes need to be closer to 25, not 35!

We have to invest in a solid, meaningful education for these kids. With the resources currently available, they are not getting what they need.

Please increase the BSA to a level that keep our schools healthy and our kids learning.

Sincerely
Scott Hayden
12304 Hilltop Dr
Anchorage AK 99515

**CITY OF SELDOVIA
RESOLUTION 23-35**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SELDOVIA, ALASKA
SUPPORTING THE INCREASE OF THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION THROUGH THE
STATE OF ALASKA LEGISLATURE**

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula School District has a projected FY24 budget deficit of \$13,076,851 and the Board has identified the following funds:

- KPB fund to the maximum allowable (above FY23 contribution amounts): \$2,188,830
- Remaining ESSER III funds [Covid last tranche]: \$6,439,215
- Unassigned Fund Balance – FY22 \$2,354,271 [portion]: \$821,581

to lower the deficit to \$3,627,225.

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has proposed cuts to the budget of \$3,627,225 which include increases in Pupil to Teacher Ratio; closure of pools, closure of theaters, and elimination of staff, including the Susan B. English pool and staff; elimination of Student Success Liaisons; reduction to school supplies; reduction to extracurricular travel and safety equipment, hockey ice funds; cuts to Athletic Directors.

WHEREAS, the FY25 Budget will no longer have the ESSER III funds, and the School District will have an additional deficit of \$6,439,215.

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska legislature is proposing to increase the Base Student Allocation Rate which was last raised in 2017 and has not kept up with inflation as follows:

- Senate Bill 52: \$5,960 to \$6,960 (increase of \$1,000)
- House Bill 65: \$5960 to \$7,210 (increase of \$1250)

WHEREAS, either of the bills will eliminate the deficit and position the School District with sound and stable funding including FY25.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the City Council of the City of Seldovia, Alaska supports the increase of the Base Student Allocation Rate through the State of Alaska Legislature so that education is funded to support sound and stable funding

- for the success of our students as educated and well-rounded Alaskans,
- for the recruitment and retention of teachers and staff,
- for community activities that support families and attract and retain workforce to Seldovia, the Kenai Peninsula and Alaska.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the City Council of the City of Seldovia on this 13th day of March, 2023.

ATTEST:



Liz Diament, City Clerk

APPROVED:



Jeremiah Campbell, Mayor



Michael Mason

From: Sherman Caruthers <shermancaruthers@dbsd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:22 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: SB52

Dear distinguished members of the Alaskan Senate.

I urge you to please consider a yes vote for the bi-partisan SB52 that is in the hopper. It has been 6 years since we have had an increase of funding per student and with the rise of inflation in recent years, I fear that the "status quo" approach of flat "flat funding" will end up with teachers and programs for our youth to be cut due to expense.

Please vote yes on SB52

Sincerely,
Claude Sherman Weinberger-Caruthers
Big Lake, Alaska

--

Sherman Caruthers
Secretary/Vendor Coordinator
Denali Peak Correspondence/Homeschool Program
Wasilla Office
(907) 357-2730

February 14, 2023

To our Alaska Legislation:

Sitka High School student council is writing to you today to advocate for our education. We believe that Senate Bill 52 will help with mental health, keeping extracurriculars in our schools, CTE programs, teacher retention and more. By increasing the BSA it not only helps students today but future generations of students in Alaska.

As you know, Senate Bill 52 is "An Act relating to education; increasing the base student allocation; and providing for an effective date." This will raise the BSA by \$1,000, which is huge for our state and education. Our district alone would receive around \$1.3 million, which would cut our deficit down. If the BSA increases, our local government will be able to grant us additional funds.

Our first point is the importance of increasing the BSA. How much of an increase is needed? Well, just to match school funding levels in 2009, we would need to increase the BSA by around \$2,200. Think about the occurring inflation since 2009! Schools around Alaska are having to make tough decisions about what programs to keep. Here in Sitka, we are already at the bare bones. If we cut one teacher, then we cut an entire program. If a program is cut, then we will lose the interest of students who are on the fence about education to start with. Howard Wayne, the American Government teacher here at Sitka High School, says "With inflation driving up the costs of things like fuel and supplies, if we do not add to the BSA, programs will be cut, and schools will close."

Secondly, mental health is particularly important to all the students in our school. By not funding schools and forcing cuts, these programs that are considered "extra" will no longer enable students to discover their passions and easily find a reason to be happy at school. To provide additional information on mental health in Alaska, as of 2020, Alaska had the second highest suicide rates in the country, and it was the seventh leading cause of death. For many students, the highlight of their days are their extracurriculars. With limited access to mental health professionals in our school, any additional cuts on mental health services would negatively affect students. This is something we will need to face if the BSA is not significantly increased.

Finally, we would like to touch on teacher retention and retirement. Over the years, retirement programs for teachers in Alaska have continually gotten worse and worse. In fact, Alaska holds the record for the state with the worst teacher retirement package. Specifically in Sitka, the cost of living is so high that teachers who began working in the district after the year 2005 might not have enough money in their retirement savings to live off. This is because in 2006, Tier 3 began and the retirement packages were dramatically cut. Teachers are also unable to collect social security. If teachers even want to retire, "They'll have to invest their own money in the bank," is what Howard Wayne said regarding this issue. Increasing the BSA would also help teacher retention and retirement. Teacher retention is essential because of the relationships built between students and teachers over many years. Building these bonds creates safe spaces for students and allows for a better school environment. Additionally, the cost of hiring and training new teachers every year is an expensive process. By creating a competitive market for teachers, we will see higher teacher retention rates and higher quality teachers attracted to our beautiful state.

In conclusion, thank you for taking the time to read this letter. A BSA increase of \$1000 would help our schools keep teachers and programs and allow students access to mental health services. As elected members it is your constitutional responsibility to fully fund education in the Great State of Alaska. We hope you consider a significant increase to the BSA and supporting Senate Bill 52 for the future generations of students in Alaska.

With highest regards,

Sitka High School student council

Frankie
Amber
Erin Myers
Guadalupe Torres
Clive Sean

Justin
Sierra

David

Jivra
Edward
Danica Majeski

Angie
Al

Michael Mason

From: casey mapes <YAK2YOU2@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 7, 2023 3:45 PM
To: Senate Education
Cc: Yvonne Baker; Carol Pate
Subject: SB 52 comment

Hello,

My name is Casey Mapes, I am a member of the Yakutat school board of education in Yakutat, and I am a concerned parent of an Alaskan student .

I wish for my comment to be considered regarding SB 52, which moves to increase the base allotment per student. AASB's request for an increase of not less than 860.00 per student, is the barest of minimums that should be considered. It is my personal feeling it should be a good deal more than this amount. Inflation has more than doubled nearly all expenses in Yakutat in just one year's time, meanwhile, the per student base has remained flatlined without a raise at all since 2017. This is absolutely unacceptable. We have a responsibility as Alaskan adults whom, many of us were given an opportunity to receive a good quality education here in this state. We owe it to paying this forward to the next generation, and we absolutely are not doing so at this time. I can attest that without this proper funding, our school budget has suffered tremendously. We are forced as a district to not fill much need positions, that would have diversified the classes offered to students, or has caused us to double, even triple classes under one teacher. This is just not the right way at all for us as a people. Education simply HAS to become paramount in your budget planning, if we are to remain a functional society into the future. Give our kids the best education we possibly can, and it will pay in spades, every time.

In addition to giving a fair and solid raise to the base per child allotment, I feel proper consideration should be given towards an additional offset to outlying bush communities that have less children enrolled than bigger schools, and also have an even much steeper inflation rate. Because these kids come from small districts, does not, and should not mean that they should receive less opportunities to access quality education. Fuel is many times more expensive here, housing for teachers is also, our district is struggling. As a result, so are our students testing scores. They aren't given a fair chance to succeed in the secondary schooling system.

Please, make Alaskan kid's education first, Thank you in advance for taking my comment to heart, and giving it fair consideration.

Casey Mapes

Mar 21, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for increasing the state base student allocation for public education in the state of Alaska. As you know, providing a high-quality education is crucial to the success of our children and the future of our state. However, our current level of funding for education falls far short of what is needed to ensure that every student has access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

According to the National Education Association (NEA), Alaska ranks 38th in the nation for per-pupil spending in public schools. The state's base student allocation, which is the amount of funding allocated per student from the state government, has remained stagnant for over a decade. In 2011, the state base student allocation was \$5,680, and in 2021 it was still \$5,680. This lack of increase in funding has made it challenging for schools to keep up with rising costs, such as teacher salaries, benefits, and classroom supplies.

At the elementary level specifically, Alaska's student-teacher ratio is higher than the national average. According to the NEA, Alaska has a student-teacher ratio of 17.8 to 1, compared to the national average of 15.8 to 1. This means that Alaska's elementary school teachers are responsible for more students than their counterparts in most other states, making it harder to provide individualized attention and support to each student.

Given these statistics, it is clear that Alaska is not currently providing its students with the resources and support they need to succeed in school and beyond. By increasing the state base student allocation, we can ensure that our schools have the funding they need to provide a high-quality education to every student, regardless of their background or zip code.

At the elementary level, in particular, we need to provide our students with a strong foundation in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. This requires adequate resources for textbooks, technology, and classroom supplies, as well as highly qualified teachers and support staff who are able to provide individualized attention and support to each and every student. Unfortunately, our current level of funding for education in Alaska does not provide for these critical needs.

Increasing the state base student allocation would go a long way toward addressing these issues. By providing more funding for education, we can ensure that our students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed in school and beyond. This investment in our children and our state's future is essential if we are to build a strong, vibrant, and prosperous Alaska.

Increasing Alaska's Base Student Allocation (BSA) can also have a significant positive impact on the state's economy. By increasing the BSA, Alaska can attract and retain highly qualified teachers, provide better resources and facilities to schools, and ultimately improve student

outcomes. These improved outcomes can lead to a more highly skilled workforce, which can attract new businesses to the state and help existing businesses expand. In addition, increasing the BSA can create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Improved education outcomes can lead to higher graduation rates and better-prepared graduates, which can result in a more highly skilled workforce. This, in turn, can attract businesses and industries that require highly skilled workers. As these businesses and industries grow, they can create new jobs and spur economic growth throughout the state. Furthermore, increased funding for education can lead to new investments in research and development, which can lead to new innovations and new businesses in a variety of sectors, such as technology, healthcare, and energy. Overall, increasing Alaska's BSA can create a virtuous cycle of economic growth and prosperity for the state.

I urge you to take action to increase the state base student allocation for public education in Alaska. Our children deserve nothing less than the best education we can provide, and we owe it to them and to our state to invest in their future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Casie Warner
907-491-0544
Po Box 1964
Seward Alaska
9664

Michael Mason

From: Martin Niemi <cmniemi@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:05 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Public School Funding

I support raising the BSA by at least \$1,000 as the LBA Committee reports is needed to restore Public Education to funding levels from 8 years ago. Flat funding is not supportive of our students & thereby unacceptable. Also, I support restoring defined benefit retirement plans for teachers (TRS) & other school employees (PERS) to recruit & retain staff. It's time to stop punishing our public school students & staff.
Thank you.

Christine Niemi from Douglas, Alaska
& grandmother of 3 young children who are future Alaska public school students.

Michael Mason

From: CJ Koan <CJ.Koan@pm.me>
Sent: Saturday, February 18, 2023 11:18 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Stop the BSA increase!

Senate Education Committee Members,

Please stop the increased spending!

I have recently learned the Senate Education Committee plans to increase the BSA by \$1000 this year, which would increase the education funding by more than \$500M. The increase is actually more per student because there is a decrease of 2000 students! Why do the schools need more money with less students? Why do we keep rewarding poor outcomes? Why are you not looking for ways to hold the school districts accountable for poor performance?

Our state doesn't have the extra money to spend especially during a recession. The State Education department has requested a \$30 per student increase, which is still more than I like but definitely more reasonable.

Sincerely,

CJ Koan
Wasilla

P.O. Box 1330
675 Second Street
Cordova, AK 99574



(T) 907-424-3265
(F) 907-424-3271
www.cordovasd.org

**RESOLUTION OF THE CORDOVA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Resolution No. 2023: 03**

**A RESOLUTION ADVOCATING FOR AN INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION TO
CONTINUE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

WHEREAS, Cordova City School District is thankful for the support of education stakeholders in our community; and

WHEREAS, the success of the education system in Cordova is dependent on community members, parents, students, teachers, administrators, and the School Board, along with adequate funding support provided by the State of Alaska and the City of Cordova; and

WHEREAS, public education available to all students without exception is foundational to our democracy and is required by the state constitution; and

WHEREAS, Cordova children deserve to be invested in because they define the future success of our community, the state, and our country; and

WHEREAS, the School Board governs with a philosophy that aims at providing the best possible education for our students, not the minimum education due to variables and constraints outside the Board's locus of control; and

WHEREAS, the state's foundation budget formula, which determines state aid to each district, has been woefully out of date for years, thereby underfunding school districts for essential educational services; and

WHEREAS, despite flat state funding, increased costs of living, and rising costs of goods and services, the District is still expected to appropriately educate students while having no means, itself, to generate revenue; and

WHEREAS, the District has analyzed its operational budgetary needs and has estimated a shortfall of approximately \$926,000 for FY24 in order to maintain the status quo; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 65's proposal of a \$1,250 increase to the Base Student Allocation closely aligns to meeting the shortfall needs of the District for FY24; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as the governing board responsible for ensuring a high-quality public education for each student in our community, the Cordova School District Board of Education is resolute in strongly advocating for an increase to the Base Student Allocation in order to continue providing a quality education for our students.

Approved by the Cordova School District Board of Education on March 22, 2023.


_____, Board President

Michael Mason

From: D A <davidcharlesalexander@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 2:30 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Public Comment Bill SB52

I am writing in support of increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$1,000. The BSA has not had a significant increase in many years. As a direct result, our schools are currently underfunded and our borough (Denali) is being forced to consider closing two community schools.

A quality public education system is a key element in attracting and retaining residents to our community and to our state.

Please support this increase to the BSA.

David Alexander
Denali Park, Ak 99755

Michael Mason

From: Dawn Adams <dawnadams@dbsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 10:53 AM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Support for SB 52 and BSA increase

Dear Senators -

Thank you for your service to the current and future citizens of Alaska.

As a school board member in the Denali Borough, our board like many others is struggling with balancing our annual budget with our commitment to doing what is best for the students.

I am writing to advocate for increasing the Base Student Allocation and tying future increases to inflation. The AASB resolution for an increase of at least \$860 would go far in helping our district to meet our commitment to students and teachers.

Without a BSA increase we are faced with the reality of needing to close schools which will crush the hopes of families in those communities. No community school will diminish the interest of future families to move into those areas if their children are faced with long bus rides to attend a brick and mortar school.

Please make up for the impact of inflation after 6 years of flat funding. Our borough assembly has maxed out it's financial support, we have to look to the state to fulfill its responsibilities to the children.

Respectfully yours,

Dawn Adams
Seat G, District 4
Denali Borough School District

Michael Mason

From: deb.naspinsky@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Deborah Naspinsky
<deb.naspinsky@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 25, 2023 11:00 PM
To: Senate Education
Subject: Please vote YES on SB 43: Sex Ed

Dear Alaska Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support SB 43, the bill to require sex ed in Alaska schools.

Young people deserve age-appropriate, medically accurate information about sex, reproduction, and concepts like consent, respecting boundaries, and who to turn to for help. However, many students in Alaska do not have access to the information and skills they need to protect their health and safety because public schools in Alaska are not required to provide comprehensive or medically accurate sexual health education.

Over 90% of Alaskan voters agree that sex education should be medically accurate, age-appropriate, and should cover healthy relationships, consent, and communication skills.

Please support young people in Alaska by voting YES on SB 43.

Sincerely,
Mrs Deborah Naspinsky
23345 Muley Cir # 670088 Chugiak, AK 99567 deb.naspinsky@gmail.com