

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Amanda Neal <amanda22u@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2023 9:06 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** INCREASE K-12 FUNDING!

Please, consider increasing K-12 Funding for Alaskans. This is more important than a PFD, this is the most important investment that we can make in the future of our state. We need to attract quality teachers, retirement, maintain our schools, and support our children in learning. Base student allocation has not been raised since 2016! Why? The base student allocation needs to be raised. Please take care of our children's education and future in this state or why would anyone want to send their children or come to Alaska to teach?

Thank you,  
Amanda Campbell  
PO Box 3803  
Homer, AK 99603

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Amy Horstman Ingram <achorstmaningram@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 31, 2023 10:20 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Fund Our Schools

Hello,

I am writing today to urge you to fully fund public education in Alaska. When taking inflation into account, the funding of our schools has been steadily decreasing and, unfortunately, the level of quality education we are able to provide has also decreased.

Educators are fleeing to other districts or, in some cases, other professions because we are not offering competitive pay and benefits. The sub pool doesn't even begin to cover the number of vacancies in the schools and a seemingly endless cycle of teacher burnout continues, creating more vacancies and in turn more work for the existing educators.

Alaska's greatest resource is not oil or fish, it is our children. We must invest in our youth so that we have a strong, educated workforce in the future. We must invest in our teachers who provide the tools necessary to help shape citizens that will contribute to our society. A strong Alaska starts with a strong school system.

Thank you,  
Amy Ingram  
Fairbanks, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Anita Green <ninatony@live.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 6:14 AM  
**To:** Senate Education

How does one legitimize not funding education? We are allocating mountains of dollars to homelessness, violence, and mental illness... which are just symptoms. Doesn't it make sense to focus on the root of the problem? If children were to be the priority, and we better prepare them for success in life (and education is a great part of that), the future would change.

It is important also, to return sports and arts. Sports teach team building and provide real socialization instead of virtual. Arts allow for self expression and have been proven to increase learning.

It is selfishness that would draw from the permanent fund to finance vacations, and not ensure the future of the next generation.

Anita Green

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**From:** Anna Bosin <[annabosin@yahoo.com](mailto:annabosin@yahoo.com)>

**Date:** January 29, 2023 at 9:26:53 PM AKST

**To:** "Sen. Löki Tobin" <[Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov)>

**Cc:** ARTHUR SOSA <[sosa\\_arthur@asdk12.org](mailto:sosa_arthur@asdk12.org)>, "Rep. Zack Fields" <[Rep.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov)>, School Board <[schoolboard@asdk12.org](mailto:schoolboard@asdk12.org)>

**Subject:** Base Student Allocation Increase and Defined Benefits for Education workers

Good evening, In advance of tomorrow's Senate Education Committee public testimony I wanted to share that I fully support increasing the Base Student Allocation across the state to account for inflation and to help with educator and staff recruitment. I also fully support re-instituting a defined benefits package for the public workforce, including educators and staff. If that means less PFD and/or an income tax, I am in support of that as well.

In addition to these key costs being discussed this week in Juneau, I want to expand on the other areas of school education that could take advantage of some federal funding. Specifically, there are many programs under USDOT and EPA that now have new flexibility for spending on local needs in the transportation arena. I believe Alaska should be looking at how to transition all fleets, including transit and school busses, from diesel to electric. <https://electrificationcoalition.org/schoolbus/>

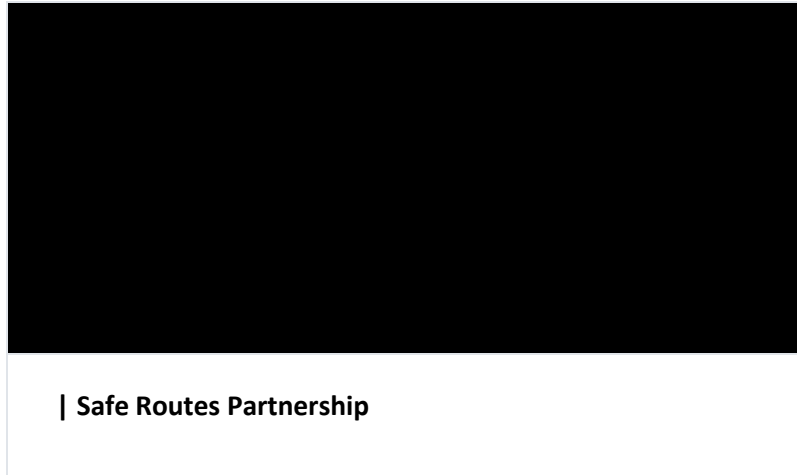
The State needs to start engaging stakeholders to ensure the plan to transition maximizes federal programs and does it equitably. Alaska Energy Authority is the State of Alaska Electric Transition Agency to help navigate grants, funding partners, and help stakeholders get together with industry partners (i.e. Chugach Electric in Anchorage example). <https://www.akenergyauthority.org/What-We-Do/Grants-Loans>

"Tailpipe emissions from diesel vehicles cause a [variety of health problems in children](#), such as asthma, respiratory infections, cognitive impairment, and premature death. Exposure to air pollutants from diesel vehicles is especially problematic for children, whose rapidly developing bodies and high respiratory rates make them [more susceptible than adults to poor air quality](#)."

Safe Routes to School Programs are getting reestablished after previously being unfunded. [I Safe Routes Partnership](#) Anchorage's December snow events highlighted that car dependency is a deficit to our communities by impacting transportation systems. I encourage you to dedicate state funding to non-motorized maintenance in a line-item call out for DOT&PF to force maintenance for sidewalks and transit. Having safe walking available is key to reconnecting communities. DOT&PF needs to reimagine maintenance priorities for Anchorage and other communities by prioritizing operations that fit the community's specific needs. I encourage you to have the conversation with DOT&PF this legislative



season to ask for transparency and public input on maintenance priority maps, routes, funding, and accountability. Public/Private partnerships could be a way to support schools taking on more snow removal to ensure walking routes are cleared.



Here is the AK report card for safe routes to school and it isn't good...<https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/srp-report-card-2022/srp-report-card-2022-alaska.pdf>

Thanks for your efforts for Education in Alaska!

Anna Bosin

Anchorage Resident

January 30, 2023

Dear Chair Senator Löki Tobi, Vice-Chair Senator Gary Stevens, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

This letter is to provide support for increasing the BSA at a minimum level of \$863 per student as outlined and presented by the Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA). At Annette Island School District (AISD), similar to many other districts, we have been subject to cost increases in multiple budgetary areas over the past five years. The list below does not capture all cost increases, but outlines those that are most impactful. In comparing costs from **FY19 to FY23**, costs have increased in the following categories:

- Heating oil: 26%
- Electricity: 26%
- Personnel: 18%
- Food Service: 22%
- Health Insurance: 12%

In addition, our enrollment has decreased 4% from **FY21 to FY23**. Enrollment decreases negatively impact AISD through losses in revenue from both of our major funding sources, State Foundation funding (BSA) and Federal Impact Aid funding.

These cost increases and losses of revenue have created a budgetary shortfall for FY23 and FY24. With a healthy fund balance this year, AISD can absorb the FY23 shortfall. However, the FY24 projected shortfall will have a significant impact on the services that we will be able to offer our students for the 2023-24 school year if revenues do not increase. Currently, we are projecting a shortfall of \$1.2 million for FY24. This does not include absorbing three employees that are currently funded out of ARP.

AISD is a high-needs district, with a current (FY23) IEP ratio of 27% and a projected FY24 IEP ratio of 32%. We have implemented a reading program that fully aligns with the Alaska Reads Act that has been deemed as "robust and evidence-based" by DEED. This work is led by a Reading Specialist, funded through Title I. We have similar initiatives in progress to address achievement gaps in mathematics, led by a Math Specialist, funded through ARP. AISD's ARP funds will be depleted this year. With our projected budget shortfall for FY24, we will not be able to continue to fund this critical math specialist position without an increase to the BSA. In addition, in order to develop a balanced budget for FY24, we will have to decrease our teaching staff across the District, which will further negatively impact our reading and math initiatives, as well as other programs that align with the Alaska Education Challenge.



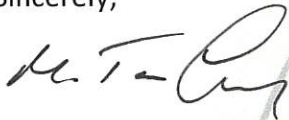
In order for AISD to meet the goals outline in the adopted Alaska's Education Challenge, we require an increase to the BSA at the minimum level of \$863 per student. As a reminder, the Alaska's Education Challenge outlines the District's responsibility to meet the following goals:

1. Support ALL students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.
2. Increase career, technical, and culturally relevant education to meet student and workforce needs.
3. Close the achievement gap by ensuring equitable education rigor and resources.
4. Prepare, attract, and retain effective education professionals.
5. Improve the safety and well-being of students through school partnerships with families, communities, and Tribes.

We have strived diligently over the past four years to align our district goals and priorities around this challenge and have implement quality programs to meet these challenges. I implore the Senate Education Committee and the Legislature to fully fund public education by increasing the BSA to the minimum level of \$863 per student.

Thank you for the work that you do, for your time, and for your support.

Sincerely,



M. Taw Lindsey  
Superintendent, AISD  
PO Box 7  
Metlakatla, AK 99926  
907-886-6332, ext. 2261  
907-821-0145, cell  
[tlindsey@aisdk12.org](mailto:tlindsey@aisdk12.org)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Benjamin Johnson <benjamin.johnson@k12northstar.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 2:20 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB52 - Insight From a Tier III Teacher

Respected Senator Members,

My name is Ben Johnson and I am in my 17th year teaching the Arts A/V (Media) classes at Hutchison High School. My wife, a former Army nurse, and I moved to Alaska in 2006 for her assignment on Fort Wainwright. I was incredibly pleased to land a dream job at Hutchison teaching exactly in my area of study. Having obtained my undergraduate and masters in Education in Arizona much of our training was on how to be a teacher in almost impossible financial situations. Arizona consistently rates in the bottom three in both educational spending and educational funding. Upon landing my first job in Alaska I was amazed how all my colleagues, though stressed with the massive challenges of teaching, that finances and supplies though concerning were not the top fear. After three years my wife got out of the military and we were free to choose where to live. With no family in the state it made the most sense to leave Alaska. However, as I began looking at other states closer to my family it became clear that the educational system, both for my own career and for our young children, was too good in Alaska to leave. We continued many years this way often searching for a better setting but often settling on the same conclusion that between teacher salary, program funding, and quality of our children's educational environments that it was still worth enduring the other challenges of Alaska because the educational system was just too good to leave. For a while it just became the accepted thing and we stopped searching. Then about five years ago during yet another staff meeting about financial woes and future plans for cuts the tide began to change. I just signed a second non-negotiated contract as our union heads toward mediation with the school district with the main sticking point being funding. I just had for the fourth time in five years a reduction to my program funding. We now have conversations about limiting paper copies due to budget restraints. Essentially all the conversations that I remembered from burnt-out teacher mentors in the terrible education state of Arizona were suddenly surfacing in Alaska. Needless to say my family is now again beginning to consider the concept of leaving Alaska especially with many of our projected states showing positive steps in terms of educational support.

The history lesson above aside I think there is one additional caution to our State that needs to be issued. In conversations with teachers in my building many of the senior teachers are Tier II. Being Tier II and closing in on their retirement they acknowledge the challenges and sliding support but basically just plan on sticking it out regardless. I was hired the year after the State turned to Tier III. Therefore, nothing really binds me to staying in the State aside from it being a great place to work. This must be true across the State that now your Tier II teachers are no longer the young ones just happy to have a job but rather your go-getter teachers with massive experience who highly invest in their programs as they hope to enjoy them for many years to come. If educational funding in the State of Alaska does not start staying current with the rest of the economy all your Tier III teachers will begin to seek brighter locations and you will be left with final leg Tier II teachers and a host of young inexperienced new hires who will take massive amount of money to train up and once trained may begin looking for new locations anyways.

I am not advocating for a change to the retirement system as I know that is a much bigger fish to fry. What I am advocating for is that the State go back to properly funding educational endeavors and a return to being such an amazing state to teach in, and to have our children be educated in, that no amount of long winters and freezing temperatures would drive us away.

Thank You,  
Ben Johnson

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Bill Britt <bill@billbritt.us>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 29, 2023 4:51 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support for Increasing Education Funding

I'm sad to have to write this note.

I've lived in Alaska for more than 40 years. Our young adults always migrated out of state at a high rate. A few decades ago many returned and were joined by many adventurous young adults that came north for opportunity. Our youngsters don't come back anymore, unless they have to, and Alaskan opportunities and quality of life no longer attract the best of the Outside young.

One cause of this change is the degradation in the quality of our schools. No one who has children or is thinking of having children wants to move to a place with crummy schools, and Alaska politicians have allowed our schools to starve for years. Everyone could see what was happening, but no action was taken. Shame on everyone who voted for budgets that failed to cover these sorts of basic responsibilities of government but included foolish stuff. The list of the latter is long and should be embarrassing. It's time to make this right.

We should want to be the most pro-education state in the country, and I urge you to fund our schools accordingly.

Bill Britt

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Camryn Kaspari <camryn.kaspari@k12northstar.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 1:08 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please fund Education!

Please increase the base allocation for students in the state. Education funding has been stagnant for years in a time of very high inflation. Class sizes are too big, and many schools need repairs. As a public school teacher, I urge you to pass the bill.

We currently are working on an expired contract due to a lack of funding from the state. Wages are not keeping up with inflation and the retirement system already leaves more to be desired. Large class sizes and increases in expectations for teachers lead to burnout. Teachers are leaving the state and leaving the profession due to conditions.

Thank you for your time,

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Camryn Kaspari

Science Teacher

Hutchison High School

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Cheryl & Mark Lovegreen <lovegreensnorth@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 16, 2023 2:16 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Fixing Alaska's education woes

Thanks to the committee for taking the lead on solving Alaska's education problems. As you know, public school districts all over the state are having trouble paying their expenses and recruiting and retaining quality teachers. While many tools will be needed, two immediate fixes are increasing the BSA by at least \$850, and reinstating the TRS defined benefit program. Proposing and acting on these bills right away will help thousands of students and make a good investment in our future.

I appreciate your commitment to Alaska,

Cheryl Lovegreen

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Chris Siddon <chris.siddon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2023 4:20 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Public Education Funding

I am writing to provide public comment and advocate for a marked increase in Base Student Allocation funding for all State public school. At minimum the BSA should be increased to make up for not tracking inflation over the past decade and should be “future proofed” to always follow an appropriate index of inflation. Realistically, the State should prioritize education funding above and beyond just keeping up with inflation.

Currently I have a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader in a class of 28 kids, when the school pupil to teacher ratio for this grade is 23.5. Without an increase in the BSA the class sizes are estimated to increase markedly above the already to high class sizes.

Thanks for your time.

Chris Siddon  
Juneau, AK



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Chris Zafren <czafren@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 2, 2023 9:48 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** School funding

Dear Committee members,

It is time to increase the base student allocation to account for inflation and the challenges schools are having in retaining personnel. Expecting schools to improve outcomes when education funding is insufficient to maintain buildings and and staffing is an impossible requirement.

One contributing factor to poor scholastic outcomes is inconsistent attendance. Students who miss many instructional days (as we've seen during the pandemic) do not make good academic progress. If schools could claim the PFDs of chronically truant students, that money could go toward tutoring and makeup schooling. Another factor is the churn of teachers Alaska experiences because of our defined contribution retirement system. Reverting back to the defined benefit system would encourage teachers to stay in Alaska for the duration of their careers.

I hope the Legislature can address this important issue this session.

Chris Tower Zafren  
10181 Curvi Street  
Anchorage, AK 99507

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Christina Stark <Christina.Stark@kibsd.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 7:01 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 52 Support

**SB 52: Increase Base Student Allocation.** The bill released today proposes a \$6,960 BSA, an increase of \$1,000.

**I support this bill.**

**Thank you,  
Christy Stark  
Christina.stark@kibsd.org**

**Michael Mason**

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**From:** Christy McMurren <christym907@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2023 7:06 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** public school funding

I'm writing to offer some reflections upon the challenge of providing and funding education for our children.

I'm not sure how we got to a place where funding education for all is an unpopular idea with some lawmakers. I also don't know where the idea came from that teachers are there for the money and to have summers off.

I'm a retired early intervention provider to babies and toddlers ages 0-3, basically special education for infants and toddlers . In my experience, the challenges faced by teachers today are very different than even 30-40 yrs ago.

The challenges of special ed students are vastly different nowadays. It used to be that special ed students were kids who had intellectual challenges (what we used to call mentally retarded) or cerebral palsy or Down Syndrome to name a few. These diagnoses or conditions are not seen very much now. Now, the special ed students are more likely to be children who were born prematurely, drug and/or alcohol exposed, or children who are in foster care because of neglect. The number of children who are being cared for by parents who themselves have a disability is also growing. To care and educate these children requires an entirely different mind set and support systems. And , in addition to providing special ed, many children in mainstream classrooms have higher needs than in the past. However, playing the blame game doesn't help any of us.

We cannot solve complex problems with simple solutions. I've also noticed that whenever there is a policy change to try a different approach, we expect it to just solve the problem overnight. We have no tolerance for waiting to see the effects of a change in policy.

I encourage you to be curious about what is necessary in 2023 to provide an appropriate education to all children in our state.

Thank you,  
Christy McMurren  
Anchorage

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Christy Newell <christy.j.newell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 31, 2023 8:45 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Base Student Allocation

As the parent of two children in the Alaska public education system, I highly support an increase to the base student allocation to the maximum amount possible.

As a military family, my children have had the opportunity to experience school systems in Homer, Sitka, and now Juneau, where we are now permanent residents and they are finishing high school. They have also experienced out of state schools. Each time we have moved out of state, they have been behind their peers in coursework. Each time we have returned to Alaska, their class sizes have increased. We have chosen to remain in Juneau anyway, but for community and other opportunities rather than education.

In the Juneau high schools, graduation requirements are dismally low. Most colleges require much more for basic entrance. Parents and students must even track for themselves the ability to meet the course requirements to attain the Alaska Performance Scholarships, as they include much more than basic Juneau graduation requirements. Juneau high schools cannot even offer all of their own basic graduation requirements in person, like health, due to lack of funding for teachers. Imagine taking high school health online! Course pathways that are published in school course catalogs are not even available as they cannot offer all listed courses. Our students are at a real disadvantage when compared with their peers in other states who routinely meet much more stringent graduation requirements. Each time I inquire about these issues, I am told that lack of funding is the cause.

In middle schools, class sizes have been at 40 students plus. That is just unacceptable.

I urge the legislature to increase funding for the future of our students. This is much more important to my family than larger PFDs.

Christy Newell  
3007 Nowell Ave.  
Juneau, AK 99801

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Colleen Ford <colleen.ford@rocketmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 2:59 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Education funding

It is imperative that we increase the BSA for the students of Alaska.

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Colleen Smith <colleen.smith@k21schools.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 4:19 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*SPAM\*\*\*\*\* Educational Funding

Senate Education Committee,

My name is Colleen Smith. I have been a 3rd grade teacher at Houghtaling Elementary in Ketchikan for 26 years. I am a lifelong Alaskan and teach at the same elementary school that both my daughters and I attended as children.

I am writing to you to BEG for you to support increasing the BSA. We are at a critical point. One that I absolutely NEED you to understand.

Our kids have suffered through and survived a pandemic. My personal experience is one where my students' educations were saved by smaller class sizes. My colleagues and I were able to meet the needs of our kids. We were able to build strong communities, even if the world seemed to be falling apart. Academically, we stood a chance. Emotionally, we stood a chance. As a veteran teacher, I honestly think we "stumbled" upon a (if not THE) golden ticket. If you want to see children that feel connected to their communities and stand a chance against turning to violence, drugs etc... later in life~ allow them a haven where they have room to learn and grow and thrive. Provide them a place where they are seen and heard and supported. Give them a chance!

Huge inflation combined with ridiculous support will crush our education system. I am equally heartbroken, infuriated and disgusted.

Smaller class sizes, academic and emotional support, programs, and services cost money. Just like running our homes, if you neglect basic maintenance and just do BARE minimum, your house will fall apart. These are our kids!

We know. I know. You know.  
Everything is more expensive.  
Quality costs more.  
Kids are worth our investment.  
Kids deserve our investment.

Anything prioritized over one's children is at minimum~ suspect.

Pathetic increases to BSA are insulting and more importantly, dangerous. I love our kids. Please do what we both know is right.

Sincerely,  
Colleen M. Smith

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Cristina Bieber <cbieber01@kibsd.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 12:58 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Desirae Ott; Kelly McBride  
**Subject:** Written Testimony

Alaska Legislators,

I am emailing my SUPPORT for **SB 52: Increase Base Student Allocation**.  
**This newly released bill proposes a \$6,960 BSA, an increase of \$1,000.**

Alaska's urban consumer price index has risen by more than 15% in the last five years. In the same time period, the Base Student Allocation was raised by only 0.5%...It's time to make our students, teachers, and public education system the priority.

Thank you for supporting SB 52!

### Cristina Bieber

Director of Special Education Services  
Kodiak Island Borough School District  
Located on beautiful Kodiak Island!

Cristina Bieber, MS, CCC-SLP, BCBA (she/her)  
**Director of Special Services**  
Office phone: 907.486.7575  
Email: cbieber01@kibsd.org



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## Michael Mason

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**From:** David Smith <david.smith@k21schools.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 4:31 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Alaska BSA

My attempt to call in failed. My apologies. My name is David Smith. I am a lifelong Alaskan, and 26 year teacher in my home town of Ketchikan. I will be retiring soon and any significant increase to the BSA will have little to no effect on my personal income. I cannot imagine the testimony you all have to wade through regarding this topic. I will be brief. In addition to the myriad of lost opportunity that purposefully flat funding education has resulted in for Alaska's young people, I hope you will all consider the following. Failing to invest in kids has long term social consequences. You will, in the next decade, without a financial investment, be filling your classrooms with unskilled and unprepared teachers. The amount of problems you will encounter with the sorts of people that will be attracted to teaching in Alaska makes me shudder. I will continue to put my energy into endeavors that benefit young people, long after I retire. I challenge you to do the same.

Regards, and thank you for your time and service.  
Dave Smith  
Ketchikan Ak.

## Michael Mason

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**From:** David Song <david\_song1@alumni.brown.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 3:45 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Re: Support for BSA Increase

Hello,

My name is David Song, and I am writing to implore the Senate Education Committee and the Alaska State Legislature to support an increase to the Base Student Allocation pegged to inflation.

For years, we have seen an annual effective cut to public education through the insidious mechanism of flat funding, which, despite our governor's branding of "full-funding" is a cut to education spending given the rate of inflation.

This defunding of public education has caused major issues for students, families, teachers, and staff, and the breakdown of our educational system has become more and more evident as many schools in Anchorage are facing the threat of closure (a burden faced almost entirely by our Title 1 population), staff and teacher shortages (with some students having to eat nonperishable prison commissary food due to a lack of cafeteria workers), and ultimately an exodus of qualified educators and families with young children out of state.

This is also compounded by an effort by "school choice" advocates who seek to divert public funds from public schools to private institutions across the state through the CSAP program. Make no mistake, this is a long-term project to cripple public education (a project that then-Senator Dunleavy dedicated much of his legislative career towards) to fund the privatization of education in Alaska.

NEA is currently supporting a lawsuit to oppose this unconstitutional transfer of public education funds towards institutions like Anchorage Christian School and Kenai Classical Schools.

Let me be clear, our public schools have great educators and administrators, but due to a governor and many legislators who are hostile towards public, non-sectarian education, they are not being given the tools and funding needed to succeed. The victims of this project, ultimately, are the students, teachers, families, and staff who have to continuously face the degradation of facilities, overcrowded classrooms, pitiful school meals, unreliable bus transportation, and more.

Increase the BSA, and ensure that the funding we put towards public education matches the rate of inflation to ensure that at the very least, education funding does not get cut further. Every year we continue to cut public education funding is another year we fail the children of Alaska.

David Song  
Anchorage, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Dawn Fitzpatrick <dawnell1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2023 4:17 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Concerned parent, community member, and teacher- please raise the BSA

Hello,

I am a high school teacher in Fairbanks. But my most important jobs include being the mother of two young children and a community member. I am writing to testify for the need for the Alaska Legislature to raise the base student allocation (BSA).

Our schools are in crisis. We are shutting down elementary schools and other program in Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. We cannot hire new staff. Many teaching positions are currently filled by emergency certificate; people with content knowledge but no to little experience actually teaching. As a high school teacher, I see more and more students getting a sub-par education. This is much different than when I started teaching 16 years ago. Funding hasn't kept up with inflation, and our schools can't either.

I truly believe that healthy communities, and healthy economies, rely on healthy schools. Parents with the ability to choose, move to places with good schools. I am seriously worried for the future of my own young children if they cannot get a quality middle or high school education in Fairbanks. I am watching parents around me debate whether or not they can continue to live in Alaska if it means their children can't get a good education. I've always dreamed I'd live down the street from my grandchildren in Fairbanks. But I can't forfeit my children's future just to stay in Fairbanks, the community that I love dearly.

Please raise the base student allocation and give us the resources to make Alaskan schools great again.

Respectfully,  
Dawn Ell Fitzpatrick  
Fairbanks: 99709

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Deedie Sorensen <deedie.sorensen@juneauschools.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 30, 2023 1:12 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Increase BSA

Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Deedie Sorensen. I moved to Juneau in 1981. I did so as a strategic move in my career as a teacher. I had two bachelor degrees, a master's degree, and a graduate level endorsement in special education when I arrived. My first year of teaching I almost doubled my salary. I traded in my opportunity to collect my earned Social Security benefits for a quality defined benefit retirement program and put down roots. Most of the teachers that I taught with eventually retired after 20-30 years of service. My role has changed since I moved to Juneau. I am in my fourth year on our school board and am currently the president. Because of my 40 plus years in close association with the schools, I am profoundly aware of how much we have lost over a considerable number of years. In the '80's and '90's Alaska was a great place to teach. Alaska attracted highly qualified teachers from all over the country. We had outstanding resource staffing. Teacher training was dynamic and cutting edge. The first major cut to education quality wasn't directly about the BSA. The RIP's (early retirement options) in the 90's, while economically positive on a spread sheet were a brain and talent drain. Highly trained and experienced teachers left the state by the hundreds, reducing education quality and taking the hundreds of thousands of dollars the state had invested in their training to new districts out of state. In addition, it shredded the normal attrition rate leaving districts without their most experienced staff to mentor new teachers. The next blow came when Governor Murkowski blew up the defined benefit retirement system, leaving Alaska the least attractive state to contemplate a long term career in education. One thing that survives from the last century, is the myth that teachers in Alaska continue to be highly compensated. That ship sailed in the '80's, docked in the '90's and sank with the change in the retirement system and decades of failure to prioritize education as part of a healthy economy.

The Juneau School District Mission Statement is: In Juneau, we partner to provide each student with meaningful relevant and rigorous learning experiences in order to graduate diverse, engaged citizens ready for a changing world.

If our school district is successful in accomplishing this task, then none of our students who go on to earn a teaching degree either in state or out of state would realistically ever consider staying in/returning to Alaska to teach as a longterm career choice if they weigh the economic cost/benefit equation. A young teacher coming to or staying in Alaska encounters the high cost of living, housing shortages that drive rents beyond the recommended budget threshold for housing, a stagnant state economy, strikingly under resourced classrooms and a salary schedule that is not even competitive with communities in many western states. There is the tourist appeal of Alaska which brings in some new teachers, however there is no incentive to stay. There is no defined retirement benefit in Alaska and no Social Security. Alaska alone has a "make it and take it" retirement plan. That is what young teachers do. They take their Alaska school district's investment in their professional training and experience, their Alaskan experience, and their defined contribution and move to a state with a positive economic forecast that values education, competitive wages combined with a lower cost of living, and for those who stay in education, a defined benefit retirement and maybe even Social Security. Unfortunately for

many of our most challenged students, educators with advanced and specialized degrees don't come here at all.

Alaska school districts have been cutting educational options, opportunities and supports for decades. There is nothing left to cut. The State of Alaska contributes approximately one third of Juneau's school budget. The constitution says that the state should fund education, but the reality is, the State's failure to adequately fund the BSA not only drives, but by law, insures the skeletonising of our students' education opportunities. The BSA needs to be increased by \$800-\$1000. Schools have patched together our budgets with federal pandemic monies. The monies are gone but the needs remain. To be clear, Alaska's schools were publicly asked to "do more with less" by the Commissioner of Education in the '90's. It has been the same refrain every year since. Schools have been cutting for 20+ years. I have watched the erosion of programs, support services, staff and instructional resources at every level and in every department. By 2010 I was spending more than \$3,000 of my own money to purchase instructional materials so that my students could have the same high level learning opportunities that my students had a decade before. Today, schools do as much as they can with fewer staff and educational resources every year. The model is not sustainable.

Sincerely,

Deedie Sorensen

Juneau Board of Education

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Desirae Ott <Desirae.Ott@kibsd.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 5:09 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Written Testimony

Alaska Legislators,

I am emailing my SUPPORT for **SB 52: Increase Base Student Allocation**.  
**This newly released bill proposes a \$6,960 BSA, an increase of \$1,000.**

Alaska's urban consumer price index has risen by more than 15% in the last five years. In the same time period, the Base Student Allocation was raised by only 0.5%...It's time to make our students, teachers, and public education system the priority.

Thank you for supporting SB 52!

Desirae Ott  
Kodiak Island Borough School District  
Assistant Director of Special Services  
Phone: 1 (907) 486-7576



Engaged in Learning.  
Prepared for Life.

**Need to schedule a meeting? It's so easy!** Just click on the link to schedule your 15, 30, 45, or 60-minute meeting with me. <https://calendly.com/desiraeott>

**Tips when connecting via TEAMS from outside KIBSD:** Download Teams app & when connecting, use button to continue as \*guest within KIBSD.

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## Michael Mason

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**From:** Dustin Crump <dcrump@pcsd.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2023 11:53 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Public Education Funding in Alaska Testimony - Dustin Crump

Senate Education,

Hello, my name is Dustin Crump and this is my 8th year as a high school world language educator and my second year as an educator in the state of Alaska (District #5, Petersburg School District).

In my early 20s, I decided to pursue a career as a World Language Educator.

I received a B.A. in Spanish and K-12 Education in 2012 and later obtained a M.S. in Instructional Technology and Design.

While I believe there is no better place to be an educator than Petersburg, Alaska, I would be lying if I were to say that I am not concerned about the mental and financial well being of students and educators throughout the state.

We all know that Alaska is an expensive state.

After further examining inflation compared with our state's public education funding over the years, numbers show educators were fairly compensated until 2017. Six years later, inflation has increased by 18% while our state's funding has increased by 0.5%. This means the amount of each student should be increased by \$1,300.

The numbers indicate that Alaska Public Schools are in desperate need of change via funding.

With this being said, funding public education in our state **must** change.

Therefore I urge you to take the actions necessary to drastically finalize and implement the BSA Increase Bill.

Thank you.

--

**Dustin Crump (he/him/él)**

Teacher - Spanish / PE

Petersburg High School / Mitkof Middle School

[Link to My RingCentral](#)



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Adam Hykes <adamhykes@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 29, 2023 7:26 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Base Student Allocation (we need a new model)

Honorable members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am opposed to the increase in the BSA amount, for one reason only: spending more money has not so far yielded better results. Alaska spends more on students than most states and consistently fails to return better results in meeting educational standards.

Adding more money to the model will not improve this, because it's the model that's faulty. As a tax-payer who pays for the educational system as well as the legislative salary, I am not pleased with the return on my investment. I have discovered a better system. A base amount designated for each student (administered by their parents) for them to spend on their child's education at whichever institution they see fit, and can be spent on whatever supplies are necessary to this end. This amount of money follows them to whichever educational provider they choose. It goes with them just as a backpack.

It is up to each parent to choose what is best for their child's education. The educational system is a bad investment, and I am displeased with my money being spent on a bad product when a better alternative is available.

Respectfully,  
Adam Hykes