

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Angel Hayes <angelhayes@dbsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:52 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Literally on my knees begging

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you on behalf of all Alaskan school districts. Never have we needed help financially than now. I believe the one time BSA increase of \$1000 needs to be voted in, for such a time as this.

Teachers are quitting jobs they were born to do because of burnout, and frustration. As the cost of living has risen over a year ago my district has not been able to give pay increases to meet the need, show their appreciation or show that they value their staff members. Students are suffering from the loss of some of the most gifted instructors in the United States of America. Students are not meeting their full potential and going the route of homeschooling. They are not being challenged to critically think and to strive for high quality work. Their education from home is a basic Abc, 123, rhetoric. New concepts and ideas are being excluded leaving students at a huge disadvantage. Alaskan students matter, and so do their teachers! Help alleviate the load off of the teacher's backs so that they can focus on what they do best; TEACH! And help Alaskan students by providing them with the very thing Alaska promises them; HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION!

Increase the BSA. Alaska is depending on you to do the right thing!

Angelica Hayes  
Paraprofesional

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Marka Anne Brooks <brooks.markaanne@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:16 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Marka Anne Brooks  
**Subject:** Alaska Education Funding

Senate Education Committee

First of all, thank you very much for your work on behalf of Alaskans. I am writing to encourage you to raise the base student allocation by at least \$1000. I would very much like the increase to make up for the years of cuts and inflation, but understand it is a challenging proposition. Our most important resource are our children. Our most important service to those children is to provide them with an education. We need to attract the best, brightest and most innovative teachers. Without providing them a competitive salary and benefits, we cannot keep them in Alaska. We need to continue to provide a strong public school system.

The need for funding does not end with public schools, but also extends to the University and beyond. I am an engineer and years ago worked to increase engineering and STEM education funding so we can grow our own engineers. At the time, it was estimated that it cost thousands of dollars (\$75,000 comes to mind) to recruit and train an engineer to work and move them to Alaska. As employers quickly found out, these engineers often did not stay in Alaska, but moved back to the lower 48. The reasons were many, but it became obvious that we needed to educate our own.

The same is true for teachers, truck drivers, engineers, scientists, health care workers, lawyers and many other essential jobs in Alaska. We need a comprehensive review of wages and salaries to find a way to pay competitive salaries and benefits.

We have become a state of its all about me, it's all about me getting the largest pfd. If we lowered the size of the pfd and funded services, especially the important employee benefits that retain people in Alaska, we would greatly help Alaska and future generations.

To find the money, let's not fund another mega project, or buy into the carbon credits idea. Let's find a way to get our fair share of our oil and mining resources. Perhaps not is not the time to increase salaries to key state officials when we've cut or eliminated so many jobs.

Anne Brooks, P.E.,  
1704 Rogers Park St, Anchorage, AK 99508  
brooks.markaanne@gmail.com  
907-242-6405

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Benjamin White <whiteb@sitkaschools.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:54 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 52

Hello Education Committee,

My name is Ben White and I wanted to send a quick message **strongly encouraging** you to support senate bill 52. Alaskan schools and their students need this funding to provide the best education possible for the future of our state! I also asked that you support the January 30, 2023 memo from the legislative budget and audit committee that indicated that the BSA would need to be raised by **MORE** than \$1000 to restore public education funding to levels from eight years ago!

Please, please, invest in the future of our great state by investing in the students of our great state! Thank you for your time and commitment, it is greatly appreciated.

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## Michael Mason

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**From:** Robert Love <bjmelove@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:53 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Re: Senate Bill 52

Alaska Legislators ,  
Just want to communicate what big supporters of the \$1000.00 per student for the BSA. As retired Alaskan Teachers who put in three decades in working with students we see the need for increased resources.  
Thank You for what you do!  
Bob & Jan Love

Sent from my iPad



## Michael Mason

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**From:** casey mapes <YAK2YOU2@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 3:45 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Yvonne Baker; Carol Pate  
**Subject:** SB 52 comment

Hello,

My name is Casey Mapes, I am a member of the Yakutat school board of education in Yakutat, and I am a concerned parent of an Alaskan student .

I wish for my comment to be considered regarding SB 52, which moves to increase the base allotment per student. AASB's request for an increase of not less than 860.00 per student, is the barest of minimums that should be considered. It is my personal feeling it should be a good deal more than this amount. Inflation has more than doubled nearly all expenses in Yakutat in just one year's time, meanwhile, the per student base has remained flatlined without a raise at all since 2017. This is absolutely unacceptable. We have a responsibility as Alaskan adults whom, many of us were given an opportunity to receive a good quality education here in this state. We owe it to paying this forward to the next generation, and we absolutely are not doing so at this time. I can attest that without this proper funding, our school budget has suffered tremendously. We are forced as a district to not fill much need positions, that would have diversified the classes offered to students, or has caused us to double, even triple classes under one teacher. This is just not the right way at all for us as a people. Education simply HAS to become paramount in your budget planning, if we are to remain a functional society into the future. Give our kids the best education we possibly can, and it will pay in spades, every time.

In addition to giving a fair and solid raise to the base per child allotment, I feel proper consideration should be given towards an additional offset to outlying bush communities that have less children enrolled than bigger schools, and also have an even much steeper inflation rate. Because these kids come from small districts, does not, and should not mean that they should receive less opportunities to access quality education. Fuel is many times more expensive here, housing for teachers is also, our district is struggling. As a result, so are our students testing scores. They aren't given a fair chance to succeed in the secondary schooling system.

Please, make Alaskan kid's education first, Thank you in advance for taking my comment to heart, and giving it fair consideration.

Casey Mapes

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Glenn Cravez <Glenn@cravezlawak.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 6:35 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Support SB52

I support increasing the SBA by at least \$1000. Alaska vastly underfunds education, which undercuts our future. If we're serious about growing our economy we must make Alaska an attractive place for young families to live, as it once was.

Thank you. Glenn Cravez. 2810 Kingfisher Drive, Anchorage 99502.

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## Michael Mason

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**From:** Hannah Dolphin <HDolphin@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 3, 2023 4:39 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** BSA Increase

Good Morning,

I am writing to you as the assistant principal of Mountain View Elementary in Kenai, Alaska. Like many schools, we have been appreciative of the additional funding that came with COVID relief and Governor Dunleavy's one-time additional funds. As you may know, these funds cannot sustain us moving forward in Alaska's education.

Anyone who is paying attention to the climate of education nationwide knows that teacher recruitment and retention is at an all time low. We are battling with states and districts all over the country for teachers. Teachers are leaving the profession before retirement. Our high-quality veteran teachers are still recovering from the effects of a global pandemic. Teacher stress levels are at an all time high. The state is doing some wonderful things for education including the passage and implementation of the Alaska Reads Act. However, with changes comes more load on teachers' backs. My teachers are looking at a new literacy curriculum, new assessment system, and new record keeping practices, which are all great things, but the learning process takes time and effort.

My district's greatest cost is in paying employees a livable wage and providing benefits. When we are operating with a deficit in the budget, positions are lost and the pupil/teacher ratio goes up.

Teachers are already striving and working relentlessly to ensure students are learning. At the start of the year, my fifth grade teachers had students who were just starting to learn how to read and students who are reading at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade (or higher) reading level. We have students who are transferring in who have never been to school before. We had third graders start who could not identify their letters. My teachers are experts at differentiating instruction, providing intervention support, and personalizing learning, but at some point the lift is too heavy, and students don't get the highest level of instruction they can. As class sizes rise, and teacher numbers decline, student learning will decline as well.

We need adequate funding to ensure teachers are supported in their positions. They need a reasonable class size. We need specialists like interventionists, tutors, and counselors to help negate the negative academic and social/emotional effects that stemmed from the previous years of functioning in a global pandemic. Teachers need a livable wage in the face of inflation. Teachers are taking on a lot to ensure that students' needs are being met. It is time that we look at teachers' needs so that we can retain these quality teachers and continue to provide high-quality education to our students in a rapidly changing world.

Please help Alaska retain and recruit high-quality teachers and staff members by approving an increase to the BSA. The future of our students depends on it.

*Hannah Dolphin*

**Assistant Principal**  
**Mountain View Elementary**

**(907)283-8600**

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jasmine Maurer <jazmaurer@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 3, 2023 7:45 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Increase K-12 school funding

Hello,

I am writing to express my support of increasing K-12 school funding. Our students and Alaskas future deserve access to funding to support excellence in education through well trained and supported staff, music, art, and STEM classes activities.

The Institute for Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage concluded that by 2019, even though Alaska pays more than any other state on a per-student basis, the cost of living here is so high that once that factor is included, public schools here received less money than the national average.

Don't delay another year increase school budgets now.

Thank you

Jasmine

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jeanne Anderson <anderson.jeanne87@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 12:30 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** It's time to increase funding!

To whom it may concern,

I just read an article that indicates the per student allocation has not been raised since 2016. Our students deserve better. They are growing in a rapidly changing world in the time of a pandemic and classroom teachers are worried about trying to share boxes of crayons. Our teachers need to be able to buy supplies and support their classrooms in order to focus on giving kids the care and attention they need while we address the residual effects of schooling during COVID. PLEASE increase the per student allocation. PLEASE.

Thanks for the consideration,

Jeanne Anderson (occupational therapist in a KPBSD school)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** jeff budd <jbudd3500@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 8:55 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** I support Senate Bill 52

Dear Senate Education Committee, I support Senate Bill 52. Please make sure our children all across Alaska get the best education they can possibly get. This is a great start. Thank you. Jeff Budd, Sitka, AK

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jeni Mason <jenimason@dbsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:22 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB52

Dear Senate Education Committee Members,

I am a mother, leader, educator, and community member. I have been in education for 22 years and a mother for 14 years. Being a principal in our small district, I have felt the impact of the flat funding for the past six years. We are geographically spread out in our district with three brick and mortar schools minimally 45 miles apart and then two homeschool offices residing outside of our borough. Even through our district is small, flat funding had already affected our schools. We have very small schools, ranging from less than ten to 30 students as well as a larger school of less than 200 students and a homeschool program with less than 900 students. Our staff is exceptional, and we find resources that work for us as well as resources that are financially affordable. Each year, we have to look at how we can continue to keep all the schools open and have the staff and resources we need for all of our students. Sadly, this upcoming year, two of our three brick and mortar schools are in jeopardy of being shut down. These schools are a hub for our small communities. These students would need to transfer to another school, in another town for next year if our doors cannot be left open. Staff would need to uproot their work locations and either move or drive daily to work in the school(s) that remain open. This is very hard on each individual person and as a whole community. With an increase of base student allocations, we could perhaps be able to keep our small schools open in order for the community that the kids grow up in, to continue to learn in. As a leader, I want what is best for all of our students. I want them to have a rich and rigorous education, grow to be responsive and responsible humans with rich character that is tied to their communities. As a parent, I also wish for the same; a vibrant educational experience that is rigorous and culturally deep within the community we reside. With flat funding, all of our students suffer. Our students might have to be uprooted to a new community to learn and feel the fall out of program cuts and staffing decreases across all sites. With flat funding, our communities will suffer. Flat funding has to come to an end. AASB has resolved for an increase of not less than \$860. Increase the base student allocation.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity for voice.

Sincerely,

Jeni Mason  
Regional Principal and Special Education Director  
406-460-0629  
Denali Borough School District  
PO Box 280, Healy, AK. 99743

jenimason@dbsd.org

Working together to nurture, empower, and inspire today's student to positively shape tomorrow's world.

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## Michael Mason

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**From:** Jennifer Grant <grantj@sitkaschools.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:05 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 52

To the Senate Education Committee:

I am writing as both a parent and an educator. I've been teaching in the Sitka School District for the past 16 years, and EVERY year it seems that we face budget shortfalls and cuts to staff. The process is always extremely stressful for teachers. This year, again, we have been told by our superintendent that we are looking at a deficit of more than \$2.5 million in our small district. This translates to larger class sizes, fewer resources for students, cuts to programs, limited access to reading and math intervention, and so much more.

Last year at my school we lost our science program, and we've been told that we likely won't ever get it back. This put the burden of teaching science on classroom teachers (grades 2-5), yet we were given no materials or curriculum with which to teach science. The result was teachers spending a lot of time and our own money finding quality science lessons and materials. This is just once small example of how we are continually being asked to do more, with less.

As a parent of three children, I am concerned about the future of education funding. My youngest is a freshman in high school; my older two graduated in 2018 and 2021. Even though that is a relatively short span of time, I have noticed a more limited selection of classes at the high school level. I feel we could be doing more to prepare our high school students for college and the workforce.

I support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaska Students. I support the Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

## Jennifer Grant

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher  
Keet Gooshi Heen Elementary  
(907) 966-1711

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kimberly Bakkes <kbakkes@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:08 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Bill 52

I strongly support passing Senate Bill 52.

Costs have climbed significantly since school funding was last increased in 2017.

As a parent with two kids in school, this issue is very important to me. Currently, I feel satisfied that I can live in Alaska and work a professional job in medicine related to the fact that they are getting what they need from school in education and development. But they cannot afford additional cuts.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Bakkes, MD

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kimberly Leslie <KLeslie@KPBSD.k12.ak.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 10:36 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB 52 Testimony

Public school students grow up to BE the community, to BE the workforce, to BE the neighbors, to BE the leaders, to BE the solution finders, to BE the productive, kind, citizens of Alaska. Of course we should throw every resource we can at our schools. Of course we should provide ample time and consistency in our support.

Thank you,

*Kim Leslie*

Pronouns: she, her, hers  
Science Teacher  
High School iChoice Team  
KPBSD  
907-224-9082  
Twitter: @KNRLEsleie



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Kristi Wood <bikemoredriveless@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 3:21 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please inflation proof the BSA

Please increase the BSA. The proposed \$1,000 is a good start, however I don't think that is enough, as it doesn't bring up the BSA to match our historic inflation. As a long term resident of Alaska who loves it here and has always assumed I would remain here, I'm very concerned about the outmigration of working age Alaskans. Will I want to retire in Alaska if this outmigration continues and the lack of investment in Alaskan's education further contributes to the shrinking of our skilled workforce? What will happen to the value of my home if my neighborhood school closes due to lack of funding? Why should my teenage son remain in Alaska if there isn't a robust local university system for him and why should he return to Alaska to raise his own family if there isn't a robust school system for his children? How on earth can we expect Alaska to have a healthy economic future if we aren't willing to invest in that future?

Thank you,  
Kristi Wood  
Anchorage resident

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Lisa Paesani <lpaesani@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:23 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Increase the BSA

I am writing in support of increasing the BSA for our schools. I am wanting you to listen and abide by the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee to raise the BSA by at least 1000.

If Alaska does not insure our schools are properly funded, in order to acquire and keep good teachers and have smaller class room sizes, our population will continue to decline, especially those in educated fields. Already we have a worker crisis in Alaska. People will not move here or stay here if they see their children can not get a good education here. This issue applies to all Alaskans. Please find our schools by increasing our BSA by at least 1000.

Thank you,  
M Lisa Paesani, MSW

Sent from my iPhone

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Madisen Lundamo <mclundamo04@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 7:10 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Written Testimony in Support of SB 52

Madam Chair and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am Madisen Lundamo from Ketchikan and a senior at Ketchikan High School. Today I am writing to represent myself as a student in Alaska and a child of an educator. I am in full support of Senate Bill 52 because education is the very foundation of our communities and society. My mother has taught for 23 years in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District as an elementary teacher, and now is the Dean of Students at Houghtaling Elementary. Through her, I have witnessed the dedication every great teacher gives to every unique student in their school.

In the case of my mother especially, school is much more than a building full of classrooms, but rather a second home. Her classroom is bursting with flairs of her personality and embellished with seasonal decorations. Every seat is different and offers unique comforts. She has a large tank with two red-ear slider turtles swimming about. The overhead lights are never used as the room is illuminated with holiday twinkle lights and lamps. There's an essential oils diffuser going off every so often, filling the air with calming scents. For some time she even had a reading loft in a corner of her room! What an amazing environment to learn in, right?

Every single one of these items was paid for out of pocket by my mom because her stipend barely covered the extra comforts of an excellent classroom. This is the case with every single beyond-typical classroom in that elementary school. My mom's colleagues have used their own personal funds to improve the educational environment of their students for years.

Every single classroom in Alaska could be as comfortable and prosperous as those in the elementary school I grew up in with sufficient funding.

In my high school, students' education is taking a drastic hit due to underfunding. Teachers are in and out. Programs have uncertain futures. While my generation has been labelled as "resilient," we are seeing more and more struggles to bounce back after each hit. There is a stark shortage of substitute teachers which leads to classes being held in the library, overburdening our librarians. I have sat in the library with at least four other classes and it is not a civil picture. The environment is headachingly loud, the librarians are stretched so thin that administrators are in and out checking on the students, and there certainly is no learning happening. Programs such as Advanced Placement or AP classes are at risk to be cut due to a lack of qualified teachers. Our language classes are subpar at best due to poor quality teachers. I, a passionate and dedicated student, have found myself dreading the eight hours a day I spend at school.

There is a butterfly effect caused by a lack of funding in our education system. The school district is doing as much as they can with the little money they have, teachers are unable to provide opportunities to students, the students dread school, their education takes a hit, and in the years to come we will be made fully aware of the negative impacts. Students and teachers thrive in fully funded schools, causing our society itself to thrive. We cannot fight nor prevent great tragedies and societal illnesses such as violence, mental health crises, bullying, racial and cultural injustices, suicide, abuse, addiction, and more without prosperous schools.

Thus I urge you to remain in support of SB 52, an act to increase the BSA, and consequently an act to ensure the future of our education system and Alaska as a whole.

Thank you and Sincerely,  
Madisen Lundamo

[mclundamo04@gmail.com](mailto:mclundamo04@gmail.com)

(907) 617-0417

237 Cranberry Road  
Ketchikan, AK 99901



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Michael Wald <info@arcticwild.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 3, 2023 4:03 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 52

Hello Senators

Thank you for making education funding a priority at the start of the legislative session. This is a critically important issue not only for students but for our entire state. We desperately need to increase the BSA by a minimum of \$1000.

Education funding has not increased for years and the cost of nearly everything has increased dramatically. The state has slowly defunded our schools and many are now at a breaking point. Districts that have been solvent and responsible for decades are unable to pay utility bills. Our urban schools are moth-balling buildings. We have hundreds of unfilled job vacancies for teaching positions across the state. Our school districts need more money from the state. The funding is over due and a \$1000 increase will not even keep up with the accumulated inflation.

I urge you to increase the BSA by at least \$1000. What is more important for the future of Alaska than our youth?

Thank you for serving on the legislator.

Michael

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Michael Wald  
Owner Arctic Wild  
[Michael@arcticwild.com](mailto:Michael@arcticwild.com)  
907-479-8203  
[www.arcticwild.com](http://www.arcticwild.com)

## Michael Mason

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**From:** michal <michal\_1939@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 3:30 PM  
**To:** Senate Education; Sen. Matt Claman  
**Subject:** I support increased funding for our public schools

Dear legislators:

Please support our students and teachers. Our students fare very poorly in standardized testing. School funding has been flat for a decade. Increasing funding for our public schools gives our kids a better education and invests in their future and that of Alaska. Please know that I support increasing funding for our school, at the expense of other government programs and the PFD dividend. I would also support state taxes to have excellent public schools in Alaska. As a parent of two elementary school kids in Anchorage, quality public education is a priority for me.

Thank you for your time.

Michal Stryszak  
Anchorage, AK 99517

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Michele Elfers <michele@alaskaflyfishinggoods.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 3:36 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 52 - Raise the BSA

Good afternoon,

Please vote to support raising the BSA a minimum of \$1000 per student. We need more funding than this for our students.

I have a daughter in middle school and one in elementary school. Their class sizes are 28-35 students per class with one teacher. I hear stories from my middle schooler of kids jumping on tables and breaking them, balls being thrown, basically chaos in class because the teacher cannot control the class with so many kids. She is not being challenged because the teachers are not able to address all the varied needs and learning levels in such large classes. She sits in the gym on many days because teachers are out and there are no substitute teachers.

Next year, she goes to high school and the highschool closest to us has a part time art teacher and kids can't get into art classes. She wants to be a designer - engineer/architect, so she is looking for math and art classes. In this same school, they are struggling to keep their CAD program.

Our schools are in crisis and there is nothing I can do for my kids, we don't have any other options. Please provide more funding now.

Michele Elfers

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Nancy Mendenhall <mendenhallnancy01@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 2:26 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** HB52

This is the most important Education bill for you to get passed. I have lived in Western AK since the early Sixties and most of this time in Nome School District, associated with teachers through my work on boards, committees and jobs. It is obvious how low funding has affected maintenance of our old buildings, classroom numbers size, and teacher retention. The retention problem is also related to lack of adequate housing for teachers as well as salaries not keeping up with COL. Some vacant positions funded could not get applicants this fall. The message families are getting is that the state doesn't care about the children, the working citizens of tomorrow. I know that's not true, but that's how it comes across. Thank you for fighting hard to get a significant bill passed to relieve this situation.

Nancy Mendenhall  
<http://nancydanielsonmendenhall.strikingly.com>

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Eric and Tricia Miller <millerstead@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:56 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Please raise the base student allocation

Dear members of the Alaska legislature,

I'm writing as a parent to urge you to raise the base student allocation this session. Kids in Alaska NEED YOUR HELP. Our children have fallen behind since Covid and the only thing that can help them get back on track is more support. And support is not free. I have two school-aged students in Fairbanks. My son suffers from a sensory processing disorder that makes it very hard for him to function in school. He's not alone. There are many kids who have similar challenges that make it more difficult and more work for them if they are to succeed. My son's school and his teachers are amazing. But they can't provide extra support because the school doesn't have funding to provide extra classroom aides. They do the best they can with what they have, but it isn't enough. Children who aren't receiving the extra support they need in the classroom suffer, but so do the rest of the kids, because their learning experience is constantly disrupted.

Because the base student allocation has remained frozen despite the enormous challenges of the last few years, education is being hamstrung in this state. Class sizes are ballooning. Cuts are affecting every single student in this state. Since children ARE the future, we are shorting the future of Alaska by this massive disservice to our kids.

Yes, I know, money is tight everywhere. But let's look at the long approach- supporting education for our kids has got to be our number one priority.

I urge you to do the right thing and vote to increase the base student allocation.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Miller  
Fairbanks, Alaska

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Paul Rioux <paulg.rioux@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:03 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB 52

Committee members,

I'd like to offer non partisan praise for SB52.  
Alaska education system is currently hamstrung by inflation.  
Please support this bill.

Yours,  
Paul Rioux  
Sitka, Alaska

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sandy Blomfield <aksandyb@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 7:07 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Cc:** Sandy Blomfield  
**Subject:** BSA Funding

Senators,  
(Education Committee)

Your committee has the opportunity to change the role of education in Alaska.

As you consider the increase in BSA per student funding, I respectfully request that you consolidate all education funding to follow the student rather than the local school districts.

We have all witnessed the dramatic decline in educational scores for Alaskan kids despite more legislative funding. Elementary students are subjected to a liberal and dangerous agenda from many local school boards.

Now is the time to TIE the BSA funding allotments and district monies directly to the parent/students for SCHOOL CHOICE!

You have the power to make positive changes in our youth statewide with funds appropriated directly to students. The Senate Education committee must take this bold stand now to ensure we offer our Alaskan children the best education possible by allowing SCHOOL CHOICE through funding.

I have been an education advocate for many, many years and will continue to work on behalf of our vulnerable children. If you need assistance, please refer to the lower 48 states that have already allowed, through statute, funding following the student.

This is our responsibility and I hope you take it seriously.

Thank you,  
Sandra Blomfield

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Scott Hayden <scotthayd@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 2:35 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** I support raising the BSA by over \$1,000

Thank you for taking up the BSA increase. We as a State have to commit to a meaningful, robust education for every child in Alaska.

Right now we are not doing that.

It is long past time for an education funding increase for Alaska. The Base Student Allocation has fallen far behind inflation, and our schools are showing it. A friend started teaching 6th grade this year at a Title 1 school with 38 kids in her 6th grade classroom. About 1/3 of those kids are special needs kids, and because of unfilled positions at the school they were not receiving their legally mandated support.

Ask yourself what kind of education those special needs kids are receiving. Without extra help on math, will they learn how percentages work? Without extra help in reading, will they even learn what a sentence is? And what about the smartest kids in that class -- with a teacher occupied by students (who *should legally* have aids assisting them) throwing tantrums on the floor, is that teacher able to teach the rest of the class to their full potential?

The Anchorage School Board is grappling with ways to solve these problems, but without adequate funding they struggle in vain. My kids are in the Anchorage School District. I do not believe they are able to reach their full potential when class sizes are over 30 kids in a classroom.

At a minimum the BSA has to be adjusted to catch up with (and keep up with!) inflation. I support an increase of *at least* \$1000 per student to the BSA. We don't just need to stop the bleeding, we need to repair the damage.

Class sizes need to be closer to 25, not 35!

We have to invest in a solid, meaningful education for these kids. With the resources currently available, they are not getting what they need.

Please increase the BSA to a level that keep our schools healthy and our kids learning.

Sincerely  
Scott Hayden  
12304 Hilltop Dr  
Anchorage AK 99515



## Michael Mason

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**From:** Sherman Caruthers <shermancaruthers@dbsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 1:22 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB52

Dear distinguished members of the Alaskan Senate.

I urge you to please consider a yes vote for the bi-partisan SB52 that is in the hopper. It has been 6 years since we have had an increase of funding per student and with the rise of inflation in recent years, I fear that the "status quo" approach of flat "flat funding" will end up with teachers and programs for our youth to be cut due to expense.

Please vote yes on SB52

Sincerely,  
Claude Sherman Weinberger-Caruthers  
Big Lake, Alaska

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**Sherman Caruthers**  
*Secretary/Vendor Coordinator*  
*Denali Peak Correspondence/Homeschool Program*  
*Wasilla Office*  
*(907) 357-2730*

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Susan Litman <litman.susan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 9:24 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 52

Good Morning Members of the Senate Education Committee-

I strongly support Senate Bill 52 that would increase the BSA by \$1,000.

It has been years since the BSA was increased while inflation has continued to soar. We owe it to our students in this state to make sure their education is adequately funded.

Thank you,  
Susan Litman  
Sitka

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Ayla Walker <aylawalker@dbsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 4:11 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB52 Student Testimony

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Tri-Valley Student Council, we strongly support the SB52 proposed House bill. As students within the Denali Borough School District, we understand the outcome of this bill will affect our school district drastically. Similarly to many other districts in Alaska, our district and school are facing a budget crisis that will significantly impact each student. There are three proposed plans for the upcoming school year, which include closing schools within the district. The first option consists of keeping all schools open with major staffing cuts at all three schools. The second option involves closing one school while keeping the remaining two open with budget cuts at both locations. Lastly, the third option would close the two smaller schools and consolidate all students and staff into one brick-and-mortar site. This proposal requires the students to bus for at least 45 minutes in winter road conditions. There is a small school within our district that is at the largest risk of closure, as it contains the least amount of students. This school resides within an Alaska Native village, and the students share a strong connection with their land and community. Consequently, closing their school and forcing the students to enroll in a different system will have a tremendous impact on their way of life and culture. Therefore, the proposed house bill will significantly benefit the Denali Borough School District and its students. Please put student education in the state as priority number one. We are counting on you for a bright future.

Sincerely,

Tri-Valley High School Student Council

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Tyler Smoker <tyler.smoker@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 3, 2023 9:39 AM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** Testimony of a former JSD employee

I was a student in the Juneau School District for 13 years and graduated from JDHS in 2004. After college I worked as a substitute teacher for 5 years, and during that time covered almost every job in the district at least once. Most days were spent in Special Education classrooms, ranging from Pre-K through Transitions. The time spent working in SpEd classrooms inspired me to pursue a Doctoral degree in Occupational Therapy, and I returned to JSD to put that degree to work in 2018. After just 4 years, I've left the district. In total, I've spent 22 of my 36 years as either a student or employee of JSD.

I left for a lot of reasons. Among them is the fact that since I started as an OT, I continually had an excessively large caseload (50-70 students) that prevented me from providing quality services. This issue has been raised with administration repeatedly by many related service providers (including OTs, Speech Language Pathologists, and Physical Therapists), with no discernable action. One of the most effective coworkers I had moved to a public school in Colorado, where their caseload is capped at 25. I know that teachers are experiencing the same problem, as their classrooms become more crowded and less manageable. It's no surprise that administration has been ineffective in addressing these issues, as there has been little opportunity for leadership from Student Services.

Most of the time I was at JSD, there was no director of Student Services. Dr. Weiss may have been the director in title, but the idea that any person could do that job effectively while also being superintendent is ludicrous. There were two other people that tried to take on that role, but neither stayed long enough to learn how to do the job effectively or make any real positive change in the department.

There has been little opportunity to engage with Student Services (my former supervisors and leaders) for at least the last two years, because their entire staff has been covering full-time teaching positions that the district has been unable to fill. It's no accident that teachers don't stay in the DEC classrooms, because the case management and paraeducator supervision workloads take up all their time. Students with intensive needs require substantial skill and time to work with safely, and perpetual vacancies in SpEd have created unethical, dangerous environments for staff and students.

There is little financial reason to make a career out of teaching in Juneau. Tier 3 retirement is a cruel joke, and the consequences of it are evident in staffing. There are many Tier 2 staff that are motivated to stay until retirement, as they've been in long enough to have climbed the pay scale and their retirement is worth staying for. Tier 3 employees have no reason to stay other than their dedication to this community's children and their love of the profession. Those only go so far, particularly when systemic issues chisel away at the reasons people wanted to become teachers in the first place. In the 4 years I worked for the district, I saw no real increase in my take-home pay, as health insurance costs rose enough annually to eclipse the meager salary increases. One of the saddest facts I encountered on beginning my career as an OT is that Anchorage educators make 10k more per year than JEA members. The fact that every state job pays more in Juneau than Anchorage should illustrate how ridiculous that disparity is.

I recognize that all these problems are not unique to Juneau. What's unique about Juneau is that we know each other, that administrators and teachers see each other at the grocery store, on trails, at parks. We are all members of the same community. What we need is administration standing with JEA to demand appropriate funding from the legislature. Many administration level staff have been working hard to keep Special Education afloat, but make no mistake, the ship is sinking.

Sincerely,



## Michael Mason

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**From:** vicki vermillion <bveaalaska@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 2:37 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** School funding

Dear Ma'am and Sir,

There is NOTHING more important than appropriately increasing public school funding.

Thank you, Vicki Vermillion  
52 year resident of Alaska and mom of 2 public school graduates

Sent from my iPad

## Michael Mason

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**From:** victory lavalle <victory.lavalle@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 6, 2023 3:12 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** I support raising the BSA for our children.

Dear Alaska senate,

I support raising the BSA to ensure that the public education system in Alaska has the teachers and resources to ensure an enriching and robust education for all Alaskan Students.

I support the Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> 2023 memo from the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee which indicates that the BSA would need to be raised by more than the \$1,000 to restore public education funding levels from 8 years ago.

As a parent of a special needs twice exceptional child; I have seen many angles of this lacking budget.

My daughter went from the highley gifted classroom to a general education program. Her class increased from 13-28!

My daughter became the "bad kid" that no one could deal with. The classroom toxic for all students, teachers, aids.

That all changed when she was moved into the SBBS program. She now loves school, she is thriving,succeeding, winning awards. Teachers and staff have the opportunity to meet her needs and it is beautiful. We actually now have a hope that she may go further then highschool in life.

Our family is safe, healthy, and hopeful due to the amazing coaching and staff at Kasuun elementary. It's only been one year but our daughter is thriving!!!!.I fear that with her moving into 6th grade the reinforcements and supports will be taken away if all middle school starts at 6th grade. If there is no increase in funding there will be more need for SRO (SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS).

Continuing to flat fund our education system is punitive and is akin to expecting better morale and performance in a workplace while treating one's employees with disrespect while simultaneously demanding that your employees work more hours for the same pay.

The BSA hasn't been meaningfully raised since 2012. This is known as flat funding. When inflation goes up but your paycheck doesn't, you have less money to spend. This is why flat funding is really a budget cut.

Please increase the BSA, keep our children safe and healthy.

Victory Cheney

1041 e 26th Ave Anchorage AK 99508

9079526200

## Michael Mason

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**From:** Windy Thorn <windythorn@dbsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2023 12:06 PM  
**To:** Senate Education  
**Subject:** SB52 Support

I am contacting in regards to the SB52 bill. I am a parent and paraprofessional at Cantwell School in Cantwell, Alaska. I am in support of the bill.

The Denali Borough School District has been talking about closing the Cantwell and Anderson School's since before Covid-19. The district can't afford to keep the schools in the district open with the funding they have. It may be a problem of their own making, but it still doesn't sit right that schools are closing and you have the ability to change that. I am a parent to two young kids. My family is building our forever home here. I feel that all kids in Alaska should have access to quality education in their place of residence. We have come too far to take steps back. We shouldn't be taking kids from villages and sending them anywhere. We have seen the toll that can take on the student and family for years.

You have the power, use it.

Help keep our kids on track, don't continue to derail them.

Raise the BSA and help the kids of Alaska continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

Windy Thorn  
907-841-4018