

SB 140

February 14, 2023

To our Alaska Legislation:

Sitka High School student council is writing to you today to advocate for our education. We believe that Senate Bill 52 will help with mental health, keeping extracurriculars in our schools, CTE programs, teacher retention and more. By increasing the BSA it not only helps students today but future generations of students in Alaska.

As you know, Senate Bill 52 is "An Act relating to education; increasing the base student allocation; and providing for an effective date." This will raise the BSA by \$1,000, which is huge for our state and education. Our district alone would receive around \$1.3 million, which would cut our deficit down. If the BSA increases, our local government will be able to grant us additional funds.

Our first point is the importance of increasing the BSA. How much of an increase is needed? Well, just to match school funding levels in 2009, we would need to increase the BSA by around \$2,200. Think about the occurring inflation since 2009! Schools around Alaska are having to make tough decisions about what programs to keep. Here in Sitka, we are already at the bare bones. If we cut one teacher, then we cut an entire program. If a program is cut, then we will lose the interest of students who are on the fence about education to start with. Howard Wayne, the American Government teacher here at Sitka High School, says "With inflation driving up the costs of things like fuel and supplies, if we do not add to the BSA, programs will be cut, and schools will close."

Secondly, mental health is particularly important to all the students in our school. By not funding schools and forcing cuts, these programs that are considered "extra" will no longer enable students to discover their passions and easily find a reason to be happy at school. To provide additional information on mental health in Alaska, as of 2020, Alaska had the second highest suicide rates in the country, and it was the seventh leading cause of death. For many students, the highlight of their days are their extracurriculars. With limited access to mental health professionals in our school, any additional cuts on mental health services would negatively affect students. This is something we will need to face if the BSA is not significantly increased.

Finally, we would like to touch on teacher retention and retirement. Over the years, retirement programs for teachers in Alaska have continually gotten worse and worse. In fact, Alaska holds the record for the state with the worst teacher retirement package. Specifically in Sitka, the cost of living is so high that teachers who began working in the district after the year 2005 might not have enough money in their retirement savings to live off. This is because in 2006, Tier 3 began and the retirement packages were dramatically cut. Teachers are also unable to collect social security. If teachers even want to retire, "They'll have to invest their own money in the bank," is what Howard Wayne said regarding this issue. Increasing the BSA would also help teacher retention and retirement. Teacher retention is essential because of the relationships built between students and teachers over many years. Building these bonds creates safe spaces for students and allows for a better school environment. Additionally, the cost of hiring and training new teachers every year is an expensive process. By creating a competitive market for teachers, we will see higher teacher retention rates and higher quality teachers attracted to our beautiful state.

In conclusion, thank you for taking the time to read this letter. A BSA increase of \$1000 would help our schools keep teachers and programs and allow students access to mental health services. As elected members it is your constitutional responsibility to fully fund education in the Great State of Alaska. We hope you consider a significant increase to the BSA and supporting Senate Bill 52 for the future generations of students in Alaska.

With highest regards,

Sitka High School student council

Frank Myers
Samuel

John
Sivier

Michael

Erin Myers

Javira

Edmond

Angie

Clivic Skan

Danica Majeski



Union of Students of the University of Alaska Anchorage

Resolution #23-10: Supporting Base Student Allocation Increase (HB 65 & SB 52)

SPONSORED BY: Matthew Green, *Speaker of the Assembly & Senator*
Albiona Selimi, *Chief Activities Officer & Delegate of CAS*
Hannah Huber, *Government Relations Officer & Senator*
Macchelssy Dinganga, *Speaker Pro Tempore & Senator*

ENDORSED BY: Katie Scoggin, *President*
Shanone Tejada, *Vice President*

COMMITTEE: Legislative Affairs Committee

DATE: March 23, 2023

WHEREAS: The Union of Students at the University of Alaska Anchorage (USUAA) serves as an mechanism to promote the interests of the student body and the community at large by advocating for governmental policy that supports the University of Alaska Anchorage and its constituent parts; and,

WHEREAS: According to Article 7, Section 1, Clause 1 of the [Alaska Constitution](#), “The legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State, and may provide for other public educational institutions”; and,

WHEREAS: USUAA affirms that all levels of education are valuable and must be properly funded to succeed, as additional funding will only increase the value and quality of the education; and,

WHEREAS: Currently, Alaska is experiencing a mass exodus of young, skilled, and professional educators because K-12 education is underfunded and undervalued, resulting in [large classroom sizes](#); and,

WHEREAS: Underfunded education can affect the overall academic experience for staff and students, school function overall is lowered; and,

WHEREAS: When states invest proper resources into K-12 education, there is a greater likelihood of student success in adulthood—research indicates a correlation

between per capita income and per-pupil expenditures on former students, showing that districts with improved financial equity produce students who, in their income-earning adult lives, have a higher intergenerational income mobility, despite having been low-income during their K-12 experience; and,

WHEREAS: Lack of adequate school funding substantially impacts teachers and their salaries with studies illustrating that between 1996 and 2015, teacher salaries actually decreased \$30 per week—teachers struggle to live on their salaries which leads to departure in the career; and,

WHEREAS: Studies indicate a correlation between teacher pay and student outcomes, finding that higher wages attract more teachers, encourages competition, and yields higher-quality teaching candidates, which leads to greater student performance; and,

WHEREAS: Better educational funding leads to access to resources that play a significant role in student success, like school psychologists, social workers, and additional pupil support services that aid students in combating mental health and behavioral issues that impact their performance.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:

The Union of Students at the University of Alaska Anchorage supports HB 65 & SB 52 because it increases the Base Student Allocation for students in K-12 levels of education, providing them more financial stability and the respect education deserves; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Union of Students at the University of Alaska Anchorage calls upon the members of the 33rd Alaska Legislature to pass HB 65 & SB 52 increasing funding for K-12 education is an investment in Alaska's future; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Union of Students at the University of Alaska Anchorage calls upon the Governor of Alaska to sign HB 65, SB 52, or any compromise bill to the same effect into law, if it passes in both Houses of the Legislature; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Union of Students of the University of Alaska Anchorage will send a copy of this resolution to: Governor Mike Dunleavy, Speaker Cathy Tilton, Senate President Gary Stevens, Members of the Alaska House of Representatives, Members of the Alaska Senate, Members of the House Education Committee, Members of the House Finance Committee, Members of the Senate Education Committee and Members of the Senate Finance Committee.

THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Union of Students of the University of Alaska Anchorage will send a copy of this resolution to: The Board of Regents, President Pat Pitney, Vice President of University Relations Michelle

Rizk, Vice President of Academics, Students, and Research Paul Layer, State Relations Director
Chad Hutchison, Chancellor Sean Parnell, Provost Denise Runge, Vice Chancellor for Student
Affairs Deanne Woodard, and Dean of Students Ben Morton.

PASSED BY A 10-0-0 VOTE OF THE USUAA ASSEMBLY



Approved

Vetoed

Katie Scoggin, *Student Body President*

Date: April 12, 2023



THE BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

#2 School Road North

P.O. Box 169

Naknek, Alaska 99633

Phone: (907) 246-4225/Fax: (907) 246-6875



SCHOOL BOARD RESOLUTION 23-01

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE STATE OF ALASKA MAKE A MEANINGFUL INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION (BSA) FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- WHEREAS,** the State of Alaska is constitutionally obligated to establish and maintain a system of public schools; and
- WHEREAS,** as per AS 29.35.160, the Bristol Bay Borough School District was established to maintain, and operate a system of public schools for all residents of the King Salmon, South Naknek, and Naknek villages; and
- WHEREAS,** AS 14.17.450 currently states that the base student allocation, provided by the State is \$5,960; and
- WHEREAS,** the base student allocation has not been increased since 2017 and the impacts of inflation have decreased the value of the BSA; and
- WHEREAS,** the Bristol Bay Borough School District now receives the maximum local contribution; and
- WHEREAS,** the Bristol Bay Borough School District has found efficiencies, reduced staffing, and reduced programming to meet the challenges of inflation; and
- WHEREAS,** the Bristol Bay Borough School District continues to meet ongoing requirements, including the Alaska Reads Act, and;
- WHEREAS,** the Bristol Bay Borough School District will be required to further reduce staffing or programs in FY25 without a BSA increase; and
- WHEREAS,** the State has not made meaningful base student allocation increases since fiscal years 2015 through 2017 totaling an additional amount of \$250 to the BSA; and
- WHEREAS,** Alaska State Senate members have proposed Senate Bill 52 which would increase the BSA by \$1,000 and Alaska State House members have proposed House Bill 65 which would increase the BSA by \$1,250; and

“EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN FOR THE FUTURE”

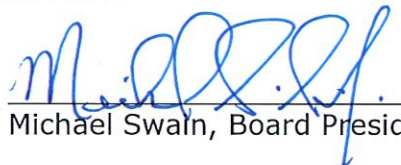
WHEREAS, on February 28, 2023, the Legislative Finance Division Director stated to the House Finance Committee that “today, the base student allocation is the lowest it’s been in the last 20 years, adjusted for inflation.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH SCHOOL BOARD:

1. That the School Board requests a meaningful increase to the base student allocation for Alaskan students to account for the fiscal gaps created by inflationary increases over the last several years.
2. That the School Board requests a mechanism to inflation-proof the BSA to reduce the uncertainty in education funding created by inflationary pressures.
3. That copies of this resolution are provided to Governor Dunleavy, Senator Hoffman, Representative Edgmon, the President of the Bristol Bay Borough School District School Board, the Education Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate, the Finance Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate, and other interested parties.
4. That this resolution is effective immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE BRISTOL BAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT THIS 9TH DAY OF MAY, 2023

ATTEST:



Michael Swain, Board President

5/9/23
Date