

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

January 29, 2009
9:04 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Kim Elton, Chair
Senator Bettye Davis, Vice Chair
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Donald Olson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Gary Stevens

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 57
"An Act relating to charter school funding."
HEARD AND HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 57
SHORT TITLE: CHARTER/ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL FUNDING
SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) THOMAS

01/21/09	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/16/09
01/21/09	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/09	(S)	EDC, FIN
01/29/09	(S)	EDC AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

CATHERINE REARDON, Aid
to Senator Joe Thomas
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented a sectional analysis of SB 57..

EDDY JEANS, Director of School Finance
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions about the department's position on charter school funding.

RICK LUTHI, Superintendant
Nome Public Schools
Nome, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

LAURIE SCANDLING, Assistant Superintendent
Juneau School District
Juneau, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

DAVE JONES, Assistant Superintendent
Kenai Peninsula School District
Kenai, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

BRENDA TAYLOR, President
Academic Policy Committee
Juneau Community Charter School
Juneau, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

MARGIE HAMBURGER, Site Manager
Juneau Community Charter School
Juneau, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

LINDA EVANS, Principal
Effie Kokrine Charter School
Fairbanks, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

BRAD FAULKER, representing himself
Homer, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

ANJI GALANOS, representing herself
Juneau, AK
POSITION STATEMENT:

JOHN ALCANTRA, Government Relations Director
National Education Association (NEA)
Anchorage, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

MIKE FISHER, Chief Financial Officer
Fairbanks School District
Fairbanks, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

SHANNA MALL, Principal
Winterberry Charter School
Anchorage, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

ANNIE KEEP-BARNES, Program Director
Head Teacher
North Pole Campus
Star of the North Secondary School
Fairbanks, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

RHONDA LOUGHMAN, Treasurer
Tongass School of Arts and Sciences
Ketchikan, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

BETH RIVEST, representing herself
Juneau, AK,

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 57.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[9:04:03 AM](#)

CHAIR KIM ELTON called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Davis, Huggins, Olson and Elton.

SB 57-CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING

CHAIR ELTON announced consideration of SB 57 Version E.

[9:08:11 AM](#)

SENATOR THOMAS remarked that the sponsor statement may be longer than is necessary for the committee members, but he felt some explanation was needed for the general public because there seems to be some confusion about why and how the [funding] calculations are made.

SB 57 corrects a flaw in the school funding laws for charter schools with fewer than 150 students. It fixes what he calls the Charter School penalty.

Current law results in charter schools with under 150 students receiving 30 to 45 percent less state funding than neighborhood schools of their same size. SB 57 funds these charter schools at a per-child rate closer to that of average, urban elementary schools.

Charter schools are public schools that provide valuable education options to Alaskan families. They increase learning opportunities and encourage parent and community involvement in our schools. Charter schools are designed and managed by parent-elected boards, under contract with their local school districts to create a school choice with the public school system. The very process of choosing engages parents and gives them a feeling of ownership, which in and of itself encourages student achievement. The legislature passed Alaska's initial charter school law in 1995. It authorized local school districts to approve charter schools in their communities subject to final approval by the State Board of Education. However the funding system has limited communities' ability to use the law to create and sustain these innovative programs.

SB 57 solves the funding problems in an equitable, fiscally responsible manner. It will support our schools and districts as they carry out the legislature's intent in creating the charter schools.

SENATOR THOMAS brought the committee's attention to a bar-chart that illustrates the count adjustment per student based on school enrollment for neighborhood schools, for charter schools under the current funding calculation and for charter schools under the proposed funding calculation.

[9:11:29 AM](#)

CATHERINE REARDON, Aid to Senator Joe Thomas, presented a sectional analysis.

The root of the problem is the way the foundation formula calculates the adjusted student count for charter schools versus neighborhood schools. The adjusted student count is the basis of state funding for all schools in Alaska. The funding a school district receives is calculated by multiplying this adjusted student count by the district cost factor, the special needs factor and other factors and finally by the dollar amount in the

base student allocation. The adjusted student count is determined by the school size formula in AS 14.17.450.

The formula in the law recognizes that economies of scale make it less expensive to operate a large school than a small school, therefore the enrollment of small schools is increased by a factor much higher than the adjustment for large schools. For example, the enrollment of a school of 75 students is adjusted to 123, a school with 400 students is adjusted to 472, and a school with 1000 students is adjusted to 1004. Charter schools with enrollment of less than 150 students are not treated as separate schools for purposes of the adjusted student count calculation. Instead, the Department of Education adds the charter school students to the students attending the largest school in their district and calculates the adjusted student count for the combined enrollment. This system makes the adjusted student count of the charter school lower than their actual enrollment while almost all other schools are adjusted upwards. (See "The Role of the "Adjusted Student Count" in School Funding".)

The statute contains brackets of student enrollment figures; for each bracket there is a base number of adjusted students granted, and then there is a multiplier for the students above the number at the bottom of the bracket range. The base number plus the multiplier, times the number of students in the school in excess of the base results in the adjusted student count. Using a school with 100 students as an example, the base figure is 122.85. That is added to the product of the multiplier (1.27) and the difference between the number of students enrolled and the lowest number in the bracket range, which is 75 in this case; so $122.85 + (1.27 \times (100-75)) = 154.6$.

Charter schools are the exception to this calculation rule. There is no base because they are lumped into the largest school in their district. For charter schools in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and MatSu, the multiplier for the largest school in their district is .84, so using that same calculation for a charter school with an enrollment of 100 students results in an adjusted student count of 84. An adjusted student count for a neighborhood school of 100 students in that area would be 154.6. That is the root of the funding problem for these schools.

[9:16:15 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS said he understands the penalty of lumping [charter school enrollment] into the larger schools but asked if

she had looked at the differential of the penalty in different communities.

MS. REARDON directed Senator Huggins's attention to the second page of the "Alaska Public Charter Schools Directory," which has a listing of charter schools by district and pointed out that Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau and Nome all have charter schools with enrollment of under 150 students.

[9:17:35 AM](#)

CHAIR ELTON interjected for those attending the meeting online, that much of the testimony is based upon charts and graphs that are difficult to follow. He said he would try to get the information to the [Legislative Information Offices] LIO and that he assumes attendees can also get the materials by calling Senator Thomas's office.

MS. REARDON continued to answer Senator Huggins's question. She said that Nome has Anvil City Science Academy, which has 44 students. Nome's largest school is in the bracket that results in a .97 multiplier. Homer has a charter school with approximately 77 students and Homer's largest school has a multiplier of .92. All of the other charter schools below 150 fall into the category of a .84 multiplier. Bethel's charter school did drop below 150 two years ago and was in the .92 category.

[9:19:14 AM](#)

SENATOR OLSON asked Senator Thomas if there is a provision for schools that can't grow any more because of facility constraints.

SENATOR THOMAS said no, they will remain as they are.

[9:19:59 AM](#)

MS. REARDON clarified that SB 57 says Charter Schools that are consistently below 150 would increase to a rate of 1.18, which is the per-student rate of adjustment of a school of 400. So the Nome charter school would go to 1.18. The second part of the bill says that charter schools in their first year of operation or that had 150 or more students the year before will have a one year hold harmless period, during which they will receive 95 percent of the adjustment given to schools of 150. After that year, if enrollment does not go up to 150 or above, the adjustment will go to 1.18. Some schools will always be under 150 students, but some schools that are generally over 150 may drop unexpectedly and perhaps temporarily.

[9:21:48 AM](#)

MS. REARDON added that Charter Schools that are within the one year hold harmless period must submit to their local school districts a plan for the following year, which includes a statement about whether they will continue to operate if enrollment does not increase to 150 students. The plan must detail transfer plans for the students, staff and materials if they intend to close. If they intend to continue operations, it must contain a projection of anticipated funding, a budget and a description of anticipated changes in the program, staff and curriculum.

[9:23:03 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked how much it costs a school under the current statute if enrollment falls from 150 to 149 students.

MS. REARDON answered that they lose about half a million dollars.

[9:23:44 AM](#)

SENATOR DAVIS moved to make SB 57, Version E the working document of the committee. There being no objections it was so ordered.

SENATOR THOMAS wrapped up with his hope that the committee will consider the bill and make suggestions to improve it.

[9:24:52 AM](#)

CHAIR ELTON said he anticipates there may be questions from the administration about a fiscal note. He asked Senator Thomas if he had any comments about that.

SENATOR THOMAS said the explanation of the fiscal note is almost as complex as the formulas and suggested that Eddy Jeans could explain it more clearly.

[9:25:50 AM](#)

SENATOR OLSON asked who Senator Thomas expects to oppose this bill.

SENATOR THOMAS answered that he is not aware of anyone who will do so.

SENATOR OLSON said he is surprised that he has seen so little feedback from school districts as to whether or not they are in favor of the bill.

SENATOR THOMAS said he hopes they will hear some comment from them, perhaps today.

9:27:12 AM

SENATOR HUGGINS opined that this formula is so complicated and hard to follow, that he thinks they should look at a number of possible solutions. For example, they could simply change the overall count factor, which would drive up the fiscal note. He admitted that it really is a problem and said he would be interested to hear what others, including Mr. Jeans, have to say about how to fix it.

9:28:21 AM

CHAIR ELTON said he has begun getting a lot of email from parents and charter schools, as well as one from the superintendant of schools in Anchorage. Her board has not taken a position, but she notes that they are very interested in maintaining charter schools and are aware of the draconian situation. He anticipates that there will be much more interest after this hearing.

9:29:52 AM

SENATOR DAVIS commented that she appreciates all of the information Senator Thomas and his staff prepared for the committee.

9:30:16 AM

EDDY JEANS, Director of School Finance for the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, said the current charter school legislation allows up to 60 charter schools in state; only 22 are operating at this time. Of those 22, 18 meet the 150 student threshold to count as a separate site. He admitted that the change in funding from 150 students to 149 is pretty draconian, but sees this bill as a way to address it. This is clearly a legislative call, and he stated that the department will support the legislature in their decision.

He reiterated that funding for those charter schools that never intend to reach 150 students will be set at 1.18; those that are above the threshold and fall below 150 will have a transition year during which they will be funded at 1.38. Within that component, he said, another piece provides that a new charter school with 120-150 students will be funded at that same rate during their first year of operation.

The department prepared a fiscal note to illustrate the impacts of the legislation, which shows that it will cost the state an additional \$174,000. He pointed out however, that the figure listed under Nome is \$21,796; the charter school would actually benefit more than that under this provision, but because the Nome school district is under the hold harmless provision that was passed last year in SB 278, the overall increase in revenue to the district is only \$21,796. The actual increase to the charter school under this legislation would be approximately \$87,000.

[9:34:38 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked if the department had discussed using a step-down technique so the funding would be reduced less dramatically for one, two, perhaps up to ten students, and the draconian measures would kick in at ten.

MR. JEANS said the hold harmless method is a reasonable approach for dealing with those situations. The question is how much money is the state willing to provide to small charter schools that are operating in larger urban areas. The current mechanism is probably not appropriate, but the actual number is up to the legislature. He reminded the committee that he had provided them with a schedule during the previous session that had funding for small charter schools at 1.08. He believes they also considered 1.17 and 1.27 at different times.

[9:37:17 AM](#)

CHAIR ELTON asked if Mr. Jeans would be available later, as they need to take public testimony.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked Mr. Jeans to recap for the committee the hold harmless provision that passed during the last legislative session.

MR. JEANS explained that if the district's overall adjusted [average daily membership] ADM for school size decreases by five percent from the prior year, the state will provide a step-down from their existing funding to 75 percent of the difference in funding, then 50 percent, then 25 percent until they get to the new funding level. This is a good approach that was incorporated in the old funding formula, but it was left out when the formula was re-written in 1998.

[9:38:48 AM](#)

CHAIR ELTON asked Mr. Jeans to stay at the table for other questions.

9:39:09 AM

RICK LUTHI, Superintendent of Schools, Nome Public Schools, Nome, AK, expressed the school board's thanks to the committee for considering this bill. He commented that Anvil City Science Academy in Nome has been in operation for over 10 years now and serves 44 students. He invited all of them to visit their charter school if they are ever in Nome; it is a wonderful culture and environment and is doing great things for kids. Very simply, this is a proposal that will help them keep going. They feel it is reasonable and will not only help their charter school but the whole district as they educate the students they are charged to take care of. They appreciate the committee looking at this and very much hope they will give it strong consideration.

SENATOR OLSON asked Mr. Luthi if the factor of 1.18 is going to be enough to meet the financial needs of their school.

MR. LUTHI said there are constant challenges; they worry about facilities and space constantly but think this increase is going to help and is a step in the right direction. They have a group of dedicated staff and parents and will make it work with whatever resources the legislature is able to provide them.

CHAIR ELTON released Mr. Jeans, thanking him for his testimony. He said that there are quite a few people who want to testify, so instead of limiting public testimony to a particular length, he would ask that people do not repeat testimony. If their comment has been made, he asked that they just express agreement.

9:43:37 AM

KIKI ABRAHAMSON, President, Charter School Association, Fireweed Academy, Homer, AK, said their charter school program is based on a theme immersion model and uses a lot of constructive principles. She had her sixth grade class of 20 students with her and they all expressed strong support for this bill with a rousing ovation.

Fireweed Academy has been very fortunate in being allowed to share facilities through the Kenai School District, but they are struggling. They don't want to get to 150 students but have had to try to do that in order to keep their doors open. They haven't been able to do it because there aren't any facilities for growth. It is very hard for them to know that their students, who walk through the north door of the school, get 25

percent less funding than the students of West Homer Elementary who walk through the main door.

MS. ABRAHAMSON said that during a two-day summit of the Charter School Association, the words she heard most often were "innovation" and "equity." She worked on the facilities and funding strand, and that group came to consensus on recommending two action items: to pursue equitable funding and to explore equitable access to facilities. She stressed that, as Mr. Jeans pointed out, for over 12 years the existing charter school legislation has handicapped the current charter schools and has provided disincentives for creating new ones. She closed by saying that they are very appreciative that the committee is supporting change to the legislation to promote innovation and equity for all Alaska students.

[9:46:40 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked Ms. Abrahamson if they get the local contribution.

MS. ABRAHAMSON said they get the minimum only.

SENATOR HUGGINS pointed out that is another disparity in funding for charter schools, and the fact that they get only part of the local contribution is a distortion he has never understood.

[9:47:33 AM](#)

LAURIE SCANDLING, Assistant Superintendent, Juneau School District, said their board has adopted a position as part of their legislative priority package on rectifying the built-in inequity in funding for charter schools. For a total of 11 years she managed alternative schools in the Juneau school district, serving students who were not successful in what some call mainstream education, and she has no doubt that alternatives are necessary. One size does not fit all. She said she will not speak specifically about the Juneau charter school, although she noted that they do face a viability issue over the next two years if the funding formula does not change. She wanted to speak to the stability, predictability and equity of funding.

MS. SCANDLING said that in the past two years, two charter schools, one in Anchorage and one in Fairbanks, have faced the position of having to close due to a sudden drop in enrollment below 150. Both of those schools have issues that need to be rectified if the state does indeed care about providing viable options for students across the state. It is more than a Juneau issue; it is an issue that affects many communities and an issue

of equity for many students who are seeking an alternative. She understands that this legislation would provide funding at the 400 student school size. She said they are not looking to create a plethora of tiny schools; she understands that the economy of scale cannot afford that. She said the Juneau School District appreciates their supporting this legislation and offered to answer any questions.

9:51:28 AM

DAVE JONES, Assistant Superintendent, Kenai Peninsula School District, Kenai, AK, went on record as saying their district has four charter schools. They support them because of the alternatives they offer the students and because of their history of high academic achievement. This bill directly addresses the situation of Fireweed Academy in Homer. They usually operate with about 70 students and would like to continue to do so; this bill would help them do that. Fireweed is unique in that it shares a building with one of their traditional neighborhood schools. He attended a Parent Advisory Committee Meeting there and was asked why the charter school students receive less funding than the students attending the neighborhood school. His only response was that the statute says that's how it is. He stressed that he is here today to support this bill because he would like to go back to the parent advisory board and tell them equity has been addressed. He is also in favor of the hold harmless provision.

9:54:30 AM

BRENDA TAYLOR, President, Academic Policy Committee, Juneau Community Charter School, thinks this bill is the best proposal to solve the current problem and to promote charter schools for the future. When the charter school bill passed 12 years ago it was seen as a way to broaden the educational options for students across Alaska. That has not been able to happen in all communities yet; this bill would make that possible.

MS. TAYLOR wanted to explain why charter schools can't always be over 150 students. Some charter schools are targeting a small population that will never be 150; perhaps it is a group of at-risk middle school students. In Fairbanks they have cobbled together a couple of different school programs into one school with over 150 students in order to meet the needs of discreet populations in that way. Some communities cannot support a school larger than 150, either because the community is small or, as in Juneau, because neighborhood schools might be adversely affected. And last, small is a very important educational tool. A small school can provide a better

environment for some students, particularly students with special social/emotional or other needs. Small schools also have the flexibility to do special things with the curriculum that cannot be done in a larger school, like bringing students to this meeting.

[9:58:55 AM](#)

MARGIE HAMBURGER, Site Manager, Juneau Community Charter School, expressed how important these schools are and how fortunate she is to be able to send her four children to the Juneau Community Charter School. If she didn't work there... if she didn't live downtown... she probably couldn't enroll her children there because the school does not have sufficient funding to provide bus service, a rally program for after school care, a school counselor or other things that regular public schools can provide.

BRENDA TAYLOR introduced the four charter school students who attended this meeting with her: Anouk Otsea, Ava Tompkins, Ryan Moritz and Nick Tragis.

[10:01:20 AM](#)

LINDA EVANS, Principal, Effie Kokrine Charter School, Fairbanks, AK, supports this bill. She feels charter schools are important to assist students who do not fit into the mainstream system. Their charter school has been having great difficulty getting to and staying at 150 students. They have 93 percent Alaskan native students, although enrollment is open to all. Their mission is to provide different educational options to help their students succeed. They use the "learning style concept" and integrate Alaska native culture into the western educational system. An emphasis at Effie Kokrine is a strong connection between what students experience in school and in their communities. They provide many cultural opportunities and opportunities for their students to get out into the community. She thinks there must be an equitable way in statute to assure every student a good public education. They are not asking for anything excessive, and provide a service to those students who would otherwise drop out. They also offer an early college grant program that allows students from 7th to 12th grade to earn credits with the University of Alaska and dual credit on their high school transcripts; 86 of their 150 students are taking college credit classes. She supports this legislation as a way to bring equity to their students.

[10:05:49 AM](#)

BRAD FAULKER, Homer, AK, said his son graduated from Fireweed Academy two years ago, and he could never understand why the charter school students received less funding. Although he doesn't see 1.18 as entirely equitable, it goes a long way toward equity, and he sees it as an excellent compromise. He thanked the committee for having this hearing.

10:07:00 AM

ANJI GALANOS, Juneau Community Charter School parent agrees.

10:07:17 AM

JOHN ALCANTRA, Government Relations Director, National Education Association (NEA), Anchorage, AK, supports SB 57. He is going to the 53rd annual NEA Alaska Delegate Assembly where there will be about 400 members, including Todd Hindman from Nome Education Association, who is in charge of the charter school there. NEA's members have been active as educators and as parents in creating a lot of the charter schools, so they definitely support SB 57. They have 217 legislative items on the books, and he is pleased to be down to 216. He thanked the committee for bringing this legislation.

10:08:47 AM

MIKE FISHER, Chief Financial Officer, Fairbanks School District, Fairbanks, AK, agreed with the previous testimony and read the final paragraph of his written testimony.

If you believe in schools of choice for students and parents and that local school boards and the State Board of Education have done their jobs when they have reviewed and approved charter applications, then it is probably appropriate to correct a rather faulty funding mechanism that has such a catastrophic impact on charter schools for what turns out to be very small variations in enrollment.

10:09:45 AM

SHANNA MALL, Principal, Winterberry Charter School, Anchorage, AK, thanked the committee for the opportunity to testify. She echoed previous testimony that charter schools do provide innovation, a chance for groups of people to come together and form a community for connection and collaboration. It is much needed in a world that is often too big for some children and families. She stressed the importance of equitable funding and facilities. Their school began in summer 2005. They thought they had facilities in a church, but found out in June that it wasn't going to work. They had to find another building and convinced

the owner to make \$700,000 in changes to the building with a promise to pay later. Construction didn't begin until August, so they had to struggle through weeks of moving from place to place, teaching school outdoors for one week, spending another week in one church and five weeks in another, doing their own custodial work in addition to teaching. It was October 18th when they finally got into their building.

MS. Mall said they had started the year with 180 students, but had an enrollment in October of only 144, which meant they lost about \$680,000. They had to let two teachers go, let their administrative and office staffs go, eliminate all of the arts instructors and ask the remaining staff to fill all of the positions. Throughout that first year, safety was a huge concern because they didn't even know who was coming in and out of the building. They had made so many promises to everyone... parents, students, the building owner... and at the end of that year they still owed \$178,000. They were able to pay that out of the second year budget, but that limited the programs they were able to offer.

By their second year in operation Winterberry Charter School had 155 students; the third year they had 165; and this year they reached 180 students. They are doing well now, but could not have persevered if they had not had the complete commitment and support of the school district.

[10:14:31 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked if Ms. Mall agreed that the biggest challenge for charter schools, among many, is facilities.

MS. MALL said it was a chicken and egg question, but that was certainly a big problem for them.

SENATOR HUGGINS said the legislature may have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with the federal stimulus package to look at charter school facilities as a component to receive some of that money and encouraged her to get together with Kiki Abrahamson to discuss that.

[10:15:48 AM](#)

ANNIE KEEP-BARNES, Program Director, Head Teacher, North Pole Campus, Star of the North Secondary School, Fairbanks, AK, said their charter school has two campuses with over 207 students. They were chartered to positively intervene for students who don't fit into the traditional school model. She is very much in favor of this bill and excited about the opportunity it

presents. The first year hold harmless provision is brilliant; there are so many unexpected difficulties during that year. She was encouraged that they are looking at the small schools as well; innovation in education should not be limited to larger communities or institutions.

Facilities are a huge problem. She commented that the Fairbanks School District has been tremendously supportive and has helped them every step of the way. When a school falls below 150 it is an impossible situation for the district; they are either forced to consider closing a school that opened with a lot of popular support or to fund it at the expense of their other needed programs. The district really has their hands tied, because, under charter school law, the district owns the charter school teachers' contracts, so if they have a charter school that doesn't make the enrollment they are still responsible for those teachers' contracts. It places a terrible burden on the district.

[10:20:07 AM](#)

RHONDA LOUGHMAN, Treasurer, Tongass School of Arts and Sciences, Tongass School District, Ketchikan, AK, said she would like them to consider appropriate class size, its educational relevance and how the funding formula impacts that. Their school is a K through six school in its sixth year. They would like to keep their class size at 20, but with seven teachers, that would put them below 150 students, and they could not function financially at that level. With their current classroom size maximums, they are full at 165 kids. They have managed to stay over 150 each year but this year are at 152.4, which is too close for comfort. She fully supports SB 57 and hopes they will continue to look at it.

CHAIR ELTON asked for other testimony but said they have only about eight minutes remaining.

[10:22:14 AM](#)

BETH RIVEST, parent of two students at the Juneau Community Charter School, Juneau, AK, wanted the committee to know how hard it is to raise money to overcome shortfalls in the budget. Their parent body works very hard to raise the money they need to keep going. She emphasized that charter schools teach to families; they make families better, and she really appreciates the legislature's support.

CHAIR ELTON reiterated that they will not move the bill after one hearing; he believes it will come back before their

committee fairly quickly. It does have another committee of referral and Finance will take a much closer look at the fiscal note. He assured the audience that this will not be a new issue for Finance as they spent a lot of time last session talking about the needs of charter schools.

SB 57 was held in committee.

10:24:05 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Elton adjourned the meeting at 10:24:05 a.m.