

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 have testified to school funding for two years now on the importance of increasing and inflation proofing the BSA due to rising costs, increased teacher salaries, ability to plan. Now more costs will be incurred by implementing the READS act by the very politicians who want to flat fund our education. As I understand it the legislature voted for a pay raise for themselves this year, justified as it has been ten years. I also think increasing BSA is long overdue. We all have a stake in education, most everyone has a child or knows someone in public education.

I have lost faith in the Federal Government's ability to do what's right, all they do now is waste time and money to persecute each other to remain in power rather than deal with the issues. Please do not let that happen on a state level for me, it was very disheartening to see what the house did with HB 65, I felt betrayed. We are friends and neighbors and like most Alaska communities small. The school is the center of many community activities, gatherings, where kids come to get nutritional food and make friends. Most Communities have one school and it is critical to their community!

When it comes down to it, after all the bickering and posturing the kids are the ones who lose.... or win if the state changes its stance on education.

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

Doniece Gott

From: Brendan Wilson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:50 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Testimony

Good afternoon, Co-chairs and Finance Committee members,

For the record, my name is Brendan Wilson and I'm the principal of Begich Middle School in Anchorage and the President of the Alaska Association of Secondary Principals.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to meet with principals from across Alaska. Whether we are on or off the road system two challenges stand out that we all have in common: staffing shortages and growing mental health needs. We'd love to focus on our reading and math scores, but instead, we're struggling to hire and keep staff for our buildings and we're spending our energy trying to get kids to come to school, stay in school, and in too many cases, stay alive. As you know, our federal pandemic funding is running out. Without a BSA increase inside the formula, we'll be confronting 2023 challenges with 2016 dollars. Continued flat funding means continued cuts for education. And it means we'll have to make impossible choices between our kids' mental health or academic needs, and we need to be able to teach the whole child. Please remain steadfast in moving SB 52 forward and keep the increases within the formula, so we can provide consistency, adequate support, and academic excellence for AK's kids. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Brendan Wilson
President AASSP

Doniece Gott

From: Alice Adams <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:46 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support SB52

I am mother of 4 and grandmother of 5. I am proud to say 3 out of 4 kids are UA graduates with degrees in mechanical engineering, elementary teacher and logistical marketing. Our eldest is certified in commercial boiler work: all Noatak am high school graduates. First granddaughter graduating high school next weekend and is enrolled to southeast college in Juneau in the biology program.

We need your support to continue to provide quality education in Alaska. Please support SB 52.

Alice Adams
Noatak

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Doniece Gott

From: Carey Carpenter [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:45 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support SB 52 Increase BSA Funding

Hello Committee Members,

I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to testify at the committee meeting today at 1:30pm, I stayed on hold for over an hour but had an appointment I had to make. I'd like to submit my testimony in writing for your consideration. Thank you for the opportunity.

Hello members of the committee, my name is Carey Carpenter and I'm from Anchorage representing my 7th and 9th grade kid's education. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my testimony.

I want to talk about IS education funding currently adequate? What is the definition of adequate? And why adequate funding is necessary?

So is the education funding in Alaska adequate?

There have been studies to answer the question of how much money do we need to "adequately" fund education. The reports I've seen are based on research and results that look at things like say how many students per classroom is most efficient for learning.

The answer is in K-3 the maximum class size should be 15 students. And for 4-12th grades the maximum class size should be 25. In the Anchorage School District, we do not have enough money to fund the recommended class sizes. As a matter of fact, as education continues to be under-funded the class sizes continue to get bigger and further away from the efficient learning models that we know are successful. Last year my 6th grader was across the hall from a teacher that had 35 students in their class.

I encourage you to think about that. Thirty-five 11 and 12 year olds in one small classroom. If you have kids, tell me if you'd EVER host a birthday party with 35 kids at it. And if you'd do it for 6 hours, 5 days a week for 9 months in a row. Oh yeah and it's not just a birthday party but you also have to teach them math. Honestly, it's a Herculean task that is just unfair to ask of our teachers and of our students. Our education system deserves better. Our kids deserve better. Our kids truly deserve the best, but all I'm really asking is that we give them the minimum here. I'm not asking for gold plated toilets, I'm asking for the next generation to be given a chance at a quality education and you just can't do that unless you fund it adequately.

So what is the definition of adequate?

Here's an example, you take your car into the shop because it's not running quite right. The mechanic says I need \$1,000 to fix it and you reply "no I'll only give you \$200". What do you think your repair is going to look like when you get it back? It's going to be done with duct tape because that's all you could afford. Do you want our education system held together with duct tape?

Because currently we are funding a duct tape education.

I urge you to listen to the education experts that have come to talk to you about what they need to fund students learning. PLEASE pass the increased BSA.

Why is adequate funding for education necessary?

I am an engineer and I moved to Alaska after graduating from college in 1999 because I wanted to experience the beauty and majesty of this place. I could've taken my education and moved anywhere I wanted. I stayed in Alaska because 10 years ago the opportunities to raise a family in a quality public school system were good. My kids attend one of the Anchorage language immersion schools in 7th and 9th grade. However, due to inadequate funding, the district has for years, continually discussed having to cut the programs that my kids thrive in – gifted education, language immersion, electives, and sports programs.

Why is adequate funding necessary? Because other professionals have the same options. If you want to attract quality professionals like doctors, nurses, engineers, and teachers to our state and stop the out-migration, you HAVE to fund education. Otherwise people will go to better places to raise their families and our community and our state will continue to suffer.

Sincerely,
Carey Carpenter

Doniece Gott

From: Patricia Dick <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:43 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Raising SBA

Dear Senators,

Dear Alaska Senate Finance Committee: My name is Patricia Dick from Sitka. I am writing in support of raising and inflation proofing the SBA in Senate Bill 52. I am a retired after 26 years Alaska teacher. For years I have encouraged interested students in the field of education. Both my daughters are award winning teachers and have Alaska teaching certifications.

In the past, I have told people that in Sitka, **"we grow our teachers"**. Our pride and joy are Sitka students that have chosen teaching as a career and come back home to teach. But now that has to change. Recently we had a "born in Sitka teacher" along with his teaching wife quit and find teaching jobs in Washington State. Why? No retirement! No support from the State of Alaska to fund our schools!! Teachers in the SSD are getting cut everywhere! We have 15 of them on the chopping block right now! When new teachers get hired, they quickly leave and find jobs in states that support education. Our governor who claims to be an educator didn't even have funds for education in the state budget!! You tell me, what am I supposed to tell students when they say they are getting an education degree? Am I supposed to say, "Don't come home, you need to find a state with good teacher retirement and has inflation proofing funding for education?"

In last night's paper Bert Stedman was quoted as saying, **"We are debating whether we're going to teach our kids reading, writing, arithmetic or are we going to teach them to cash a check!"** That is why I voted for Stedman because he has always supported education. That is also why we voted for Rebecca Himshoot as our state representative. At a time when our students are struggling to catch up from the pandemic education losses, **this is the time to step up to the plate and support our public schools in Alaska! Raise the SBA, and inflation proof it that is what we need now!!!** I appreciate all that yall do to support education in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Patricia Dick
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Barbara Hill [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:36 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB52

Co-Chair Olson & Seate Finance Committee:

My name is Barbara J. Hill and I live in Naknek, AK,.

As a retired teacher, educated at the University of Alaska, who started teaching for State Operated Schools I watched the development of an excellent well supported educational system. Let's get back to adequately inflation proofing the BSA and supporting the staff with the benefits that encourage professional stability. My salary and retirement package made it possible live, build a house, raise 6 children and retire here in Naknek' after also teaching in Levelock and Kokhanok.

Is the PFD a bribe to buy political support? Let's get serious about the future and tax people who work here, including the industries and temporary seasonal employees if you want a big PFD. Don't short sheet our children ability to a fine education and a future as Alaskans.

Let's get back to putting first things first OUR CHILDREN! OUR FUTURE!

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Melody Douglas and am a retired Chief Finance Officer from the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. I serve as the Associate Executive Director for the Alaska Association of School Business Officials.

I am in support of SB 52.

Stagnant BSA While the various one-time fundings received since FY 2016-17 are greatly appreciated, it hasn't allowed districts to stabilize and plan for the future in a meaningful way. Before federal funding for COVID-19 was awarded, many districts were having significant budget challenges. The flexibility provided with that funding allowed districts to hold things together. Federal COVID-19 funds will lapse next year. With the BSA not keeping pace with increasing costs and inflation, a fiscal cliff was on the horizon. That day is here.

Fund Balance I have seen the recent recap of fund balance districts have in various funds and some unexpended federal funds – it may lead some to think all those funds are available to districts for operating needs. That is not the case. Special purpose funds such as transportation, capital projects, and COVID-19 relief funds must be used for the purposes for which those funds were awarded. We know transportation hasn't received adequate funding in recent years so transferring that fund balance to the operating fund isn't prudent. These fund balances are not available to districts for the general fund operations budget.

Districts have very few undesignated funds available for operations after this year (ends June 30, 2023). Drastic cuts will be made by some districts if an increase to the BSA doesn't materialize.

Needed Stability An increased BSA will allow districts to:

- Maintain or improve class sizes.
- Initiate long-term instructional and operational plans.
- Hire staff as required by the Alaska Reads Act
- Create competitive salary schedules to attract and retain staff in all areas of the district.

Sustainable Growth Education funding has been a large part of legislative discussions for many years. It would be helpful if there was a way to create a mechanism within the funding formula that would allow sustainable growth. Perhaps a rolling five-year average of the inflation rate could be included so the BSA could at least keep some pace with inflation. If something like that were in place, we would not be talking about almost 7 years of essentially flat funding which is actually a cut in funding because of inflation and increased costs.

Thank you for your time focused on improving public education in Alaska!

Melody Douglas, SFO

Doniece Gott

From: BBBSD Maintenance Director [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Please help our kids.
Thank you

--
Richard Forthofer
BBBSD Maintenance Director
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Frommherz, Nanibah <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: thunder mountain

Dear AK Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Nanibah Frommherz. I am a freshman at Thunder Mountain High School. I am emailing in support of SB 52 which will increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA), aka money for AK schools, because I care about my education.

I hope to become a lawyer or a nurse anesthetist like my cousin after graduation. Currently, AK public schools do not get enough money from the state to properly pay our teachers, pay the bills, and pay for sports. I want to take as many science classes as possible before graduating but so many of my teachers and my sister's teachers are leaving because they can get paid more money in Texas or through retirement and a second job. I do not want to lose any more teachers. An increase of school funds will help pay our teachers and help pay for other things associated with schooling, like sports. We get money from the city and raffle sales to participate in sports--which I don't mind but that is a lot of effort to play sports which my parents never had to do and/or it makes for less time to study during prime times of the day. If you increase the school funding maybe I won't have to spend so much time at Superbear and can take more science classes!

If you don't pass SB52 this session, I will have to think about going to school from my grandpa's house down south.

Please support my education like you would support your child's education.

Thank you,
Nanibah

--

~Nani Frommherz

Doniece Gott

From: Patricia Dick [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Raising SBA

Dear Senators,

Dear Alaska Senate Finance Committee: My name is Patricia Dick from Sitka. I am writing in support of raising and inflation proofing the SBA in Senate Bill 52. I am a retired after 26 years Alaska teacher. For years I have encouraged interested students in the field of education. Both my daughters are award winning teachers and have Alaska teaching certifications.

In the past, I have told people that in Sitka, **"we grow our teachers"**. Our pride and joy are Sitka students that have chosen teaching as a career and come back home to teach. But now that has to change. Recently we had a "born in Sitka teacher" along with his teaching wife quit and find teaching jobs in Washington State. Why? No retirement! No support from the State of Alaska to fund our schools!! Teachers in the SSD are getting cut everywhere! We have 15 of them on the chopping block right now! When new teachers get hired, they quickly leave and find jobs in states that support education. Our governor who claims to be an educator didn't even have funds for education in the state budget!! You tell me, what am I supposed to tell students when they say they are getting an education degree? Am I supposed to say, "Don't come home, you need to find a state with good teacher retirement and has inflation proofing funding for education?"

In last night's paper Bert Stedman was quoted as saying, **"We are debating whether we're going to teach our kids reading, writing, arithmetic or are we going to teach them to cash a check!"** That is why I voted for Stedman because he has always supported education. That is also why we voted for Rebecca Himshoot as our state representative. At a time when our students are struggling to catch up from the pandemic education losses, **this is the time to step up to the plate and support our public schools in Alaska! Raise the SBA, and inflation proof it that is what we need now!!!** I appreciate all that yall do to support education in Alaska.

Doniece Gott

From: Shaelene Nicholai [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:18 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

Dear Senators,

I have learned that our BSA (base student allocation) has not increased since 2017. Therefore, our schools are now in a critical situation where underfunding has led to poor educational experiences for our students including larger class sizes, downsizing of curriculum, and inadequate school buildings.

With inflation at double-digits for the last 2 years, the cost of fuel, food and other supplies for our schools has skyrocketed while our funding remains the same. This means that the Lower Kuskokwim School District is running into deficit spending to keep our sites including our school Joann A. Alexie Memorial School up and running. We find ourselves in a position where we have to decide on traveling for basketball and other sports based on the cost and budgeting. Not only are the extra-curricular activities affected, but classroom supplies and experiences must be cut as well.

If teachers are cut from the budget, class sizes will increase and the quality of education will be affected in a detrimental manner. It is important that our teachers and staff stay in our schools to help our students have the best educational experience possible.

I thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter. I ask you to vote to increase the BSA by \$1000 in 2024 and another \$348 in 2025. Please continue your efforts to support quality education in Alaska.

Quyana,

Shaelene Nicholai
Joann A, Alexie Memorial School
Atmautluak, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Pavilla Gilman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:17 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

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If teachers are cut from the budget, class sizes will increase and the quality of education will be affected in a detrimental manner. It is important that our teachers and staff stay in our schools to help our students have the best educational experience possible.

I thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter. I ask that you vote to increase the BSA by \$1000 in 2024 and another \$348 in 2025. Please continue your efforts to support quality education in Alaska.

Quyana,

Pavilla Gilman
Joann A. Alexie Memorial School
Atmautluak, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Jenna Fabian [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:16 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Testimony

Good Afternoon, Co-Chair Bishop, Co-Chair Stedman and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Below is a transcript of my testimony that I just called in and shared. I sincerely apologize that I left the line during the at-ease-I had a student that needed my help. If members of the committee have any questions, I am happy to answer them. Thank you very much for your time listening to testimony this afternoon.

I am Jenna Fabian, Principal of Nikiski North Star Elementary on the Kenai Peninsula Board Secretary for the Alaska Association of Elementary School Principals.

I am calling in support of Senate Bill 52 and would like to begin by thanking the chair and members of the committee.

Within KPBSD, we have seen the impact of insufficient funding as our schools have been asked to continue to do more with less, despite the large gap that exists in all classrooms, due in large part to the *significant disruption* to education over the last several years. This disruption has revealed a heightened learning gap and specialized academic supports are needed more than ever before. In this way, the bandwidth, or instructional effectiveness, of our certified teaching professionals has been greatly reduced. What it looks like at the site level is a sparse turnout for site level committees and less staff that are able to facilitate after school programming because so much time and attention is focused on narrowing gaps throughout the day and additional planning time is needed to address student needs. As a building principal, I have spent a lot of sleepless nights worrying about burnout and our educators leaving the profession. I am even more worried about

whether or not we will have qualified candidates for those vacancies.

Stable, predictable 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. If we want to build and retain our workforce in Alaska and improve our economy, the change starts with supporting our Alaska schools, and the time is now to do that. Thank you for your time.

With gratitude,

Jenna Fabian

Principal, Nikiski North Star Elementary

AAESP Board Secretary



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Doniece Gott

From: Terry Duszynski [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 12:33 PM
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

Terry Duszynski
Fairbanks

--
Terry Duszynski
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99708
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

www.duszynskiandassociates.com

Doniece Gott

From: Tanya Roust <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 12:40 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Raise the BSA!

Hello,

I am a Kindergarten teacher, taking my precious 15 minute break to write to you today, encouraging you to increase the BSA. We are losing teachers at an alarming rate and many are considering leaving the profession in Juneau. Students and families have more needs than ever that are falling on classroom teachers and support staff. Raising the BSA will give us more support to attend to individual students and make sure we have enough left in the tank to keep facing the daily, hourly, and by-the-minute challenges that come with helping students grow into healthy, productive, informed citizens. Please, please raise the BSA. Our children are too important to play games or defer funding. Action and funding are needed NOW. Thank you.

Tanya Roust
Kindergarten Teacher
Sayéik: Gastineau Community School

Doniece Gott

From: Brian Smith <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 12:41 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52: Increase Base Student Allocation

Hello,

My name is Brian Smith and I am a parent in the Petersburg School District. My kids are aged 5 and 3, so I am very invested in the long-term sustainability of quality education in our town and our state.

I am writing in support of SB52 to increase the BSA. I want our schools to be able to attract and retain high quality educators and also be able to pay the bills for building maintenance and fuel in an extremely high inflation situation.

I've observed the trajectory of teacher pay in Alaska and compared it to that in nearby states who we compete against for the best educators. Alaska has not been on the right trajectory to remain competitive. Locally, we are concerned about whether we will be able to attract a qualified high school math teacher for the coming school year. We need SB 52 as well as future efforts for school funding to keep up with inflation and not fall behind the pack. Our kids and their future deserve the best education we can provide. Education is more important than a large PFD if those are truly pitted against each other as some have suggested.

Thank you,

Brian Smith

[REDACTED]

Petersburg, AK

Doniece Gott

From: im impson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 12:48 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Advocacy for BSA Increase

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing today to advocate for the increase in the Base Student Allocation. Thank you in advance for considering this written testimony.

One of the programs that will be considerably cut in Fairbanks next year according to the proposed budget (without the BSA increase) is the Extended Learning Program (ELP), which is the Gifted program in Fairbanks. Students qualify for this program by testing in the top 90% - 95% of our students in Nonverbal Reasoning, Math, Reading, Writing, and/or Creativity.

ELP students struggle

ELP students often develop asynchronously – they are far ahead in some areas and behind in others, such as social skills. They can lose interest in school because they are not challenged or motivated. They tend toward perfectionism and become frustrated when high standards are not met. They can have self-esteem issues, high anxiety, emotional and sensory sensitivity, and problems with attention and organization. ELP students are at risk for bullying and feeling like they don't fit in anywhere due to their gifts. ELP is where they can find their people.

ELP provides a class that is tailored to their specific individual needs.

ELP students are at a higher risk for dropping out.

These students learn quickly, *and then wait* while the teacher explains it many more times for all the other students. When they are bored, they tend to get in trouble and develop poor study habits, which catches up to them in middle school, high school, or college.

The ELP program gives them an opportunity to work quickly and work with like-minded peers, or peers that are exceptional in ways complementary to their own abilities. They have the opportunity to explore projects of choice. The class is based on their strengths and interests.

ELP allows them to stretch their wings! These are the top 5-10% of our students. These are the ones who will become our future leaders, doctors, engineers, attorneys, scientists; and they will excel. They have the choice: they may not choose to become a doctor. But they are *so highly capable* of doing anything they set their minds to. **Please don't limit them** by giving schools so little funding that the ELP program will be significantly cut yet again.

Proposed FNSBSD Budget

The current proposed budget would require 4 elementary teachers to serve 4 schools each. This would include all of the testing required (every 3rd grader in our district), and scheduling services at 4 different schools based on ALL homeroom teachers' preferences. This would leave very little time to actually provide ELP services,

much less the Primary Enrichment Program (PEP) that we currently provide or advanced math classes that we have provided in the past.

Recent ELP Cuts

The ELP program has already been cut in recent years. There used to be a full-time district administrator who trained the new ELP teachers on things like how to administer the many tests and how to complete the complex paperwork correctly. They would share knowledge and co-teach with ELP teachers to help them become better at teaching this unique group of students. It used to take 2 years on average for a teacher to learn those things when we had an administrator training us.

That administrator position was previously cut, and we have been struggling to learn on our own and teach each other as much as possible, on top of our teaching positions. We have already had our knees cut out from under us – I believe that the current level of funding is running the ELP program into the ground.

Teacher Retention

Teachers of all types have been stretched to a breaking point in recent years. We are being asked to provide the same quality of education with fewer educators, fewer support staff, and less funding. **It is so incredibly difficult.** Positions are being left unfilled, and positions are being cut leaving fewer educators to try to do the same amount of work. Districts cannot find substitute teachers. This also creates a situation where teachers are subbing for other teachers on their prep periods. How are we supposed to provide a quality education when we have no time to get anything ready? We desperately need more funding.

Conclusion

Many people seem to hold the opinion, “Gifted students will be ok”. This is the most highly capable group of our students, why on earth would we want to purposefully set up a system that is created for them to be “OK” when their abilities are outstanding? ELP students are just as far out of the range of “average” as other Special Education students - and they deserve ELP services.

We need to invest in our students, our teachers, and our schools rather than cutting services.

Please vote to increase the Base Student Allocation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Morgan Simpson

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest” -Benjamin Franklin

Doniece Gott

From: Bellamy_Margo <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 12:58 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: foster_amanda; Bryantt_Jharrett
Subject: Support for SB 52

Mr. Chairman, members of the Senate Finance Committee

My name is Margo Bellamy, President of the Anchorage School Board, and I am writing to represent our 43,000 + students, their families, and the staff in the Anchorage School District.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 52!

The late John Spencer wrote, *"My goal is simple. I want to make something each day. Sometimes I make things. Sometimes I make a difference. On a good day, I get to do both"*. You can make this a 'good day' for Education in our state by Increasing the BSA! This is your opportunity to **make a difference** and to **make something happen** for every student in the State of Alaska!

If you fail to increase the BSA this year, you will by default systemically deny our ASD families the programs and opportunities that they value and deserve! **This means that programs—** such as ELL, Pre-K, Choice Programs, Optional Programs, Alternative Programs, Language Immersion, Gifted Education, Middle College, CTE, and our neighborhood school concept---**will all be in jeopardy of being diminished or eliminated.**

If you fail to increase the BSA this year, ASD's structural deficits will increase from \$68 million in FY24 to approximately \$85 million during FY 25, \$91-105 million during FY 26, and \$104-125 million during FY 27.

If you fail to increase the BSA this year, ASD will be facing the elimination of many extracurricular opportunities, and unprecedented increases to our class sizes.

I think we all agree that none of the potential outcomes are desirable. SB 52 is our collective path forward!

We need each of you to be CHAMPIONS for our students!

We need you to make a difference and make something happen for our students, staff and families, now!

We need you to pass SB 52!

Thank you for your service and commitment to Education!

Margo Bellamy, President

Anchorage School Board

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

bellamy_margo@asdk12.org

Dena'inaq e'nen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu. (Dena'ina)

I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina. (English)



Anchorage School District
Educating All Students for Success in Life

Doniece Gott

From: Jarrod Decker <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:04 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support of SB 52

Good afternoon members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB 52. Alaska's public schools need long-term, reliable funding to meet the demands of rising costs and the recently passed Alaska Reads Act. School and district budgets have been stretched to their limits by the increasing costs of utilities and supplies - resulting in higher class sizes, reduced staffing, and more turnover. The Alaska Reads Act mandates systemic changes (scheduling, instruction, intervention) that can only be achieved if schools are adequately funded.

I appreciate your consideration.

Jarrod

--
Jarrod Decker
Principal
Watershed Charter School
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Marcus Geissler [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:12 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

Dear Senators,

I have learned that our BSA (base student allocation) has not increased since 2017. Therefore, our schools are now in a critical situation where underfunding has led to poor educational experiences for our students including larger class sizes, downsizing of curriculum, and inadequate school buildings.

With inflation at double-digits for the last 2 years, the cost of fuel, food and other supplies for our schools has skyrocketed while our funding remains the same. This means that the Lower Kuskokwim School District is running into deficit spending to keep our sites including our school Joann A. Alexie Memorial School up and running. We find ourselves in a position where we have to decide on travelling for basketball and other sports based on cost and budgeting. Not only are extra-curricular activities affected, but classroom supplies and experiences must be cut as well.

If teachers are cut from the budget, class sizes will increase and the quality of education will be affected in a detrimental manner. It is important that our teachers and staff stay in our schools to help our students have the best educational experience possible.

I thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter. I ask that you vote to increase the BSA by \$1000 in 2024 and another \$348 in 2025. Please continue your efforts to support quality education in Alaska.

Quyana,

Marcus Geissler
6-12 Physical Education and Social Studies Teacher and Athletic Director
Joann A. Alexie Memorial School
Atmautluak, Alaska
Phone Number: [REDACTED]

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



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

April 18, 2023

Re: Support for SB 52

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Steadman, Hoffman, and Olsen, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 52.

My name is Alex Russin, and I represent the Cordova City School District not only as its Superintendent, but also its Curriculum Director, Special Education Director, Human Resources Director, and Federal Programs Director. I am the Title IX Compliance Officer. I help design professional development for staff and I assist with food service and maintenance, not to mention substituting in classrooms and answering phones in the school offices, when needed.

I share this not to bring attention to myself, but rather to share the multitude of roles administrators play in small schools and districts. Along with many of my colleagues, particularly those in small districts who often times wear the same hats, we are educators, we are instructional leaders, we are individuals who roll up our sleeves daily to impact student outcomes.

We are accountable to our school boards and communities in providing leadership to those we serve. We are accountable to the federal government through well over 200 assurances we commit to upon receiving federal funds, and we are accountable to the state through compliance in producing yearly audits, submitting average daily membership and foundation summary reports, and ensuring qualifications of teaching staff, just to name a few. The current rhetoric generalizing that school district financial resources are bloated with administrative costs needs to change. It is inaccurate, to say the least, if not disappointing that this perspective is being perpetuated publicly by a variety of sources.

No doubt there is broad awareness that the BSA has increased by \$30 since 2016 and that the impact of the rise in costs of goods and services has created a significant loss in purchasing power for school districts. Passage of SB 52 will provide the Cordova City School District with a majority of the funding necessary to meet its potential \$925,000 budgetary shortfall for FY24 should no increase to the BSA occur, due to increased costs, many of which are outside the district's locus of control.

To contextualize this potential shortfall, \$925,000 equates to approximately 33% (10 out of 30) of the certificated teaching staff the district employs; or 17% of the certificated staff and 100% of the instructional support staff working with our students; or the entirety of the district's food service, student transportation, and student activities programs.

With the upmost respect, to extend this concept a little further within the context of the Legislature, imagine having to determine which 33% of the Legislators would need to be cut due to budget shortfalls; or imagine how reducing the more than 200 legislative support staff between the House and Senate by 33%, or even 17%, would impact the Legislature's ability to conduct its business efficiently, effectively, and with a high degree of quality. This is just a glimpse of the landscape many districts will need to face with limited or no increase to the Base Student Allocation.

Stable and predictable funding is necessary to ensure districts can attract and retain high quality educators; it's necessary to provide a high-quality education, not the minimum education, we aspire for our students; it's necessary to support implementation of legislation; and it's necessary for investing in our state's future.

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

I encourage the Legislature to truly ascertain what the needs of the state are and to be part of the direction in growing the state's revenue to provide for those needs for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Russin, Superintendent

Doniece Gott

From: ahnie litecky <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:20 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Vote to increase the BSA

Hello,

I am writing in support of raising the BSA by \$1000 per student in Alaska. I have three children in public school (1st grade, 3rd grade, 4th grade) in Homer. I value public education and believe that all children should have access to quality education to be best prepared for adulthood. Increasing the BSA will not only protect current programs and staffing but will also send a message to families that Alaskans value education, which is not a message that we currently see much evidence of. There should be no debate at all over supporting education to the fullest extent possible.

All of you people on the Finance Committee sit in a room and make decisions that affect all Alaskans. I wish you had to sit in a classroom, surrounded by kids, and make these choices that affect all children in the state. I wish you could sit with my kids in their classrooms and watch their teachers, who put so much time and energy and care, into their classrooms and their students. My first grader is learning about life cycles right now and his classroom has an incubator full of chicken eggs that will be hatching soon.

I wish you could walk down the hallways of their schools and see the dedicated paras who work with special needs students, or the school counselor helping to resolve a conflict between students. These people make such an impact on the children they work with, and the outcomes of a supportive learning environment, especially in childhood, are well-researched, and require adequate funding to provide the services and support that children need to grow.

Vote to increase the BSA and show your support for Alaskan children.

Thank you,
Ahnies Litecky

Doniece Gott

From: Isaac Snyder-Fox [REDACTED] >
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:23 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

Dear Senators,

I have learned that our BSA (base student allocation) has not increased since 2017. Therefore, our schools are now in official situation where underfunding has led to poor educational experiences for our students including larger class sizes, downsizing of curriculum, and inadequate school buildings.

With inflation at double-digits for the last 2 years, the cost of fuel, food and other supplies for our schools has skyrocketed while our funding remains the same. This means the Lower Kuskokwim School District in running into deficit spending to keep our sites including our school Joann A. Alexie Memorial School up and running. We find ourselves in a position where we have to decide on traveling for basketball and other sports based on cost and budgeting. Not only are extracurricular activities affected, but classroom supplies and experience must be cut as well.

If teachers are cut from the budget, class size will increase and the quality of education will be affected in a detrimental manner. It is important that our teachers and staff stay in our schools to help our students have the best education experience possible

I thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter. I ask that you vote to increase The BSA by \$1000 in 2024 and another \$348 in 2025. Please continue your efforts to support quality education in Alaska

Quyana,

Isaac Snyder-Fox
Joann A . Alexie Memorial School, Atmautluak Ak

Doniece Gott

From: Nicole Stellon O'Donnell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:23 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA Increase Testimony

Dear Honorable Senate Finance Committee members:

Thank you for taking testimony on the important issue of our children's education.

As the mother of two girls in Fairbanks, I have watched my children's educational opportunities be cut again and again for the past ten years. Band, Orchestra, Art Specialists, Extended Learning Program (gifted & talented), are all gone from our elementary schools.

Students in our high schools are forced to make hard choices because so many teaching positions have been cut. Scheduling is tight and offerings are limited. Honors classes, AP classes, and career classes have been cut. Classes are huge because our schools have been forced to scrape by.

In addition, many classes in FNSBSD are being taught by unqualified emergency-certified workers. I have heard first-hand from my children and their friends how the quality of classroom instruction suffers under an unqualified teacher. Teachers are no longer interested in working in Alaska. There are simply no applicants in the pool. The cuts have taken a toll on our state's reputation.

It's time to raise the BSA. Please support SB 53 and increase the BSA both this year and next. Please also tie the BSA to the CPI to help our schools continue to function. I am willing to pay taxes to have functional schools.

Thank you for your time and service to our state.

With gratitude,

Nicole O'Donnell
Fairbanks, AK

Doniece Gott

From: Tyrone Nicholai [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:25 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

Dear Senators,

I have learned that our BSA (base student allocation) has not increased since 2017. Therefore, our schools are now in an official situation where underfunding has led to poor educational experiences for our students including larger class sizes, downsizing of curriculum, and inadequate school buildings.

With inflation at double-digits for the last 2 years, the cost of fuel, food and other supplies for our schools has skyrocketed while our funding remains the same. This means the Lower Kuskokwim School District is running into deficit spending to keep our sites including our school Joann A. Alexie Memorial School up and running. We find ourselves in a position where we have to decide on traveling for basketball and other sports based on cost and budgeting. Not only are extracurricular activities affected, but classroom supplies and experience must be cut as well.

If teachers are cut from the budget, class size will increase and the quality of education will be affected in a detrimental manner. It is important that our teachers and staff stay in our schools to help our students have the best education experience possible

I thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter. I ask that you vote to increase the BSA by \$1,000 in 2024 and another \$348 in 2025. Please continue your efforts to support quality education in Alaska.

Quyana,

Tyrone Nicholai
Joann A. Alexie Memorial School
Atmautlauk, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Andrea Kassel [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:26 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

Dear Senators,

I have learned that our BSA (base student allocation) has not increased since 2017. Therefore, our schools are now in a critical situation where underfunding has led to poor educational experiences for our students including larger class sizes, downsizing of curriculum, and inadequate school buildings.

With inflation at double-digits for the last 2 years, the cost of fuel, food and other supplies for our schools has skyrocketed while our funding remains the same. This means that the Lower Kuskokwim School District is running into deficit spending to keep our sites including our school Joann A. Alexie Memorial School up and running. We find ourselves in a position where we have to decide on travelling for basketball and other sports based on cost and budgeting. Not only are extra-curricular activities affected, but classroom supplies and experiences must be cut as well.

If teachers are cut from the budget, class sizes will increase and the quality of education will be affected in a detrimental manner. It is important that our teachers and staff stay in our schools to help our students have the best educational experience possible.

I thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter. I ask that you vote to increase the BSA by \$1000 in 2024 and another \$348 in 2025. Please continue your efforts to support quality education in Alaska.

Quyana,

Andrea Kassel
Joann A. Alexie Memorial School
Atmautluak, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Isaiah Gilman <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Base Student Allocation

Dear Senators,

I have learned that our BSA (base student allocation) has not increased since 2017. Therefore, our schools are now in a critical situation where underfunding has led to poor educational experiences for our students including larger class sizes, downsizing of curriculum, and inadequate school buildings.

With inflation at double-digits for the last 2 years, the cost of fuel, food and other supplies for our schools has skyrocketed while our funding remains the same. This means the Lower Kuskokwim School District is running into deficit spending to keep our sites including our School Joann A.Alexie Memorial School up and running. We find ourselves in a position where we have to decide on traveling for basketball and other sports based on cost and budgeting. Not only are extracurricular activities affected, but classroom supplies and experience must be cut as well.

If teachers are cut from the budget, class size will increase and the quality of education will be affected in a detrimental manner. It is important that our teachers and staff stay in our schools to help our students have the best educational experience possible.

I thank you for your time and consideration in reading this letter. I ask that you vote to increase the BSA by \$1000 in 2024 and another \$ 348 in 2025. Please continue your efforts to support quality education in Alaska.

Quyana,

From
Isaiah Gilman.

Joann A.Alexie Memorial School
Atmautluak, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Randi Sweet [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support SB52 - Increase Base Student Allocation by \$1000 to \$6,960

Parents, teachers, support staff, principals and volunteers educate our children and help them grow into well rounded Alaskans.

Our schools are an educational, social, cultural and economic development anchor in our communities, particularly in rural Alaska.

In our Kenai Peninsula Borough, we have a \$13.1 million budget deficit. This year, it will be addressed in part by the last ESSER III funds and from property taxes to the maximum allowable cap pending assembly approval.

However, there will be a remaining \$4.4 million deficit. To eliminate the deficit, the Board of Education has identified potential cuts which include increases in Pupil to Teacher Ratio; closure of pools and elimination of staff; elimination of Student Success Liasons; reduction to school supplies; reduction to extracurricular travel and safety equipment, hockey ice funds and cuts to Athletic Directors. The Board also identified some fund balances, but even if used would not erase deficit and would leave the district without emergency funds.

Next year's budget situation will be more serious as one time funds will no longer be available. The deficit could be at least \$10 million, if not more.

Protracted underfunding has brought us to this moment.

We need sound and stable funding through the Base Student Allocation

- for an exceptional education system
- for the success of our students as educated and well-rounded Alaskans
- for the recruitment and retention of teachers and staff, and other needed workforce for Alaska
- for community activities that support families.

We also need to have a focus on growing vibrant communities vs those that are withering and contracting. With a budget that generates positive, uplifting possibilities for our students, families and communities, we can live and thrive in Alaska.

Please support an increase to the BSA of \$1000 for FY24, an additional increase in FY25 to catch up and inflation proof beyond.

Thank you

Randi Sweet
Seldovia AK

Doniece Gott

From: Helen Smeaton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Good Afternoon,

I am writing in support of SB 52. I am the current school board president for the Dillingham City School District. The request as you know is nothing new, districts have been asking for an increase annually for quite some time. It is plain and simply that we are solely dependent on federal, state and local contributions and the generous contributions from all three are just worth less now due to inflation and the increases of everything it takes to operate a school and provide an education.

It is not an attempt to suddenly grow our budget when we realize that everyone is being similarly hit with the same challenges. But rather to keep what we have and somehow find a way to use it effectively to:

- attract and retain high quality teachers
- close the learning gaps of our students
- address the requirements of unfunded mandates like that AK Reading Act
- support our staff who are continuously asked to take on more without additional pay
- and care for the facilities we use.

As a school board member, I feel obligated to advocate for this help BEFORE asking students, parents and staff what we should take from them. Our district has made a concerted effort to apply for and use grant funds to support student services to the extent possible but as you know, grant funding is finite and very project specific.

I've heard of a rumor going around that districts are squirreling away COVID money and really have plenty. I can only speak for Dillingham, but the COVID money we do have remaining is budgeted in our upcoming budget to provide reading interventionists (AK Reads Act) and other supports needed in our district, this will be the last year those funds are available and they are most certainly not hiding anywhere. With those included, we still have a \$500K deficit.

Please carefully consider and support SB52. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment, I completely understand the difficult decisions you have to make and encourage you to consider this request on behalf of the students and families we serve.

Helen Smeaton
DCSD

Doniece Gott

From: Jenna Hamm <j[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:32 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Jenna Hamm and I live in Denali Park with my family and have served on the school board of the Denali Borough School District for 10 years. I am writing regarding SB 52, the bill to increase the Base Student Allocation by \$1000 for FY 2024, by \$348 for FY 2025 and that would tie future BSA increases to the Consumer Price Index to inflation-proof annual education funding.

As you deliberate SB 52, I urge you to follow through with nothing less. We cannot continue to serve our children well by continually underfunding public education. Flat or minimal funding another year will indisputably shortchange our students' learning opportunities. In our district flat funding, or really anything less than a \$1000 BSA increase this year and forward, will mean losing or compromising our ability to hire and retain necessary instructional staff. We cannot continue to push education to the back burner while waiting for the price of oil to increase. Fulfill your obligation for Alaska's students by passing SB 52, to secure an immediate and critical, long-term and durable investment in Alaska's future.

Thank you for your service to Alaskans.

Respectfully,
Jenna Hamm

Jenna Hamm
she/her
Co-owner
[Camp Denali and Parkside Guest House](#)
PO Box 677, Denali Park, Alaska 99571
907-683-8888
[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Blog](#)

Providing active learning experiences and fostering stewardship of the natural world through a tradition of community, excellence and place.

Doniece Gott

From: Taw Lindsey <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:47 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support of SB52

Dear Co-Chair and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Taw Lindsey and I am the Superintendent of Annette Island School District. I am writing this email in support of SB52.

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

For Annette Island, we have been subject to the following cost increases since 2019:

1. Heating oil: 26%
2. Electricity: 26%
3. Personnel: 18%
4. Food service: 22%
5. Health insurance: 24% (was 12% last week, but raised an additional 12% yesterday).

In addition, we are projecting a \$900,000 shortfall for FY24. This does not include absorbing key personnel funded out of the ARP grant, which will be fully expended this school year. These key personnel include our school nurse and elementary math specialist.

We are a high-needs district, with 27% of our students on IEPs. This number is projected to grow to 32% next year.

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

With an increase to the BSA our district will be able fully fund our educator staff, which is critical to helping us close the achievement gap and help us meet the requirements of the Alaska Reads Act.

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

Thank you,

--

Taw Lindsey
Superintendent of Schools
Annette Island School District
[REDACTED]
Metlakatla, AK 99926
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Michelle Sloper <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 1:56 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Roy Getchell
Subject: SB 52 Testimony
Attachments: HBSD Legislative Priorities 2023 FINAL.pdf

Good afternoon members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for allowing space for additional testimony today! I am writing on behalf of the Haines Borough School District (HBSD) to convey my steadfast support for SB 52 to increase the Base Student Allocation. This meaningful and predictable increase in the BSA is incredibly important for the success of our district. I have heard that the Legislature is trying to push forward the idea of giving Alaska districts a one-time payment again this year and I want to assure you that a one-time increase outside the funding formula is a very small bandaid to address an incredible challenge of operating a high-quality school for our students.

For example, every year in our district, we make early plans about offering teacher contracts and filling any open positions. We are required to do this early in the calendar year because our ability to hire good educators/staff rests on our ability to post open positions early in the calendar year. For many of the past several years, we have considered the idea of adding another MS/HS math position at our school to bolster the math offerings – a need identified by our families. Unfortunately, despite these many conversations, we have yet to take this risk and open this position because we rarely have a solid understanding of our financial position for the upcoming academic year until after the legislation session has ended. This is too late for planning purposes and too late to recruit high-quality educators to our school. This is why predictable funding is such a priority for us.

The Base Student Allocation (BSA) must be increased to keep up with inflation to provide our students with the quality educational opportunities that they deserve. Inflation and rising operational costs (e.g., costs of fuel, commodities, school supplies, travel, and so on) continue to limit our purchasing power year after year. More information about the specifics in our district are in the attached legislative priorities flyer.

Receiving appropriated funding in a timely fashion promotes teacher/staff retention and allows for a responsible and well-planned budgeting process that supports the best interests of our students. As a developmental psychologist in my day job, I am intimately aware of the critical opportunities for positive development that take place in our school.

At the Haines School, we pride ourselves in offering excellence to our students -- we would implore the Alaska Legislature to demonstrate excellence by providing the financial support Alaska schools desperately need. We are counting on your support to offer the meaningful learning opportunities that we know are consistent with excellence in education. Thank you for your consideration of SB 52, over a one-time increase, as proposed.

Please reach out if you need more information.

Best,
Shelly Sloper
HBSD School Board Chair

--
Michelle (Shelly) Sloper, Ph.D.

[REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]



HAINES BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT (HBSD) HAINES, ALASKA

OUR CORE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2023

Reliable & Predictable Public Education Funding

1

The **base student allocation (BSA)** must be increased to keep up with inflation to provide our students with the **quality educational opportunities that they deserve**. When coupled with record increases in inflation, years of continual flat funding have significantly reduced our funding and purchasing power for student services. Receiving appropriated funding in a timely fashion promotes staff retention and allows for a responsible and well-planned budgeting process that supports the best interests of our students.

Supporting
Evidence
from
HBSD



The **cost of fuel**, which heats our facility, has

2x

since FY 21.

Round trip airfare to/from Juneau has nearly

2x

since FY 21.

The **cost of many commodities** has increased by

25%

or more since FY 21.

There is a **fluctuating fuel surcharge on incoming freight** that is now

20%

In addition to regular freight rates.

According to national Consumer Price Index data, the **cost of school supplies** increased by

12%

last year.

Reliable, Convenient, & Adequate Ferry Service

2

The **Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)** is critical to Haines and our district's future. Our rural Alaskan students receive a well-rounded academic experience which is enriched by student activities. Without adequate ferry service, these experiences are significantly impacted and are not equitable when compared to their urban counterparts. HBSD staff and families in Haines rely on the ferry for medical needs, reaching their workplace, and for receiving important supplies and services.

Supporting
Evidence
from
HBSD



Expenses to fly students for activities are

700%

higher than ferry costs.

Relying on flights for activity transportation means **fewer students** can travel to events.

Flights are unreliable due to weather conditions;

8

events have been cancelled for our students this year.

Flights are often delayed or canceled which leads to even **greater expenses, lost learning time, and stranded students**.

Delays/cancellations of activity trips have resulted in

9

days of **missed school for impacted students**.

Multiple staff members have left our community since 2019 citing the lack of ferry service as a major contributor for their decision to do so.

HBSD'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2023

Competitive Recruitment & Retention of Alaskan Educated Teachers, Support Staff, & Administrators

3

Haines students deserve high quality educators to achieve their potential in becoming contributing members of society and critical thinkers prepared for individual success. We strongly encourage the development of comprehensive statewide programs to prepare, attract, and retain high quality culturally responsive Alaskan educators. High quality staff produce high achieving students and many long-term positive outcomes for the Alaskan communities they serve.

Supporting
Evidence
from
HBSD



The number of **certified staff applications** is down

90%

compared to 10 years ago.

The number of **administrator applications** is down

75%

compared to 10 years ago.

We were unable to fill our **assistant principal** opening this year due to a lack of qualified candidates.

Over **75%** of our current applicants for the 23-24 school year would **require a J-1 visa** if hired.

Less than **10%** of applicants for our current open positions **possess a degree from the University of Alaska System.**

A Bit about the Haines Borough School District



HBSD's MISSION

Utilizing the abundant resources of the Chilkat Valley and in collaboration with its communities, the HBSD empowers students to be contributing members of society and critical thinkers prepared for individual success. Together, we do this by engaging in meaningful learning opportunities in a culture that honors diversity and is founded on safety, respect, and responsibility.

Please keep in touch!

www.hbsd.net

Superintendent: Roy Getchell, Ph.D.

K-12 Principal: Lilly Boron

907-766-6700

- Haines is located in **Southeast Alaska's Upper Lynn Canal**, north of Juneau, Alaska.
- We have a **student population of 262 students**, including 248 in our regular school program and 14 in our correspondence program.
- The **HBSD staff** is comprised of one superintendent, one principal, one assistant principal, two counselors, 20 certified teachers, and 24 classified staff.
- Currently, 52% of our students qualify for **free and reduced lunch assistance.**
- Seventy-five percent of our FY23 school budget goes **directly to the classroom.**

Doniece Gott

From: Jacob Powell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:09 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB 52

Hello,

I am an Alaskan in Anchorage, and I'd like to voice my support for SB 52 on my own behalf.

I am a homeowner and young professional with a long term partner. Her and I have discussed kids, but neither of us currently sees a future for kids in this state, especially given the inexcusable flat funding of education for so many years that has led to school closures, growing class sizes, and so much uncertainty and chaos around school funding.

An increase of the BSA would be life changing not only for so many young families considering children, but for everyone across the state, as good schools are so clearly linked to positive outcomes for the whole community.

I want to have hope for building a family in the state that I love. I don't want to have to consider moving to a state with properly funded education.

We are actively investing in our community, and plead that you do the same by passing SB 52 and unconditionally, permanently funding the BSA at a level that so many educators are pleading for.

Thank you,
Jacob.

Doniece Gott

From: Frommherz, Amber <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 2:12 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Amber Frommherz from Juneau, AK. I am a mother of three Juneau School District students and am serving on the JSD Board of Education.

I am emailing to ask that you support an increase of the BSA. Alaska is experiencing a shortage of teachers and school districts are facing increasing costs of fixed expenses. It is getting harder and hard to staff schools while meeting costs of fixed bills, i.e., utilities and insurance. We cannot attract new teachers due to the pay and structured benefits offered meanwhile losing more teachers to higher paying districts outside Alaska.

The BSA has not had a meaningful increase since FY 2016/17. School districts and local municipalities need your help to keep our schools funded. A long-term, structural increase in the BSA will help districts plan for the future and ensure that our students have an education system that sets them up for success.

Thank you for the second call for testimony and for your partnership in providing AK a public education.

Thank you,

Amber Frommherz

DENALI BOROUGH

PO Box 480 – Healy AK 99743
Phone (907) 683-1330 – Fax (907) 683-1340
dbgovt@mtaonline.net
www.denaliborough.org



DENALI BOROUGH, ALASKA RESOLUTION NO. 23-07

A RESOLUTION OF THE DENALI BOROUGH ASSEMBLY REQUESTING THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE INCREASE THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION AND PROVIDE A SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FORMULA FOR EDUCATION FUNDING

WHEREAS, it is the State of Alaska's constitutional obligation to establish and maintain a system of public schools; and

WHEREAS, as part of the funding formula designed by the State, a minimum local contribution of 2.65 mills (or equivalent) is required with an additional allowable amount up to 23% of basic need; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Borough recognizes its partnership role with the Denali Borough School District in ensuring a healthy and sustainable primary and secondary education for all students in the District; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Borough has consistently maximized local contributions, which means the Borough must make hard decisions to prioritize and maintain our financial support to our schools; and

WHEREAS, education is THE largest budget item for the Denali Borough; and

WHEREAS, the State has not made a meaningful Base Student Allocation increase since FY 2016; and

WHEREAS, the State's failure to fund public schools in pace with inflation and increased costs jeopardizes the health, quality and sustainability of our local schools; and

WHEREAS, continuing to flat-fund our public school system while nearly all expenses continue to increase will force schools to reduce offerings and in some cases, close schools altogether; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Borough is made up of small, rural, separate communities with the Denali Borough School District currently having three brick and mortar school facilities in three rural and separate communities and a home school correspondence program; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Borough already maximizes our local contribution, yet as a result of the increase in expenses without a corresponding increase to the Base Student Allocation, the Denali Borough School District is forced to consider closing two of our three brick and mortar school facilities; and

WHEREAS, all Alaskans understand the vital role the local school has as the heart and hum of the entire community and that the closure of a school in a small, rural community is devastating beyond measure for that community and surrounding area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Denali Borough Assembly states proudly that we are doing our part to support the public education in our borough to the maximum amount allowable and supports, encourages, and pleads for the Alaska Legislature to significantly increase the Base Student Allocation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Denali Borough Assembly requests the Alaska Legislature enact statute to automatically adjust for inflation going forward and return to forward funding for education.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Denali Borough Assembly this 8th day of February, 2023.



MAYOR CLAY WALKER

ATTEST:



AMBER RENSHAW, BOROUGH CLERK

VOTE: unanimous

