

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: ANSEP Assistant Director Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 2:27:58 PM

Dear Alaska House Finance Committee,

Last week the House Finance Subcommittee proposed reducing ANSEP's base funding. This would have serious consequences for the ANSEP Acceleration Academy High Schools, as well as the students and communities it serves across Alaska. ANSEP Acceleration exists to support students as they pursue their dreams. The way it does this is unlike any other program in the country, and something that funding cuts jeopardize.

You see, ANSEP Acceleration works to eliminate barriers to higher education, which leads to students across socioeconomic backgrounds moving through higher education and providing exceptional impact to their communities. It does this by providing robust wrap-around support while staff connect students with opportunities for educational and professional growth. In Anchorage, we have a number of ways we do this.

- **Recitations and Tutoring** are the core academic support services we offer. We employ staff who are subject matter experts in various fields who can serve as trusted adults while they lead study groups. The students work together to fully ensure they understand the foundational concepts of their classes. Outside of this, staff connect with students on a weekly basis to check in on their grades and well being, which also provides them opportunities to connect with the students and offer individualized academic support.

- **Meals** are provided to our students because we believe that it alleviates any concerns from students regarding food insecurity, for we understand that students struggle in all facets when they're more worried about fundamental human needs. By removing this concern, the students can spend their school days focused on learning, rather than where their next meal may come from.

We also strongly believe that our students need to learn soft skills to leave our program prepared for the professional environments they'll find themselves in. That and our recognition that students in high school thrive when they feel safe and welcome in the community leads to a number of our programs aimed around social emotional learning. We've included our students to help us build clubs and organizations that fit their interest, such as STEM and Robotics Clubs, Model United Nations, and Service Community Organization. We also provide extracurricular activities that are related to science, engineering, and business. One such example is when I connected with a local business to teach our students the science behind building an Escape Room, as this paired their interest with the educational components behind it. We also provide opportunities for them to learn from presentations every Friday, such as when a local Financial Advisor came to our Acceleration Academy to teach the students about investments and compound interest.

I'm sure you've received a number of emails about how ANSEP has transformed lives. My hope is you realize that people are doing this because they're worried that your proposed funding cuts will dramatically impact the way our program can support the future of Alaska

and, also, the United State of America. We're at the cutting edge of where education could go and saving the state millions of dollars in the process. This is a program that could transform the country as it lifts youth into work sectors that are currently in desperate need of skilled labor. It's extremely short sighted to take money away from that, and I sincerely hope you're smarter than that.

Respectfully,

Joe Rowles

Assistant Director / Professor

Acceleration Academy (Anchorage)

ANSEP

University of Alaska Anchorage

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: ANSEP Funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 7:24:54 AM

Last week the House Finance Subcommittee proposed reducing ANSEP's base funding. This would have serious consequences for the ANSEP Acceleration Academy High Schools, as well as the students and communities it serves across Alaska. ANSEP has provided opportunities to Alaskans who didn't think they could ever go into a STEM field. I strongly encourage the House Finance Subcommittee to reconsider their proposal because this program is important to so many people, and without it, lives of so many would be changed.

Sincerely,
Taryn Heyano

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: ANSEP Public Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 2:41:05 PM

To the Alaska State House Finance Committee:

Last week the House Finance Subcommittee proposed reducing ANSEP's base funding. This would have serious consequences for the ANSEP Acceleration Academy High Schools, as well as the students and communities it serves across Alaska. ANSEP is the most successful longitudinal education program in the nation for STEM-dual enrollment. For 30 years, it has created opportunities for thousands of Alaska students. I urge the House Finance Committee to restore full state funding for ANSEP.

As a staff member that works directly with students in this program, I can attest to ANSEP's impact on brilliant young minds growing and developing here at the Acceleration Academy in Anchorage as well as on the whole State of Alaska. I see future health care workers, engineers, industry leaders, and scientists every time I walk into the building, and knowing that I play a small part in bringing this generation into the Alaska workforce is incredibly rewarding. Please move to restore full funding to ANSEP - I sincerely believe it to be in the best interest of every Alaska resident.

Sincerely,

--

John Webb
Student Success Specialist
ANSEP Acceleration Academy
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: ANSEP funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 4:54:11 PM

I support the ANSEP program and urge the House Finance Committee to restore full state funding for ANSEP.

Students graduate high school with college credits.

Students and families save time and money by shortening the amount of time it takes to earn their degree.

ANSEP students have higher success rates and strengthen Alaska's workforce and economy.

Lucinda Alexie
PO Box [REDACTED]
Bethel, AK 99559
Ph. [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: About ANSEP
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 5:19:11 PM

Hello,

As an employee of the ANSEP Program, It is important for me to express the value and impact of the program to the House of Finance. I have benefitted from participating in the program and have seen firsthand the difference it can make in providing academic opportunities and success.

I work as well as attend college classes, and It is all because of this program. Therefore taking 20% of our budget is something way too big for me to sit back and accept. Preserving this program's funding from this 20% is important because this helps us stay in a comfortable position throughout our education. We have places to study, college level books, and materials for our studies. Taking this 20% away from us, is like taking our motivation away.

ANSEP is still a growing program and is capable of so much more than I can imagine. With more students my age joining this program, I doubt we could handle a -20% budget. In Fact I suggest that you increase our budget by 20% instead because of how much we are growing.

I strongly urge you to reconsider your stance on this matter. Keep the ANSEP budget intact.

Thank you.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Ansep Student Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 2:08:21 PM

Dear House Finance Committee

I want to express my devotion and appreciation towards ANSEP. Being in the program for 3 years, I've gained a lot, education and resource wise. ANSEP was my crutch in the hardest and most pivotal times in my life. My house was abusive and depressing and I got to getaway from that thanks to ANSEP. I am succeeding and confident, two things that I used to struggle to say. I've gained a community of people that have guided and continue to guide me in the right direction. I am safe here. ANSEP will allow me to break my generational curses and give hope to those in the same shoes i.e. my siblings. The best part of ANSEP is that it eases financial burden but also strengthens Alaska workforce. Oh how beautiful it is to be a proud Alaskan. ANSEP is a stirring pot of diverse people that bring different perspectives and experiences, this is my favorite part.

Thank you for reading my testimony, I hope you find it in you to give us this funding.

Future Engineer,

Christian Naea

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: BSA Increase
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:37:18 AM

Thank you for passing a BSA increase! Please be sure to fully fund the increase in the operating budget so our students, our schools, and our communities can thrive.

Holly Cannon
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99516

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: BSA increase
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:49:00 AM

Hello-

Thank you for passing a BSA increase! Please be sure to fully fund the increase in the operating budget so our students, our schools, and our communities can thrive.

As a teacher it is more important than ever that we fully fund education to keep the quality teachers we have in place and provide the best education for our students.

Thank you for your time.

Kelly Kowal

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: BSA increase
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 11:03:25 PM

Thank you for passing a BSA increase! Please be sure to fully fund the increase in the operating budget so our students, our schools, and our communities can thrive.

Best regards,
Jane Atuk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Child Advocacy Center Budget funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 7:30:17 PM

Having worked in a Pediatric clinic in Fairbanks before there was a CAC (Stevie's Place) I know first-hand the advantage of having a place where a child only has to tell her story once and have that story shared with law enforcement, forensics nurses and trained behavioral health professionals without the trauma of repeating it over and over. Please consider fully funding CAC's in Alaska; for the sake of children and families.
Thank you.

Marjorie Richards, RN
Fairbanks, AK
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#); [Sen. Robert Myers](#); [Rep. Frank Tomaszewski](#)
Subject: Child Care Testimony HB 53
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 3:53:44 PM

Dear Finance Committee,

I'm reaching out to submit this written testimony regarding HB 53, Alaska's Operating Budget. I want to express my gratitude for your vital support of child care funding, which is already in the budget.

Please ensure the preservation of the \$7.725M recurring Child Care Grants included in the Finance Subcommittee's version of the FY26 Department of Health budget.

I also urge you to consider incorporating funding for the ROOTs Award to help recruit and retain early educators in Alaska.

This funding is crucial for Alaska's parents, employers, and children. Child care is indispensable for our community and economic well-being – it keeps parents employed and encourages healthy development and readiness for kindergarten.

Your continued support for child care funding is appreciated.

Sincerely!

Linda Gronewold

[REDACTED]

Fairbanks, AK 99712

Mailing Address

[REDACTED]

Fairbanks, AK 99707

[REDACTED] mobile

From: ellamy@kwrcc.org
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: DVSA Operating Budgets
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 4:32:26 PM

My name is Emily Tiller, and I am the Outreach Coordinator at the Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center. As someone who works in the violence prevention field as well as a member of the Kodiak community, I want to say thank you for all the work you have done to support domestic violence and sexual assault services in my community and across Alaska. Your support is a crucial as we all work to build safer homes and communities across Alaska. Thank you for keeping funding level for these essential services.

With your help, KWRCC has been able to provide safe housing for individuals and families fleeing domestic and sexual violence and help both residential and non-residential clients access the resources and supports they need to build new, safer lives. We have facilitated groups that promote healing through art. We run programs that promote confidence, self-reliance, and healthy social connections for young girls through physical activity. We maintain a crisis line specifically for youth in our community who experience dating violence, sexual assault, or other challenges so they can get the supports and resources they need to find safety and healing. We hold trainings and events to promote safety for individuals, families, and the community. The work we do at KWRCC has a significant impact on the overall health and safety of the Kodiak community- both in town and in the villages on the island. This is made possible, in large part, by your support.

We understand that funding for education, behavioral health services, and child advocacy centers, which are all necessary pieces of any healthy community, must have attention this year. We can do our jobs well when schools, behavioral health providers, and child advocacy centers can also do theirs. We need each other. That said, we will be asking for focused attention toward DVSA services next year.

We accomplish so much with so little, but costs are rising all around us. We tighten our belts and make every dollar stretch as far as it can. We know that, in the long run, funding DVSA services saves money around our community. Not only does our work literally save lives, but it helps to ease the load on law enforcement, hospitals, emergency services, services to prevent homelessness or provide housing, and so many other parts of our community.

Domestic violence and sexual assault continue to be horrible problems that plague our communities. Please continue to support us as we work to change that. Please help us to make Kodiak and all of Alaska safer.

Thank you.

Emily Tiller (she/her)
Outreach Coordinator
Kodiak Women's Resource and Crisis Center
422 Hillside Drive
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907)486-6171

ellamy@kwrcc.org

www.kwrcc.org



From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Education concerns
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 7:53:27 PM

Good evening , I am a concerned mother of 3 here in rural Kotzebue Alaska , education . Sports & extra curricular activities play a huge toll in my children's lives . Even simple things like parents getting some relief with free Lunches / breakfast for their children daily af school is a big deal as our money is slim with how expensive it is to survive in the arctic .

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Full PFD
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 11:50:30 PM

Dear Representatives,

Thank you so much for keeping a full PFD in the budget! This will be an enormous help to so many families and individuals that are struggling to pay their utilities and put food on the table. The days where people would use the PFD for pleasure are long gone. It will be used by most people for essentials that had to wait because there was not enough money to go around - the car repair or new tires that are needed, repairing the washing machine that broke 6 months ago, school clothing or shoes for the kids, bus fare, groceries, utility bills - you name it. Thank you again.

Irene Quednow

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Ross Davila](#); [Jessica Davila](#)
Subject: Fully support full BSA increase
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 6:04:22 PM

Thanks for passing a BSA increase. Please fully fund the increase to support our students, community and teachers. We need this fully funded to thrive.

Jessica Davila

[REDACTED]
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fund the BSA
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 7:22:03 AM

Thank you for passing a BSA increase! Please be sure to fully fund the increase in the operating budget so our students, our schools, and our communities can thrive.

Thank you
Sarah Fineman
Anchorage, 99508

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:24:35 PM

I'm 80 years old and first was in anchorage at the age of 12 . I have 39 years of public school experience and 7 years as

A private school principal. I am very active as a senior citizen with senior concerns and needs. I was Executive director of older persons action group, senior voice, for 7 years. I am currently a member of the anchorage municipality senior advisory commission and a board member on the anchorage senior activity center board. I support the increase outline at the house level for education and extra 3 million dollar increased outlined for senior benefits. If we take care of the kids and the senior citizens we are a better state and a better place to live...

Thank you
James Bailey

[REDACTED]
Anchorage Alaska.

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: More behavioral health funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 11:02:15 AM

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I am resending my letter asking for you to support more behavioral health funding.

Last week I attended the ABHA conference in Juneau and learned that the state is planning to spend \$14 MILLION dollars on adding DocuSign to the Alaska Medicaid contractor's provider enrollment process.

That is more than HB53 is requesting at \$13.75 Million and that amount would cover the entire funding for this bill!

Please keep pushing for this funding request and thank you for all your hard work on this!

Sincerely,

Lisa Brown, MSW

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

From: Lisa Brown <ak.lisabrown@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Feb 25, 2025 at 11:21 AM
Subject: More behavioral health funding
To: <Representative.David.Nelson@akleg.gov>
CC: <Senator.Mike.Cronk@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Forrest.Dunbar@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Lyman.Hoffman@akleg.gov>, <Senator.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Kelly.Merrick@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Donald.Olson@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Bill.Wielechowski@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Jamie.Allard@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Robyn.Burke@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Jeremy.Bynum@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Bryce.Edgmon@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Alyse.Galvin@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Andrew.Gray@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Sara.Hannan@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Nellie.Jimmie@akleg.gov>, <Representative.DeLena.Johnson@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Chuck.Kopp@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Donna.Mears@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Genevieve.Mina@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Justin.Ruffridge@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Mike.Prax@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Calvin.Schrage@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Rebecca.Schwanke@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Will.Stapp@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Cathy.Tilton@akleg.gov>, <Representative.Frank.Tomaszewski@akleg.gov>, <Senator.Jesse.Bjorkman@akleg.gov>, [REDACTED]

Dear Representative Nelson,

I am a new constituent in your district and, like you, live one block away from Centennial Park.

The local policies have had devastating impacts on people experiencing homelessness who continue to live in tents at the park.

I have also worked in Alaska Medicaid programs for 30 years and know the positive effects successful behavioral health treatment can have in people's lives, including full recovery, being functioning family members and spouses, raising their children, and sometimes turning into treatment providers themselves.

The behavioral health system needs investments that prevent people from multiple hospitalizations, incarcerations, and experiencing homelessness where their treatment needs are not met.

Alaska Medicaid is two years and \$15 million behind on updating rates that make staffing behavioral health agencies and providing more services possible.

Behavioral health services aim to treat the individual person and their whole family system. This has a greater impact for more Alaska residents than only the Alaska Medicaid recipient.

Please support increasing behavioral health funding in our state for more services to be available for the people and families who need them.

Thank you for your difficult work on these important changes!

Sincerely,

Lisa Brown, MSW

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Fwd: Support of ANSEP
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 12:40:33 PM

>

> I am writing in support of funding for the ANSEP program. I been a resident of AK for 72 years and have seen our education system grow to educate all residents. ANSEP had help many young people become independent citizens that contribute to our State. They offer many programs to our indigenous people and others. I urge you to continue funding ANSEP and the education it provides to our residents.

>

> Beverly Cross-Cason

> Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB 53
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 10:39:30 AM

Dear members of the house finance committee,
Thank you for passing a BSA increase! It is so encouraging to know that you heard our voices and listened! Now we urge you to please fully fund the increase in the operating budget! We need our schools, our students, and our communities to continue to thrive!
Sincerely,
Charity Bangerter
Mother of two ASD students

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB 53
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 4:58:26 PM

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 53. My name is Darlene Trigg, and I am a lifelong Alaska resident, a Nome Beltz graduate, a parent of three Nome Beltz graduates, and a grandparent with one grandchild attending Nome Public Schools. I am also the President of the Board of Education for Nome Public Schools.

I urge you to invest in public education in Alaska:

- An increase in education funding inside the BSA is crucial for children in Alaska.
- Funding for public education has not kept pace with inflation, and as a result, our schools have been forced to make difficult decisions that have impacted the morale and consistency of our children's education. Nome Public Schools has worked hard over the last several years to ensure that our reduced purchasing power doesn't negatively affect our students' ability to learn. However, the inconsistent funding outside of the BSA makes it very challenging for both teachers and the community to focus on our children's needs.
- Without an increase to the BSA, our school district is facing a budget deficit of \$590,000, which would require us to cut \$550,000 in positions.
- Keeping the \$1,000 increase in the BSA will allow Nome Public Schools to maintain our current staffing levels and increase support for the children and families served by our district. It will help us continue the positive gains we've made in math, reading, and language scores. Additionally, it will provide our teachers with a sense of stability so they can focus on what is most important—teaching our kids.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this information and for your commitment to Alaska's future.

Sincerely,
Darlene Trigg

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB 53
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 11:27:44 PM

Dear Legislators

Please please pass a budget that supports education. I was thrilled to learn that HB 69 sailed out of the House with a wide margin today. I'm sure it will be upheld in the Senate.

Hopefully the governor won't try to veto — getting rolled would likely not be his favorite look.

Anyway, please pass HB 53 so that it can support the passage of HB 69.

I really appreciate your work, and your commitment to growing a next generation of SMART, capable, thoughtful Alaskans who will do well, help others and become excellent public citizens. All that of course requires a good education.

Sincerely

Dr. Emily Kane

Juneau

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB 69
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:37:18 PM

My name is Rachel Munger and I am a parent of a student in the Anchorage School District.

I am reaching out to you to request that you vote yes on HB 69 to increase the BSA. It has been hard to watch as my kids' class sizes increase, their teachers have to crowdsource to pay for classroom materials, and there is so much anxiety about possible school closures and the closure of the IGNITE gifted program. Our schools can't keep up with costs when their budgets have been virtually frozen. Please support a significant and sustained increase to the base student allocation. Alaska's kids and our future depend on it!

Thank you, Rachel Munger

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [Rep. Frank Tomaszewski](#)
Subject: HB53 Operating Budget / HB55 Mental HealthBudget-- Infant Learning Program
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 7:32:50 PM

Good Evening, It was brought to my attention that we have an opportunity to strengthen the funding of the Infant Learning Program(ILP), which may expand services to more kids and their families. There is plenty of literature stating how important it is for early intervention and how impactful it can be for kiddos with challenges but you likely already know that. I want to share with you something that you might not know. Something before having a child with disabilities, I didn't know myself and that was, the Infant Learning Program isn't just for the child but it is for the whole family.

Our state insurance would not cover resources for Down syndrome, only autism. Thankfully we were told about ILP services that were affordable through ACCA (Alaska Center for Children & Adults). We expected them to only service Asher, challenging him physically and mentally, and that we would mostly be observers. They challenged the whole family! Through their leadership and support they equipped us to become Ashers physical, speech, and occupational therapists. By equipping us with the knowledge and techniques, Asher received therapy everyday. Once Asher received TEFRA I would have providers assess him but asked what their therapists would be doing to help him and it was what we were doing at home so we never utilized providers until years later when Asher needed more expertise than what we had. Thankfully by that time we had insurance that helped cover therapies for Down syndrome.

ILP is much more than just early intervention and ensuring children reach their full potential. It's empowering families, especially during times of uncertainty and helplessness. It's an opportunity given to families to become a team that support one another to achieve goals together. These families are strengthened by these challenges and having worked through them these individuals can impact the whole community. Our family has shared what we've learned and have become cheerleaders for others and their families in our community.

We will always be indebted and overflowing with thankfulness for the Infant Learning Program. I hope you recognize the importance and impact the ILP has in our community and advance the states support. Thank you for your time and continued support!

Jessica Wagner
[REDACTED]
Fbks, AK 99712
[REDACTED]

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB53 testimony
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 2:11:06 AM

Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Anna Lea Hyer. I write to you today to urge the House Finance Committee to restore full state funding for ANSEP, the nation's most successful longitudinal STEM dual enrollment program. ANSEP's Acceleration Academy High Schools transform educational outcomes across our state. They fundamentally reshape what's possible for Alaska's students.

The statistics are compelling, but behind each number is a story of potential realized. ANSEP students graduate high school with an average of 63 college credits—college-level achievements that would be financially out of reach for many families. This remarkable head start saves Alaskan families millions of dollars in tuition and living expenses, but more importantly, it opens doors that many of us never imagined could be open.

ANSEP strengthens Alaska's economy by developing a skilled, homegrown workforce ready to tackle the unique challenges facing our state. Your investment in ANSEP today ensures Alaska's economic resilience tomorrow.

What's at stake transcends budget lines. Cutting ANSEP's base funding would extinguish opportunities for students across Alaska, particularly those from rural and underserved communities who deserve the chance to pursue STEM careers.

The future of Alaska's workforce, economy, and communities stands before you today, asking for your continued investment. I urge you to maintain full funding for ANSEP in the state's operating budget. This decision isn't just about current students; it's about the Alaska we're all working to build.

Thank you for your consideration and your commitment to Alaska's future.

Respectfully,
Anna Lea Hyer
ANSEP Student

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: HB53
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 12:10:57 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

Good day, my name is Rita Blandov. I was born here in Ketchikan, Alaska and raised in Metlakatla, Alaska. I have people I love that are not Alaska Native (Part of a Federally Recognized Tribe) that desperately need the mental health help that we lack in this state. When my father was alive and when I lived with him, he regularly used our local Gateway Human Resource Center for his mental health needs. I have experienced being a part of folks lives that went to that place and that have begun to lead pretty normal lives from the help they received.

I was a teenager during those times in my life, so we have needed these resources since the 1990's. Seeing people you love suffer because of the lack of funding and available resources hurts on a deep level. Every role of every person that has ever helped my father or myself has been in the mental health field. Mental health is often over looked and not acknowledged that should be where the care starts period. Science has more than proven that without a healthy mental state, the rest of a human being declines. Effecting the rest of the whole being, causing other areas of the person to decline.

The homelessness and the help people need in this state is outrageous. Every single one of them means something to someone, and most of the folks experiencing these things are either not properly diagnosed or literally struggling with some form of addiction that keeps them in the state of mental and emotional distress. Some people I love will not even use benefits for being Alaska Native (Part of a Federally Recognized Tribe) because their significant other isn't and cannot receive help for not being Alaska Native (Part of a Federally Recognized Tribe). The cry for help cannot get any louder than it has been for decades. People's lives matter, and they are loved, they are not lost causes. They need the help that they have not been receiving.

**N'doyackshn, Quyana, Gunalchéesh, Háw'aa, Thank you,
Sincerely,**

Rita Blandov

Revenue Cycle

Office: (907) 228-9387

2960 Tongass Ave.

Ketchikan, AK 99901

blandovr@kictribe.org



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From: [Elizabeth Doronila](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: House Finance Committee public testimony
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 5:56:43 PM

Testimony in Support of SESA Alaska

What services have you received from SESA?

Our school district has received specialized services from SESA. A SESA staff member provides support by visiting our school and offering ongoing consultation through email.

How did these services impact you or your school team?

SESA's ability to provide in-person services in remote Alaskan communities is invaluable. In a village where air travel is the only way in and out, having specialists visit in person makes a significant difference.

During these visits, SESA staff observe student needs firsthand, allowing them to provide hands-on training and make real-time adjustments to our instructional approaches. This direct support is far more effective than relying solely on virtual meetings.

Over the past three years, I have worked closely with SESA, and I have seen meaningful progress in students receiving their services. The expertise, training, and resources they provide are essential to supporting students with complex needs in rural Alaska.

Thank you!

On Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 3:51 PM Olivia Yancey <oyancey@sesa.org> wrote:

Here you go!

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

From: Reinhart, Patrick J (DOH) <patrick.reinhart@alaska.gov>
Date: Tue, Mar 11, 2025 at 11:24 AM
Subject: Correction: Action Alert for March 12-14, 2025
To:

Feel free to share with your networks....

Action Alert: Alaska House Finance Committee, Budget Public

Testimony on 3/12-3/14, 2025

If you are a State of Alaska employee, please take note before taking any action because of receiving this “legislative alert” email or notice, including forwarding it to others inside or outside of state government. The Alaska Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) serves as Alaska's Developmental Disabilities Council, a federally required role of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) which includes a unique responsibility to engage in "advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities" without interference by the State (42 USC 15024(c)(5)(L). While the GCDSE has this unique independent role under the DD Act, state employees who are on this email generally do not have the same ability to advocate as the GCDSE. Therefore, before taking any action using any state resources, any state employee who is on this list and who does not work for the GCDSE should contact their supervisor or their designated ethics supervisor to discuss what they can or cannot do with respect to the action items listed in this email or notice. -Patrick Reinhart, Executive Director, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education Patrick.Reinhart@alaska.gov, 907-727-6610

Dear Council Members and Agency Partners,

We invite you to participate in the upcoming **House Finance Committee public testimony** this week on the FY26 budget bills (**HB 53/ HB 55**), which will significantly impact services for individuals with intellectual-developmental disabilities. Your voice and advocacy are vital to ensuring that the necessary funding is secured for these essential services.

How to Participate:

- **Written Testimony:** Email to house.finance@akleg.gov by 5:00 PM, March 14, 2025
- **Verbal Testimony:** Attend or call during the designated times this week (see below). You may join in person in Capital 519, or any Legislative Information Office (LIO) <https://akleg.gov/lios.php> or call into the Capital switchboard (see below) no later than 30 mins before the end of each session. Follow up with an email.

Testimony Tips: *IMPORTANT: Call-in 30-minutes before the end-time to be added to the list before they close the list. Keep testimony under **2 minutes!!** Make sure to introduce yourself, where you're from, and which budget items you support. If it is a hardship for you to get to an LIO, use the call-in number and call during your community call-in time, or during the Offnet Sites options mentioned above All Off Net callers must hang up immediately after testifying but can continue to watch via Gavel to Gavel. **Link to [Akleg.gov](#) “How to Testify Telephonically”**

https://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/AKLEG_Testimony_Instructions.pdf

- Use these numbers to call in by phone, depending on where you are calling from:

Anchorage phones only = 907-563-9085

Juneau phones only = 907-586-9085

All phones outside Anchorage and Juneau = 844-586-9085

PUBLIC TESTIMONY SCHEDULE for House Finance Committee this week!

Wednesday, March 12, 4:30-6:30 pm = Anchorage, Matsu and “Offnet”

Thursday, March 13, 4:30-6:30 pm = Fairbanks, Kenai, Bethel, Cordova, Kotzebue and Statewide “Offnets”

Friday, March 14, 1:30-3:30 pm = Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, Delta Junction, Dillingham, Glennallen, Valdez, Wrangell, Homer, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Seward, Tok, “Offnet”

Council’s Key Budget Items to Support which are not included in the House Version of the Budget and need your advocacy:

1. **Special Education Service Agency (SESA) \$480 K (DEED)** The Special Education Service Agency (SESA) provides training and resources to special education teachers and school staff in rural Alaska who support students with Low Incidence Disabilities (LID), including autism, deaf and hard of hearing, vision impairment, deaf-blindness, emotional disabilities, and multiple disabilities. SESA's budget is based on total public-school enrollment, which is declining, while the number of students needing SESA's services continues to grow. This funding gap forces SESA to serve more students with fewer resources, and without an increase, they will have to implement a waitlist-violating federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which mandates timely special education services.
2. **Deaf Navigator Program \$75 K (DOH/SDS).** The Deaf Navigator Program provides essential support for Alaskans who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf blind, helping them navigate services and access resources. Originally housed at The Arc of Anchorage and now operated by Hope Community Resources, the program has never received a funding increase since its inception. Without this funding, critical support

for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community will be at risk, limiting access to communication assistance, advocacy, and essential services.

3. **Functional Needs Coordinator, \$175 K (DMVA/Emergency Operations)** – Add \$175 K for an Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Coordinator within the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) so they can meet the emergency planning and response necessary for Alaskans with disabilities. Unlike most emergency operation centers, Alaska does not have an AFN Coordinator.
4. **Human Services Transportation Grant Program--\$250 K (DOTPF/ACT)**- Add \$250 K in GF/MH capital funding for the Human Services Transportation Grant program. This program was previously funded at \$1.0 M and is currently in the draft FY 26 budget at \$750 K.
5. **Public and Community Transportation Match Funding—\$1.0 M (DOTPF)** - To maintain access to federal funding and sustain community transit, we request \$1 million in capital funds to assist transit providers in meeting their match obligations for federal grants.

Council’s Key Budget Items to Support which are included in the House Version of the Budget (Tell Legislators “Thank You and keep in the budget”):

1. **ILP Program: a) Increased funding to support Early Intervention and Infant Learning Programs for \$2.7 million “to address inflation since 2017; b) Added another \$3.02 million to the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program to “expand grant funding for services covered under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act to enable alignment with current Part B eligibility found in regulation.” Total request included is \$5.7 million. This was our number one priority!!!**
2. Supported Trust funding for continued support of ADRCs thru \$300K for “No Wrong Door Coordinated Access to Services” through SDS Grants each year thru FY29.
3. Added \$1.5 million to Adult Day Services and Respite Services through SDS Grants.
4. Supported MH Trust funding of \$300K for ILP Statewide Equity Project each year for FY26-FY29.
5. Increased funding to support Early Intervention and Infant Learning Programs for \$2.7 million “to address inflation since 2017.”
6. Supported Trust funding for the DSP Professional Training and Development Project thru \$200K in MHTAAR and \$200K in GF/MH each year thru FY26-FY27
7. Supported Trust funding for the new SDS EMODs position at \$94K each year thru FY26-FY27
8. Added \$1.1 million to increase the daily rate for General Relief-ALH program to \$120/day.

9. Supported Trust funding for increasing support to the GCDSE by \$45K each year thru FY28.

Patrick Reinhart

Executive Director

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education

Patrick.Reinhart@alaska.gov

907-727-6610

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Olivia Yancey, Executive Director
Special Education Service Agency (SESA)
2600 Denali Street, Suite 200, Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 334-1300 Fax: (206) 330-0306
TTY: (907)-644-3228
www.sesa.org

The information contained in this email (including any attachments) is confidential and may be privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, do not read, print, copy, retain, distribute, or disclose its content. If you have received this email in error, please advise us by return email.

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Elizabeth Doronila
SPED Teacher - Allakaket School
[Yukon-Koyukuk School District](#)
Allakaket, AK 99720
968-2250 EXT 1805

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Increase the budget for our students
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 2:44:00 PM

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for passing a BSA increase! I am the parent of a 6th and 10th grader and am so relieved to know our schools are one step closer to having the additional funding they so desperately need. Please take this across the finish line by supporting fully funding the increase in the operating budget so our students, our schools, and our communities can thrive.

Thank you for your service to our community.

Lea McKenna
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99517
Tel: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Kotzebue Funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 10:52:00 PM

Good evening,

My name is Cory Jackson, I recently was elected to the advisory school council in Kotzebue, AK. I want to send in my comments and concerns. I believe house bill 69 should pass. Rural schools need help, they need the funding to pass to help our rural schools. We need to help continue education - we lose teachers because of the lack of funding. We have programs such as ANSEP that are so beneficial for our youth to excel. Sports is a major part of our rural communities - it is sometimes the only outlet for children. To cut funding in our school would be devastating to all. We struggle living in rural communities as we see the most impact on grocery and gas prices going up. We need you, the legislature to do what's right for ALL rural schools and push out funding to keep schools, food programs, sports and to secure our teachers for our future. It's crucial to continue this as families are enriched in our culture we still want what's best for all. We want the school to be successful as they do their best each year with each budget cut to help our children. We are turning back to speak and help them. Thank you for your time -

Cory Jackson

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 12:48:22 PM

Hello,

My name is Sara and I'm writing this in support of Alaska EXCEL. I am originally from Chevak. I now live here in Anchorage and am a dorm parent at Alaska EXCEL. They have helped me and so many others get important things such as a driver's license, scholarships, jobs, academic and career certifications, high-school credits, and so many other great things.

They help the rural Alaskan students go places literally, academically and career wise. Bringing students to different colleges and job sites to help them figure out what they'd want to do after high-school. Fun fact, 92% of EXCEL's alumni live in Alaska and either work, attend college, trade school or have joined the military. So as you can see they help the students be well prepared for life after graduation.

That being said I hope you help us help the generations to come, giving them a chance to get a start on life before they graduate high-school.

For more visit info@alaskaexcel.org

Sincerely,

Sara Ulroan

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: My testimony for the Infant Learning Program
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:16:03 AM

Dear Alaska House Finance Committee,

I support the \$5.72 million increment to the Infant Learning Program. The work they do is important to me and other families. I have grandchildren who have benefited from early intervention services and more children should have access to these life changing services.

Without this help and support for vulnerable children and families, there will be hard repercussions that not only affect families involved, but our whole society.

Please vote for this and don't miss the opportunity to care for the most vulnerable.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ellen Wood, a 50 year resident of Alaska

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#); [Rep. Sara Hannan](#); [Sen. Jesse Kiehl](#)
Subject: Operating Budget & the BSA
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 12:50:19 PM

House Finance Committee Members:

I am the grandmother of a kindergarten student who attends school in Alaska. My older daughter & her husband, who were both born in Alaska & teachers here, moved out of state after his job was threatened last spring. He was offered a job outside & they moved with hope of stable education funding. Their children, my grandchildren, would soon have entered Alaska schools. The elementary class that my daughter would have been assigned to, has 35 students! This is NOT acceptable. Teachers, many who are parents, are deserving of enough energy at the end of a school day to give to their own families. I am a witness to hard working teachers who have students, many who struggle due to situations outside of school that are beyond their control & through no fault of their own. School funding has become a humanitarian plea in addition to an obligation to provide adequate funding as the Alaska Constitution requires. WE ALL WANT A POSITIVE OUTCOME IN OUR SCHOOLS. Let's provide adequate funding. If we choose not to adequately fund our public schools, we stand to lose not only those who move outside Alaska, we lose the ones who remain here as well. Our children are worthy of our support.
Please fully fund the BSA increase in the operating budget.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine Niemi
Douglas, Alaska

From: [REDACTED]
To: house.finance@akleg.gov; alheaslet@alaska.edu; [House Finance](#)
Subject: Preserve and secure ANSEP funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 11:23:26 AM

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

Along with the incredible statistics below for Alaskan students in general, the Alaska Native Science and Engineering (ANSEP) program has benefitted the children in my own family. With ANSEP's support, both of my children were able to participate in: the Middle School STEM academy, Career Exploration programs, and earn college credits all before graduating from High School. My son is now a freshman at UAA and has participated in the ANSEP Summer Bridge program and in the University Success program. These supports have allowed him to navigate entering the University program, complete a high quality pre-freshman year internship in the Business field and have helped him achieve an A grade point average during his freshman year thru academic supports when needed. My daughter, a graduating high school senior, is excited to follow these paths but in the Health Care field. She needs your support to help make this happen by preserveing and securing continued funding for this crucial program for our Alaskan youth from Villages to Valleys.

Thank you for using your voices to support higher education in AK that will help keep our incoming workforce well trained.

- Students graduate high school with an average of 63 college credits – nearly two years of university coursework completed.
- Some students achieve remarkable milestones—one student recently graduated with 125 college credits.
- Families and the state save millions by reducing the need for university remediation and shortening time to degree completion.

- Students avoid three or more years of tuition and living expenses, easing financial burdens and increasing access to higher education.
- Higher retention and success rates strengthen Alaska's workforce and economy.

Sincerely,
Tonia Kushin
Wasilla, AK

From: [Amy Simpson](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Public Testimony 3.12.25 House Finance Committee
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 5:33:29 PM

My name is Amy Simpson I am the director of Programs for Infants and Children or PIC, the Infants Learning program in the Anchorage area. I am a resident of Eagle River. I have been with PIC for 30 years as director and a speech language pathologist. I am here to voice my gratitude for the \$5.72 million increment to the ILP. This increment would provide some much-needed relief for 11+ years of flat state funding to the Infant Learning Program. It would also do something very important in that, it would allow the program to expand the eligibility criteria from a 50% delay to a 25% delay. We believe the program statewide would see a 77% increase in the number of children eligible for these important services.

Last year, providers at PIC had to tell parents of more than 100 children that although the children have a significant delay, they are not yet delayed enough to qualify for early intervention in Alaska. In fact, Alaska has the most restrictive eligibility of all states which is a 50% delay. This needs to change. Research indicates that nearly half of all children who received early intervention services do not need special education services beyond kindergarten. We believe this investment in ILP now would avoid \$34 million each year in special education costs for the state in the future.

Thank you for your time and I appreciate including the total \$5.72 million ILP increment in the final budget for the future of our kids and our state. I encourage you to support all early childhood programs including Childcare grants, Head Start, and Parents as teachers as well.

Amy Simpson

Executive Director
Programs for Infants and Children
907-550-3024

From: [Elizabeth Spangler](#)
To: [Sheyna Wisdom](#)
Cc: [House Finance](#); alheaslet@alaska.edu
Subject: Re: support of ANSEP
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 8:45:33 PM

thank you Sheyna!

Beth Kitto Spangler
ANSEP Endowed Chair
University of Alaska Anchorage
(907) 748-4496
www.ANSEP.net

On Wed, Mar 12, 2025 at 4:05 PM Sheyna Wisdom <wisdom@aos.org> wrote:

Good afternoon,

The Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) is one of 11 regional systems across the US coast that represent NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). IOOS is a national-regional partnership working to use ocean data and information products in innovative ways to improve maritime safety, enhance the economy, and protect our environment. For the last three years, AOOS has partnered with ANSEP to develop the next generation of ocean scientists and policy makers. AOOS has hired three undergraduate interns as part of the University Success program. These interns are paired with Principal Investigators (PIs) conducting ocean research in Alaska who provide hands-on experience and mentorship to undergraduate students who have all continued or are continuing to work in the marine field in Alaska. AOOS has also partnered with ANSEP's Middle School Academy where experts in ocean observing work with middle school students from across Alaska to learn how ocean observing, technology, and informational tools improves maritime safety. AOOS and are working together to ensure the next generation is part of the solution to an ever-changing environment. **ANSEP is critical to the success of the education of students from across Alaska. We urge your support of this integral, important program.**

Sincerely,

Sheyna

Sheyna Wisdom, Executive Director
Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS)
wisdom@aos.org
907-748-5864 (cell)
1007 W. Third Ave, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501

From: [Cyndy Fry](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: SESA funding HB 53
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 4:59:04 AM

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) and the invaluable role it plays in supporting rural districts across Alaska, particularly in its work with students who have significant disabilities.

SESA's dedication and unwavering commitment to providing specialized services have made a profound difference in the lives of countless students, families, and educators in our most remote communities. The agency's efforts to ensure that students with disabilities receive the education and resources they deserve are indispensable, especially in rural areas where access to specialized services and professionals is limited.

SESA has been a critical partner for school districts striving to meet the unique needs of students with significant disabilities. Their support not only helps bridge gaps in services but also empowers local educators and families, enhancing the overall educational experience for these students. In Petersburg, we have a large number of students with significant disabilities. These disabilities have a wide range with unique needs from Autism, visual/hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, severe social emotional behavioral disabilities and traumatic brain injury. These require our special education to be well versed across multiple levels of curriculum, instruction and interventions that are individually appropriate to bring the best learning experience to our students. In addition, SESA staff have offered invaluable support to our families navigating the world of disabilities in the rural community.

I urge you to continue your support of SESA, as its work is essential to creating a more equitable and inclusive education system for all students, regardless of where they live. The agency's impact on rural Alaska communities cannot be overstated, and their work is more important than ever as we strive to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed. Our partnership with the SESA staff is essential for our students.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support of SESA. \

--

Cyndy Fry
Special Education Director
District Test Coordinator
1 (877) 526-7656*104

MISSION: What is our Purpose?

Petersburg Schools will advocate for continuous growth, promote a healthy environment, and provide diverse educational opportunities where all students achieve.

(FERPA). If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message is strictly prohibited.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Senior Community Grants
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 11:25:35 AM

Dear House Finance Committee:

Our household supports the 3 million dollar increase for Senior Community Grants across Alaska to sustain our current programs. We appreciate your support.

Thank you,

Alan Wolf, MD and Rose Wolf, RN

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Senior grant increase
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:34:48 PM

I support the 3 million dollar increase in the senior community grants budget for senior centers to continue nutrition. Transportation and other support services. These help seniors to continue to age in their homes.

Maria e viteri

[REDACTED]

Anchorage Alaska..

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: State funding for ANSEP
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:32:56 PM

Dear members of the House Finance Subcommittee,

I am writing to express my support for the continued full funding of ANSEP. I, my husband, and daughters, respectfully request the House Finance Committee to restore the full state funding for ANSEP. Reducing the funding would have serious consequences for the ANSEP Acceleration Academy High Schools, as well as the students and communities it serves across Alaska. **ANSEP is the most successful longitudinal education program in the nation for STEM-dual enrollment.** For 30 years, it has created opportunities for thousands of Alaska students. We urge the House Finance Committee to restore full state funding for ANSEP.

I am a lifelong Alaskan, and graduated from UAA with a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering and a minor in mathematics at the end of 2003. I was one of the first people to participate in ANSEP and ANSEP played a critical role in my families ability to afford my education. When I started college I was a young mother of two daughters, my husband had just gotten out of the Active Duty Army so that we could return to Alaska and I could have my families support to attend college. Being young and uneducated my husband joined the national guard and took jobs waiting tables and working construction to support our family. I went to school full time. ANSEP made this possible with the scholarship I received. My ability to get an education was a pivotal point in my life. I was the first in my family to graduate college, after I graduated I was able to support my husband while he went to college. ANSEP changes the trajectory of lives.

Please consider the following when assessing your decision to fully fund ANSEP:

- Students graduate high school with an average of 63 college credits – nearly two years of university coursework completed.
- Some students achieve remarkable milestones—one student recently graduated with 125 college credits.
- Families and the state save millions by reducing the need for university remediation and shortening time to degree completion.
- Students avoid three or more years of tuition and living expenses, easing financial burdens and increasing access to higher education.
- Higher retention and success rates strengthen Alaska's workforce and economy.

I am now employed as a Sr. Transportation Engineer / Project Manager with Professional Engineering (PE) licensure in 3 states. I routinely contribute back to the community through financial donations and volunteering. I serve on the Urban Design Commission. All of these things are possible because I was able to get an education. **Cost is often the number one barrier to education and ANSEP removes / reduces that barrier.**

Thank you,
Edith McKee

|

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Support for ANSEP Funding – Testimony
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:12:01 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

Dear House Finance Committee,

My name is Serina Wesen, and I am an ANSEP alum. I am a direct result of ANSEP's Acceleration Summer Components, having attended three in high school, as well as one year of the Summer Bridge program. Thanks to ANSEP's guidance and support, I now work with Arctic science research doing outreach and engagement management out of Utqiagvik.

The ANSEP Acceleration Academy did not exist when I was in high school (having graduated in 2016), but I had the opportunity to help run it from its first year in Anchorage in Fall 2018 through my graduation in Fall 2021. I also served as the Summer Bridge Program Director for ANSEP in 2021, which is ANSEP's pre-college summer component for high school graduates, where I worked closely with Acceleration Academy graduated high school students that were provided internships and beginning their careers where I was able to see firsthand their determination, passion, and motivation to succeed. Their drive to take on challenges and create brighter futures for themselves was inspiring, and I continue to give back to ANSEP by leading Snow Science and STEM activities for high school students during Career Explorations Week each year (see photos below).

ANSEP provides life-changing opportunities for Alaska's students, and reducing its funding would have a direct and negative impact on students and families across the state. From working with these students for many years, you get to feel their bow hearts that inspire them every step of the way. And now working with Arctic Research in Utqiagvik and across the Arctic Slope region, there is a need for these rural and indigenous students to be involved in the research, science, and engineering projects are affecting their home communities. I urge you to restore full funding for ANSEP to ensure this program continues to serve the next generation of Alaskan leaders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,
Serina Wesen



Showing Acceleration Academy students how deep glacier crevasses are, Matanuska Glacier, May 2024 (photo courtesy of Allie Heaslet).



Teaching students about snow science and glacier formations at Portage Lake, AK - April 2023 (Photo Courtesy of Allison Heaslet).



Helping Acceleration Academy students build a 3D ice lattice structure at the Campbell Creek Science Center - 2022 (photo courtesy Serina Wesen).



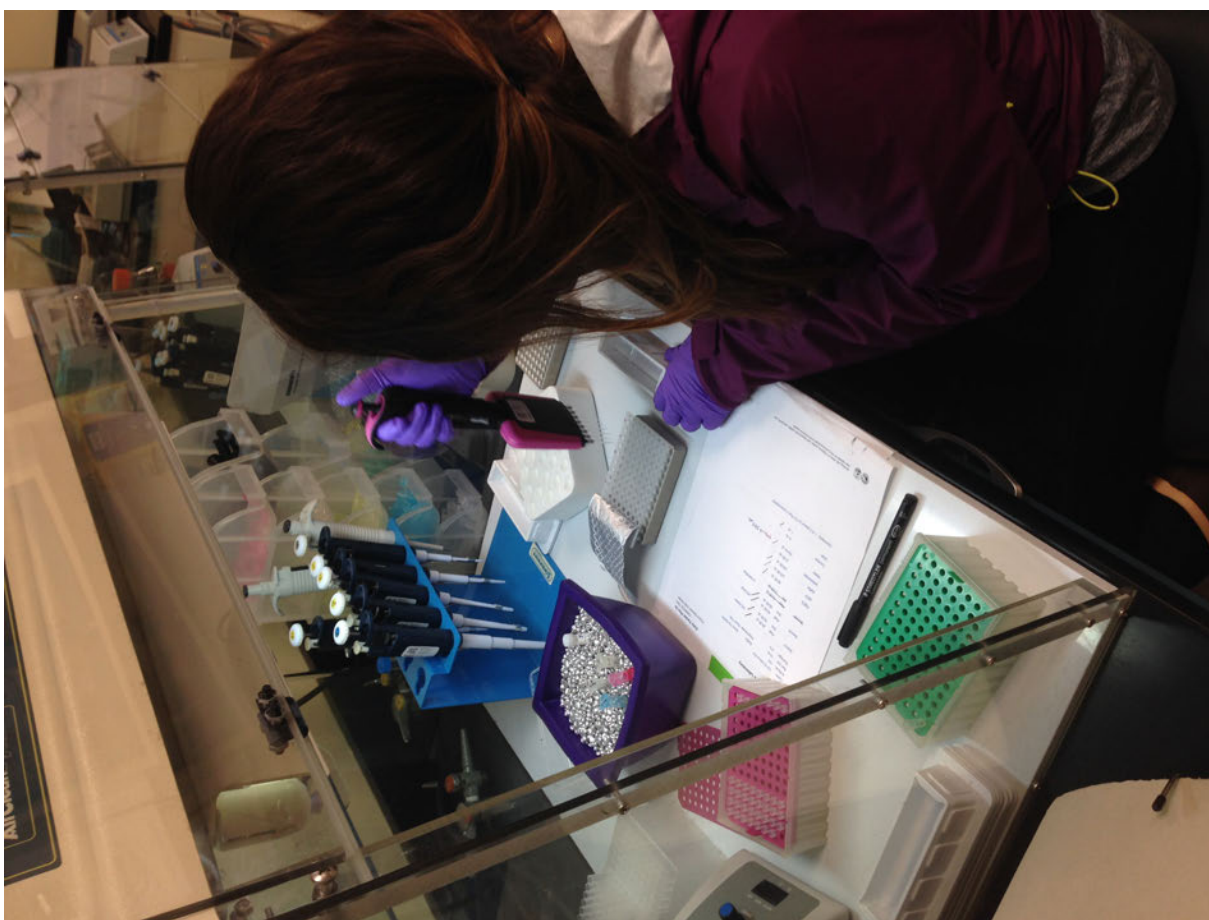
Eight ANSEP University Success friends travel to London for Spring Break - some long lasting relationships from attending Acceleration Academy in 2014! March, 2019.



Halloween costume competition during ANSEP Acceleration High School's first semester in Anchorage - Fall 2018 (photo courtesy Serina Wesen).



Working with ANSEP Acceleration high school students in 2017.



My first internship with USFWS Conservation Genetics Lab during my ANSEP Summer Bridge - 2016.



Acceleration Summer Academy 2015 - my second year with ANSEP!

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Serina Wesen

ANSEP Alumni

UAA Alumni, BS Natural Sciences with focus in Arctic Environmental Geophysics, minor in Mathematics

Snow Scientist - UAF Geophysical Institute

Arctic Science Outreach & Engagement Manager with UIC Science

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance; alheaslet@alaska.edu](mailto:alheaslet@alaska.edu)
Subject: Support for ANSEP funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 11:08:28 AM

To whom it may concern,
I am writing to support full funding for ANSEP.

Math is challenging for many, and the pedagogy that runs through this program is supportive enough to build confidence and skill among a range of students who want to pursue careers in science and engineering.

The origins of the program arise from Native ways of teaching and learning that are community oriented.

As an educator, I have witnessed many students who thrive in the program. I still remember the all female rocket team who came out of ANSEP and who represented alaska with victory at a national NASA event.

<https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/news/archive/2019/05/women-rocketry-team-breaking-just-sound-barrier-nasa-competition.cshtml>

This program does not discriminate. It is and always has been open to all students, and the Native approach to teaching and learning works for many, many students.

Please support their ongoing contribution.

Jackie Cason

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: alheaslet@alaska.edu
Subject: Support for Full State Funding for ANSEP
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 11:08:49 AM

Dear Members of the House Finance Subcommittee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued funding of the Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP) in the state's Operating Budget (HB 53). As a parent of a student who benefits from ANSEP, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact this program has had on my child and countless others across Alaska.

ANSEP has proven to be the most successful longitudinal education program for STEM dual-enrollment in the nation. For 30 years, ANSEP has provided opportunities for Alaska students to engage in rigorous, college-level coursework while still in high school. The program not only helps students graduate high school with an average of 63 college credits—almost two years of university coursework—but it also sets them on a path to succeed in higher education and careers in STEM fields. Some students have even earned as many as 125 college credits, which is a remarkable achievement.

Reducing funding for ANSEP would have devastating consequences for the students and communities it serves. The proposed cuts would negatively affect the ANSEP Acceleration Academy High Schools and disrupt the progress made in preparing Alaska's youth for higher education and the workforce. Additionally, this program saves families and the state millions of dollars by reducing the need for university remediation, shortening time to degree completion, and helping students avoid years of tuition and living expenses.

I urge the Subcommittee to restore full state funding for ANSEP. The program strengthens Alaska's workforce, supports economic growth, and provides life-changing opportunities for students. Without ANSEP, many students may not have access to the education they need to succeed, which ultimately limits the potential of our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will continue to support ANSEP and ensure that this invaluable program remains fully funded.

Sincerely,

Jason Klein
Wasilla, Alaska

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for HB 53: Operating Budget - Child Care Funding
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 12:34:58 PM

Dear House Finance Committee,

This email is my written testimony for HB 53, Alaska's Operating Budget. Specifically, I am writing to thank you for your critical support of child care: Please protect the \$7.725M recurring Child Care Grants restored in the Finance Subcommittee version of the FY26 Dept. of Health budget.

Alaska's children, parents and employers rely on this support. I believe that each family should be able to build itself as a reflection of its values, priorities, and skills so that the next generation may have a better life than we did. This investment in our youth does that and reflects that this state values family's contributions to it and wants us here and thriving.

Please support other child care priorities this year as well. Thank you!

Heather Fricaud
[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99508

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: school funding - budget
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 6:30:52 PM

House Finance Committee,

I have been following HB 69, education funding, and now I understand we need to figure out how to actually fund it within the State Budget. I don't know exactly how or when to weigh in on the actual funding method for the increased BSA as that bill is still moving, now transmitted to the Senate Education Committee. But I believe school funding is so critical for our State, I appreciate the opportunity to testify to your committee.

I have previously testified with concern about excess funding of charter schools, or other types of programs that take money from our public schools. I feel that funding our brick and mortar neighborhood schools should be the highest priority.

We home schooled our daughter as we lived in the bush with no alternative. We did not expect the State to pay us education (BSA) money, or for "enrichment". We were serviced by Centralized Correspondence Study out of Juneau and appreciated everything that was mailed to us - including lesson plans, text books, library books and related materials. We mused our dog team 7 miles each way to meet the weekly mail plane in great anticipation of the materials, including returned school work, graded papers and messages from our teachers. We were very grateful to have the CCS program available.

Our family supported our daughter's correspondence education with our time and expected nothing more from CCS or the State. If there are other Alaskan parents who wish to exercise "school choice", that's fine. But I feel they shouldn't expect the State to pay for that.

I particularly object to funding religious schools in clear violation of our State constitution. My parents sent me and my siblings to a Catholic school through 8th grade. But my parents paid for that.

I don't believe a fat PFD check is a higher priority than education. Our daughter is grown and we don't have grandkids in the State, but we still believe in funding schools ahead of our PFDs.

Thank you

Judy Miller - [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: support for child advocacy centers
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 6:25:55 PM

Alaskan Senators,

I am writing in favor of Child Advocacy Centers. I have worked in early childhood for almost twenty years and I can testify to the fact that children are an underserved segment of the population that has almost nobody to advocate for them. Alaska ranks between first and second on juvenile victims of abuse per capita and that's not something to be proud of, so I expect you to do what you can by releasing funds to CACs. Thank you.

--

Sincerely, Angel Peger (she/her)

[REDACTED]

I acknowledge that the land on which I live are the unceded ancestral lands and waters of the Tanana Dene people who stewarded them for thousands of years and continue to steward them.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Finance](#)
Subject: support funding of food resources in HB 53
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 7:47:56 AM

I am an anti-hunger advocate in Alaska. I volunteer weekly at a local food pantry. I see the growing need, and it scares me.

Our interfaith pantry allows people to select what they want to take from our shelves instead of us preparing a bag for them. We used to serve about 15-20 shoppers a week, who were responsible for feeding about 45-60 family members, but in the last year our numbers have doubled. There is regularly a line of a dozen people waiting for our pantry to open at 9:30 on Saturday mornings. Shoppers regularly speak of not being able to make ends meet so they have to rely on the indignity of food pantry shopping to provide for their families or themselves. We try to afford them the dignity of choice, but I'm afraid we are going to have to start imposing limits on what shoppers can take, as otherwise our shelves will be bare before the pantry closes at 11:00. We get most of the food we offer from the Southeast Alaska Food Bank, but even there, the amount of available food is declining, as grocery stores are being more cautious with donations in this economy.

I ask you to remember the hungry as you deliberate on the 2026 budget. Please continue to fund direct food purchasing programs like the recent \$1.5M Food Security Grant from the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development as well as the \$1.5M for Food Bank and Pantry Relief Fund from the Department of Health. And please, please please consider funding initiatives that feed Alaska's children, such as summer EBT and free and reduced school meals. I also volunteer as a Reader Buddy at my neighborhood elementary school, and I clearly see that student nutrition is a valuable component of the bigger school funding picture. School is often the only place students receive a hot meal, and there are many children who would otherwise go without, which affects their ability to learn.

Alaskans don't deserve to be hungry. We are a wealthy state. We can provide this basic resource to all Alaskans in need. Prioritize food access in this spending plan!

Thank you for your consideration and thoughtful deliberation on HB 53.

Jetta Whittaker
[REDACTED]
Juneau AK 99801

From: [Sheyna Wisdom](#)
To: [House Finance](#)
Cc: alheaslet@alaska.edu
Subject: support of ANSEP
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 4:05:49 PM

Good afternoon,

The Alaska Ocean Observing System (AOOS) is one of 11 regional systems across the US coast that represent NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). IOOS is a national-regional partnership working to use ocean data and information products in innovative ways to improve maritime safety, enhance the economy, and protect our environment. For the last three years, AOOS has partnered with ANSEP to develop the next generation of ocean scientists and policy makers. AOOS has hired three undergraduate interns as part of the University Success program. These interns are paired with Principal Investigators (PIs) conducting ocean research in Alaska who provide hands-on experience and mentorship to undergraduate students who have all continued or are continuing to work in the marine field in Alaska. AOOS has also partnered with ANSEP's Middle School Academy where experts in ocean observing work with middle school students from across Alaska to learn how ocean observing, technology, and informational tools improves maritime safety. AOOS and are working together to ensure the next generation is part of the solution to an ever-changing environment. **ANSEP is critical to the success of the education of students from across Alaska. We urge your support of this integral, important program.**

Sincerely,

Sheyna

Sheyna Wisdom, Executive Director
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