

Senator Tobin, I am a member of the Nome School Board but I am writing to you as an individual today about the BSA. I have 16 descendants who have gone through, or are currently in the Nome School District system, and three others in other school districts of Alaska currently. I have also taught at many levels in Alaska until retirement. I very much appreciate your understanding of education needs.

My statement:

It is not fair to the children of Alaska, or to the future of the state, to not have a consistent, recurring, and fiscally realistic level of funding for the BSA. We struggle each legislative session for what should be common sense and are left short-funded. What does this predict for their progress, and their future when they set out for post-secondary training, then to join the labor force?

School districts should not have to depend on unpredictable funding levels from the legislature, or grants, in order to keep basic operations intact and able to meet the needs. This district, like so many others, has old buildings and power and safety systems needing maintenance and upgrading. We are sick to see increased turnover in good teachers leaving due to unrealistic salaries and benefits, and K-4 classes increasingly above advised levels. We have support positions we annually can't keep filled anymore. Now we have to deal with inflation too. Our Nome City Council has been each year more generous in its support and wonders why our State continues to neglect our students. I feel the schools are caught up in political trade-offs, or the legislature as a whole doesn't understand that education, thus the BSA, must have realistic, consistent funding. Thank you much for your support and for passing this on.

**Nancy Mendenhall**

<http://nancydanielsonmendenhall.strikingly.com>