

**CITY OF KACHEMAK
KACHEMAK, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 2023-16**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF KACHEMAK, ALASKA, REQUESTING THE STATE OF ALASKA MAKE A MEANINGFUL INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

WHEREAS, The City of Kachemak is within the Kenai Peninsula Borough, which is required by AS.29.35.160 to constitute a borough wide school district and establish, maintain, and operate a system of public schools on an areawide basis; and

WHEREAS, Paul Banks, West Homer and McNeil Canyon Elementary, Homer Middle and Homer High Schools are Kenai Peninsula Borough School District schools attended by students who live within Kachemak city limits; and

WHEREAS, Maintaining high quality public schools is important to the quality of life of Kachemak residents; and

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

WHEREAS, At current funding levels the State's base student allocation will only provide 59.5% of fiscal year 2024 Kenai Peninsula Borough School District education funding and local government contributions will make up the majority of the balance; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is facing a \$13.1 million budget deficit for fiscal year 2024, requiring an increase in class size and the elimination of programs important to students and community members; and

WHEREAS, Alaska legislators are considering bills in the House and Senate to raise the base student allocation; and

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

WHEREAS, The Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly adopted Resolution 2023-07 on March 14, 2023, requesting the State of Alaska make a meaningful increase to the base student allocation for public schools.

NOW, THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the City Council of Kachemak, Alaska, requests a meaningful increase to the base student allocation of Alaskan students to bridge the fiscal gap created by a lack of inflationary increases to the base student allocation over the last several years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to Governor Dunleavy, the Kenai Peninsula legislative delegation, the President of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education, the Education Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate, and other interested parties.

PASSED and ADOPTED by a quorum of the City of Kachemak Council on this 11 day of April, 2023.

CITY OF KACHEMAK


Connie Isenhour, Mayor

ATTEST:


Debbie Speakman, City Clerk

Doniece Gott

From: LoAna Benton [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 10:41 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Pass SB 52

Dear Honorable Senators,

I am writing to urge that SB52 be passed with great haste.

I am the Lead Teacher and site administrator for Twin Hills School in Twin Hills, Alaska. Our school is greatly impacted by the inflation of the past few years. Our district is facing huge cost increases in areas we cannot change such as heating oil, transportation, shipping, food, and baseline costs of goods. In addition, we face difficulty hiring qualified staff, which impacts the services we are able to provide students. A one time payment, while helpful in immediate cashflow, does not solve the challenges we face.

At Twin Hills school, we are currently in crisis due to budget shortfalls:

- 1- Our fuel cost at Twin Hills has increased significantly in the past 2 years. This rise in cost translates to a rise in cost of keeping the building open.
- 2- Our food service cost has risen significantly. Some of our food items have increased in cost by 68% in the past 2 years. The quality and taste of our food items has been impacted by what we can afford to purchase, and that impacts student motivation.
- 3- The cost of air transportation, which is an absolute necessity at our site, has increased significantly. Because we must use air transportation for freight to get necessary supplies, we have less money in our budget for educational field trips and sports travel. Opportunities for travel are essential for students from bush communities to gain experiences to draw from and increase their knowledge and comprehension.
- 4- Because we haven't had funding to allow for salary increases, I have been unable to recruit adequate staff. Our district had to decrease our certified teaching staff from 3 teachers to 2 teachers. This means 2 human beings are responsible for teaching grades k through high school, and meeting the needs of 2 students with significant intensive special needs. In my 3 years as site administrator, we have only had a janitor for 6 months. We have only had the cook position filled sporadically. We have an instructional aide position that has never been filled, and we rarely have subs when staff is out. This is mostly because we are unable to offer pay competitive with other jobs available. I've had local community members tell me our rate of pay is not enough for the high level of energy it takes to work with children. This means our instructional staff is daily being pulled away from student instruction in order to keep our building safe and clean, and to make sure our children are not hungry. Students miss out on instructional time, and student learning is impacted.

Given the importance the state of Alaska has placed on reading instruction by passing the AK READS Act, it is essential that the state provide funding to adequately staff our schools so that our instructors can focus on the task at hand. Passing SB52 would be a step in the right direction. Not passing it would be a sign that the state isn't willing to back their educational policies with funding.

LoAna Benton
Lead Learner
Twin Hills School
[Email: lbenton@swrsd.org](mailto:lbenton@swrsd.org)
Phone: (907)525-4215
Mobile: (907)493-2313

Run with the Pack!

**CITY OF KACHEMAK
KACHEMAK, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 2023-16**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF KACHEMAK, ALASKA, REQUESTING THE STATE OF ALASKA MAKE A MEANINGFUL INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

WHEREAS, The City of Kachemak is within the Kenai Peninsula Borough, which is required by AS.29.35.160 to constitute a borough wide school district and establish, maintain, and operate a system of public schools on an areawide basis; and

WHEREAS, Paul Banks, West Homer and McNeil Canyon Elementary, Homer Middle and Homer High Schools are Kenai Peninsula Borough School District schools attended by students who live within Kachemak city limits; and

WHEREAS, Maintaining high quality public schools is important to the quality of life of Kachemak residents; and

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

WHEREAS, At current funding levels the State's base student allocation will only provide 59.5% of fiscal year 2024 Kenai Peninsula Borough School District education funding and local government contributions will make up the majority of the balance; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is facing a \$13.1 million budget deficit for fiscal year 2024, requiring an increase in class size and the elimination of programs important to students and community members; and

WHEREAS, Alaska legislators are considering bills in the House and Senate to raise the base student allocation; and

WHEREAS, On February 287, 2023, the Legislative Finance Division Director stated to the House Finance Committee that "today, the base student allocation is the lowest it's been in the last 20 years – adjusted for inflation; and

WHEREAS, The Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly adopted Resolution 2023-07 on March 14, 2023, requesting the State of Alaska make a meaningful increase to the base student allocation for public schools.

NOW, THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the City Council of Kachemak, Alaska, requests a meaningful increase to the base student allocation of Alaskan students to bridge the fiscal gap created by a lack of inflationary increases to the base student allocation over the last several years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be sent to Governor Dunleavy, the Kenai Peninsula legislative delegation, the President of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education, the Education Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate, and other interested parties.

PASSED and ADOPTED by a quorum of the City of Kachemak Council on this 11 day of April, 2023.

CITY OF KACHEMAK


Connie Isenhour, Mayor

ATTEST:


Debbie Speakman, City Clerk

Doniece Gott

From: Juliet Eames [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 8:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Fwd: SB52 -My testimony

Can help me get this to where it can still be heard? Life is far too busy and keeping up with deadlines in the legislature is difficult.

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Juliet Eames. My husband and I moved to Fairbanks 10 years ago. We have six children that have attended Barnette Magnet School (K-8 lottery school) and Lathrop High School. My husband is a physician at FMH and I devote my time to our home and family. My kids' ages range from 7-18. We have both been very involved in the community, and especially, within the schools themselves. I am currently serving as PTA President for the second year, for our K-8, nearly a full time job.

By having a large family, kids in all the various age groups, and varied involvement, I feel like I have a pretty good handle on how the lack of budget is affecting our schools and children.

My husband and I value education very highly and put a lot of energy into trying to give our kids the best opportunities for their growth and development. The quality of education in an area is one of the top two deciding factors in where we live.

Fairbanks can be a very difficult place. It's a land of extremes. It gives a lot, but demands its fair share. Those first few years were very difficult, for me, especially. On the hardest days, the thing that got me through, was the phenomenal education opportunities at Barnette Magnet School. It was worth the cost to hear the kids, enthusiastic about their learning, and all the different things they were both experiencing and being exposed to.

As they grew and entered high school, I found that Lathrop had many unique offerings as well. There were several languages to choose from, a variety of STEM experiences with nationally recognized teachers. They had an excellent choir and drama program, and a good variety of AP offerings with quality teachers.

There were also classes such as building trades, ground school pilot courses (at West Valley) and small engines (Hutchison) that they were able to take advantage of. These are the kinds of programs that breathe life, energy, and interest into their education, and develop them as people. They also offer more diversity, as they appeal to kids with all abilities.

In the last two years, especially, we've seen quite a few hits. First it was a half position here or there. Then a full position and some reshuffling or class size increases. Then, entire classes. Last year, entire schools.

Offerings are becoming pretty fundamental now. Language in K-8 is gone. There is only one language left at Lathrop, despite the fact that many colleges require 2 years of foreign language for admittance. That nationally recognized teacher I mentioned, was pulled last year from some of his exceptional STEM offerings, to teach basic math classes. He currently teaches 3 STEM classes, concurrently, in the same classroom, multiple periods of the day, just to make them available with the cuts.



In our K-8, another excellent teacher is teaching Advanced math to the middle schoolers for 15 minutes (4 times a week) during either her break, or at the beginning of other classes she teaches, in order to make it available for the kids who need it. They give up an elective class to be able to do this because otherwise, they can't get into the higher math track they need in high school. Though quite young, she will be leaving teaching after next year due to the high stress load.

Last Fall, 6 weeks into the school year, (after teachers had been cut so drastically to match budgets) kids at Lathrop found themselves being pulled from their core English and Math classes to be placed in with an entirely new teacher and class, disrupting the entire flow that had been established with that teacher and as a cohort. What a ridiculous disruption and unnecessary setback! That doesn't even address the question of what quality of teachers were available to teach, after schools nationwide, were already in full swing.

This week, for state testing, my daughter's 5th grade class had to alter their testing around other classes, to have enough computers to use. Their classroom set isn't large enough for the increased class sizes. Lathrop has had no daytime custodian this year and has begged the students to help keep the school clean to make up for it.

There are countless other things I could offer as support, but the bottom line is this--we have been stretched as far as we can go. It is no longer just a stressor, nor an inconvenience, it is a breaking point. It is affecting...everything! It is affecting the quality of education that these kids are getting and it has me, as a parent, looking into other options. Offerings have become so fundamental, there is almost nothing left to help the kids compete nationally.

The stress of the staff is palpable. Quality teachers have been leaving right and left or changing jobs to find something less exhausting. Those left are trying to carry the burden, and it's just too much. The budget must change, or the system will break.

My family loves Alaska and all that abounds here. But if we don't increase funding for education, it is headed for destruction. **This is not sustainable and I urge you to increase the BSA.**

Thank you for your time, consideration, and the service you render our great state-

Juliet Eames

Doniece Gott

From: Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 4:02 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony for SB 52

This is Cheryl Lovegreen, writing from Anchorage as an individual. I support SB 52 to significantly increase the BSA in a reliable and sustainable way.

We've already heard excellent testimony on this bill. I'll just sum up my points quickly to keep this short.

In 2019, Alaska spent less per pupil on public education than the national average (when spending is adjusted for inflation and the cost of living). There are 2,100 fewer educators in Alaska classrooms today than there were 10 years ago. You've already heard examples of how that impacts our schools.

The BSA needs to increase by \$1,348 to match the buying power of 2015. One-time or temporary funds create uncertainty. SB 52 would reliably achieve our goal in the next few years.

While I understand the pressure to give a large PFD, the Alaska constitution requires the state to provide quality education to all our students. Please pass this bill to allow our school districts to fulfill this mission.

Cheryl Lovegreen

Doniece Gott

From: Mike and Kristie Wall <mikeandkristiewall@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 4:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Please support SB 52.

My name is Kristie Wall . I am a life long resident of Alaska. I have raised and help education 3 daughters on Kodiak Island .

Recently I retired after a 40 year teaching career with the same passion, but much less energy than with I started in 1982...A time when Alaska invested in education - offering top salaries our state attracted the most highly trained. It would be years of amazing training before I could fall under that category, but having a 5th year toward a masters in reading allowed me to assess , diagnose and effectively teach that subject before I entered my first classroom! It would be years of additional on the job training before I could do the same in Mathematics. YES there is THAT much to Learn to be an effective teacher! Yes I am one of the "LUCKY ones -"as my younger colleagues call us Tier I teachers. I was paid, trained, and supported as a professional — My colleagues and I were well aware of our privilege in comparison to our Lower 48 counter parts and gave 110% .

SO what did the state of Alaska get from their investment? From my cohort alone I can name 5 principals, one Commission of Education, many career teachers they stayed around to mentor and train 3 more decades of teachers. We bought homes, raised children and many choose to remain in Alaska after retirement. And despite what years of headlined "test scores" would lead you to believe, we cultivated a vibrant core of successful "Home Grown" 20 - 40 year olds, from a all career levels (3 doctors, dentist, Arts Council director, film producer, mechanics, plumbers, community directors, engineers, educators) that have returned to our community to set down roots. NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL AN INVEST !

... Not to mention the numerous retired staff that our district has relied upon to come out of retirement and fill temporary and full time "unfillable" positions these last several years.

So what about today's teachers?

According to our DOE site, a first year teacher with up to 100,000 college debt can expect a salary of \$43,000 — only \$8,000 more than a starting NFL WATERBOY who only needs a high school diploma. Who can afford to stay in college the 2 more years truly needed to learn the skills other countries expect their starting teachers to have. Instead of high quality training on teaching strategies and best instructional practices, they can expect hours of data entry and mining standardized test scores, or training on the latest suggestions on saving the most students from a shoot attack or how to stick your finger in a bullet hole to stop bleeding! I could go on .. but... if you are incline to understand — you get the picture.

Please vote to invest in our public school system instead of continuing the current "death by a yearly flat funding" cycle we have been on for far too long.

Thank you for listening,
Kristie Wall.

SEWARD LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Seward.LIO@akleg.gov

Phone: 907-224-5066

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: City of Seward Resolution 2023-0043
REPRESENTING: Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
BILL # or SUBJECT: HB 65 and SB52 Base Student Allocation
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee **DATE:** April 13th, 2023

NOTE: This testimony is considered part of the official record and will be posted online with the hearing documents

Please see attached Resolution 2023-043

Sponsored by: Council Member Barnwell

**CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 2023-043**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEWARD,
ALASKA, REQUESTING THE STATE OF ALASKA LEGISLATORS
MAKE A MEANINGFUL INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT
ALLOCATION (BSA) FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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

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

WHEREAS, AS 14.17.470 currently states that the Base Student Allocation (BSA) provided by the state is \$5,960; and

WHEREAS, at current funding levels, the state will only provide 59.5% of Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) education funding, and local government contributions will make up the majority of the remaining balance; and

WHEREAS, education is the single largest budgetary item for the borough; and

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

WHEREAS, requiring the KPB to continually increase local contributions in order to keep pace with rising costs results in decreased spending on other essential programs; and

WHEREAS, the KPBSD is facing a \$13.1 million budget deficit for FY24, resulting in an increased class size and the elimination of programs important to our students and community members; and

WHEREAS, the state has not made meaningful BSA increases since Fiscal Years 2015-2017 totaling an additional amount of \$250 per student; and

WHEREAS, Alaska State Senate Members have proposed Senate Bill 52 (SB52) which would increase the BSA by \$1,000 per student, and Alaska State House Members have proposed House Bill 65 (HB65) which would increase the BSA by \$1,250 per student; and

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2023, the Legislative Finance Division Director stated to the House Finance Committee that, "Today, the Base Student Allocation is the lowest it's been in the last 20 years, adjusted for inflation."; and

**CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 2023-043**

WHEREAS, on March 14, 2023, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly approved Resolution 2023-027 to request that the State of Alaska make a meaningful increase to the Base Student Allocation for public schools; and

WHEREAS, the Seward City Council joins the borough assembly in this request to the state in the interest of providing students with the most opportunities for education possible.

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

Section 1. The Seward City Council hereby requests that State of Alaska legislators make a meaningful increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for Alaskan students in order to bridge the fiscal gap created by a lack of inflationary increases imposed on the Base Student Allocation over the past several years.

Section 2. Copies of this resolution will be sent to Alaska Governor Dunleavy, all members of the legislative delegation for the Kenai Peninsula Borough, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, the Alaska Education Committees in both the Senate and House, and other interested parties.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.


PASSED AND APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Seward, Alaska, this 10th day of April, 2023.

THE CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA


Sue McClure, Mayor

AYES: Osenga, Calhoon, Wells, Barnwell, DeMoss, Finch, McClure
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST:


Brenda J. Ballou, MMC
City Clerk
(City Seal)



Doniece Gott

From: Kelsey Hallford <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 4:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: REJECT SB 52

To whom it may concern,

Alaska pays the most out of any state per student, and we have some of the worst test scores. Throwing more money at the problem won't help our students or our communities. Reject this bill!

Kelsey Shumway

Doniece Gott

From: KC Casort <kcasort@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:23 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Rep. Ashley Carrick; Sen. Click Bishop
Subject: Support for BSA (SB 52)

Dear Legislators,

I had to hop off the phone before I was able to offer public testimony today on SB 52, so I am submitting it here instead:

My name is KC Casort, I am a Fairbanks resident testifying on behalf of myself in support of SB 52.

I am a graduate from the Fairbanks North Star Borough school district. Recently I was able to travel internationally for the first time to France, and it brought back such a flood of memories of how much I loved my West Valley High School French class! That class was such a highlight for me, but the class was cancelled after I'd taken it for two years, so I wasn't able to approach anything near fluency. I say this because my time in high school was shaped by an understanding that our classes, particularly our favorite things like music, art, and sports, were always on the chopping block, every single year. The funding for education, or lack thereof, was very real and present for us as young people, and I know from the high schoolers I work with now that they are just as aware of this scary and vulnerable budget situation as we were when I was a student.

Due to the years of insufficient state funding, the Fairbanks school district is laying off educators and increasing class sizes again and again, and continuing to eliminate those things that make school FUN - languages, sports, music, arts, etc. I thank you for the courage to address this big problem this year, and hope that SB 52 will pass without amendments that cut down the proposed funding or switch to a one-time measure that doesn't build a sustainable future for all of us. Please pass it out of committee and vote yes on the floor.

Thank you for your time & service to Alaska.

-KC Casort
Fairbanks, 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Waldern, Ryia <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA funding

I am speaking in support of SB 52 (Increases BSA by \$1000 and additional \$348 next year). As a teacher for the Juneau School District I have seen my class sizes go from 18 to 23 to 27; currently I have 32 6th graders in my science class. In a 53 minute class period that means I have less then two minutes per student for one on one support, clarifying questions, checking in, talking about homework, discussing preparing classwork for traveling students, redirecting behavior, celebrating ah ha moments, or any of the hundreds of things I do to support students on a daily basis.

Students, the schools spend a huge majority of time in, teachers, and staff deserve more than the bare minimum. Please fund our schools in a continuous and predictable way.

--

Ryia Waldern
Floyd Dryden Middle School
6th grade science
FDMS phone: (907) 796-5300

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This communication, including any attachment, contains information that may be confidential or privileged, and is intended solely for the entity or individual to whom it is addressed and contents may be subject to terms of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible to deliver it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any release, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited.

If you have received this communication in error, please notify the author immediately by replying to this message and delete the original message.

Doniece Gott

From: Hannibal Grubis <hannibalgrubis@ktenorhastar.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 5:39 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Do the basic math. The base student allocation needs to be increased at least \$650 - \$950. The youth are our future in Alaska. Adequate funding of education is a mandate in our AK constitution.

--

Hannibal Grubis at West Valley High School

1st Alg 1.1, 2nd & 4th Alg II, and 3rd & 6th Calc

M.S. Mathematics and National Certification in Math

Senate Finance Committee,
Thank you, Senate Finance chair and Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important bill, SB 52.

For the record my name is Kevin Shove, I am a 28 yr. Haines resident and parent, General manager and part owner of Alaska Business Growth corp. We own Howsers IGA supermarket, Alaskan Liquor and Carolines Closet, a gift shop. I am also school board member for the Haines Borough School District and a proud product of the public school system.

We, the Haines Borough School Board and Administration, strongly support SB 52.

I am not going to lecture you on how flat funding, rising costs and skyrocketing inflation has affected education in Alaska, many others have testified to this, we all know the current situation with our economy. I have watched other testimony on the current House and Senate bills. I even had the impression after watching some testimony that some legislatures were concerned where the funding was being allocated to, that to me would seem to be an accountability issue and not funding. We get audited every year. I am sure that the educators had the best intentions for their kids. Having control of funding at the local level is critical for Alaska as the communities are so diverse. I feel as a board member that we at the local level know what's best for our community. Some say Alaska's test scores would warrant no increase I say the lack of funding does.

I am mostly coming to you as a concerned parent of a 4- and 11-year-old. I want the best education as does every parent for their children and the bottom line not increasing funding since 2017 is a huge concern for me. I am pretty sure that most public/federally funded institutions have seen an increase in their funding during that time frame. All of our employees have seen cost of living increases during that time and most recently larger inflation increases. I understand that there are national groups advocating against raising the BSA at this time. Well, I say to them they have no "skin" in the game so to speak like I do as a parent of two children. We have a small community like most of Alaska, I know the teachers in this school and their passion to teach the kids. I go to the parent/teacher conferences. We have one school in our community, we do not have the luxury to go to a private school. The school is a community hub and major part of this town. Many events, activities and community gatherings happen there, without it there would be no town!

As a school board member, I have seen how the school has had to adjust to flat funding and the reduced purchasing power of the dollar. Reducing curriculum, electives, sports and having less opportunities than more for our children is very concerning for me as a board member/parent. Most of an increase in funding would go to teachers' salaries just to keep up with other states.

I am at a point financially in my life that I can do what's best for my children. Haines is a great place to raise kids and the school has done a great job to this point with the resources that have been allotted. I am concerned for the very near future if something is not done and may have to make the hard decisions necessary for my children. I did not attend college but got a good public education and work ethic and now I am part owner of a multi-million-dollar organization and make more money than a lot of college graduates. Public education does work!

Again, the passing of SB 52 would show serious commitment Alaska has to the education of its children, inflation proofing the BSA would be the next step. I have lost faith in our Federal Government to do what's right for the many, please do not let that happen on a state level. I have watched the last couple years how education has been "kicked down the road" by our legislature and has been very disheartening for me, quite frankly I am sick of it. I love Alaska and want to raise my kids here but if the states stance on education remains the same, I will be looking elsewhere.

I think some if not most Alaskans would agree if we had to use the PFD funds for state funding Education is something most can get behind.

Thank you for your time, consideration and service to Alaska
Kevin Shove

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Nicole Austin, and I am a Homeschool parent & Parent Advisory Committee Chair. I am representing the IDEA homeschool program with the Galena City School District.

I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 52.

This increase in the Base Student Allocation is an absolute need. I'm sure you already know of study after study that shows that the more monies invested in the early years of education decreases the monies spent on later in life for things including, but not limited to tutoring, re-education, rehabilitation, and therapy. This and other bills would allow those monies to be spent as an investment in our Alaskan future.

Families in the Alaskan communities have proven that they want what is best for their children and we work hard to research and provide the best education for our children. Unfortunately, we are working on a small scale with a fraction of the per-student budget that the building-based students get. Costs continue to increase and families are struggling. Many of us, including myself, running out of allotment and paying out of pocket as early as January.

I'm sure many of you are parents and understand the sacrifices we make to ensure our children the most successful future. Homeschool parents are no different, we are parents that believe for one reason or many that home education, individualized learning is the best option for our children. Unfortunately, finances come into play with this choices. Many of us gave up careers, promotions and our time to educate our children. And we don't do it for the money, but do need support from our state. We pay the same taxes and yet only see a portion of the education monies being applied to our families. I hope you truly consider this bill and the positive impact it will make on our Alaskan families and their education.

I'd like to share a story about one of my four boys. My middle son has emotional challenges as well as ADHD. As someone who has worked in a building based school I have the understanding of how he could and most likely would have been labelled as a problem child. He seeks attention in incorrect ways, comes to tears when faced with problems he's unsure about and is prone to outbursts. In a classroom setting this is difficult to handle. But homeschooling him, I have been able to give him one on one attention to work through his challenges, give him tools to calm down and self-regulate himself. He has autonomy, something that many with similar issues struggle to access.

I have another son, who because of the freedoms of homeschool has been working on a business plan for opening up a cafe that not only serves as most cafes do but provides cooking classes whose funds would support times for those unable to pay to have discounted or even free meals. He's seven years old. Homeschooling has allowed him to make the connections of not only what can be done, but the ability to explore how to make those things come together. I'm sure his business plan will evolve and grow over the years, but those sincere dreams are things I as a homeschooling parents can encourage and incorporate into our schooling.

I could go on and on with stories of why homeschooling is important to me personally and how it has encouraged that Alaskan spirit in my children, but I know you have other things to discuss and will leave you with this glimpse. My family is not unique in these kinds of stories and I'm sure many will attest to that. Homeschooling allows families to grow children into Alaskan adults we can all be proud of.

In the IDEA homeschool program, this funding increase will ensure access to materials and enough funds to continue education without the staff and families having to struggle to find ways to pay for materials, ongoing trainings for staff and families, and of course services.

I know of many homeschooling families who have children that need additional services for special needs. From reading or sensory disorders to more serious needs. IDEA staff does there absolute best with the funds provided to serve these families. Unfortunately those services are costly and with current systems in place, set by Alaska State bills those services are at the cost of the same monies provide for curriculum. This leaves those families with less monies to encourage growth and success unless they seek out special funding or pay for services themselves. This is not only unjust, but heart breaking. Many families choose to homeschool to allow their children's special needs to be addressed in a better and more positive light. Yet those more expensive services mean that they lose out on their normal funding for curriculum and materials.

In closing, please consider my support for Senate Bill 52 as it will only encourage the growth of the Alaskan community we all dream for. One in which families are able to chose to homeschool or send their children to school with the same monies backing them. Bills such as this, that allow our families freedom without punishment of less funding will only help our Alaskan society grow into something as beautiful as the nature that surrounds us.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you and thank you for the time you took to ponder the best path forward.

Nicole Austin
North Pole, Alaska
IDEA homeschool mother of 4

Doniece Gott

From: Bette Seaman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 8:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA

To the finance committee:

I am, like most Alaskans, definitely in favor of raising the BSA. It has not been raised since 2010, 13 years ago!

One of the most important functions of state government is public education, available to all children, regardless of income. A one time increase in state funding is helpful in the short run, and I am in favor of it. But it does not provide school districts the ability to do realistic planning. Without planning, everything is more difficult, more expensive and less consistent. Please consider a significant raise to the BSA. Our children are our future.

Thank you for your service.

Bette Seaman

Doniece Gott

From: PSD Superintendent [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 4:36 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Letter of Support for SB 52

Co-Chair Senators Stedman, Hoffman, Olson and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Erica Kludt-Painter and I am the Superintendent of the Petersburg School District. I am also a proud parent of two Petersburg High School graduates, and have served the Petersburg School District as a principal and superintendent since 2001. My commitment to public education in my community and in the state of Alaska is clear and unequivocal. Thank *you* for your continued work on behalf of Alaska's students. I am sending this letter today in support of SB 52. The education budget in Alaska has been unstable for years with a minimal \$30 increase to the BSA in the last six years. The impact of inflation during that time has created a significant loss of purchasing power for school districts. This instability has resulted in inadequate resources, underfunded programs, and limited opportunities for teachers and students alike. This, in turn, has led to a decline in the quality of education in Alaska, and the state has fallen behind in terms of educational outcomes and student achievement. In order to foster excellence in our schools, the State needs to make a larger investment in education now. Stable, predictable funding is necessary to ensure districts can attract and retain high quality educators, and improve student outcomes.

After years of conservative budgeting and strategic reductions, our school district is facing a \$1 million budget deficit. There is no more fat to trim, and next steps will be increased class sizes and reduced programs and learning opportunities for students. In addition, as we prepare to meet the requirements of the READS Act, the current BSA as it stands is inadequate to support successful implementation in our schools. If third grade reading proficiency is the priority, then we are all accountable for ensuring our students, staff, and schools have the necessary resources and training to accomplish this. Please support the passage of SB 52 with a funding increase inside the BSA, not one-time funding outside the BSA. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Erica Kludt-Painter

MISSION: Petersburg Schools will advocate for continuous growth, promote a healthy environment, and provide diverse educational opportunities where all students achieve.

Erica Kludt-Painter
Superintendent
Petersburg School District
P.O. Box 289
Petersburg, AK 99833

Phone and Fax: 1-877-526-7656

E-mail: supt@pcsd.us

Website: www.pcsd.us

PLEASE NOTE: This communication, including any attachment, contains information that may be confidential or privileged, and is intended solely for the entity

or individual to whom it is addressed and contents may be subject to terms of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message is strictly prohibited.

April 13, 2023

Dear Senator Stedman and Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Kersten Christianson, I while I speak for myself, I am also a teacher.

I'm calling to request a \$1000 permanent BSA increase.

I've been an Alaskan educator since 1996 and proud to say all my years have been in service to public schools throughout the state, from Kenai, Gambell, Soldotna, and Utqiagvik, and Sitka.

This is my 20th year of teaching in Sitka, both my alma mater and my hometown. Every day, I see students move forward, sometimes with small steps, sometimes great strides. This is the heart and nature of learning.

But I can tell you the most stressful part of my career existence is in the soundtrack of state and local budgeting, roughly January to May. I will forever encourage funding to the max possible, of rolling increased funding each year into districts at the earliest possible opportunity. Because for 20 years of teaching in Sitka School District, I know all too well the broken record of budget season:

There may be cuts...

There will be significant cuts...

We are anticipating these certain cuts...

We're still waiting (mid-April) on BSA...

And some years the budget gets resolved, somewhat, with a Band-aid approach only to repeat the following year. All too often there are significant hits, usually through attrition resulting in reduced programming for students, or fewer supplies and materials.

I ask that you set in motion a permanent increase to the BSA by looking at the roles our schools serve in the greater community and not the too-narrow focus of a single standardized test snapshot. Let it be recognized that schools in Alaska still move forward on what is, every year, meager funding. School districts need more than a shoestring budget. Change this narrative. I ask that you do better by our youth. Show up for them.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kersten Christianson

[REDACTED]

Sitka, Alaska 99835

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Emily Moody <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 3:47 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: PASS SB 52

Members of the Senate Finance committee,

My name is Emily Moody from Cordova, I have lived, and taught in the state for 12 years. I'm also a mother with two children in school.

I am writing in support of SB 52.

We need to increase and inflation proof the BSA. Everybody has experienced the effects of inflation. It has reached every single consumer and business owner in the country. The school is no different. There are lots of costs that are outside of the district's control, similar to households, including rising health care, energy, and food costs.

The BSA has only increased \$30 since 2016. How are schools expected to operate with such a significant reduction in buying power? I'll tell you how I see my school district dealing with the state inflicted budget gaps:

- We can't pay substitutes enough, and as a result we can not recruit them. When I asked a community member why they quit subbing, she replied, "I just don't have time to do charity work anymore." I'm currently sick. I'm at school today because if I had called in sick, one of our paraprofessionals would have been removed from their duties and put into my classroom to cover my class. It's very disruptive when this happens, so instead, I just came to school.
- We don't pay our paraprofessionals enough, we can't recruit them either. We've had years where we cannot fill vacancies. Currently, the grocery store in town can pay their employees more than most of our paraprofessionals. Para's play a critical role in our educational system. Their jobs are incredibly difficult, oftentimes working one on one with our most demanding students. It's not a surprise that we can't recruit people to do this work when we're not able to pay them more than \$20/hour.
- Cordova is in desperate need of preschool. Our district cannot provide general preschool service because we cannot afford a teacher.

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 and so I and many others don't have to take time away from instruction to advocate for the funding to do my job. Please, have the courage to prioritize education.

Thank you,

Emily Moody

Doniece Gott

From: Cheyenne Cuellar <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 3:50 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support SB 52

Senate Finance Committee members,

I am writing in support of SB 52, an increase to the BSA. As a teacher, I am feeling the affect of flat funding on our schools. This is my 12th year of teaching, and each year the support I need to be an effective teacher continues to be eroded away. In order to try and not increase class sizes, districts have had to make the tough choices to cut support staff positions or not offer competitive pay for those positions. This includes cutting office staff, custodians, truancy officers and other important positions. Paraprofessional positions are not being filled due to uncompetitive wages. Teachers are resigning in record numbers in our district because they do not have the support needed. In order to maintain an education system in our state, an increase to the BSA is absolutely necessary.

Thank you,
Cheyenne Cuellar

Doniece Gott

From: tom schwartz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 3:54 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52 comment

Esteemed Senators,

Please support SB52 to raise the BSA and help to fund our schools. Successful schools require funding, and successful states need educated people.

Thank you,

Thomas Schwartz
2973 Foster Ave.
Juneau, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Elizabeth Herron-Ruff <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 4:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: finances

Good Afternoon,

I am a site administrator with the LKSD school district. I am writing to encourage you to increase the BSA for our students. As you are well aware, the cost of everything has increased dramatically and schools are falling behind in being able to offer services and programs.

Please support the increase of BSA for our children.

Dr. Elizabeth A Ruff
Site Administrator, Mertarvik Pioneer School
[REDACTED]
School: 907-543-4839



Doniece Gott

From: Tracey Burke <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 3:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: student base allocation - education funding

Dear Senators:

I urge you to support raising the per-student amount of state financial support for public education by *at least* \$1000 - I would support raising it significantly more. I have had one child graduate from Anchorage public schools and have two more in secondary schools now. I was a school social worker in a rural (remote) school district. Our children, in the communities of all sizes, need our investment. We need to invest more than money of course, but money has got to be part of it. If we're serious about wanting our young people to perform better in school, reducing the resources for teaching and learning (and tending to the social/emotional needs that support learning) is the opposite of what we need to do.

As an Alaskan resident for more than 30 years, I appreciate the PFD and realize that fully funding public education means reducing the PFD. *I am fine with that.* Again: I support reducing the PFD in order to fund our schools. I realize many will be dismayed at the loss of discretionary funds. I realize lower-income families will feel it most acutely. I also know lower-income families are most dependent on public schools.

Please, do the courageous thing and support our youth, our future.

Thank you,
Tracey Burke

[REDACTED], Anchorage, 99504

Doniece Gott

From: Hermon Morgan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 3:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: No on SB52

No on SB52

People need full PFD you can see by their own testimony the HIGH cost of living.

Lowest test scores in nation !

Herman Morgan

Aniak AK

99557

[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Tam Agosti-Gisler <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 3:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson; schoolboard@asdk12.org
Subject: SB52

I waited on line for 75 minutes to testify this afternoon but then had to leave to attend a class. Here is my testimony:

My name is Tam Agosti-Gisler. I am an Alaskan living in Senate District G, College Village neighborhood in Anchorage.

I would like to advocate for \$1,000 increase to the BSA as a good start to the needed educational funding in this state.

As a former teacher, I know what the impacts of funding shortfalls mean in the classroom. I recall when my principal came to my classroom and said, "Tam, you know I value your hard work to build a program; your students enjoy and thrive in your classes; their parents appreciate the results and your colleagues respect you, but the budget requires cuts and therefore we're eliminating your program." This happened more than once in my teaching career and was very demoralizing. It led to my later service on the Anchorage School Board to work to avoid these illogical cuts.

As a former school board member, I know you have to find a way to pay for what you value and you need to balance your budget. This increase will cost a projected \$257 million to the state's budget. I understand that the governor's proposed budget includes close to \$2.5 billion for Permanent Fund dividends which is about \$3,860 per Alaskan.

I support Senator Stedman's idea to lower that to a \$1,300 dividend which could then pay for the \$1,000 BSA increase as well as municipal bond debt and address the budget deficit.

In my retirement, I am being asked to write letters of recommendation for younger teachers who are looking for employment outside of Alaska. I do with reluctance because I know how badly we need them. But I understand their needs to have a salary that covers inflation and a decent retirement plan. As a grandmother, I feel compelled to look out for my grandchildren who are future Anchorage School District students as well as all young people in Alaska. Please fund what we Alaskans value. Please fund this increase to the BSA as a start.

Tam Agosti-Gisler
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99508

Doniece Gott

From: Meghan Redmond <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 3:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony in support of SB 52

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of SB 52, a BSA increase, and for it to pass this legislative session.

For the record, my name is Meghan Redmond. I am the principal of Homer Middle School in Homer, Alaska, but today I am also a parent of 4 young children. I have been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal both on and off the road system in Alaska for the past 13 years.

Our schools are facing rapidly rising costs in energy, transportation, health care, food service, and so much more. As those costs that are mostly out of our control rise through the roof and our funding remains flat, our districts are forced to find cuts that directly impact the classroom through cuts in staffing. As a principal, when I have to cut staffing, I am faced with an impossible decision of what opportunities to cut for my students or how big to make classes. I am forced to make decisions that I know are not best practices for student learning, when my original plan for next school year was to be moving the completely opposite direction. I can speak from experience that the things everyone calls "extra" are most often the things that get motivate kids to get to school so that they can also get our core instruction.

We need stable, long term, and predictable funding for our schools to be able to focus on long term school improvement, and to retrain and recruit excellent educators to our schools. Being a teacher is hard, being a teacher in Alaska is hard. We have amazing, dedicated teachers in our state. but when our jobs are constantly on the chopping block due to possible budget cuts that year after year are stayed off temporarily by one-time funding outside the BSA, eventually the amazing teachers we have will have had enough. And I can tell you from personal experience in hiring teachers in Alaska for the past 13 years that we will not be able to replace them.

We constantly ask our schools and our teachers to do more and more with less and less every year. Passing this bill and ensuring stable, long-term funding for our schools will make an immediate improvement in the education of Alaska's children.

Thank you.

Meghan Redmond

Homer Middle School Principal
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Hermon Morgan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:37 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public testimony

Am opposed to increase in Student Base Allocation. NO RESULTS !

Worst education system in the nation.

Only parents and those WITHOUT FINANCIAL GAIN, (conflict of interest) should testify, NOT all school district .

Too top heavy. STOP using OUTSIDE recruiters for teachers !

Throwing more money won't fix it.

Lost the mission. More money or the kids will suffer lower scores more because teachers will be FIRED !

9 billion in Pers n Ters ??

Lots of leftover Fed money with NO quality education.

State is facing legal action for not providing education. When students from Rural AK go to UAA they find out they are TWO YEARS behind and have to go to UAA for six years.

Alaska CANNOT educate the whole world's population while ignoring our own.

Herman Morgan
Aniak AK.
99557
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: tachyon@gci.net
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:47 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52

I am a born and raised Alaskan, now near retirement, who spent his entire life here in Alaska. I attended public schools and University of Alaska. The current BSA is wholly inadequate to allow school districts to operate and attract teachers that will be consistent and of benefit to the student populations of the state. To short change education in lieu of a fat PFD is both myopic and misguided. Our students deserve better. Do your jobs and give the schools what they need in order to provide the kids of this state with a decent foundation. To do any less would simply be a negligent waste. Raise the BSA now. Our students deserve better than what they have been given.

Allen Strah

[REDACTED]

Eagle River, AK. 99577

[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Barbara Hill <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:45 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52

Dear Sen. Stedman and Sen Hoffman,

My name is Barbara Hill I live in Naknek, Alaska. I support SB 52. As a retired teacher, educated at the University of Alaska, first hired by the Alaska State Operated School System to teach in Levelock, AK. I have seen the rise and fall of educational quality in our State. Teaching, initially Kindergarten through 9th grade in bush Alaska in schools with substandard living and working conditions evolved into the building of modern facilities including PreSchool through High School along with teacher housing in Kokhanok. Moving on to Naknek our six children graduated from Bristol Bay Borough High School. Half had spent their elementary school years in the village school of Kokhanok a Lake and Peninsula School. Our six children went on to higher education earning degrees establishing themselves in careers that have provided five of them productive lives as bush Alaskans. Shop, art, and music were part of that standard curriculum along with the support of degreed school counselors and librarians. These essentials for the most part have been deleted from our 15 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren's curriculums.

We invested our lives in bush Alaska and it provided well for us. Most of the BBBSD staff built their own homes and raised families here. I continue to live in this the area of Alaska, Bristol Bay and Lake Iliamna supported by an adequate retirement. Unfortunately, the career support is not available to upcoming educators. Now many come for the "Alaskan Experience" and leave once they are impacted by the financial realities adding to the instability of creating a firm foundation for the next generations.

I would deeply appreciate the financial support needed for our educational system to be based on inflation proofing the BSA which should provide our young ones the education they deserve.

Thank you for your time and commitment, Barbara J. Hill

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: LIO.Ketchikan@akleg.gov

1900 First Ave., Suite 310
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Phone: (907) 225-9675

Fax: (907) 225-8546

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME:

Michael Robbins - Superintendent

REPRESENTING:

REPRESENTING: Ketchikan School Districts

BILL# or SUBJECT:

BILL# or SUBJECT: SB 52

COMMITTEE AND

HEARING DATE: April 13 - SENATE Finance

Please see attached.

For the record, my name is Michael Robbins, and I am the Superintendent representing the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District.

I am testifying today in support of: Senate Bill 52

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

In the Ketchikan Gateway Borough school district, we have seen the impact of insufficient funding...

- Because of an increase in health insurance of over 8% in the past two years. An increase in fuel costs general maintenance and supplies due to inflation in the past two years.
- If funding isn't increased we will be forced to reduce 48.50 positions from our general operating budget, in all areas, including 20 teaching positions.
- Retention of younger teachers will be dramatically decreased. We are losing the future of Alaska educators.
- Due to teacher cuts, our schools will see larger class sizes in all grades. An increase of 3 students per class in the elementary school.
- We have proposed the reduction of school administrators, which leads to less support for teachers in the classroom.
- Recruiting of teachers and administrators has become more difficult in high needs areas, such as...special education and at the director level with the uncertainty of budgets from year to year.

With an increased BSA increase the district would have the opportunity to

- Provide mental health counseling services
- Expand our restorative practices program that will help students stay in school
- Restoration of a depleted fund balance
- Help with implementation of the READS Act

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.

Thank you.



Doniece Gott

From: trishaherminghaus <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:14 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation Support

I am writing to encourage the Alaska Legislature to increase the Base Student Allocation to the highest amount possible to support effective education in our schools.

With inadequate funding for education statewide, a problem that has been going on for years, our Alaskan Students are living and learning on an unequal playing field. Students in other states are being better educated, therefore have more opportunities moving forward in their lives.

If we want to keep our younger generations in Alaska, there need to be good job opportunities. People who are considering moving to Alaska will make decisions based on the quality of our schools.

The current inadequate Base Student Allocation is harming our children, and businesses in Alaska.

Please make this important decision to move toward adequately funding the schools in Alaska. Our students are our future.

Trisha Herminghaus
Anchorage Supervoter

--

"Be kind. Be a helper." Inspired by Mr. Rogers

Doniece Gott

From: Flo Larson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:20 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Senate Bill 52 BSA increase

To Whom This Concerns,

Please pass this bill, Senate Bill 52! The Basic Student Allotment has not increased commensurate with student needs in Alaska. Our children are our greatest resource and must take priority.

Thank you for your attention!

Flo Larson
[REDACTED]
Homer, Alaska
99603

Doniece Gott

From: Nicole Stellon O'Donnell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 12:48 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please Increase the BSA

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am reaching out today to encourage you to support SB 52. Our state needs a BSA increase in FY 24 and 25, and we need to increase it every time the CPI increases in the future.

I am the mother of two school age children and have witnessed the damage that the many years of BSA freezes has done. In FNSBSD, my district, art specialists, orchestra, band, afterschool programs, the ELP (gifted and talented) program have all been cut while my girls have been students. In addition two entire elementary schools and many teaching positions have been cut, resulting in larger class sizes all around.

With the frozen BSA, offerings at our high schools have become so limited that my younger daughter is unable to take the second year of foreign language that's required for her to qualify for the Alaska Performance Scholarship. The district, with its frozen pay and impasse in contract negotiations (brought on by years of underfunding the BSA), has been unable to hire a qualified teacher. This problem will worsen if we don't fund education fully in our state.

It's time to increase the BSA and tie increases to cost of living increases in Alaska. I, along with many other Alaskans, am willing to pay taxes to support our education system. Please support this BSA increase.

Thank you for your time and service to our state.

Sincerely,

Nicole Stellon O'Donnell
Fairbanks, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Bradley King <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 12:51 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Hello,

I would like to encourage the legislature to support additional funding for our schools. We are attempting to do many great things for our students but with less funding than is necessary. Everything helps. Thank you.

Brad King
Principal, Gustavus/Klukwan
bking@chathamshd.org
907-697-2248 work (Message capable)
[REDACTED] (Message capable)
801-753-0375 VOIP (No messages, please)

Superintendent's Office
(907) 886-6332
(907) 886-6006 (F)

Business Office
(907) 886-6332
(907) 886-5130 (F)

Maintenance Office
(907) 886-6332
(907) 886-5130 (F)



Metlakatla High School
(907) 886-6000
(F) (907) 886-5120

Charles R. Leask Sr. Middle School
(907) 886-6095
(F) (907) 886-4130

Richard Johnson Elementary School
(907) 886-4121
(F) (907) 886-4120

April 13, 2023

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

This letter is to provide support for increasing the BSA through SB52 at a minimum level of \$1,000 per student. At Annette Island School District (AISD), similar to many other districts, we have been subject to cost increases in multiple budgetary areas over the past five years. The list below does not capture all cost increases, but outlines those that are most impactful. In comparing costs from FY19 to FY23, costs have increased in the following categories:

- Heating oil: 26%
- Electricity: 26%
- Personnel: 18%
- Food Service: 22%
- Health Insurance: 12%

In addition, our enrollment has decreased 4% from FY21 to FY23. Enrollment decreases negatively impact AISD through losses in revenue from both of our major funding sources, State Foundation funding (BSA) and Federal Impact Aid funding.

These cost increases and losses of revenue have created a budgetary shortfall for FY23 and FY24. With a healthy fund balance this year, AISD can absorb the FY23 shortfall. However, the FY24 projected shortfall will have a significant impact on the services that we will be able to offer our students for the 2023-24 school year if revenues do not increase. Currently, we are projecting a shortfall of \$900,000 for FY24. This does not include absorbing three employees that are currently funded out of ARP.

AISD is a high-needs district, with a current (FY23) IEP ratio of 27% and a projected FY24 IEP ratio of 32%. We have implemented a reading program that fully aligns with the Alaska Reads Act that has been deemed as "robust and evidence-based" by DEED. This work is led by a Reading Specialist, funded through Title I. We have similar initiatives in progress to address achievement gaps in mathematics, led by a Math Specialist, funded through ARP. AISD's ARP funds will be depleted this year. With our projected budget shortfall for FY24, we will not be able to continue to fund this critical math specialist position without an increase to the BSA. In addition, in order to develop a balanced budget for FY24, we will have to decrease our teaching staff across the District, which will further negatively impact our reading and math initiatives, as well as other programs that align with the Alaska Education Challenge. Overall, we are looking at a potential 12% decrease in staffing.

In order for AISD to meet the goals outlined in the adopted Alaska's Education Challenge, we require an increase to the BSA. As a reminder, the Alaska's Education Challenge outlines the District's responsibility to meet the following goals:

1. Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
3. Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable education rigor and resources.
4. Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
5. Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and Tribes.

We have strived diligently over the past four years to align our district goals and priorities around this challenge and have implement quality programs to meet these challenges. I implore the Senate to pass legislation and collaboratively work with the House to fully fund public education by increasing the BSA through SB52 to the minimum level of \$1,000 per student.

Thank you for the work that you do, for your time, and for your support.

Sincerely,



M. Taw Lindsey
Superintendent, AISD
PO Box 7
Metlakatla, AK 99926
907-886-6332, ext. 2261
907-821-0145, cell
tlindsey@aisdk12.org

Doniece Gott

From: Melonie Boord <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 12:52 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA

Please consider raising the base student allocation:

- by \$1000 to \$6,960 in FY24, and by \$348 to \$7,308 in FY25.
- and require DEED to use the U.S. Dept. of Labor Consumer Price Index to calculate an "inflation adjustment" percentage increase to the BSA in FY26.

Start funding our schools so we can educate our students and have stability instead of wasting and worrying about cutting necessary teachers every year. Our kids deserve better than the current BSA. Thank you and please support SB52.

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Christopher Brown <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 12:57 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA Increase

I am writing in regards to SB 52: Increase Base Student Allocation. I believe this increase is absolutely necessary. Schools have not received a noticeable increase in years, and inflation has taken its toll. I support passing SB 52 as it is, with no changes.

Thanks.

Christopher Brown
Homer, AK 99603

Doniece Gott

From: Jon Clouse <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Testimony

Good Afternoon,

This is testimony in support of SB 52. As a result of inflation, Dillingham City School District FY24 budget has a bleak outlook. The increased fix costs need to heat our buildings and provide electricity have increase significantly. Increased in food costs, freight costs, and health insurance as also having a significant impact on the overall budget of the district. These fix costs are out of our control but are necessary to ensure students are a safe and adequate learning environment.

These costs are also being felt by our staff. The inflation rates for the past 18 months have been historic but the wages have not increased at nearly the same rate. There is already a teacher shortage and the cost of living compared to the available wages is making recruiting extremely difficult.

One time funding is a band-aid approach to these issues. The best solution is to increase the BSA.

I urge you to support SB 52.

Thank you for your time.

--
Jon Clouse
DCSD School Board Member
907 843 0652
jclouse@dlgsd.org

Doniece Gott

From: Laura Bonner <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:04 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Sen. James Kaufman
Subject: Support SB52

I'm retired and never worked in the school system. I fully support SB 52 to increase the BSA by \$1000 even though the \$1300 level is more appropriate. It's the first place to start for Workforce Development. In a short ten years, the high schoolers will be our nurses and other healthcare workers, engineers, tradespeople, and accountants. Some may be legislators or work in local government.

Increasing the BSA now will help school districts to plan without the stress of possible layoffs or other cuts. The funding impacts not only class sizes but also paraprofessionals, career counselors and others essential worker providing a sound education for the students. Maybe districts and even restore programs for music, art and sports for those students who's parent's can't afford to private pay for those opportunities.

So please support and pass SB 52. It is affordable without draws from the CBR if you also pass the 75//25 POMV split. For the future of Alaska, we can't afford not to increase the BSA.

Laura Bonner
Anchorage

Doniece Gott

From: Lauren Attanas <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: Testimony in support of SB 52

To the Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 52, which would increase the base student allocation and establish a stable funding stream for our public schools. If we are to pull up from the financial nosedive that Alaskan school districts are currently in, you, dear legislators, have no other choice. You must pass this bill this legislative session.

I'd like to start with a little context. It was recently announced in the [Anchorage Daily News](#) that the governor and his salary commission have worked their magic to give you and your colleagues a 67% raise, a move that does not seem to be generating enthusiasm for a legislative override. *Sixty-seven percent*. Let that sink in. Our schools, on the other hand, have only seen a 4.2% increase in funding since 2012, while costs increased by 24% during the same time period. Can you, in good conscience, be the beneficiary of such a gargantuan pay raise when the largest school districts in the state are closing multiple schools, student class size is ballooning, and educational staffing shortages are at crisis levels?

I am proud to be the mother of 2 kids who attend public school in Fairbanks. Every time I visit their school, I marvel at the energy, care, and dedication that staff members pour into their work, into making sure that each kid there feels like they matter. But with every passing year, I see the toll that decreasing resources is taking. Quality education is unraveling in our district. This year, the Fairbanks-Northstar Borough School District will eliminate over 35 full-time school district staff, increase middle school class size to 30-32 students, and cut special education and student support funding. Staff positions are going unfilled because of poor compensation and year-to-year job insecurity. My kids' classes used to have 20-25 students; now, they have 25-30+ students. There's no money for teacher aides except in kindergarten classes, and retaining experienced staff who are close to retirement is incredibly difficult. Forget about elementary school band and orchestra. Field trips and extracurriculars? Often, there are not enough staff to supervise these. All of this is coming on the heels of a pandemic which was a huge setback to many of our kids' learning. And yet, year after year, I hear from this legislature and the governor that it's just not the right time to increase the BSA. We can tackle this next year.

Senator Bishop and other members of this committee, I am here to tell you that there is no 'next year' for some of our schools. The Fairbanks-Northstar Borough School District closed 3 elementary schools in 2022 and packed some of our middle schools to 95% capacity, far above recommended levels. Furthermore, it seems like school closures also may be a grim reality during the next couple of budget cycles, not only in Anchorage, but again in Fairbanks. My kids attend University Park Elementary, one of the smaller elementary schools in the district. If the district closes another school, there are rumors that it could be our school. Legislative inaction this year could become a very real and heartbreaking problem for my family in the very near future.

Do something now. Vote to advance SB 52 out of this committee, and vote 'yes' on SB 52 when it comes to a floor vote. Please encourage your colleagues in the House to get their act together and work towards compromise on an increase to the BSA this year. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lauren Attanas



Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Courtney Wood <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:09 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Vote YES!

Please vote yes on SB 52: Increase Base Student Allocation. The students of Alaska deserve to have their needs met and this requires funding. Increasing this base allocation will go towards helping districts across Alaska create the best learning environment for our students.

Thank you,
Courtney Wood
CMS Social Studies

Greetings Co-Chair and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Rick Dormer. I serve as principal of Ketchikan High School, as well as President Elect for the Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 52 to ensure stable, predictable funding to support the children of Alaska. Our schools are the centers of our communities here in Southeast. We provide so much more than a basic education for our students and families. Adequate funding is necessary to ensure districts can retain high quality staff, to continue to provide the excellent programs and the crucial supports our schools implement in communities across Southeast Alaska.

In Ketchikan, we will be responsibly reducing staffing across our district due to a smaller student population regardless of an increase in the BSA. We are not administrator heavy, ranking the second-lowest in the state. Ketchikan High School is served by only two admins.

As a District, our operating costs continue to steeply climb, and without an increase to the BSA, we will reduce our preschool time from 4.5 to 2.5 hours per day. We have cut student electives in our schools, our curriculum development funds were completely removed meaning our teachers could not purchase textbooks, classroom supplies or technology subscriptions for the upcoming years. Additionally, we are looking at deeper cuts to staff across the district, an increase in class sizes, as well as a decrease in overall student and staff support.

Reliable funding is key to attracting and retaining high quality teachers and administrators, and reducing the high turnover rate of these positions we are witnessing in Alaska. Recognizing that effective teachers and administrators that have built positive relationships with their students are the top two indicators of student success in schools, this high turnover rate is detrimental to our Alaskan schools.

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

Thank you for serving Alaska.

Sincerely,

Richard Dormer

Doniece Gott

From: [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:26 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: SB52- Vote NO

Dear Committee.

Please Vote "NO" to INCREASE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION. Here is no need for additional funding for education sir school districts are spending mass amounts of money to support non-education curriculum to our students. Past years they received increases to still have our students test at the bottom 10% of the Nation. Sad truth is increase dollars are not going to the poor management to our lack of education.
Vote NO to SB52!

Kindly,

Rita Trometter
North Pole

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



Virus-free. www.avast.com

Doniece Gott

From: Dianna Schollmeier <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:33 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Student Base Allocation

Good Afternoon,

I am a parent, educator, and rural Alaskan community member. I came to Alaska when there was a meaningful retirement and solid pay for the current economy. In fact, many flocked to Alaska; however, today, our hiring pools have dried up. There is no longer a retirement system to brag about. Our cost of living is the highest in the Nation, and we are amongst the bottom five states for the lowest pay. There are many more requirements placed on educators today than 15 years ago, yet they have been given no increase in pay. This is a slap in the face to the education field, and this lack of respect will continue to dry up our hiring pools. For the sake of the students, increase the BSA to encourage teachers to stay and teach in our culturally diverse and amazing state filled with young minds worth investing in.

Sincerely

Dianna Schollmeier
Southwest Region School District
Parent of Dillingham City School District
Dillingham City Community Member

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: kathleen shoop <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:43 PM
To: Senate Education; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52 = NO

Dear Senate Finance;

Alaska public schools are a failure and already spend far more than any other State and has the worst scores for every subject in the country.

Do not take more money from the people to support the losing, failing schools.

I do not support SB 52!

Kathleen Shoop
Alaska resident since 1992

Doniece Gott

From: Douglas Pfau <dougpfau@nomeschools.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: support for SB52

Please vote for the passing of SB52 to help Alaska School District's with the funding shortage that has become impossible for districts to be able to educate our students. I doubt that anyone in the country would think that going without ANY raise for 7 years would be reasonable and that is what has happened with Alaska Schools. Thank you for your help and support.

--
Doug Pfau
Nome Public Schools
Assistant Superintendent/HR
dougpfau@nomeschools.org
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Kimberly Hankins <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 1:52 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52 Comment
Attachments: SB52 Senate Finanace.pdf

Please see the attached written comment in support of SB52.

Kind regards,

--

Kimberly Hankins
Superintendent
Lower Kuskokwim School District
Bethel, AK
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Alicia Hicks [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:01 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52

Good Afternoon Members of the Senate Finance,

If student funding is increased throughout our state these are the advantages each underperforming school receiving funding:

- "A 20 percent increase in per pupil funding for underperforming schools reduced the number of below-average students in mathematics, English, social studies and science by 19.7 percent."

<https://direct.mit.edu/edfp/article/18/1/1/109966/The-Effect-of-Extra-School-Funding-on-Students>

Alaska student performance compared to the other states in the lower 48 ranks #45. If we could at least get into a ranking in the 30's instead of being in the 40's that would be a huge boost in the overall state of Alaska's academic performance on state assessments.

Lastly, Increasing funding for students means more staff could be hired to provide extra curricular activities. For example if the school sites could pole parents and students to find out what their interests are. Then the district could send out a survey to the members of the community/parents to see if anyone has skills to fill the need. In addition, the money would go to supplies helping the district with providing the material needed for the extracurricular activity. Thank-you for your time 🙏.

Respectfully,

Alicia Hicks
Slana School
K-8th Lead Teacher

Doniece Gott

From: Amy Horstman Ingram <ahorstmaningram@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:03 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony for SB 52- Increase the BSA

Hello,

I am writing today to urge you to fully fund public education in Alaska and raise the AK BSA . When taking inflation into account, the funding of our schools has been steadily decreasing and, unfortunately, the level of quality education we are able to provide has also decreased.

Educators are fleeing to other districts or, in some cases, other professions because we are not offering competitive pay and benefits. The sub pool doesn't even begin to cover the number of vacancies in the schools and a seemingly endless cycle of teacher burnout continues, creating more vacancies and in turn more work for the existing educators.

Alaska's greatest resource is not oil or fish, it is our children. We must invest in our youth so that we have a strong, educated workforce in the future. We must invest in our teachers who provide the tools necessary to help shape citizens that will contribute to our society. A strong Alaska starts with a strong school system.

Thank you,
Amy Ingram
Fairbanks, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Deedie Sorensen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2023 2:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am again testifying to the need for a substantial increase to the BSA. Recently there has been a move in the House for a one-time funding boost and a promise. While any funding is helpful, the rules around any district's ability to judiciously utilize a one-time infusion is limited as school districts can carry over only 10% of their annual budget. As a school board member, this means that it would be fiducially irresponsible for school boards to use these one-time monies for structural operational costs like salary or ongoing program development and support because that would just set up the district for program cuts and personnel lay-offs the following year when all but 10% of the monies have been expended. The battle between the size of the PFD and providing for adequately funded education for Alaska's students will be even more fraught in an election year. A statutory PFD is not attracting significant potential business to Alaska, nor reducing its out-migration. Alaska is not open for business. Years of political dithering have left the state's entire bureaucratic infrastructure crumbling, every department is limping along without essential staff/management. Our schools are the most publicly visible examples of legislative procrastination around meaningful long range sustainable fiscal solutions. The legislature is also constitutionally mandated to adequately fund the schools and it is clear to most Alaskans that this is not happening. I urge the Senate to increase the BSA to a minimum of \$800 and inflation proof the BSA.

Deedie Sorensen
Juneau Board of Education

Doniece Gott

From: Emily Kane [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2023 11:01 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Rep. Sara Hannan; Rep. Andi Story; Sen. Jesse Kiehl
Subject: HB 52

Thank you for valuing education and allocating commensurate funds towards raising many more generators of thoughtful young Alaskans who will take us into a future where we can continue to thrive and reach our full potential. A well rounded, vigorous education is the basis for increasing the likeliness of a satisfying and meaningful life experience. Please commit to the funds required to retain excellent teachers, to paying them competitively with a good retirement plan, and also allowing for smaller classrooms where students are more likely to get individual attention. We have invested in our school facilities; let's maintain them in a timely manner to increase their longevity.

Emily Kane
Juneau

www.DrEmilyKane.com
www.naturopathic.org

For refills try Fullscript.com

Be good to yourself :)

Doniece Gott

From: Travis [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2023 9:44 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School Funding

Alaska Senate Finance Committee,

Please do not increase school spending. History has shown that higher funding does not increase test scores or graduation rates. Instead the State of Alaska should emphasize homeschooling of children to achieve better education outcomes without overburdening the state with frivolous expense.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District currently has 8,301 students and 1,214 employees. That means there are 6.83 students for each employee. The KPBSD owns and maintains 42 buildings within the district. KPBSD will spend \$141,146,012 this year or \$17,003.49 per student or roughly \$22,710 per student that attends class in a KPBSD building. Excluding home school students there are roughly 6,226 students attending a KPBSD school. The State of Alaska Base Student Allocation is \$5960.00; the Connections homeschool program allotment per student is only \$2700.00. KPBSD is paying an extra \$16,750 per student that attends school in a district building; whereas KPBSD is gaining \$3262 per Connections student.

Given that homeschool graduation rates are higher with similar or better test scores; it appears that public school is not a rational investment for the State of Alaska.

Connections enrollment is 1107 students which represents 13% of school district enrollment with an estimated 25% of KPBSD students enrolled in some type of homeschool program. It is time that this large demographic is embraced. Base Student Allocation should be earmarked specifically for the school the student is attending not to be pooled by the district to prop up underperforming schools.

Travis Robotkay

Doniece Gott

From: G Nelson [REDACTED] >
Sent: Saturday, April 15, 2023 10:05 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 -please support our schools.

Good morning,

A solid and robust educational system available across the population is the basis of a healthy, productive community.

As a retired Anchorage School District teacher/librarian, I urge you to raise the BSA to \$1000 in order to provide our students, teachers and parents with support for success. Through my work as an ASD proctor for annual assessments of primary students, it is clear to me that our youngest students' academic skills were negatively affected by the pandemic and we must build up instruction available to them.

Current teachers describe disruptive student behaviors more severe than prior to the pandemic that are draining their energy and taking attention away from academics. We must keep class sizes small and supportive services strong.

We have not increased the BSA over the past six years and know that inflation has increased. The BSA increase should also be set for more than just a single year. Please provide support to our students that will continue into the future.

If you think about the experiences that have had the biggest impact on your success in life; I am sure they would most likely be based in your educational experience.

Please give all our students the opportunity for success by increasing school funding.

Gretchen Nelson
3039 Alder Cir
Anchorage, AK



Denali Borough School District

P.O. Box 280 • Healy, Alaska 99743 • (907) 683-2278 • FAX (907) 683-2514

Testimony supporting SB 52 - Increasing the Base Student Allocation by \$1000, submitted by Dan Polta, Superintendent, Denali Borough School District.

Mr. Chairman, Co-chairs, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for your service to the children of our State and your consideration increasing the Base Student Allocation

My Name is Dan Polta. I am the superintendent of the Denali Borough School District.

I'm speaking to you in support of SB52 and urge you to advance it with all due haste.

In short, our students need and deserve this support.

The many years of stagnant funding and under investment in our children's education in Alaska negatively impacted on our ability to fully support our students. For Denali to maintain the same level of student services next year, as we provide in 2022-23, there would need to be an increase to the BSA of ~\$1080. A stagnant BSA over the years has led to a reduction in supports for our students and their learning.

We can no longer offer salaries and benefits that attract teachers to nurture our students' love of learning, to recruit teaching assistants to help inspire our students to show up every morning ready to learn, to retain custodians to ensure a clean classroom for our

Mission Statement

Working together to nurture, empower, and inspire today's student to positively shape tomorrow's world

students to work in every day, and to provide maintenance staff to repair our students' aging schools.

The stagnant BSA and underinvestment in public education is creating another problem. When we as a district negotiate contracts with our professionals, that flat funding puts us in a tough position. We know that the BSA has been flat. We've worked hard in negotiations, but this tight fiscal position creates animosity and rancor. Now, after a decade of this, things are becoming so contentious and demoralizing that I worry that this is affecting the professional relationships we need in our schools to build the best instructional program we can for our children.

We're at the point where I fear the frayed relationships may become visible in the classroom and undermine the critical relationship between a student and their teacher, not from any direct negative interaction or behavior of a teacher but from the overall impact on a teacher's morale, and their ability to effortlessly smile and welcome any challenge that the student may carry with them. We need our teachers to know that we are here for them, so they can be fully present for students. Trust me, teachers have far enough to consider, plan for, and react to in the classroom, they do not need to be thinking about the BSA. Their students deserve their full attention.

Our children need the support in SB 52 to ensure that their education prepares them for a successful future in our changing world. Every child in Alaska deserves an excellent education, every day. Passing SB 52 will be a powerful step toward realizing this aspiration.

Thank you

Dan Polta
Superintendent
Denali Borough School District

Doniece Gott

From: Rachel Detemple <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 10:30 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Dear Senators,

I have been teaching in this state for 22 years. For half of that time, I've watched the funding for our schools get cut and cut and cut again. I remember the days when we had adequate support staff, adequate counseling staff, manageable class sizes, adequate budgets for books and supplies as well as student activities. It's why I chose to make this state my home. But every year that the BSA stays the same, we have to figure out how to do without even more of the people and resources we need. It's untenable. It's a betrayal. Frankly, I'm tired of this state balancing its budget on more and more of my spare time. What do you think happens when a teacher's average class size goes from 24 to 32? We work 30% harder, which means we work more and more hours that extend far beyond our paid contract time (often 70 hours a week, when I am paid for 35).

But if we ask for even a 1% raise, we're told no. Why? Because there's no money. The cost of absolutely everything has increased so much that the cost of our labor is not allowed to increase by anything at all. How is that fair?

So now we have multiple school districts unable to settle contracts, and we're looking at strike actions the likes of which this state has never seen. Get ready. Don't think we aren't ready to go there. I mean, most of the teachers still in this profession after COVID are ready to retire anyway. The rest of them have such a terrible retirement package, there's not much incentive to stay or come to Alaska in the first place. Try us -- we'll quit or leave. And what will this state do then?

We're all so tired of districts having to scramble to figure out how to function on a sub-minimal level (babysitting) for just one more year. Because that's all the legislatures of the past decade have been interested in letting us do. It's been cruel.

Now is your opportunity to be better and do better. Please look down the road at least five years and take every action you can to make sure this state can have the adequately trained workforce we must have in order to keep any kind of stable economy. Education is the industry of industries; we create all of the other ones. If you are pro-industry, you MUST be pro-education -- you cannot have one without the other. Make no mistake -- any failure of this body to act is going to result in impacts that go far beyond schools.

It's already too late to avoid a massive teacher shortage, but maybe it's not too late to prevent a full-scale meltdown.

Tying a BSA increase to inflation is an excellent idea. We need to make sure we don't get flat-funded during an inflationary period ever again. We've lost so many excellent teachers just because we don't know what our funding is this late in the year -- they choose certainty elsewhere over uncertainty here. And we've lost great educators we can't even measure because they never came here in the first place because the retirement system is the worst in the nation. These are fixable, optional problems.

Alaska has the money to fix its problems. The failure has been one of priorities. The Permanent Fund was never supposed to be an individual payout, remember -- it was meant to support the public services we all benefit from. Who doesn't benefit from an educated and capable work force? Choosing a payout over public services is short-sighted and irresponsible. So don't do that, please.

Pass SB 52 without delay. It's good policy that benefits us all.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Rachel DeTemple
English Teacher
Hutchison High School (Public CTE School of Choice)
Fairbanks, Alaska
--

Rachel DeTemple

English Teacher

Hutchison High School

Doniece Gott

From: BBBSD Maintenance Director <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2023 10:19 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Please be positive for the children of Alaska.

Thank you

--

Richard Forthofer
BBBSD Maintenance Director
Maintenance@bbbsd.net
(907) 469-0907



LOWER YUKON SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 32089 • Mountain Village, Alaska 99632

Phone: (907) 591-2411

www.lysd.org

George Smith

Chairman

Gene Stone

Chief School Administrator

Good Afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the Senate Education Finance Committee.

My name is Gene Stone and I am the Superintendent for the Lower Yukon School District. Thank you for providing this opportunity to advocate on school funding. It is encouraging to hear that our legislative body has publicly shared they are going to work to address the current funding deficiencies that exist as a result of flat funding for education since 2017. Please accept this letter as a letter in support of SB 52 that would offer a \$1000 BSA increase in 2024 and a \$348 BSA increase in 2025.

As a rural school district LYSD has seen costs soar in transportation, shipping, building materials, housing and school maintenance, labor costs, recruiting costs, fuel and nutrition services costs. We have to supplement our food costs by one million dollars a year. Our activities costs have increased by 500K, recruiting costs for teachers requires overseas recruiting now along with the use of recruiters to address the existing teacher shortage.

Many of our CIP projects don't end up making the cut for funding so we as a district have to hope there are fund balances at the end of the year to pay for inherited infrastructure issues. We recently have neared zeroing out our fund balance to pay for a tank farm project in Hooper Bay that cost the district 4.5 million dollars.

We can't attract teachers without adequate housing. We currently have two housing projects on hold because of funding uncertainty. Our students went through the COVID pandemic without access to internet. Our District is recognized as having one of the highest poverty levels in the country. To provide our students with 21st Century opportunities requires a BSA increase.

We have been an innovative district and have partnered with ASD to provide CTE opportunities. We paid for and renovated the old Long House Hotel so our students could have CTE opportunities that could not be funded if we tried to fund a

CHILDREN FIRST

Alakanuk Emmonak Hooper Bay Kotlik Marshall Mt. Village Pilot Station Russian Mission Scammon Bay Nunam Iqua

program in rural LYSD. We have done our part to be innovative, share resources with ASD and provide a return on investment to stakeholders and the State of Alaska.

We have three collective bargaining units that deserve raises to address rampant inflation. Please make adequate education funding a priority for our kids and teachers.

Thank you,

Gene Stone