



2024 Nome Public Schools Board of Education
Legislative Priorities

Increase in the Base Student Allocation

\$1320 – this increase in the BSA would allow us to continue at the same level we are at for FY24 without any cuts to staff or non-staff costs. Anything less will require cuts to give us a balanced budget. Preserving instructional positions is our first priority.

\$1413 – this increase in the BSA allows Nome Public Schools to meet the requirements of the Alaska Reads Act.

\$1740 – this increase in the BSA would allow us to bring back some of the services and programs which have eroded over the past 7-8 years, such as instructional coaches, a music program at the elementary school, school nurses, and support and health programs.

2024 State Legislative Priorities

The Nome Public Schools Board of Education has chosen the following priority areas for the 2023-2024 Legislative Session. We will focus our advocacy efforts with the Alaska Legislature around the following:

- Early, Predictable and Full Funding for a High Quality Education

The Board supports full and predictable funding for a high quality education for all students, which should provide revenue to cover the actual cost of education in all districts, allows for inflation and increasing costs, and includes all initiatives, laws and mandates that require additional costs and services, such as the Alaska Reads Act. In addition, forward funding and early notification of funding is crucial to allow for recruitment and retention of quality educators and administrators in today's challenging job market. The Base Student Allocation should be adjusted to a figure of approximately \$7,500 in order to keep up with the 21% inflation rate over the last five years (2017-2022) and provide competitive salaries, keep up with the rapidly growing cost of energy and supplies, and allow for the increase in the cost of health insurance and other employee benefits. Nome Public Schools would also support a revision of the Funding Formula to better reflect the rapidly increasing gap between the economic situations in rural remote and hub communities as opposed to road system districts.

- Funding of School Capital/Major Maintenance Projects

Nome Public Schools currently has well over \$6 million dollars in needed capital improvement projects, due to aging facilities and systems for buildings many of which were opened in the mid-1960's. Reinstatement of school bond reimbursements and full funding of projects submitted through the Capital Improvement Program are crucial to ensuring our school facilities are safe and providing the best possible environment for learning. Ensuring funding for needed construction of teacher housing facilities is also a high priority item that impacts the ability of the district to recruit and retain quality staff. The Capital Improvement Program scoring system should also be revamped to recognize the cost of continually updating the applications to remain competitive which places an undue burden on smaller districts.

- Attracting and Retaining Quality Educators and Administrators

Teacher and leadership turnover hampers progress on district initiatives and negatively impacts student achievement. Alaska students deserve knowledgeable, stable, and committed teachers, principals and support staff, who are culturally grounded in their local communities. Turnover of less than 10% annually is critical to allow programmatic changes to take hold and produce desired results in the long term. Programs and professional development to grow equity leadership are crucial in making changes to a system we acknowledge has not always served our children well. Alaska's salaries and retirement system are no longer competitive or attractive to teachers from the lower 48, and we are currently utilizing non-traditional teachers, which often require additional support from colleagues and administrators. Equitable and inflation-responsive funding of school districts to provide competitive salaries and wages in response to the high cost of living in many areas in the State, control of health care costs, follow through on commitments to the TRS/PERS pension systems, and high quality teacher preparation programs through the University system are all key to developing Alaska's teacher workforce. The teacher preparation programs offered through the Alaska University system should focus on graduating students who are prepared to serve students in the various rural communities around the state, with proficiency and background knowledge in culturally affirming instruction.

Affordable housing is a crucial factor in this area, and is lacking in Nome and the Bering Strait Region in general. The District's efforts to provide additional housing for educators has been hampered by the lack of available funding for either school districts or municipalities; the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Teacher Housing Grant is an important funding mechanism, but is limited to building small projects and is inadequate in scope or funding to support the rapid expansion of projects needed to meet current needs.

- Culturally Responsive Education and Language Revitalization

Culturally responsive classrooms and school settings are foundational and fundamental to any school with a high percentage of Alaska Native students. Our students deserve to see their culture, language and knowledge as an integral part of everyday instruction. It is crucial to the achievement of Alaska Native students when identity is validated through content and methods, and they are motivated and successful when they see themselves reflected in their classrooms

and schools. Curriculum which reflects students' cultural identity is often lacking in schools, as textbooks and supplemental materials reflect Western views and values. Modifying curriculum and supplemental materials requires additional time and funding, but results in students who feel engaged and connected to their schools.

Professional development for all staff in culturally responsive teaching and curriculum development, regardless of whether they come from within the community or out of the state, is vital. In addition, legislation and funding that supports efforts to grow a local teaching force from within the community would ensure more stable and culturally knowledgeable educators.

Last but not least, Nome Public Schools calls upon the Alaska Legislature to support indigenous language revitalization efforts by supporting immersion programs for students, as well as programs which build language knowledge for school staff.

- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health of Children**

The negative impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic on the social, emotional and mental health of our children has turned the spotlight on the need for support and funding for school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists, as well as professional development for educators and families in trauma-sensitive and trauma-preventative practices. Schools must now assist children in regulating emotions, developing coping skills, and forming strong positive relationships with adults. Recent efforts focused on the social/emotional learning of students must be continued and expanded, especially those based in community partnerships.

Nome Public Schools also embraces the concept of wellness and a whole child approach. Children who are taught to connect their mind, body and spirit through grounding in cultural beliefs and practices have healthy attitudes and make healthy life choices. We support instruction and curriculum that promote these practices.

- **Literacy and Reading Achievement**

The Board of Education recognizes that reading is a fundamental skill for all students, and one of the most important focus areas for any school. The recent passage of the Alaska Reads Act is a starting point and provides a framework for moving literacy achievement forwards in Alaska schools. Funding to support the provisions of the Alaska Reads Act is crucial in order to effectively support the needs of students, such as after-school interventionists, instructional coaches, and summer literacy programs. Funding to support the required professional development for teachers in the area of effective reading instruction is a high priority, as well as ensuring that teacher preparatory programs provide a strong foundation for teacher candidates in reading instruction is crucial for the future of Alaska's students.

- **Career and Workforce Development**

Nome Public Schools recognizes that the Alaskan and U.S. workforce is undergoing a unprecedented shift and schools must be poised to prepare students for rapidly changing needs,

including growth in jobs in infrastructure. The coming deep draft expansion of the Nome Port and the opening of the Graphite One mine will mean our schools must deepen and expand our existing partnerships with local employers and the University of Alaska's Northwest Campus to create more formalized school-to-work pathways including apprenticeships and internships. The Northwest Arctic Career and Technical Center (NACTEC) is a pivotal linchpin in ensuring students from Nome and the Bering Strait Region are prepared to fill these positions and keep economic growth tightly centered and benefiting their home communities.

2024 Federal Legislative Priorities

The Nome Public Schools Board of Education has chosen the following priority areas for the 2024 Legislative Session. We will focus our advocacy efforts with the Federal Legislature around the following:

- Increasing the reimbursement for Alaska Rural/Remote communities under the National School Lunch Program to better reflect the costs of employee wages, foodstuffs and shipping costs
- Legislation that supports and/or coordinates with our State Priorities
- Removal of limitations and/or barriers to access federal funds, especially those designed to meet the educational needs of Alaska Native students

Doniece Gott

From: Darlene Trigg <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 10:09 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding testimony
Attachments: FY24 Legislative Priorities + BSA .pdf

Hello Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Darlene Trigg. I serve on the Nome Public Schools board of education. As you discuss the budget I request that you consider making a meaningful investment in the future of Alaska by investing in education for children.

Our school district is facing a budget deficit of \$1.3M and as a result will have to cut up to 11 classroom positions in our district. An increase to education inside the BSA is important to be able to invest in our classrooms and in our teacher salaries. To continue to operate at our current level we would need an increase to the BSA of \$1320.

Fully fund the Reads Act. We believe that the current budget short funds schools and DEED for implementation of the Reads Act. If the Reads Act is going to be a mechanism for accountability, it needs to be adequately funded to ensure success. For Nome Public Schools to meet the requirements Alaska Reads Act we would need an increase of the BSA of \$1413.

An increase of \$1740 would allow Nome Public Schools to bring back services and programs that have eroded over the past 7-8 years such as a music program, health programs, and bring instructional coaches to our schools.

Thank you for your dedication to our State.

Darlene Trigg

Doniece Gott

From: Jeanne Fredrickson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 10:34 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BSA Increase

This is to state my support for the Alaska Legislature to increase the Basic Student Allocation (BSA) in this session's budget consideration. It is past time for an increase to the BSA that has remained the same since 2017.

The Alaska Legislature has a constitutional mandate to adequately fund public education. It is one of the most important responsibilities of this body. There is no similar mandate to provide residents with a free check in the form of a Permanent Fund Dividend. This is a gift that is appropriate when the state is flush with oil revenue, which is no longer the case at this time.

Our governor wishes to spend the state's money on large PFD dividends for political purposes because it makes him popular. He does so even though his opposition to education funding is causing many families and teachers to leave the state.

The legislature needs to do its constitutional duty and adequately fund public education. Please increase the BSA to an adequate level. It is the right thing to do.

James Fredrickson
Seward, AK
Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Kerry Mahoney <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB186, SB187, SB188

Good day members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I was very fortunate to be in Juneau last week as a representative for the Board of Education of the Unalaska City School District. I'd like to reinforce that although I am a board member, I am also a parent of two recent graduates and of a current high school student in our district.

I am urging you to deeply consider the ramifications we are currently experiencing due to the underfunding of education in our state. In our district, the shortage of staff and lack of substitute teachers has stretched our team razor thin. We have no pool of substitute teachers to call. Our teachers in the junior and senior high school have been called upon to give up their prep periods to fill in the gap, and our high school principal taught five periods of Spanish and Biology five days last week while the instructor was out. This was not the best use of his time, as he is needed to seek, interview and hire new staff to fill the positions that increasingly become open as staff turn in resignations. Many of our teachers and classified employees have found or are looking for better income earning opportunities.

Please invest in education. Education needs to be the priority of this legislative session. There is a need for an increase to education funding INSIDE the BSA. As a committee, please prioritize the appropriation of funding towards a sizable (\$1413!) increase in the BSA. This amount made all the legislators I met shake their heads, but this amount keeps funding on the same level as the inflation we are experiencing. If the governor vetoes this, please stand together, unite and provide the majority vote to outweigh the veto. In the governor's words, "When people think of education, they'll say ALASKA". Truly, I hope this could be realized. At the moment, we don't have the level of education happening in our classrooms that we need to realize this. Learning stalls without consistency. The mental health of our staff affects the mental health of our students. The frenzied, fractured, and fatigued sentiments of our staff trickles into the student population. Appropriate and adequate funding of education through the significant increase in the BSA will lead to better educational and mental health outcomes for all students.

Sincerely,

Kerry Mahoney
[REDACTED]

Unalaska, AK 99685
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Alida Trainor <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 2:41 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: Increase the BSA to no less than \$800 per student

Hello Senator Myers,

I see that you are still have not agreed to amend the BSA beyond \$300 per student. That is completely unacceptable and will have consequences for our local economy, as lifelong Alaskan families like mine consider leaving. At this point we aren't even arguing over QUALITY of education but rather simple ACCESS to it. The school closures that will result from your inaction will continue to build our reputation as a State that doesn't prioritize education and there will be cascading impacts to our workforce and businesses.

The work to better fund this state is difficult and requires revenue. I get that. Uphold your constitutional mandate to fund education fully and continue the hard work of rethinking Alaska's revenue problems.

I also recognize the tough position you are in with our state leadership. Most times, the swords we carry aren't worth dying on. As a politician you have to choose your battles carefully, and decide when to stand up to your administration and commit to a veto override. I believe you do care about education but you are still deciding whether this is a sword to die on. I can say this with certainty. If you change your stance now and take a stand, now, there will be wind at your back and we, the VERY concerned families of Fairbanks, will support you in a way you've never felt before.

Sincerely,
An active voter in your district,
Alida Trainor

Doniece Gott

From: Bob Metcalf <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 11:26 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Donny Olson
Subject: Education Funding in the Operating Budget

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am a member of the Nome Public School Board of Education.

Our school district is facing a budget deficit of \$1.3M, a roughly 10% cut, and as a result may need to cut up to 11 classroom positions in our district. The causes for the deficit are well-known and often cited for increases in funding for other State services. To continue to operate at our current level we would need an increase to the BSA of \$1320.

Fully fund the Reads Act. The current budget under-funds schools and DEED for implementation of the Reads Act. If the Reads Act is going to be used for accountability, it needs to be properly funded to provide for its success. For Nome Public Schools to meet the promise of the Alaska Reads Act, we would need an increase to the BSA of \$1413.

Schools are one of the most significant features and measures of the quality of life in Alaskan communities. What kind of school system should the State maintain—not good enough or the very best possible?

An increase of \$1740 would allow Nome Public Schools to bring back valuable services and programs that have eroded over the past 7-8 years, such as a music program, health programs, and bring instructional coaches to our schools.

I'm not sure what criteria the Legislature would use to measure educational success, but I do know that not increasing funding levels for schools will certainly not improve any of them.

Thank you for your service to the people of Alaska.

Bob Metcalf

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School Board Member
Nome Public Schools

Doniece Gott

From: EXT-Mock, Dana S <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 12:26 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Senate Finance Committee public testimony

Good Afternoon,

I'm writing today to request your support on education issues within our great state. Here are several key points that should be considered.

- An increase to education inside the BSA is important to be able to invest in our classrooms, and teacher salaries.
 - With the rising costs including of supplies, health benefits, and general living expenses, our teachers are taking home less money this year than in years past. We have to address this or our educational system is going to continue to suffer as teacher recruitment and retention are directly tied to this.
 - A consolidated Statewide Health Benefits plan would help offset this challenge.
 - A defined benefits plan would also help.
 - Another consideration is to start contributing to Social Security as many states have a 401K program but their teachers also pay into social security so they have both systems as another form of retirement.
 - Work through DEED to Require schools to show how the money received is being spent, a 70/30 split is not unrealistic.
- Fully fund the Reads Act. We believe that the current budget short funds schools and DEED for implementation of the Reads Act. If the Reads Act is going to be a mechanism for accountability, it needs to be adequately funded to ensure success.
 - This is a great program and the Delta Greely School District has embrace the program but it becomes challenging when the program isn't fully funded, it is another mandate with financial support.
- The Delta Greely school district has it's challenges and has made very difficult decisions on the budget and it has a direct impact on the students and the opportunities that can be provided. When you keep trimming the excess you eventually get to a point where there is nothing left to trim. That is where the DGSD finds itself now.

Please consider the message that is sent when you don't support the educational issues before you. I appreciate your support

Respectfully,

Dana Mock

Resident of Delta Junction

Doniece Gott

From: Dianna Leinberger <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 6:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Senate Finance Committee - Fairbanks Testimony

Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I was unable to call in during the day to testify at the Senate Finance Committee for the Fairbanks community, so I am sending an email with my testimony.

My name is Dianna Leinberger, and I live in Fairbanks in the Goldstream Valley. I'm testifying today to advocate for an increase in the BSA funding. I am requesting the full \$1400 to account for inflation since the BSA hasn't increased since 2017. I've heard there was a January 30, 2023, memo from the Legislative Finance Division which calculated that **the BSA would need to increase by \$1,348** to match the buying power of peak year 2015.

According to the State Constitution "the Legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State." I would argue that funding the BSA to keep up with inflation is a critical component of "maintaining a system of public schools."

I am very frustrated that we have to fight so hard for education funding, funding that is critical not only for those with children, but the entire state.

According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development working age people (18-64) are leaving the State, which is holding back economic growth. If we don't have a strong education system, people are going to leave Alaska and others are not going to move here. A strong education system is critical for strong communities and strong economies.

I've heard comments about not throwing money at a problem, but public schools aren't a "problem" and if we really care about education, then we need to keep schools open, we need to pay teachers competitive wages, and we need to at the very least provide enough money to maintain the system. We can't underfund schools and then point fingers at performance measures.

I'm asking the Senate Finance Committee to please do what you can do to make sure public schools are adequately funded.

I want to thank you for your public service and thank you for taking testimony from Fairbanks today. I appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Dianna Leinberger
Fairbanks, District R

Doniece Gott

From: Emily Youcha <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 6:32 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: I support a large increase to BSA

Dear Senate Finance Committee members,

Thank you for your work to increase the BSA to a more meaningful amount.

My daughter goes to a school in Fairbanks that is slated for closure. She is also in the gifted program called "Extended Learning Program" that will likely be cut or diminished as well. Already, many programs such as elementary band and orchestra, elementary art class in the Fairbanks district have been cut. Teachers turnover is increasing. I am sad that my daughter does not get to enjoy the opportunities I had growing up.

Families are beyond frustrated with the instability and decreasing quality of public education due to budget cuts year after year. Getting a good public education at a neighborhood school is one of the most important issues in our family right now.

My legislators (Rep. Tomaszewki and Sen. Myers) do not seem to be hearing their constituents so I'd like to be sure my voice is heard by someone who cares. I have written them but they no longer respond.

I support a very large investment in public education by increasing the BSA by over \$1400 (minimum). I also support an income tax for this purpose.

I want my child to have all the opportunities that I did.

Thank you Senators for understanding the value of education.

Emily Youcha
Fairbanks, AK

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Margo Bellamy <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 3:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA! Testimony

Good afternoon!

My name is Margo Bellamy. I write to you today as the President of the Anchorage School Board and President of the Association of Alaska School Boards.

I write with a heightened sense of urgency to implore your thoughtful reconsideration and immediate action to increase the BSA by \$1413, not just for the over 43,000 students in the Anchorage School District, BUT for EVERY STUDENT in the State of Alaska ...all of whom deserve the best education possible from highly qualified teachers, in schools that are safe, clean, physically/emotionally warm, academically engaging and offer tremendous academic choices and opportunities.

We cannot consistently provide these opportunities if we can't retain our current educators and support staff; if we are forced to increase our class sizes; or eliminate or reduce special programs and services.

Specific to ASD....Since 2017, inflation in Anchorage has risen nearly 27%, while the BSA has risen just 0.5%. This imbalance is eroding public education in our district and across our state.

ASD faces a \$98 million structural deficit for FY25. To address this deficit, ASD is faced with reducing its emergency reserve account and implementing significant cuts to programs, services, and staff – choices that will all impact student outcomes and undercut our current efforts to implement our goals and guardrails including the implementation of initiatives such as the Alaska Reads Act.

ASD and AASB is advocating for a permanent BSA increase of \$1,413, for a total of \$7,373, and to inflation-proof the BSA going forward.

ASD and AASB recognizes the state's fiscal situation and know how difficult it is to balance competing interests when resources are strained. Without your support our Districts cannot deliver the world class education we all want for our students.

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Molly Proue <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 7:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: In support of increased education funding

Hello committee members: thank you for all the work you are doing on behalf of Alaskans.
I am writing in support of increased education funding and in support of funds for school maintenance and construction.

I was just reading today in the Alaska Beacon about how low Alaska ranks in education and in serving our youngest residents.

As the mother of two small children, this is devastating and makes me question my decision to live here, although I love Alaska.

Now in Fairbanks, where I live, we are faced with the horrible possibility of four school closures including our neighborhood school.

Please ensure adequate funding is provided to help our young Alaskans.

We are counting on our state's leaders to help build our children up, rather than send a message that they are not worth investing in.

Thank you,
Molly Proue
Fairbanks, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: emily remsburg <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:41 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase funding for public schools!!

So disheartening to see local schools in Fairbanks get shut down due to no help or funding. With inflation the cost of materials, fuel, and electric have increased. Please help our students in Fairbanks have a bright and successful future, let's show them they are important and matter. Closing Pearl creek elementary will be devastating to the community, it is the highest rated public school in the North Star borough. These teachers and kids need your help Emily Remsburg

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Megan Wiegand <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase Education Funding

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as an Alaskan resident and mother of three children who utilize the public school system. I am pleading with you to amend the budget to increase education funding. Our school system is facing a significant budget shortfall which will require closing schools, cutting teachers, and increasing class sizes. My children already have some classes that are 30+ students, which makes increased class sizes really unmanageable for staff and students alike.

Insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly, yet there has not been an increase in funding to reflect these rising costs. It would seem reasonable to factor this rising cost of doing business into our education funding allocation.

I am very passionate about public education because it provides opportunities to students from all backgrounds. That kind of equalizing investment helps improve the health, safety and future of a community. Please help the state of Alaska invest in public education by increasing school funding.

Investing in education, and our youth, is an investment in the future of Alaska!

Sincerely,

Megan Wiegand

Resident of Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Shelby Carlson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 7:33 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Testimony for the Operating Budget

Good morning,

I am writing to ask you to fully fund the Reads Act. It is vitally important that all our kids are able to read, which the legislature recognized when you passed the Act. The Governor's rallying cry around education funding is student outcomes. What better way to improve a specific and measurable outcome than to fund this mandate?

Thank you,

Shelby Carlson
Seat A - Whittier
Chugach School Board

Doniece Gott

From: heather anne [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 8:41 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funding

Please amend the budget to increase education funding. This budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year.

This budget does not help districts maintain status quo when insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year, and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts.

With BSA bills in limbo, please do something to stabilize the dramatic budget shortfalls that districts are facing.

The Base Student Allocation that has not changed since 2017 and inflation has made this unsustainable.

Don't fail our kids.

Sincerely,

Heather Coletti (25 year AK resident and mother to 2 Alaskan born kids in our public schools)

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Ashley Hannah [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 4:40 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Please amend the budget to increase funding for education this budget does not full fully fund education but amounts to significant cuts from last year.

Please increase the BSA by \$1,413!!

In the last 7 years, the BSA has increased 0.5% while FNSBSD costs have increased approximately 16% in the same period of time.

This budget does not help maintain status quo for districts when fuel prices and cost-of-living has increased exponentially and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts. Please help fund our children's futures!!

Thank you for your time and consideration. Our kids thank you!



Sponsored by: Douthit, Daniel

**CITY OF KENAI
RESOLUTION NO. 2024-04**

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the City of Kenai is served by the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and has three traditional schools in Kenai, one alternative high school, two charter schools, and one school within the Kenai Peninsula Youth Facility; and,

WHEREAS, without a Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase or one-time funding, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District will face an approximately \$13 million budget deficit for FY25, which would likely require an increase in class size and elimination of programs important to our students and community members; and,

WHEREAS, the BSA has not kept up with the increased costs and the rates of cumulative inflation; and,

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough has continually increased local contributions to keep pace with these rising costs and has reached the maximum allowable amount resulting in a need for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District to decrease spending on essential programs; and,

WHEREAS, the BSA amount directly affects how much the Kenai Peninsula Borough is allowed to contribute; and,

WHEREAS, a meaningful increase to the BSA would help ensure adequate and equitable funding to maintain reasonable class sizes, provide basic student resource needs, and improve student outcomes; and,

WHEREAS, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly voted unanimously by resolution to support a BSA increase, and we hereby support their request for a BSA increase.

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

Section 1. That Kenai City Council supports the Kenai Peninsula Borough's request for the Alaska Legislature to increase the BSA.

Section 2. That a copy of this resolution will be sent to Governor Dunleavy and the Kenai Peninsula legislative delegation, the President of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Board of Education, the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly, the Education Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate, and the Finance Committees of the Alaska House and Alaska Senate.

Section 3. That this Resolution takes effect immediately upon passage.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KENAI, ALASKA, THIS 17TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2024.



Brian Gabriel Sr., Mayor

ATTEST:



Michelle M. Saner, MMC, City Clerk



KENAI

City of Kenai | 210 Fidalgo Ave, Kenai, AK 99611-7794 | 907.283.7535 | www.kenai.city

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Gabriel and Council Members

FROM: Council Member Alex Douthit
Council Member Phil Daniel

DATE: January 8, 2024

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 2024-04 – Base Student Allocation

This resolution requests the State of Alaska make a meaningful increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for public schools.

The BSA has not kept up with the increased costs and the rates of cumulative inflation, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough has continually increased local contributions to keep pace with these rising costs and has reached the maximum allowable amount. Without a meaningful increase to the BSA, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District will need to decrease spending on essential programs and resources.

An increase to the BSA is important to maintain and improve public schools in Kenai, including three traditional schools, one alternative high school, two charter schools, and one school within the Kenai Peninsula Youth Facility and will help ensure adequate and equitable funding to maintain reasonable class sizes, provide basic student resource needs, and improve student outcomes.

Your consideration is appreciated.

Doniece Gott

From: Ashley Hannah <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 4:40 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Please amend the budget to increase funding for education this budget does not full fully fund education but amounts to significant cuts from last year.

Please increase the BSA by \$1,413!!

In the last 7 years, the BSA has increased 0.5% while FNSBSD costs have increased approximately 16% in the same period of time.

This budget does not help maintain status quo for districts when fuel prices and cost-of-living has increased exponentially and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts. Please help fund our children's futures!!

Thank you for your time and consideration. Our kids thank you!

Doniece Gott

From: Kristin Papp <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:55 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony 2/21/24

Please amend the budget to increase public education funding! The current proposed budget is significantly less than last year.

With increases in cost of insurance and fuel this budget will not fully fund education and will lead to teacher cuts, program cuts and school closures.

The BSA has not been increased in 7 years and the BSA bill is in limbo. Please do more to support a budget that will allow schools to function and remain open!

The Alaska State Constitution states "The legislature shall by general law establish and **maintain** a system of public schools open to all children of the State"

Please maintain our public education. If we want quality education, increase test scores and increase literacy rates amend the budget to include more money to support public education.

Respectfully,
Kristin Papp

Doniece Gott

From: Sarah Trainor [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 1:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Re: increase the BSA by no less than \$1,413

PS - I live in Fairbanks, Alaska - Goldstream Valley

Thank you!

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Sarah Trainor <[REDACTED]>
Date: Wed, Feb 21, 2024 at 12:16 PM
Subject: increase the BSA by no less than \$1,413
To: <Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov>

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I urge you to amend the budget to permanently increase the base student allocation (BSA) by no less than \$1,413 and to support Alaska's K-12 public education.

This budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year.

This budget does not allow school districts to maintain the status quo when insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year. It will lead to teacher cuts, lost jobs, school closures, increased class size, and program cuts.

With BSA bills in limbo, please prioritize stabilizing the devastating budget shortfalls in K-12 education that school districts are facing.

Strong schools support strong economies. We want Alaska to be an attractive place to live in order to keep people living here and to attract new residents and stimulate economic growth. Underfunded schools deter new industry and economic growth. School closures and underfunded schools also lead to decreased property values.

Working families cannot homeschool their kids.

I urge you to support public K-12 education because Alaska's kids are our future. We need to support and nurture their learning and growth. Strong schools build capable, contributing members of society.

Thank you for your service to the state and your constituents.

Respectfully,
Sarah Trainor

Doniece Gott

From: Juneau Montessori School JMS [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 1:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Urging you to increase childcare funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

As a director of an early childhood program, I work daily with families who are struggling to pay their monthly childcare bill. I've seen countless parents quit their jobs and keep their kids home, or move away, rather than pay for childcare in Juneau. I do what I can to keep tuition rates low through a pull-tabs operation and grants, but like many childcare programs, 75% of our revenue is spent on payroll - leaving us in a bind. Our staff live paycheck to paycheck, and most eventually leave the industry despite their passion for working with children. Last summer we were severely understaffed and were forced to raise tuition so that we could raise our starting wage to \$20/hour. We expect this problem to keep getting worse, not better.

Families can't afford to pay, and programs can't afford to stay open. It's a lose-lose and it's causing young families to move out of our state, with detrimental effects on our economy. We need to do better.

I urge you to increase funding for childcare this year by providing state funds to match the amount the federal government currently invests in Alaska's Child Care Program. How can we expect families to choose Alaska if childcare is impossible to find? Invest in Alaskan families and invest in the future of our state.

Thank you,

Laura Talpey
Executive Director
Juneau Montessori School
(907) 364-3535
www.juneaumontessorischool.org

Doniece Gott

From: Kristin Papp <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:55 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony 2/21/24

Please amend the budget to increase public education funding! The current proposed budget is significantly less than last year.

With increases in cost of insurance and fuel this budget will not fully fund education and will lead to teacher cuts, program cuts and school closures.

The BSA has not been increased in 7 years and the BSA bill is in limbo. Please do more to support a budget that will allow schools to function and remain open!

The Alaska State Constitution states "The legislature shall by general law establish and **maintain** a system of public schools open to all children of the State"

Please maintain our public education. If we want quality education, increase test scores and increase literacy rates amend the budget to include more money to support public education.

Respectfully,
Kristin Papp

Doniece Gott

From: Danielle Barnett <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 2:13 PM
To: ashley.carrick@akleg.gov; click.bishop@akleg.gov; frank.tomaszewski@akleg.gov; maxine.dibert@akleg.gov; mike.cronk@akleg.gov; mike.prax@akleg.gov; robert.meyers@akleg.gov; scott.kawasaki@akleg.gov; Senate Finance Committee; will.stapp@akleg.gov
Subject: Raise the BSA

To our chosen representatives,

Please consider raising the BSA for the children of The Northstar Borough School District. Since 2017 the BSA has been increased by \$30 despite the fact that inflation has risen by 25% in that same time period. Much like a household our school district cannot be expected to provide the same education and opportunity with less and less funding each year. Continuing to close schools, raise class sizes, and take away music programs, art programs, sports and more will negatively impact our children. We cannot expect our educators to make a positive impact and teach our kids adequately when the ratio is 30:1. Giving teachers an annual bonus only goes so far. As class sizes continue to increase it becomes harder and harder to teach, the disruptions become greater and at a certain point it becomes unmanageable. We have already begun to see teachers leave the profession because of this. The current structure of our public school system is not feasible and is negatively impacting the future of our community.

Dunleavy has made it clear that he believes homeschool and charter schools deserve more attention than public school. Unfortunately, attending those schools comes down to privilege and a lottery. Low income and most middle class families do not have the opportunity or the means to homeschool or attend charter schools. If neighborhood public schools could have the same parameters as charter schools (limited class sizes, required volunteering) the results would be better too.

Closing our public schools is not a solution to the budget, we have to have raise the BSA. We have to do better for our children. By not doing so you are telling the future generation that their education is not important, that mediocrity is ok, and you are failing them.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope that you decide to make the children of Fairbanks and the children of Alaska a priority.

Danielle Thomas

Proud parent of a Pearl Creek Puffin

Doniece Gott

From: Sara Stoops [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 3:15 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: education funding

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to encourage you, and even plead with you to help our schools maintain their standards of education by providing an increase to the BSA. I worked in the schools years ago and now I help in several schools where my grandchildren are attending. I have seen a decline in the quality of education due to a lack of funds.

Please increase the BSA and do not sacrifice funds from the public schools to fund Charter schools. Our neighborhood school children deserve the best we can give them despite their economic status!!

Thank you,
Sara Stoops

Doniece Gott

From: kristen schupp <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:52 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Fund Education

Senate Finance Committee,

I am asking you to meaningfully support funding education. By not doing so you are compromising the future of this state.

In Fairbanks the school board is looking at having to close an additional two or more schools after just having having to close three just a couple years ago.

Last night the school board had about three hours of testimony from the community asking that we save their schools and their jobs.

I would urge you to watch the testimony, that you can find in the school district website, so that you can hear what these schools mean to families and what the employees provide.

When considering the dollars that you do or do not allocate to education, also consider the lives you are effecting. Most importantly the lives of children who grow up to be our future nurses, police officers, water technicians, energy experts, policy wonks, teachers, legislators etc.

School operating costs increase over time just like operating our households have. Schools do not live in a bubble unaffected by the financial reality that goes on in the world. The state needs to keep up with the financial reality of operating a functional thriving school districts.

Please fund our schools.

Our greatest natural resource is our children, and we need to invest in them.

Thank you,
Kristen Schupp
Fairbanks

Doniece Gott

From: dp <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:02 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding

Greetings,

Alaskans need educators and properly funded schools. The state is in crisis, teachers are quitting and living in poverty. Take care of our teachers and Alaska will prosper.

Please amend the budget to increase education funding. This budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year.

This budget does not help districts maintain status quo when insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year, and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts.

With BSA bills in limbo, please do something to stabilize the dramatic budget shortfalls that districts are facing.

Thank you!

Dylan Proudfoot
[REDACTED]
Juneau, AK 99801

Doniece Gott

From: Laura Volmert <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:04 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget testimony

I'm a Fairbanks resident and am writing to implore you to amend the budget to increase funding for education. I am the parent of two children, one a graduate of the FNSBSD, and one a current high school student. I have watched as school programs have been cut, class sizes have increased, teachers have left and not been replaced. My younger child is not getting the same education my older child received. Our schools are truly our most important resource, because they not only are creating the future of Alaska, they attract innovators to our state who want their children to receive an excellent education. We are not currently offering the excellent education we once did, and we are losing people. With the BSA bills in limbo, please do something to stabilize funding for our school and the dramatic shortfalls our districts are facing.

--

Laura Volmert
Fairbanks, 99701

"You can either practice being right or practice being kind." -Anne Lamott

Doniece Gott

From: Erika Burr <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 3:26 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please amend the budget to increase education funding

Dear Finance Committee,

Thank you for your hard work and careful consideration of community needs during the budget process. Please continue to work on budget amendments to **increase education funding**. The current budget amounts to **painful cuts** when our communities **desperately need** significant **increases** to grapple with higher fuel, insurance, and maintenance costs. Current proposed funding levels will force additional **building closures, staff and program cuts** (on top of losses due to previous years of flat funding).

Student needs are great and going unmet. Insufficient funding has caused **class sizes** in our district to be **much too large**. This is **stressful** and **exhausting** for students and teachers, alike. Large class sizes undermine the connection between students and their teachers **making school feel impersonal**. When students feel unseen, it **saps the joy** from the classroom that should be central to the learning experience. In turn, classes are **less productive**, and teachers **feel unsuccessful**. Teachers need to feel connected and effective to continue to do this important, challenging work. **We cannot afford to have teachers continue to leave** (or never enter) the profession. Our **students need us**, and **we need** support from **sufficient funding**.

Thank you for doing **everything you can to ensure sufficient funding** so our schools can address the vast student needs and once again become places where students feel seen and teachers can feel connected. **Our communities are counting on you**.

Show our students that they matter to you and to Alaska. **They will give back generously** when they know they are supported and valued,

Erika Burr
Teacher, parent and concerned community member
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

Doniece Gott

From: Heidi Wood <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 3:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA

Thank you for all your hard work!
Please increase the BSA to \$1413. Our children deserve the best and it takes funding to get there. I am very disappointed in Frank T, my representative, and his unwillingness to fund our children's education.

Please vote in favor of our future and our schools!
Heidi Wood
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks AK 99709

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Megan Barker <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 3:33 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: RAISE THE BSA

Please consider raising the BSA for the children of The Northstar Borough School District. Since 2017 the BSA has been increased by \$30 despite the fact that inflation has risen by 25% in that same time period. Much like a household our school district cannot be expected to do the provide the same education and opportunity with less and less funding each year. Continuing to close schools, raise class sizes, and take away music programs, art programs, sports and more will negatively impact our children. We cannot expect our educators to make a positive impact and teach our kids adequately when the ratio is 30:1. Giving teachers an annual bonus only goes so far. As class sizes continue to increase it becomes harder and harder to teach, the disruptions become greater and at a certain point it becomes unmanageable. We have already begun to see teachers leave the profession because of this. The current structure of our public school system is not feasible and is negatively impacting the future of our community.

Dunleavy has made it clear that he believes homeschool and charter schools deserve more attention than public school. Unfortunately, attending those schools comes down to privilege and a lottery. Low income and most middle class families do not have the opportunity or the means to homeschool or attend charter schools. If neighborhood public schools could have the same parameters as charter schools (limited class sizes, required volunteering) the results would be better too.

Closing our public schools is not a solution to the budget, we have to have raise the BSA. We have to do better for our children. By not doing so you are telling the future generation that their education is not important, that mediocrity is ok, and you are failing them.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope that you decide to make the children of Fairbanks and the children of Alaska a priority.

-Megan

Doniece Gott

From: Maureen Knutsen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 3:31 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding

As a retired 31-year employee of my local school, I am urging you to fully support education funding, including raising the BSA. Our future leaders deserve to have best preparation possible to take on such a vital role for all of us and our great state.

Thank you for considering my comments and your service for our state.

Maureen Knutsen
[REDACTED]
Naknek, Alaska 99633
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Ruth Gronquist <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 4:19 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase Public Education Funding

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for your hard work and careful consideration of statewide education needs during the budget process. Please continue to work on budget amendments to increase education funding. The current budget will cause substantial cutbacks in the education we can offer students at a time when our school districts desperately need significant increases to cover higher fuel, insurance, and maintenance costs. Current proposed funding levels will force additional building closures, staff and program cuts (on top of losses due to previous years of flat funding).

Insufficient funding has caused class sizes in our district to be much too large, leaving student needs going unmet. This is stressful and exhausting for students and teachers, alike. Large class sizes undermine the ability of teachers to reach students, leaving many to fall through the cracks. Connection between students and their teachers are important and central to the learning experience. When students feel unseen, it energy from the classroom that should be central to the learning experience. In turn, classes are less productive, and teachers feel frustrated and unsuccessful. Teachers need to feel connected and effective to continue to do this important, challenging work. We cannot afford to have teachers continue to leave (or never enter) the profession, which is what is happening in Alaska now. Our students need top notch teachers and classroom sizes adequate for **all to learn** and support from sufficient funding. Without adequate funding for robust instruction, our children are cheated and unable to be successful adults.

Thank you for doing everything you can to ensure sufficient funding so our schools can address the vast student needs and once again become places where students feel seen and teachers can feel connected. Our communities are counting on you.

Show our children that they matter to you and to Alaska. They will give back generously when they know they are supported and valued.

Sincerely,
Ruth Gronquist
Fairbanks grandparent and parent of Alaska educator

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Ashley Hannah <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 4:37 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase the BSA

Please amend the budget to increase funding for education this budget does not full fully fund education but amounts to significant cuts from last year.

Please increase the BSA by \$1,413!!

In the last 7 years, the BSA has increased 0.5% while FNSBSD costs have increased approximately 16% in the same period of time.

This budget does not help maintain status quo for districts when fuel prices and cost-of-living has increased exponentially and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts. Please help fund our children's futures!!

Thank you for your time and consideration. Our kids thank you!

Doniece Gott

From: Jacqueline Muehlbauer <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:05 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public testimony

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I write to urge you to amend the budget and increase funding for public education. The current budget is forcing school districts to close schools and this is unacceptable. Our children deserve better. Please fight for them. Please fight for the future of our great state.

Kindly,

Jacqueline Muehlbauer
[REDACTED]

Doniece Gott

From: Amy Skraba <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 11:45 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Rep. Frank Tomaszewski; Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: Funding for public education.

Hello, I am writing to encourage you to please amend the budget to increase education funding. I am a resident of Fairbanks, Alaska and our schools need an increase in funding. I have emailed my local legislative representatives and have encouraged them to work on increasing the BSA so our schools and community can survive. For too long, 10 years, the budget to schools has been stagnant and inadequate to meet the needs of students, parents and educators. The current budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year. This budget does not help districts maintain status quo when insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year, and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts. We need a permanent, sustainable and substantial increase to the BSA for education. With BSA bills in limbo, please do something to stabilize the dramatic budget shortfalls that districts are facing. Our future Alaskans deserve more than being forced to have their educational options constantly be cut. If we want our future Alaskans to keep our state moving forward, we must find ways to provide them a quality education.

Thank you for your service.

Amy Skraba
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99712

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Doniece Gott

From: Alida Trainor <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:11 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: INCREASE the BSA to \$1400, the time is now

Hello,

I moved from an interior village to attend public school in Fairbanks. I was raised by a single mother who worked for the FNSB for 25 years. I would not have become as successful as I am without access to a neighborhood school and transportation to that school. Attending charter schools is a privileged luxury that not all families can take advantage of.

I know that there is some stall out on an increase to the BSA and that you may get a chance to hear public testimony today from families across our state. Im not able to call in today but **I'd like to encourage you to amend the budget to increase education funding. The budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year. Fairbanks is facing 4 additional school closures, after already closing 2 and overcrowding our middle schools by shifting to a K-5 system. This budget does not help districts maintain status quo when costs are increasing. With the BSA bills in limbo I urge you to do something to STABILIZE the dramatic budget shortfalls that local districts are facing.**

At this point we aren't arguing over the quality of education. We are simply struggling to defend access to it. Will my student have a place to sit? Will they benefit from the decades old school communities that are at the heart of our communities? Or will they get bounced around year after year as closing schools is a way to compensate for a failed constitutional mandate by the State of Alaska?

It is clear that the budget realities of Alaska and the borough have pitted our state and local governments against each other with both sides calling on the other to do more. I commit to advocating that the borough do its part to increase funding but I urge you to do yours, as well.. Step in stabilize this funding, and commit to overriding a potential veto. The time is now and the consequences of not acting will extend beyond our children's lives.

My husband and I both consider ourselves Pearl Creek Puffins, for life. We both benefited from tremendous opportunities through the public school system including GT programs, before school care, and sports to name a few. We bought our house so we could be in the Pearl Creek and West Valley district and send our four children to these schools. Unfortunately, we've watched as schools have closed, elementary schools moved to a K-5 system, overcrowding our already maxed middle schools, and have listened as high school teachers explain to us that there's too many students to facilitate group discussions in class anymore.

After hearing our local response to lack of state action, my husband and I agreed that we will prioritize our children's education over our long standing family and community roots in Fairbanks. We will leave Alaska if education funding doesn't dramatically improve soon. We are both state employees, with a combined 35 years of experience. We are heartbroken at the idea of giving up everything we've built and contributed to our town if our representatives, at the state and local levels, can't make the same priority

commitments. We know we aren't alone in this consideration. Our economy and community fabric will continue to crumble as educated adults make decisions in response to yours.

I know these decisions are extremely hard and that money doesn't grow on trees. I commend your efforts and would also like to encourage you, to implement a tax. Just do it. This is ridiculous.

Sincerely,

A lifelong Alaskan whose heart is breaking

Doniece Gott

From: Sarah Trainor [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:17 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: increase the BSA by no less than \$1,413

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I urge you to amend the budget to permanently increase the base student allocation (BSA) by no less than \$1,413 and to support Alaska's K-12 public education.

This budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year.

This budget does not allow school districts to maintain the status quo when insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year. It will lead to teacher cuts, lost jobs, school closures, increased class size, and program cuts.

With BSA bills in limbo, please prioritize stabilizing the devastating budget shortfalls in K-12 education that school districts are facing.

Strong schools support strong economies. We want Alaska to be an attractive place to live in order to keep people living here and to attract new residents and stimulate economic growth. Underfunded schools deter new industry and economic growth. School closures and underfunded schools also lead to decreased property values.

Working families cannot homeschool their kids.

I urge you to support public K-12 education because Alaska's kids are our future. We need to support and nurture their learning and growth. Strong schools build capable, contributing members of society.

Thank you for your service to the state and your constituents.

Respectfully,
Sarah Trainor

Doniece Gott

From: Brooke Carney <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:27 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education funding

As a parent of two youth in Anchorage, I strongly urge you to act now to stabilize the crazy and stressful budget limbo the entire state is currently in. We relocated to Anchorage and decided to raise our family here because of the awesome schools that offer a diversity of learning options. The lack of state funding sufficient to keep up with costs of educating students is severely frustrating and risks highly skilled workers taking their jobs and families outside of Alaska.

Please provide the increase in education spending needed to allow ASD and other districts to maintain their current operations. The BSA must be updated and increased to match the rising costs of goods and services associated with providing a quality education to students - the future of Alaska!

Thank you,
Brooke Carney

Doniece Gott

From: Alaska Coalition of BIPOC Educators <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:32 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Urgent Request to Increase Education Funding in the Budget

Dear Senate Finance Committee

I am writing on behalf of the NAACP and ACBE to urgently request an amendment to the budget to increase funding for education. We are deeply concerned about the current budget proposal, which falls significantly short of fully funding education and even amounts to a significant cut from last year's budget.

As you are aware, districts are facing immense financial challenges due to the rising costs of insurance and fuel. This budget does not take into account these increasing expenses and as a result, it will inevitably lead to teacher cuts, school closures, and program cuts. This is unacceptable and will have a detrimental impact on the quality of education in our state.

Furthermore, with the Base Student Allocation (BSA) bills in limbo, it is imperative that something is done to stabilize the dramatic budget shortfalls that districts are facing. The BSA has not been updated since 2017 and it is crucial that it is adjusted to reflect the current costs of education.

We understand the difficult decisions that need to be made when creating a budget, but we urge you to prioritize education and invest in the future of our state. Our children deserve the best education possible and it is our responsibility to ensure that they have access to quality education.

We appreciate your attention to this urgent matter and we hope that you will take the necessary steps to increase education funding in the budget. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Roz'lyn Grady-Wyche

President of the Alaska Coalition of BIPOC Educators Chairwoman of the NAACP ANCHORAGE AND TRI-STATE CHAPTERS

Doniece Gott

From: Rebecca McGuire <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 12:36 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee; gov.alllegislators@alaska.gov
Subject: Raise the BSA by at least \$1,500

Our schools are in crisis mode and we need to increase the BSA by at least \$1500. Public education has been flatlined since 2016 despite inflation rising 28% in that time. Education should be the priority, there should not be the question that it is too expensive. It can never be too expensive, it is critical and more important than the other budget items. Unimportant budget items that come to mind are sending the National Guard to Texas for \$1 Million A MONTH, a 67% pay raise for legislators, \$35 MILLION for the pre-development funding for the Ambler road, and subsidizing the Manh Choh trucking, and the list goes on.

Trying to get rid of public schools in favor of charter schools is discriminatory to the Alaskan public. Sure there are some great Charter Schools, but they cap class sizes, do not admit all children, and don't bus kids, which means that they are not accessible to all.

I have holding you accountable and asking you to meaningfully increase the BSA.

Rebecca McGuire
[REDACTED], Fairbanks, AK, 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Peter Hoepfner <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:37 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Operating budget and Education funding increase and cut to CDVSA of 20%

Thank you to the senate finance committee for taking testimony.

In cordova, education funding is hitting a crisis level. With no increases to meet inflationary costs for many years, the increases in health care costs, the increasing costs of shipping goods and increases in food costs is taking funds that would go to the classroom.

Our classroom sizes are growing beyond what is a good learning environment.

We are having a hard time even attracting teachers, which has NEVER happened in the past. We have 4 retired teachers filling positions, we could not find a 5th grade teacher and have 30 children in the classroom. We could not find a second sped teacher to help our overwhelmed sped teacher who has been working 6-7 days a week, just to be able to fill out all the paperwork.

With the current retirement system that incentivizes teachers to leave the state after 5 years, NO Social Security, states in the lower 48 paying MORE, AND having a robust retirement system, AND Social Security program.... Why would teachers come to alaska with higher costs of living??

Does the state of Alaska want to crash the public education for Alaskans children?? Public education in Alaska has hit a crisis level with the 4-500 open teacher positions in the state of Alaska, and how this is not going to be solved quickly.

I have HUGE concerns about how the State Of Alaska is funding education, and how the public education has seen declining funding JUST based on inflation.... And DOES NOT take into account the skyrocketing costs of increasing healthcare costs, skyrocketing costs of transportation of goods... And NOW, our electric coop is increasing electricity costs this year by 15%...

And WHERE do the funds come from to cover ALLL these increases???? It comes out of our general fund, monies meant to go to the classroom..

I HOPE that people see these dire circumstances that public education is in here in Alaska.

Thank you for your time, and increasing the BSA, AND in changing the retirement system, so that teachers remain in the state of Alaska.

Peter Hoepfner
Cordova School Board member

Thumbed in from my iPhone

Thumbed in from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Paul Kelly <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:41 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Testimony offered verbally on the governor's revisions to the operating budget

Co-chairs and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for taking the opportunity to hear from us today. While I am a state employee, I am here on my own time, and speaking for my community as an individual member of the Juneau Assembly. I do not speak for the full Assembly.

I am here to ask for an increase to the Base Student Allocation funding in the operating budget.

The proposed funding, when considering inflation still amounts to a steep cut. As the Assembly's liaison to the School Board Finance committee, I've been in the room as the School Board has struggled through some very tough decisions over the last few weeks. When I served on the Board 2.5 years ago, all the fat had been cut. Now, in order to survive, in order to persist in their mission of educating the next generation, they're cutting into the meet. At the last Retreat, they were talking about laying off as much as 20% of staff, closing schools, and reshuffling school configurations. This has caused a great deal of turmoil and uncertainty for our students, parents, teachers, and other dedicated public servants.

With legal limits to how much we're allowed to fund, we as a community are doing what we can for our students and our future. As inflation has eaten away at the value of the Base Student Allocation, more and more of the burden is being passed along to our taxpayers.

I ask the state to step up. Under the Constitution, you have a responsibility to fully fund education. Please raise funding for the Base Student Allocation to \$1413.

Thank you.

Paul Kelly

City and Borough of Juneau

Assembly member - Areawide

Office Hours: Saturdays from 10a-noon | **In person and Zoom**

Office Hours Zoom link: [Zoom meeting](#)

Find updates here: <https://www.facebook.com/PaulKellyCBJ>

Doniece Gott

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:50 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget

Please dramatically increase the funding for public schools in this new budget. Schools are going to have to close, more special programs will have to be eliminated (many already have), and teachers will be even more difficult to hire.

Alaska is already well on its way to becoming a failed state - its food stamp program can't be administered, high job vacancies exist throughout state agencies, the snow remains piled up all over Anchorage; can't we at least educate our children?

Tom Nelson

Anchorage 99507

Doniece Gott

From: Loraine Navarro <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:50 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please, properly fund public education

Dear members of the Senate Finance Committee,

As a mother of a child attending Pearl Creek Elementary - one of the schools that are facing closure in Fairbanks - and as a member of our dear community, I urge you to adequately fund education in our state and support a proper increase of the BSA.

I attended the Fairbanks North Star Borough School Board meeting last night and had the opportunity to listen to 3 hours of emotional and powerful testimonies from local families who are heartbroken, genuinely concerned, and angry at state legislators for refusing to increase funding to our schools despite the sharp 28% inflation that has happened since 2016. By doing so you are failing not only our children, our families, and our educators, but also our community and state as a whole.

To be clear, I am advocating for ALL our local schools and families impacted by the current lack of education funding in Alaska - and I am also standing up for Pearl Creek Elementary specifically, which is not only one of the best public schools in Fairbanks with an amazing community, but also one of the only local schools that do provide on-site before and after school care for our children. As a single mother in charge of both school drop off and pick-up, I simply could not keep my job and therefore financially provide for my son and I if Pearl Creek were to close and we lost access to this after school care program.

Education is at the basis of a working society and I find it mind blowing that families have to beg for public schools to be properly funded in our state. Our children and incredible educators deserve better. Please, do what is right and chose our children over politics - support a raise of the BSA.

Thank you for your time and for standing up for our children.

Loraine Navarro
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Traci Baumgardner <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 11:06 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please increase the BSA and begin to FORWARD fund our schools

My husband, twelve year old son and I live in Seward. We are extremely concerned about our son's continued education here because of lack of sufficient and forward funding of the BSA. I keep hearing and reading comments from people about how "throwing money at a problem won't fix it", but (at least here in Seward) we aren't asking for things like new computers or Smartboard repairs or school desks/chairs or **anything new**. We're asking for the BSA to be raised to a sufficient level so we can have **enough teachers** to teach our students. I don't think people realize what the BSA goes toward. Here in KPBSD, most of our budget (something upwards of 75%-80%) goes toward teacher salary and benefits. **Every single year** that my son has been in school here in Seward, we lose teachers because of lack of funding. Next year, if the BSA isn't raised, we will lose 1.8 teachers at the Middle School. I know for a fact that one of the core subject teachers will not be returning. That means she would not be replaced with a teacher that has experience in that field. So our students will be taught a core subject by a teacher completely outside of their field. And that's just the 1 position. What about the other .8? Who goes? Special Ed? We're already operating on a skeleton crew at the MS and the HS here in Seward. We do not have enough teachers in the schools to teach all of the subjects that need to be taught.

My husband is a primary care provider here in Seward and we run a very small family practice clinic. I manage the clinic and I am also an educator and teach a class for KPC every fall. We love Seward and the Kenai peninsula and enjoy serving our community. Our son is very bright and will be college bound, and we are very very concerned that his education here will not prepare him for college. We are considering moving, not just away from Seward but away from the state of Alaska in search of schools that are funded adequately enough so that he is exposed not just to music, art and other electives but qualified experienced teachers that are invested enough in their school and community to stay. Already, our Seward HS students have to take *at least* one (this number goes up if a student needs any kind of advanced or honors courses) distance course every year starting their freshman year to meet graduation requirements because we don't have enough teachers - enough qualified bodies in the school - to teach the subjects in person. **We don't have a teacher shortage in Alaska. Teachers are here and qualified and certified, but we can't hire them because there is no budget to hire them.**

It's extremely frustrating to hear people say that throwing money at a problem won't solve it and that we shouldn't increase the BSA because our test scores are the lowest in the nation. But tell me, how can we solve those problems without teachers? Please help stop this false narrative of the BSA being money that is going toward bloated admin salaries or given to schools with no discretion. Our schools will never flourish with a high turnover rate or with teachers constantly being forced to teach outside of their expertise because, for example, there's no budget for a science teacher but the kids still have to get a science education. My son's math teacher (yes MATH!) is teaching outside her expertise because of this issue.

If you read through the 5 goals of [Alaska's Education Challenge](#), you'll notice that the first four of those goals **cannot** be accomplished without qualified teachers. I don't know how the governor can't

see that. We cannot recruit, hire and retain quality educators with the BSA where it is right now and without changing the policy to forward fund.

I know this is long-winded and I know you are busy, but please know we need your help to make things better for our children. Please amend the budget to increase education funding. This budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a **significant** cut from last year. **If you've read this far, thank you for your time.**

Thank you,
Traci Baumgardner



Doniece Gott

From: Heidi Heimerl [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 11:07 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase Public Education Funding

Please amend the budget to increase education funding. This budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year.

I work alongside multiple school districts in Alaska providing mental health and wellness support to elementary, middle, and high schools. I see the daily impacts of the lack of sustained funding for our schools and have heard from these school districts that drastic cuts will continue without sustainable (\$1,413/student) state funding to support the varied and complex needs to current students entering the public education system. The Alaska Reads Act had to be implemented this school year without funding attached, which speaks volumes around the lack of understanding or current student and school staff needs across Alaska. Current students overwhelmingly struggle with the lack of basic needs, overwhelmed families, and skyrocketing rates of depression, anxiety, suicidality, isolation, etc.

Education is very lean right now and significant cuts continue to occur. School staff and administrations suffer from high rates of burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, and ultimately turnover due to lack of staff (support and teaching staff), lack of substitute teachers, student challenges and behaviors, etc. The pressure is too great to carry and the lack of understanding of what our students, their families, and school staff need and continue to go through is appalling.

Even before the pandemic, education was difficult:

- Educator, administrator, and school-based mental health staff had high rates of stress, burnout and turnover (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006; Betoret, 2006; Jepson & Forerest, 2006; Diliberti, Kyriacou, 2001; Limberg et al, 2021; Sorenson, 2007)
- Behavioral effects of students' unmet social-emotional needs (Baker, 2006; Cadima et al, 2015; Planta, 1999; Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufman, 2009)

Since the pandemic, education is even more challenging:

- Declining child and adolescent mental health (CDC, 2020; CDC, 2021; Sparka, 2022; Vestal, 2021)
- Interrupted learning and academic losses (Camera, 2022, Mervosh, 2022)
- Educator, administrator, and school-based mental health stress, burnout, and turnover amplified (Correa & First, 2021; NASP, 2023; Santamaria et al, 2021; Savitz-Romer et al, 2021; Sullivan, 2022; Will, 2022)

What do our students need?

- It must incorporate what we already know about students and learning:
 - Students' social-emotional well-being is essential to learning (Baker, 2006; Cadima et al, 2015; Planta, 1999; Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufman, 2009)
 - Regulated and caring educators are positively associated with students' learning and well-being (Haydicky et al., 2017; Berry, 2012)

This budget does not help districts maintain status quo when insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year, and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts that our kiddos rely on for creative outlets, connections, and important learning to succeed in life. We need to work together and build connections with one another to be able to learn.

With BSA bills in limbo, please do something to stabilize the dramatic budget shortfalls that districts across Alaska are facing. Our schools are deeply struggling, and in turn Alaska is as well.

Thank you,

Heidi Heimerl

Doniece Gott

From: Lara McGlinchy <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:39 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase BSA

Please amend the budget to increase education funding. This budget does not fully fund education but amounts to a significant cut from last year.

This budget does not help districts maintain status quo when insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year, and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures and program cuts.

With BSA bills in limbo, please do something to stabilize the dramatic budget shortfalls that districts are facing.

Thank you!

Lara McGlinchy

Doniece Gott

From: Holly Dean <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:46 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Increase Education Funding

It is imperative that you increase education funding. This current budget does not fully fund education and amounts to a significant decrease from last year.

This budget does not account for significant increases in insurance and fuel costs that the district must pay, and will lead to teacher cuts, school closures, and additional program cuts.

With BSA bills in limbo we need you to do something to stabilize the dramatic budget shortfalls that school districts are facing.

Education is the foundation of our state, without proper funding it will have far reaching impacts on our economy for generations.

I strongly urge you to increase education funding.

Thank you,
Holly Dean, Fairbanks

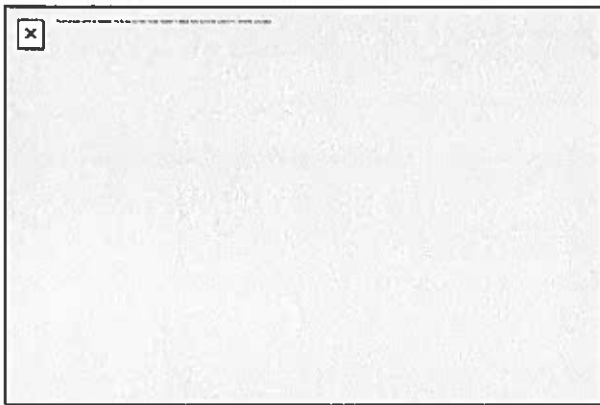
Doniece Gott

From: Gary Young <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 9:59 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State fisical budget

Good morning,

Alaska needs to have a fiscally responsible budget, over the past years education funding is received and still they requested more funding with yet the same outcome. The schools in Alaska are ranked in the top 5 for spending. There are other issues within the state that need to be addressed. Thank you for your time.

Attached is information on the rank of spending in Alaska education.



States That Spend the Most on Education
learner.com

Thank you again for your time.

Lisa Young
Fairbanks Ak

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Sandra Hartlieb <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:02 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Education bill

Please convince your colleagues and the governor that their agenda for not funding our state public schools is incredibly short sighted and contrary to the wishes of their constituents in Alaska. Perhaps they believe we (their voters) have short memories. But we have not forgotten they spent a good deal of our tax dollars to increase all of their salaries recently. I have not forgotten that. I can and will vote appropriately.

Sandra Hartlieb
Anchorage

Doniece Gott

From: Tricia Miller <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:06 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: state budget

Dear Finance Committee for the Alaska State Senate,

I'm writing to respectfully provide my input as a long time resident of the state of Alaska.

Education needs to be the number one funding priority. As is, the pithy amount allocated by the governor is crippling schools statewide. Fairbanks schools have been squeezed tight over the last few years due to dwindling funding. The legislature has the obligation written in the Alaska Constitution to adequately fund public education and you have been remiss in your duties. Even with the minimal amount in the budget, it amounts to a budget cut. Meanwhile, Fairbanks will be forced to close 4 schools. We've already closed schools. Our teachers are being asked to do way too much with way too little. How can elementary children learn anything when there are going to be 30-40 kids in each class? That is just mind boggling.

I have two school aged children and I'm asking you for their sake to please, FUND EDUCATION FULLY. PLEASE get your act together and WORK TOGETHER.

Sincerely,
Patricia Miller

[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Julian Tate <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FY25 Budget - Fund Our Schools

Hi,

This budget falls short! It doesn't even keep education funding at last year's level, let alone provide the increase we need.

Schools are already struggling. Insurance and fuel costs are skyrocketing, but this budget doesn't help them keep up. It means fewer teachers, closed schools, and fewer programs for our kids.

We can't wait for a solution! With BSA bills uncertain, we need immediate action to fix these dramatic budget shortfalls. Our schools can't afford to wait!

Please amend the budget and invest in our children's future!

Julian Tate
7th & 8th English Language Arts
Ben Eielson Jr./Sr. High School
[REDACTED] / Eielson AFB, AK 99702
[REDACTED]
#RavenLynxPride #SmallMightyProud

Doniece Gott

From: Nicole Stellon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:15 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Robert Myers
Subject: Education Funding and Revenue

Dear Senate Finance Committee and Honorable Senator Myers:

I am unable to call in today to testify, so I am emailing.

I would like to request that you amend the budget and increase education funding. With the years of drastic underfunding and the rate of inflation, this budget represents a significant cut from last year's budget.

A budget is truly a reflection of our society's value. From the many years of underfunding Alaska is giving the message that it does not value its children. The population is decreasing in Alaska as families relocate to other states for opportunities for their children. From K12 to university, we need to fund opportunities for young people.

My own two children, born in Fairbanks, are uncertain whether they will be able to raise families here. They want to stay, but feel a lack of opportunity and community spirit that is only getting worse.

It is time to talk revenue in our state. Time to return oil taxes to levels that serve our communities. Time to re-instate an income tax on wealthy Alaskans (and the many people who take advantage of jobs in our state but do not live here—slope workers, traveling medical staff, etc.). Time to have a serious and difficult discussion.

I am a constituent of Senator Myers. I have emailed, called, and attended open meeting he has held. He likes to say "government moves as slow as molasses." Alaskans elected all of you to light the fire and halt this continuing education funding crises.

Please increase the BSA and open the long overdue discussion of raising revenue.

Thank you!

Nicole Stellon O'Donnell
30 year Fairbanks resident
Mother of 2 children educated in FNSBSD

Doniece Gott

From: Amy Habberstad <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget

As a teacher and parent in the Anchorage School District, I implore you to amend the budget to increase education funding. The budget as written is actually another significant cut. Basics like insurance and fuel costs have increased significantly from last year. We are all feeling the fiscal pinch, but our children should not go without a good education. This budget will lead to teacher cuts, school closures, and program cuts. Our kids pay the price, and it's no wonder our future workforce is leaving our state when they graduate. What makes them feel like staying in Alaska and investing in our state's future when that state refuses to invest in them?

The Anchorage School District is attempting to do something amazing with the Academies of Anchorage workforce development plan, but without reliable funding, we cannot make it happen. Our children deserve more. Please, find a way to invest in our schools...with constant cuts we lose teachers every year and have a hard time attracting new teachers to a profession that is unstable and unappreciated.

Thank you for your time.

Amy Habberstad

Doniece Gott

From: Peter Hoepfner <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 21, 2024 10:30 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Operating budget and Education funding increase and cut to CDVSA of 20%

Thank you to the senate finance committee for taking testimony.

In cordova, education funding is hitting a crisis level. With no increases to meet inflationary costs for many years, the increases in health care costs, the increasing costs of shipping goods and increases in food costs is taking funds that would go to the classroom.

Our classroom sizes are growing beyond what is a good learning environment.

We are having a hard time even attracting teachers, which has NEVER happened in the past. We have 4 retired teachers filling positions, we could not find a 5th grade teacher and have 30 children in the classroom. We could not find a second sped teacher to help our overwhelmed sped teacher who has been working 6-7 days a week, just to be able to fill out all the paperwork.

With the current retirement system that incentivizes teachers to leave the state after 5 years, NO Social Security, states in the lower 48 paying MORE, AND having a robust retirement system, AND Social Security program.... Why would teachers come to alaska with higher costs of living??

Does the state of Alaska want to crash the public education for Alaskans children?? Public education in Alaska has hit a crisis level with the 4-500 open teacher positions in the state of Alaska, and how this is not going to be solved quickly.

I have HUGE concerns about how the State Of Alaska is funding education, and how the public education has seen declining funding JUST based on inflation.... And DOES NOT take into account the skyrocketing costs of increasing healthcare costs, skyrocketing costs of transportation of goods... And NOW, our electric coop is increasing electricity costs this year by 15%...

And WHERE do the funds come from to cover ALLL these increases???? It comes out of our general fund, monies meant to go to the classroom..

I HOPE that people see these dire circumstances that public education is in here in Alaska.

Thank you for your time, and increasing the BSA, AND in changing the retirement system, so that teachers remain in the state of Alaska.

Peter Hoepfner
Cordova School Board member

Thumbed in from my iPhone

Thumbed in from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Rebecca Bernard [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 1:44 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget: BSA increase needed

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am a parent of two children who are students in Anchorage public schools. As you consider the state's operating budget for the next fiscal year, I implore you to give Alaska's public schools a desperately needed and long overdue cost of living increase. State funding for our schools -- in the form of the BSA and funds that flow from it -- has been flat since 2017 while inflation has soared and the cost of maintaining and heating the buildings, health insurance for school employees, and everything else has risen dramatically. As more of the schools' static budgets are gobbled up by these ballooning costs, schools are having to cut programs, increase class sizes, and close entire schools to close their yawning budget gaps.

The situation is unconscionable. Alaska's public school system used to be strong and is now being steadily strangled by static funding. Every other part of the state government has gotten a raise -- our schools need and deserve one too. Otherwise, we are failing our children and the future leaders and citizens of this state.

Please include funds for a meaningful BSA increase of \$1,413 or more in the state operating budget.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,
Rebecca Bernard
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99501