

Doniece Gott

From: Christy McMurren <christy.2023@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:31 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA

When I moved to Alaska 40 yrs ago, there was already talk about planning for the eventual decline in oil revenue. And that talk was held every year until maybe 20 yrs ago. There really has been no appreciable answer to what industry and new jobs could be created to sustain our state. Well, the time has come. For those of you who would like to see Alaska fade into night and become a big nothing—then don't do anything. Your goal has been met.

If there are any of you who would like to envision a future for Alaska, then funding education is the foundation. Do you want Alaska to be like Mississippi where there's no investment because the population isn't educated enough to work in various fields?

Do you want to try to solve the myriad of social problems that continue to plague us? Then, education is the partial answer.

RAISE the BSA!

Christy McMurren
Anchorage

Doniece Gott

From: Paula DeAngeles <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:51 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA increase

Dear Senate committee, I have seen great teachers leave Alaska because we are unable to provide contracts in a timely manner due to unknown BSA increases. Our budget has a high costs of medical, 35%, building heat/fuel are also high. It is sad to see that we have to make cuts to teachers so that we can fund increases in medical and inflation costs to electricity, fuel and materials. The BSA has not kept up and it is the teachers and the students that are paying the price of the states failure to fund education.

Paula DeAngeles

Doniece Gott

From: Grant Guy <gguy@alaska.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:51 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Testimony

Esteemed members of the Senate,

I want to thank you for your support for SB 52 and for understanding that public education is the backbone of an informed and successful society. I have two students who attend public schools in Fairbanks and I have watched their class sizes steady increase over the last seven years as inflation and health care costs have deteriorated the purchasing power of our school district. An increase to the BSA is essential to maintain class sizes at their already high levels. Without an increase, we will see classes regularly above 30 in the High Schools and approaching 30 at the elementary level. Studies show that teachers make the single largest impact on a students education and the more students in a class, the less time a teacher has to work with each child. This increase to the BSA is vital to our students. To my kids. I would add that while an increase to the BSA will help prevent overflowing classrooms, I applaud the forward thinking of the Senate to include a measure to increase the BSA by a percentage equal to the average increase to the Consumer Price Index. If we do not add this vital piece to legislation our public schools will always be trying to do more with less. Always playing catch up and will never be funded to the degree necessary to support the ever changing needs of students and families in Alaska.

Thank you for your hard work, I sincerely hope that the Senate, House and the Governor can find common ground and support public education in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Grant Guy



Fairbanks, Alaska
99712

Doniece Gott

From: Laura Norton <will[REDACTED]@alaska.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:55 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: PFD vs BSA

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I have been an Alaska resident since 1981. I hope to continue to live here until I die. I have raised a family here and all my children, with their children, still live here as well. Although it is very nice to receive a boost in the fall from the PFD program I would MUCH rather the money were spent educating my grandchildren along with the rest of our youth. If we don't support our schools there will not be a competent younger generation to insure the quality of life of all Alaskan residents. It is extremely short sighted to prioritize the PFD over the BSA.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Laura Norton
Homer, AK

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Tracey Schaeffer <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:08 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA, SB 52

The children in this state are struggling. The future of our state is very precarious right now. We have got to invest in our children!

The BSA has not been changed in 15 years, and in that time prices of doing business, especially off the road system have increased appropriately 40%. We need Child care, we need Infant Learning to get children ready for school then we need an increased BSA!

Every dollar we invest in early childhood has a return of up to \$12. I know it's not immediate but it matters!

Tracey Schaeffer, OTR/L
Trauma Informed Occupational Therapist and Certified Yoga Instructor
Arctic OT Services, [REDACTED]
Fax: 1-888-822-0741

Want to be trauma aware? Connect before you correct and get curious, not furious!

Doniece Gott

From: Trina Resari-Salao <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Hello,

I'm writing today to express my support for increased funding for public education. My children are in the Chinese Immersion program in the Anchorage School District. My daughter is in 6th grade and was part of the first cohort in the program. When we enrolled in the program we made a commitment with the understanding that the district was making a commitment to us as well. What we didn't understand is that despite that commitment the district may not be able to hold up their end due to stagnant funding for public education.

When the potential school district budget cuts were first announced we were heartbroken that the Chinese Immersion program was on the chopping block. Instead of being able to continue through high school the program might be reduced to elementary only. You can imagine how relieved we felt while waiting to testify at the school board meeting when they announced that the program wouldn't be reduced after all, at least for now.

Please help us secure the future of this amazing program, not only for my kids but for all of the other students who have taken the opportunity to learn Mandarin Chinese. Please vote in support of public education funding.

Best,
Trina Resari-Salao
Anchorage, AK

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Jennifer Grant <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:13 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA increase in Senate Bill 52.

Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing in support of the BSA increase in Senate Bill 52. I've been teaching in the Sitka School District for 16 years, and each spring we get a memo from the district office that we are facing a budget deficit and that teaching positions will be lost. This year is no different. In our building alone we have seen cut after cut. This year we lost our entire science program at my school. The science teaching position was cut, yet nothing was provided (curriculum, training, etc.) to replace it. We also lost a part time music teaching position. For the upcoming school year we are set to lose four teaching positions in our building—this is a drastic move for a school that has less than 400 enrolled students.

The budget cuts are affecting students. We are already operating at a bare-bones capacity, and I just don't see how it's feasible to absorb any additional cuts without drastically impacting student learning. With the upcoming AK Reads act, more will be required of teachers. Without an increase to the BSA we will once again be expected to more with less.

In addition to the annual stress of not knowing about funding for the upcoming school year, the dire state of the retirement plan for teachers is going to drive people out of this field. It's going to be harder and harder to recruit quality teachers under these circumstances. Students will be affected.

Thank you for your time, and I sincerely hope you will consider voting for an increase to the BSA. I would like to have called in with my testimony; however, the scheduled time interferes with almost every teacher's work schedule. It's impossible to make an important phone call with a classroom full of students.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Grant

5th Grade Teacher
Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary
Sitka, Alaska
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Matthew Huffman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:22 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52 BSA Public Testimony

I would like to offer my support for approving an increase to the BSA. I am a new teacher to AK and was hired as a new position this year. I moved my son and I up here from UT to come to a beautiful place I have always wanted to live to provide my service as a teacher to the students here. I absolutely love it here and in the short time I have been here it is clear that the students here don't have as many educational course choices that my previous district had in UT.

I was brought here to teach computer science, web development, engineering, drafting, and robotics. I love what I teach and I believe every student should have to take at least one computer science course in high school as a graduation requirement. If the BSA is not increased by a considerable amount, my new full time position that was approved last year, is already in jeopardy.

I was fortunate to be offered a contract for next year, but I will be splitting my time between the high school and middle school to accommodate a lack of funding for enough teachers to go around. Our student to teacher ratio will increase, limiting our ability to offer as many courses as we should. We will not be able to hire a new art teacher to replace the one that left mid year, we will be forced to close our swimming pool, and we will lose one of our support staff members.

These things will all greatly impact student learning and opportunities. If we as a country want to grow we cannot hold our educational systems hostage with lack of funding. Student growth, learning, and opportunities should be one of the highest priority in a society looking to the future. Neglecting education will only lead to disaster.

Thank you,

Matt Huffman
CTE Teacher
Seward High

Doniece Gott

From: Lars Hansen <lars.hansen@k12northstar.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:25 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Input.

Hello,

I am a teacher of science in the Fairbanks North Star School District at Hutchison High.

During the 14 years that I've been teaching, I have watched a steady stream of teachers leaving our fairly small school (about 400 students) as funding cuts have been made, while the number of pupils remains the same. Sometimes a last-minute funding works to save a position or two, but not always.

This year, again, there are two and a half positions on the chopping block right now, and we are looking at an average pupil to teacher ratio of 32 to 1 going into next year.

PLEASE increase the BSA, the education of our kids is essential, and the strain that flat (or negative) funding puts on teachers, administrators, and also students is untenable for the long run.

Thanks,
Lars Hansen

Doniece Gott

From: Homer Hounds [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:25 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: I support increasing the base student allocation

Our students are important! Well funded public education attracts young families to Alaska, which is critical to supporting our entire economy. Please increase the base student allocation for the benefit of all!

Thank you,

Tory Rockefeller - 20 year resident of Homer and mother to one of next year's kindergartners.

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Milli Martin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

It is such a pretty day in Homer, a rarity of late. I will be out skiing while this bill is heard again and you take public testimony. Cannot let a day like this go by.

The BSA increase, as in SB 52 is desperately needed. Our schools have not been adequately funded since 2017, in spite of the higher cost of everything.

Our children are our future, and it is important that districts are adequately funded, so please, please support SB 52.

There are groups who are working hard to destroy public education, and sadly many of our House of Representatives have bought into their fake information. Thank golly the Senate has not. Please support our school districts and fund them adequately.

Thank you,

Milli Martin
[REDACTED]
Homer, Alaska 99603
[REDACTED]

Co-chair Stedman, Co-chair Hoffman, Co-chair Olson, and members of the Alaska Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of the student council at Bristol Bay borough school district, we are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 52 (SB 52). As elected student council members it is our duty to advocate for the students of Bristol Bay. We believe that this increase is vital to ensure that our peers have access to high quality education and are empowered to succeed.





An increase in the BSA is critically needed to address the unique challenges we face at Bristol Bay Borough School District. Stable, predictable funding is necessary to ensure we can attract and retain high quality educators. The base student allocation has only been increased by \$30 since 2016, and the impact of inflation during that time has created a significant loss of purchasing power of our district and numerous others. In the Bristol Bay Borough school district, we have already seen this impact of insufficient funding and inflation in, sports travel costs, food for culinary arts class, concessions, and school lunch.

Without stable and predictable funding, the fear among students is that we will lose the programs and opportunities we are so grateful to have now. These include art, culinary arts, shop classes, numerous clubs, fab-lab for elementary, CTE programs, sports, and importantly long lasting teachers that are able to build bonds and connect with their students.

Thank you for considering passing the increase, as well as inflation proofing of the B.S.A. to ensure Alaska schools can continue to serve students with the quality education they deserve.

Sincerely,

The student council of Bristol Bay Borough School District

Bella Young	President	
Olivia Harvilla	Vice President	
Brooke Phelps	Secretary	
Lewis Singley	Treasurer	

Doniece Gott

From: Shannon Dryden <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 9:56 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Testimony

I thank Senate Finance for accepting public testimony for SB 52. I very much appreciate your time and careful consideration of my eyewitness account. This account is what I have personally witnessed as a parent with multiple children within the Alaska Public School System.

As I reflected on testimonies I have written while serving on the HBDS's school board I have spotted the constant and would like to keep my testimony today focused on one topic, Teacher support, and Retention.

As I begin this testimony I glance at a stack of local newspapers, their titles read, "What's causing the teacher shortage?", "Six new staff join the Haines Schools.", "Jenae's Playground funding falls short.", "Property tax assessments increase.", "Teachers get a pay increase in new contract.", "House budget includes one time school funding boost." These frequent titles involving our local schools and teachers should be alarming. Alaska Public Schools need stable, perpetual adjustments to market conditions, support calculated within the BSA formula is the most reliable financial support allowance.

Each of these newspaper titles shows a timeline of a small remote community. It shows how the lack of predictable sustained funding in the Alaska Public Schools is causing lifelong residents and their transplant counterparts to leave Alaska in search of reliable transportation services and professional opportunities that Alaska has just been unable to offer.

"What's causing the teacher shortage?" In Haines, everything from overseas hiring, to lateral or enhanced benefits from another state, to lack of housing, to the cost of living, to medical and transportation access. In a nutshell, salary and access to services. The ferry system commutes goods, services, experiences, and relationships. As the ferry system withers, so will the state. Consider who and what you want to remain in Alaska as you choose your support for funding, services, and expansion of the Alaska Marine Highway. As soon as Alaska residents can teleport, Alaska can start considering defunding the Alaska Marine Highway. As for salaries.... if the salary you receive just can't meet the cost of living in the community in which you live and work, you have no option but to give up on your Alaska Dream and seek new opportunities.

"Six new staff join the Haines Schools." & "Teachers get a pay increase in new contract." While my community is grateful for the outcome of our recent recruitment of certified staff, the flip side of this is that we lost a large amount of staff. Turnover costs an employer so much, training, local knowledge, and relationships. Predictability in funding, the BSA formula, allows Alaska's Public Schools the opportunity to support the needs of our educators. Our teachers and the taxpayer deserve the biggest bang for their buck and predictable funding leads to responsible financial allocations. As the treasurer of the HBSD School Board, I was nervous to see a slightly riskier budget proposal than what I have been used to seeing; but I understand that without a reasonable risk, we will be losing our greatest assets, our teachers and mentors.

"Jenae's Playground funding falls short." & "Property tax assessments increase." Even with the support of our very giving community, major maintenance has been placed on a simmer. While the administration tries to keep a rapid boil of progress, HBSD has turned to the Haines Borough for increased funding.

In closing, I would like to confirm that SB 52 is necessary. This increase would start to make up for dormant formula calculations. Allow your local school boards and administrators to maintain the best student services while being responsible to our staff and to our communities.

Thank you for your time and service.

Shannon Dryden
HBSD school board member and parent

Doniece Gott

From: Kari Dendurent <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:01 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Clayton Holland
Subject: Letter of Support for SB 52

My name is Kari Dendurent, and I am the Assistant Superintendent for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

The purpose of my testimony is to support SB52 to increase the BSA by \$1,000 in FY 24, a \$348 increase in FY25 and increasing the BSA by a percentage equal to the average percentage of increase over the preceding four calendar years in all items of the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers for urban Alaska starting in FY 26.

As the KPBSD Assistant Superintendent I have oversight over a myriad of projects, however the most important aspect of my job is to ensure students of the KPBSD are equipped to be successful in life upon graduation. This includes providing a solid education in which students are proficient in English Language Arts as well as in mathematics. In addition to these foundational skills, it is also our responsibility to expose our students to a variety of experiences and opportunities in order for them to be competitive both nationally and globally.

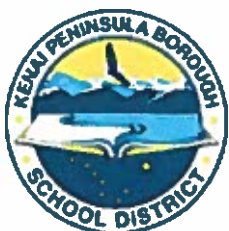
In 2022 the KPBSD worked with our staff and community stakeholders to write our 5-year strategic plan. This plan was based on assessment data, survey data as well as personal convictions for the goals of the KPBSD. Five areas were identified: Student Success, School Climate and Safety, Family and Community Engagement, Workforce Development and Organizational and Resources Management.

An increase of the BSA will assist the KPBSD to realize our goals as these things require personnel to teach students, keep our facilities safe, provide programs for our families, hire and retain staff as well as to pay our bills. As you know School Districts cannot raise funds and the required funds are provided through a combination of state aid, required local contribution and federal impact assistance. My ask is for the Alaska State Legislature to provide the necessary funds needed to educate to the best of our ability and to reduce the frustrations of cutting staff and programs.

Thank you for considering my request to support SB 52.

Respectfully,

Kari



Kari Lee Dendurent
Assistant Superintendent
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
[REDACTED]
kdendurent@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

Doniece Gott

From: Robyn Taylor <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:24 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Respected members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I write this correspondence urging you to pass SB 52 and fund our educational system in the state to the levels we so desperately need in order to operate viable institutions preparing our students to enter the future workforce and be leaders of our communities.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District is anticipating a 17 million dollar budget deficit for the 2023-2024 school year. The direct impact this has on the school I lead, Hutchison High School, is that I will lose the equivalent of two teaching positions, in a career and technical education school of choice budgeted for 400 students. Due to how the staff is scheduled in my building and the way we offer CTE pathways for students I will now be filling general education classes such as english, history, math, and science with an average of 29-33 students per class period whereas my CTE focused classes will average at 12 students per class before any part-time students enroll from within the borough. In the 8 years I've had the privilege of leading this building, I have reduced my general education teaching staff by 6 teachers. The classrooms themselves are structured to accommodate 24 students and a teacher comfortably. These types of settings do not create optimal learning environments.

Where there has not been an increase to the BSA inside the foundation formula for several years, schools have continued to incur nothing but drastic cuts to our educational well-being in all areas of operation while the costs of inflation continue to rise. Districts are faced with many challenges; trying to maintain facilities, pay employees, navigate rising healthcare costs, purchase necessary supplies, and most importantly adequately provide quality education to our students.

Please, place the fiscal emphasis where our constitutional responsibilities lie, and fund public education by passing SB 52 so that school districts can adequately operate and ALL students in the great State of Alaska have the opportunity to receive a quality education.

Kindest regards,

Robyn Taylor

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ROBYN TAYLOR M.ED., ED.L.
Alaska Principal of the Year 2020
Principal
Hutchison High School
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99709
[REDACTED]

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Doniece Gott

From: David Evans <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:28 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Jenny Martin
Subject: BSA increase/PFD

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

We emailed you public testimony for your meeting last week stating our reasons for supporting the BSA increase of \$1,348.

Now that you have the House Budget with a BSA increase of only \$680, a PFD of \$2,700, and a deficit of \$590 million before you, we feel the need to testify again today as you meet.

Please truly consider Representative Sara Hannan's proposal to cut the PFD to \$1,350. That savings of \$800 million not only reduces the deficit but provides more incentive to raise the BSA to the level put forth in SB 52.

Question: Why would you give each child in our state a PFD of \$2,700 and not provide adequate funding for the public schools that they will attend?

Thanks for your hard work,

Bonnie & David Evans

Homer, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Frieda Nageak [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:31 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Increase BSA

Uvlaalluataq,

Frieda Nageak School Board Member from North Slope Borough School District. I am in support of increasing base student allocation. Our children's education is very important and vital for their future. Our student's shouldn't have any barriers that would stop them from receiving the best education they need. As a state can increase salaries and increase other funding in other areas, but NOT our student's education? BSA wasn't increased for 7 years. Please increase BSA for our students, our teachers, our school because the students are our future leaders, workers.

Giiii

Quyanaqpak!

Doniece Gott

From: Sara Erickson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:52 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52: Increase Base Student Allocation

My name is Sara Erickson. I have been a teacher in Chignik Lagoon, Alaska for over 20 years.

Students are losing out because schools are struggling since they have not had a raise in the base allocation but there has been a lot of recent inflation. The state of Alaska has a responsibility to educate our children. Please raise the base allocation so our schools can meet their responsibilities.

--

Thank you,
Sara Erickson
Chignik Lagoon School

Doniece Gott

From: Elisabeth Hauser [mailto:elisabeth.hauser@alaska.gov]
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 10:34 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA

I am writing in support of SB 52. An increase to the BSA is imperative to the continued hard work that educators are doing throughout the state of Alaska. As a school counselor and educator currently employed with the Juneau school district I have witnessed the mental health concerns of educators and students first hand. Educators are leaving the field, the work has become extremely difficult and a huge aspect of this is not enough funding for schools. We are asked to do so much with too little. Please pass this important bill - fund our schools, support our educators, take care of our future.

Elisabeth Hauser
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Doniece Gott

From: Kate Schaberg <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 7:12 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written comment on SB 52- Increase Base Student Allocation

For the record,

I am a resident of Kodiak AK and have a 3rd and 4th grader in the public school system. I have seen first hand over the last few years how the schools are struggling to make ends meet. I would like to advocate for increasing the Base Student Allocation to make up for the impact of inflation after 6 years of flat funding (2017 to present).

In our students' elementary school, I see very concrete needs for additional funding support: library roof leaks, old furniture giving kids splinters, teachers having to pay for their own art supplies and books. The list goes on -our families have been supportive in fundraising to help support students and teachers over the last couple of years, but this is not a sustainable plan of action. Teacher retention and recruitment issues, lack of teacher aides, and thus large class sizes are very real problems happening in our community. It's a big problem, and we need your action on this bill.

Again, I urge you to increase the Base Student Allocation to make up for the impact of inflation after 6 years of flat funding (2017 to present).

Thank you,
Kate Schaberg

Doniece Gott

From: Elizabeth Nicolai <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 7:50 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please raise the BSA

Hello,

I know how many emails you get, so I will keep this brief. Please stay strong with your budget with the raised BSA instead of a one time up like the house budget. Raising costs are not a one time problem. I have two children, kindergarten and 3rd grade, in public school. Our community and our future needs this investment.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Moreau Nicolai, Anchorage

Elizabeth Nicolai

Doniece Gott

From: Damien Stella [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:03 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I strongly urge you to NOT endorse an increase in the base student allocation for schools in Alaska. Nothing in this bill (at the end of the day) does anything to improve outcomes; it simply adds more administrative burden -- cost -- to educating children in AK. Alaska has a PROVEN track record of performing at the nadir of USA educational systems on a statewide basis, both per capita and in real terms.

Alaskan students would perform better if 'we returned our focus' to those basic and essential elements of **reading, writing, and arithmetic** that those of earlier generations embraced and by which we excelled. Follow these up with civics, true history (not the recently made up pabulum that passes for it), basic economics, other languages, and -- maybe -- extra-curricular activities, though these latter should be funded at the local level, not at the State level.

The State of Alaska is in no position to spend more money on another failing proposition, like the grain silo in Valdez, the fish processing plant in Anchorage, or the half-billion dollars 'given' to Trans-Canada for a pipeline to nowhere. Stop the fiscal insanity.

Give our children the ability to read, encourage their parents to take them to reading venues (called libraries when I was a kid) and book stores; expose them to the beauty of literature and the lessons of history. Given this, they will surely flourish and be better citizens at a lower cost to society in both the short and long run.

Thank you for your consideration,

Damien Stella
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99503
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: mary griswold [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 8:16 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 BSA increase

I support SB 52 for a long-needed increase to the BSA-- not a one-time education increase in the House budget.

I support funding essential government services with a 75/25 split of a 5POMV withdrawal from the permanent fund, with 75% for government.

The state gets no revenue from our economy, other than oil taxes. Demand for services is ever-increasing. We all need to help support the services we demand. I also support a state income tax and an increase in oil taxes.

I support replenishing the CBR, not depleting it to bankruptcy.

I urge you to pass a sustainable fiscal plan this year. It's our best chance since it's not an election year.

Mary Griswold
Homer

Doniece Gott

From: Lila Lee Little [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 10:58 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Please increase the BSA to provide increased funding for our school district. The future of ur state depends on this!

Doniece Gott

From: Christopher Brown [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:01 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA Increase

Greetings,

I am writing today in support of SB 52 BSA Increase. This bill would address two important items: 1) the need for substantive increase to the BSA (something that has not been done in a number of years) and 2) a semblance of predictability when it comes to next year's BSA.

In an ideal world, we would have forward funding of education to avoid the nearly annual cycle of layoffs and rehires. At the same time, we would have funding that addresses inflation concerns.

Thank you for all that you do for our great state.

Christopher Brown
Homer, AK
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Megan Peltier [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:13 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA

Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am unable to call into today's testimony, but wanted to share my thoughts with you.

I support increasing the BSA by \$1000 and inflation proofing the BSA to keep schools properly funded in the future. I think issuing a smaller PFD payout and using some of that money to pay for educating our children is a prudent decision.

I do not believe the one time education funding boost and larger PFD that the House has proposed is the proper choice. We need long term solutions.

As a graduate of the Anchorage School District and parent of two (next year three) ASD students, it is very important to me that schools receive better funding. The flat funding that has been in place has effectively been a cut in funding due to inflation. Keeping class sizes low and maintaining things like health class, gifted programs, and immersion programs should be a priority.

Please stick with the current plan proposed in SB 52.

Respectfully,
Megan Peltier
Senate District F

RE: SB 52 Increase to Base Student Allocation (BSA)

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Andrew Ratliff and I have the pleasure of serving as the Chief Financial Officer for the Anchorage School District (ASD).

You've heard from my District and School Board about the importance of SB 52: Increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Today, I am writing on behalf of myself but also as a subject matter expert in support of the bill.

The BSA has not had a meaningful increase since FY 2016-17. Since that time, the Anchorage School District has used a combination of budget reductions, increased class sizes, one-time State funds, fund balance, and more recently, Federal stimulus funds to balance its budget and avoid significant reductions in educational opportunities afforded to students. Those one-time funding sources are nearly exhausted. SB 52 would provide much needed relief to districts across the state as inflationary pressures limit purchasing power. This bill would allow the district to potentially restore class sizes to current levels, add reading specialists to comply with the Alaska Reads Act, and create long term instructional and financial plans to ensure a high-quality education for our students. In contrast, competing bills that would provide only one-time funding would cause uncertainty heading into the following fiscal year and districts would again spend time on what programs and positions to eliminate next rather than focusing on how to improve student achievement.

The effects of price increases over time impact not only fixed costs such as liability insurance, utilities, rents, supplies, and equipment, but also the price of labor which makes up approximately 85% of ASD's budget. As the price of goods, services, and labor increase over time, the number of employees ASD can afford to pay goes down, leaving fewer resources for students, even without considering the effects of enrollment variations. Recent price increases have been exacerbated with record inflation. At the same time, the recruitment and retention crisis in education is ongoing, so the need for competitive wages is critical.

As oil prices fell in 2015, the State faced mounting budget deficits and districts braced for a period of flat funding. ASD made the conscious effort to limit wage increases to help alleviate the number of positions that would need to be reduced to balance the budget. While this practice helped the District's budget in the short term, other sectors outpaced the District in wage growth over time, which resulted in increased vacancy rates. This was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a shrinking labor market and increased competition among employers to hire qualified employees. Having reliable, inflation-proofed funding could have significantly mitigated this, notwithstanding the pandemic that has affected the labor market as a whole.

A one-time reset to the BSA to make up for previous years' flat funding, coupled with future inflation proofing, would allow districts to create long-term instructional plans to address

student achievement rather than perpetually planning for reductions based on flat funding. This can be done in a responsible and sustainable way, and one need not look any further than the Municipality of Anchorage as a model for this course of action. In the mid 80's, Anchorage voters approved a local tax cap championed by fiscally conservative members of the community. The tax cap was implemented to limit the amount of tax increases that could be approved by future assemblies without direct voter approval, and has done a good job keeping the size of government proportionate to population and infrastructure for nearly 40 years. This is done by limiting the overall tax increase in a given year to the average of the previous five years of both population and inflation, plus an adjustment for new construction.

In some similarity to the Anchorage tax cap, the State Foundation Formula already addresses population changes through the average daily membership counts each year. This bill would take a further step toward sustainability by codifying a BSA adjustment based on a previous average of inflation in a manner similar to the Anchorage tax cap. Additionally, if the State would like districts to add new programs or initiatives, they could be accounted for in a similar fashion to the new construction clause in the Anchorage tax cap, or by adding multipliers to the Foundation Formula like the State did with the CTE adjustment years ago.

The Alaska Constitution directs the State to establish and maintain public education, however, State funding has not been maintained since at least 2016-17. Adjusting the current BSA to catch up to the cost of living increases since then, and instituting fiscally responsible public policy allowing for sustainable growth, would provide the stable educational system that the framers of the constitution intended, while allowing districts to better plan for student success in perpetuity.

Thank you for focusing your time on improving the quality of public education during this legislative session. A well-resourced, stable educational system will attract businesses and families to this great state and be the cornerstone of a thriving and prosperous economy.

Andrew Ratliff

Doniece Gott

From: Henk Kruithof [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:32 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52 support

Thank you all for the work you do for the children of Alaska. As a grandfather and a school board member I am very concerned about funding for our schools. Without an increase to the basic student allocation, Cordova would have to make very very difficult choices choices that would not benefit the education of our students. I stand in support of an increase to SB 52. Thank you.

Henk Kruithof

Doniece Gott

From: Danae McKinney [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:40 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA Increase

Good morning members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I write to you today to express my deep concern for the education of Alaska's children. Districts all across the state, including mine (the Kodiak Island Borough School District) are struggling financially to continue to offer children a basic education, much less to continue to offer the world class education that we would all like to see for our students! Take Anchorage as an example, they are considering closing actual brick and mortar schools, forcing children to relocate into other schools with ultimately higher class sizes. Certainly not ideal for children's stability or growth. My own school district is operating with a \$4,000,000 deficit right now. This burden will fall on the shoulders of homeowners in Kodiak, through Mil rate increases. None of these situations is good for the economic future of our state. If you want to raise educated adults, who will stay in Alaska and contribute to its economy, you have to invest in that future by paying for their educations at the current costs, and remove this back (and spirit) breaking responsibility from families and communities who just want the best for our children!

Please take this moment in history to do something extraordinary that can only come from you, OUR elected officials. I humbly ask you to increase the Base Student Allocation to the highest level to keep up with inflation. What you choose will steer the future of Alaskans for many years to come. It's up to you to do something that will directly impact the lives of every Alaskan.

Sincerely,
Danae McKinney

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Anne Biberman [mailto:anne.biberman@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:54 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB 52

I write with strong support of SB 52 and the recommended increase to the Base Student Allocation. Flat funding for our schools has resulted in school closures, loss of programs, and valuable, passionate, professional teachers. This small investment will have a significant rate of return.

The BSA has not seen an increase in many years. During that time, we've seen our schools increase class sizes and force cuts of important programs to stretch district dollars. This increase represents one piece of a multi-pronged effort to ensure that our children have every opportunity to excel in Alaska's classrooms. Schools both need and deserve adequate funding, this becomes especially urgent due to recent inflation and everyday costs are skyrocketing. From rural sports and elementary music programs being cut, vocational education going away to class size increases, the impacts on our students of flat funding for seven years is real and harmful. We can, and must, do better. It is important both for itself and to remain competitive with other states.

As I advocate to our local school board to keep valuable programs from the chopping block, I can't help but be aware that they can't do that without adequate funding from the state. We have to provide them with the means to do that.

Please fund education in our state. It is the very definition of investing in our future.

Respectfully submitted

Anne Biberman
Fairbanks

Doniece Gott

From: Cooper Freeman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:56 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony re: Operating Budget and the Capital Budget

Greetings,

I am Cooper Freeman from Homer, Alaska.

I would like to testify in support of a substantial BSA increase for K-12 Funding. As a new parent, there is nothing more important to me than my child's education. We need to keep young families in Alaska, starting and sustaining businesses and our communities. Our schools are the foundations of our communities. I would happily receive a far smaller PFD payment to increase the BSA to upwards of \$2,000 per student.

I would like to testify in strong opposition to 404 Primacy Funding. This is a huge waste of money the state doesn't have, taking on a program and adding staff when the federal government is already fronting the bill. This money would be far better spent on education.

Thank you,

Cooper Freeman
[REDACTED]

Homer, AK
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Kathryn Ault [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 11:57 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

To the Senate Finance Committee:

As the mother of two primary school aged children, their education is one of my top priorities. I grew up in Alaska and attended the public schools here and I know first hand what a great education system on the Kenai Peninsula can look like. I believe I benefitted from that. My sister was a teacher in Homer for the past few years, but left that job, early in her career, because the pay was too low. She left to go out of state where the cost of living is less and she can make more money. Our current wages for teachers are unlivable especially as inflation continues to rise.

I currently work on the Kenai Peninsula as a nurse-practitioner, a job I truly love, but if the education here is not made a priority by the state and we continue to stay stagnant in the funding, I would certainly leave the state for a better education for my kids. Kids are the future of this state and are our future economy. We need to invest in this now.

Thank you,

Kathryn Ault, APRN