

Doniece Gott

From: Ty Mase <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 1:00 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Honorable Members of Senate Finance,

I do not have much to say that you haven't already heard from education. I just urge you to please consider moving this bill out of committee. I have spent many years leading districts, and in all honesty, I have only seen things get worse financially. The programs and student support we used to offer 10 years ago were far superior to what we can afford today. In fact, it feels like the past several years have just been "survival mode."

SB 52 is the first light on the horizon I have seen in many, many years. Please consider what we will be able to do for Alaska's youth and our educational systems as a whole if we receive this funding. A significant BSA increase, coupled with the Alaska Reads Act will show immediate results.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ty Mase

--

Ty Mase
Chief School Administrator
Chugach School District

Doniece Gott

From: Scott Ballard <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 1:32 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Senate Finance Committee,

Please consider the needs of rural Native students and all other students in need of a comprehensive educational program and move for a \$1000 increase in the BSA.

The fixed costs of the Yupiit School District to provide water, sewer, fuel, and electricity continue to increase, while flat funding of the BSA increasingly limits our basic educational programs.

Federal Funds to repair our schools and make up for learning loss during the pandemic have been encumbered to improve our HVAC systems and offer additional services for students.

Thank You for helping our students,

--

George (Scott) Ballard
Superintendent
Yupiit School District
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



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Doniece Gott

From: Christopher Brown <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 11:40 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

Greetings,

I am writing to request that the Senate Finance Committee move SB 52 (Increase in BSA) out of committee. I appreciate all of your hard work and service to our state.

Christopher Brown
[REDACTED]
Homer, AK 99603

[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Sondra Lundvick <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 11:55 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support SB 52: BSA Increase

Mr. Chairman & members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 52. Stable, predictable funding is necessary to ensure that districts can attract and retain high-quality educators. At Sitka High School, we currently have two teachers that are retiring; but we have been unable to offer teaching positions to any potential hires because of the uncertainty of funding. May is too late to try to hire quality teachers for our teaching positions in Sitka! We need to find a long-term solution to this problem, and that solution is NOT one-time funding. One-time funding would put us back in this same scenario next year, and this does not allow us to adequately plan for our students. From recruiting or retaining teachers to scheduling classes for students, we need to know what we can count on. Early funding is crucial to the stability of education for the students of Alaska, our future.

Please support SB 52!

Thank you,

Sondra Lundvick
Principal, Sitka High School
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

GO WOLVES!

"Success is never final, failure is never fatal. It's courage that counts." John Wooden

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Doniece Gott

From: Roy Getchell <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 12:22 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52 Support

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

I appreciate all of the time and effort taken in hearing about the importance of reliably and predictably funding public education in Alaska. You have spent hours (I know) hearing from many people with opinions on the subject. I also know that decision time awaits and I am hopeful that you will remember Alaska's children, our state's true future, by moving SB 52 out of the Senate Finance Committee at this watershed moment.

A lot is at stake for our public schools - please know that this increase will support us in providing a quality education for every student, every day, in all of our communities. I know that is a desire that we all truly share.

Thank you for your service to our great state.

Yours in Education,

Roy Getchell

—

Roy Getchell, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Haines Borough School District

Empowering Excellence Every Day



GALENA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 299 GALENA, ALASKA 99741

PHONE (907) 656-1205

FAX (907) 656-1368

SUPERINTENDENT

Jason R. Johnson, Ed.D.

Please Support and Move SB 52

May 8, 2023

Senate Finance Committee

Re: SB 52

Dear Committee Members:

The Galena City School District is writing in full support of SB 52 and respectfully requests that the committee move this bill forward.

While you have been inundated with facts, figures and featured stories throughout the session regarding educational fiscal matters and their impacts on our students' lives, I am hopeful that the following context may shed light on this matter in a newfound way.

Nearly collectively, Alaskans and the Legislature have found common ground in stating that "We need a fiscal plan." Albeit, there are multiple perspectives on what this means and/or may look like, there is a shared agreement that without a path forward Alaska will suffer.

Likewise, flat-funding and one-time funding (outside of the foundation formula), does not allow for public education as a collective whole to judiciously plan for a brighter future and to utilize funding with reliable precision to address student, staff and facility needs.

In the same vein that our state is reeling without a fiscal plan, it should be no coincidence that our children, students and staff will experience the same fate if we fail to provide the infrastructure from which to live into our strategic plans and efforts on their behalf.

SB 52 provides that platform, ensuring that public funding is available to provide the most return on investment possible and setting the course for an exceptional education for Alaska's children.

Respectfully,

Jason R. Johnson, Ed.D.

Superintendent

Galena City School District

jason.johnson@galenanet.com

Doniece Gott

From: Hannah Dolphin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 11:26 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA

Good Morning,

I am writing as the current assistant principal of Mountain View Elementary in Kenai Alaska. Next year, I will be the principal of this school. **Please take action and permanently increase the BSA.**

It is hiring season. I am desperately attempting to retain and recruit teachers and other staff members for my school. Mountain View Elementary is a wonderful place. We are a Title I school and we have the largest special education program in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. We have excellent staff retention, with the majority of our teachers having worked here for 10+ years.

All of that being said, teachers and school staff are tired. COVID-19 was hard on educators across the state and country. Staff are still recovering. They are working with significant student learning loss, both academically and socially. My 5th grade teachers are working to teach 27+ students in all subject areas with student ability levels ranging from beginning Kindergarten to late middle school. They are doing this alone, with very little academic support in our classrooms. Our interventionists are swamped attempting to assist all of these students, and are only serving the students functioning far below average. While working to meet students where they are at academically, teachers and staff around the state are dealing with decreased attendance, increased behavior issues, and increased parent apathy.

Teachers and school staff members are miracle workers, yes, but they can't work miracles with insufficient resources. Teachers are leaving our state, and new ones aren't coming to replace them. School districts need money to fund school staff fully and provide financial incentives for people to want to work in our state. I am faced with class sizes of approximately 30 students in each of my third, fourth, and fifth grade classes next year due to staffing cuts.

From a school employee perspective, it seems that there is a war waging against public education. Nasty rumors are spread daily about what is happening inside public school walls. I hear words like "indoctrination", "woke teachers", etc. There is no hidden agenda in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. We are working diligently to help kids learn both academically and socially. We are teaching and shaping our country's future. Increasing the BSA is not "throwing money at a problem", it is giving highly trained, highly qualified educators the incentive and support they need to teach effectively in Alaska.

Please help us do this by allocating the funding we need to prosper.

Thank you,

Hannah Dolphin

**Assistant Principal
Mountain View Elementary**

Doniece Gott

From: Cyndy Mika <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 11:15 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB 52

Good morning Senator Stedman, Senator Olson and Senator Hoffman, and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Cyndy Mika and I am the Superintendent of the Kodiak Island Borough School District. As the Superintendent in Kodiak and the parent of a HS student, I am writing today to share my support and to ask you to support SB 52 and permanently increase the Base Student Allocation.

The BSA hasn't seen a significant increase since 2017 and you must recognize the diminishing value of flat funding in relation to inflation. Early notification of funding and forward funding is crucial to sound financial management, as well as recruitment and retention of quality educators.

We appreciate the \$175 million one-time funds for education currently included in the state budget, recognizing an increase to the BSA will give school districts the reliable funding they can count on beyond FY24.

This year I have had to cut 12 teaching positions and raise the per-pupil ratio of our secondary campuses to 30 students in a class. This has brought our deficit budget in KIBSD for FY24 from \$4.8 million to \$2.8 million. Without also cutting programs and potentially closing one elementary, I don't have any other positions to cut at this time to further lower the deficit. We continue to analyze our system for efficiencies, but with the increased costs we are facing, it seems an impossible task without taking away non-core programs for our students, which I know is not what is best for students. Additionally, I need to add 5 reading specialist positions to comply with the AK Reads Act which will raise our deficit from the \$2.8 million we lowered it to through cuts up to \$3.3 million.

An increase to the BSA would allow KIBSD to potentially lower teacher to pupil ratios in classrooms, 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 students.

By increasing and inflation proofing the BSA, KIBSD will be able to budget for increasing fixed cost.

On behalf of the education leaders, teachers, support staff, parents and students of Kodiak, we hope we can count on your support of SB 52.

Cyndy A. Mika, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools Kodiak Island Borough School District



*We gather on the traditional homeland of the Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people.
The heritage and culture of the Alutiiq people continue to enrich our communities
and our schools.*

KIBSD
[REDACTED]

Kodiak, AK 99615
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Kristin Garot <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, May 07, 2023 5:43 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: in support of SB52

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my firm belief in creating a sustainable and reliable educational funding formula that is part of SB52.

I am a long-time educator in Alaska and as a school principal in Juneau I see first hand the challenges that flat-funding has had in our schools and the direct impact that has had on children.

To be honest, here in this last month of school I have not been able to do the work my job demands of me AND monitor any changes to SB52 along the way. I'm not sure if changes have been made since I last saw that was being proposed. I support the increase of 1000 for this next SY24, and an increase beyond that in SY25. I also support creating a mechanism to tie future BSA in some way to inflation, consumer price index, or other measures to indicate an increase cost of living that doesn't just affect families or the private sector but impacts public programs as well.

Thank you for your support in providing funding that aligns more with what we see as needs we must address. And new laws that are mandating more from us as educators without funding to go with it. I was the Alaska Reads Act to be a success and show other states what a focus on literacy instruction at the early grades can do for long-term positive success for all students - but we can't implement that with as much vigor and strength without funding to accompany some of the changes we want to make.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kristin Garot
Juneau

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 8:52 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: Keep the Theater Techs

From a student's perspective.

Senator Jesse Bjorkman
District D
907-465-2828

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

From: morgan.hooper@evangelicalalliance.org
Sent: Sunday, May 7, 2023 2:32 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman <Sen.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>
Subject: Keep the Theater Techs

Dear Senator Jesse Bjorkman,

Hi, this is Morgan Hooper. I am twelve years old and have been performing since I was five. Musical theater is a home for kids. When my director for The Lion King musical told us that we would be the last show to happen in the KCHS auditorium because there would not be any more theater techs. She told us that she didn't want it to be a good kids musical, she wanted it to be the best musical she had ever seen. Instead of going out with a bang, she told us that this musical was going out with a roar (because of it being the lion king)! I love theater too much to let that happen, so my friends and I decided to email you about the issue. I believe that theater is important for the emotional growth of a child. A lot of kids on the peninsula have theater, drama, or dance in their future. By cutting off the usage of theaters you will be limiting the next generation. The theater tech guys, Bob and Rusty, are amazing people who put an arm and a leg into making shows happen. We need theater in our community. Just yesterday I heard some people talking about the benefits that theater has on the community, and how it leaves you calm and happy. If you came to Sponge bob the musical you could have seen exactly what program you would be canceling.

Sincerely,
Morgan Hooper

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 8:53 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: We need a permanent increase to the BSA

From a student.

Senator Jesse Bjorkman
District D
907-465-2828

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

From: adrialaska@everyactionadvocacy.com <adrialaska@everyactionadvocacy.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2023 8:20 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman <Sen.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>
Subject: We need a permanent increase to the BSA

Dear Senator Jesse Bjorkman,

Alaska students are making tremendous progress in overcoming the challenges of recent times. However, their academic achievement is being stifled by flat funding, program eliminations, and cuts to the education workforce.

Our students, schools, and communities desperately need a permanent increase to the Base Student Allocation that will signify a meaningful and dependable investment in public education.

School districts are building their budgets right now, and they're facing impossible choices because inflation has eroded their spending power. Without a BSA increase, we will see schools close, class sizes increase, and student opportunities disappear. Alaska students deserve better, and you have the power to make a real difference in their lives by passing a permanent increase to the BSA.

Communities across Alaska have made their support of public education clear. Local education leaders and administrators know that funding means more opportunities and more student learning. Business leaders know that investing in education will help our local businesses find work-ready young people. Families know opportunities like sports, CTE, and extracurriculars help children grow and thrive.

The Legislative Finance Division calculates that the BSA would need to increase by \$1,348 to match the buying power of the peak year 2015. Please make a commitment to Alaska's future in this legislative session with a meaningful and permanent investment in public education

Thank you for your service and leadership on this important subject.

Sincerely,
Adrienne Muir



Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 8:53 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: We need a permanent increase to the BSA

From a student's perspective

Senator Jesse Bjorkman
District D
907-465-2828

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

From: jackson.hooper@everyactionadvocacy.com [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, May 6, 2023 3:04 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman <Sen.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>
Subject: We need a permanent increase to the BSA

Dear Senator Jesse Bjorkman,

Hi, my name is Jackson Hooper. I'm in 8th grade at Nikiski Middle/High School, and I'm currently in the SpongeBob SquarePants Musical (As SpongeBob himself). Words cannot express what theater has done for me. It has come to my attention, that all theater techs could be cut from the budget and their jobs terminated. I'm writing this email to do my darndest to convince you to keep the jobs of the theater techs. At NMHS, we have the most wonderful pair of techs, Bob Maybry and Rusty Singleton. Everyday after a show, they're the last people you see when you give back your mic after you greet the audience. Bob and Rusty are some of the most kind and genuine people I've ever met, and probably will ever meet. And they don't just help Nikiski, they cover Kenai High School and Soldotna High School. They also routinely help out with community theater like Kenai Performers and Triumvirate Theater. Bob and Rusty will be helping out with a show that I'm doing in June (Lion King), in which I am Simba. Today, in Lion King rehearsal, my director announced to the whole cast that this could be the last show ever performed in the Kenai Central High School Auditorium. I had to leave the room for a while, I had just broken down, trying to imagine my life without theater. Terri, my director, said, "if we're going out, we're going out with a roar", my roar. Before you make your decision, I would greatly appreciate it if you would come to The SpongeBob Musical's closing night just to see the program you're canceling. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jackson Hooper
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Bob Butera <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 9:59 AM
Subject: I Support Increased Funding for Public Education

My son subbed in the Anchorage School District for a year. Two of his friends taught for a year. All three of them have decided that although they love teaching and the kids they are going to move on to other careers. Why? Because the classes are large and the support minimal. There are a lot of dysfunctional kids. Everything is stressed to the breaking point. They also look ahead and don't see a future that compensates them adequately for such challenging work. This scenario did not exist when my son was in school two decades ago and received a great education.

And where are these young adults going. Not here. They lost faith in our University when it was gutted. They see the handwriting on the wall that our government does not care about funding a strong society.

We are cheating our children, we are losing our young adults. We must do better. Lets start with adequately funding education.

Doniece Gott

From: Denise Kelly <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, May 08, 2023 10:51 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: support for SB52

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Denise Kelly, principal at Sterling Elementary School. I am representing Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for SB 52 which increases the Base Student Allocation for school districts.

I have been working in the KPBSD for 12 years and principal at Sterling Elementary for nine years. Each year, our district works to meet the very diverse needs of all of our schools. Each year, staff positions, which effects class sizes, are in limbo due to uncertainties in funding. With stable and predictable funding each year, we can attract and retain high-quality educators. Year to year, our district has many positions to fill within our schools. This year, I have three teaching positions to fill. Research shows that high teacher turnover has a direct and negative impact on student performance. Reliable funding is imperative to improving and maintaining student outcomes by stabilizing school and reducing our teacher turnover. With the Alaska Reads Act components, Sterling Elementary will need to fill these positions with the highest quality teachers for our students' sake.

Early notification of funding allows all schools in all districts plan and prepare for the upcoming school year. Early funding is crucial to meeting the educational needs of our students. Sterling Elementary is a "suburb" of Soldotna. For many of our students, school is the safest and most consistent place they can be. If we are going to continue to provide a safe and stable place for our students to learn and to thrive, we need to have the committee consider increasing the Base Student Allocation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of all of the testimony that you have and will receive regarding this bill. Your work is challenging and ever so important to what we do all the way down to our classrooms.

Denise Kelly, Principal
NAESP National Distinguished Principal 2022
Sterling Elementary School
[REDACTED]

"Be somebody that makes everyone feel like somebody."

Doniece Gott

From: Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, May 06, 2023 5:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 52

I support SB 52 which provides a substantial, permanent increase to the BSA. Our public schools need the help, and this will prevent annual crises as districts try to guess what the legislature will do each spring. Please vote for this bill to show that our state is serious about education.

Thanks for your service,

Cheryl Lovegreen.

Doniece Gott

From: Nancy Lehnhart <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, May 06, 2023 8:25 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Dear Senate Finance Committee members,
Please move Senate Bill 52 to increase the BSA out of committee so it can get to the floor for a vote. Our districts need the sensible support of a raised BSA so that we can relieve the constant stress of one time funding. We need all the support we can give to our districts to retain good teachers.

Gunalchéesh!
Nancy Lehnhart
Juneau