

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
March 18, 2014  
5:31 p.m.

[5:31:22 PM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stoltze called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Alan Austerman, Co-Chair  
Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair  
Representative Mark Neuman, Vice-Chair  
Representative Mia Costello  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative David Guttenberg  
Representative Lindsey Holmes  
Representative Cathy Munoz  
Representative Steve Thompson  
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Lynn Gattis; Phyllis Carlson, Juneau School District, Juneau; Pat Olsen, Teacher, Kodiak; Robert Whipple, Lower Yukon Education Association; Tiffany Jackson, Aleutians East Borough School District; Robert Claus, Craig City School District, Craig; Lauren Smoker, Self, Juneau.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Pearl Brower, Ilisagvik College, Barrow; Kathy Leary, Ilisagvik College, Barrow; Kathleen Rock, Ilisagvik College, Barrow; Ben Glover, Ilisagvik College, Barrow; Danny Frazier, Superintendent, Dillingham City School District, Dillingham; Maria Calhoun, Self, Homer; Karen Shemet, Self, Homer; Donna Girard, Self, Anchor Point; Todd

Hindman, Anvil City Science Academy, Nome; Stewart McDonald, Kodiak Island Borough School District (KIBSD), Kodiak; Tim Parker, National Education Association (NEA) Alaska, Fairbanks; Tracey Martinson, NEA Alaska, Fairbanks; Fred Villa, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; Pete Lewis, Superintendent, Fairbanks School District, Fairbanks; Sean Genson, Teacher, Fairbanks; Heather Damario, Teacher, Fairbanks; Richard Benneville, Self, Nome; Siobhan O'Hara, Teacher, Anchorage; Sunny Hilts, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, Soldovia; Dr. Lisa Parady, Superintendent, North Slope Borough School District, Barrow; Heather Handyside, Self, Anchorage; James Parkin, Teacher, Angoon; Lisa Rieger, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Anchorage; Ed Hayes, Self, Haines; Geoffrey Humphries, Self, Anchorage; Joey Eski, Aquarian Charter School, Anchorage; Meghan Steenburgh, Self, Anchorage; Robin Wittrock, Self, Anchorage; Donna VanFlein, Charter School Parent, Anchorage; Pamela Samash, Self, Nenana; Regan Brooks, Self, Anchorage; Greg Reynolds, Southeast Career Consortium, Sitka; Lon Garrison, Sitka School Board President, Sitka; Kari Sagel, Self, Sitka; Wendy Ranney, Parent, Cordova; Joan Diamond, Self, Anchorage; Michael Rehberg, Winterberry Charter School, Anchorage; Vivienne Murray, Public Education, Anchorage; Alison Arians, Self, Anchorage; Becca Bernard, Self, Anchorage; Tam Agosti-Gisler, Anchorage School District, Anchorage; Tina Bernoski, Self, Anchorage; Jessie Menkins, Self, Anchorage; Deena Mitchell, Self, Anchorage; Daniel Sullivan, Teacher, Petersburg; Jon Dufendach, Partners for Progress, Delta; Tim Walters, Teacher, Mat-Su; Ernie Kirby, Self, Mat-Su; Joe Boyle, Matanuska Susitna Education Association (MSEA), Mat-Su; Karen Barnard, Self, Anchorage; Celia Rozen, Self, Anchorage; David Nees, Self, Anchorage; Lisa Paesani, Self, Anchorage; Rita Dexter, Self, Anchorage; Lilian Worl, Self, Juneau; Janel Walton, Self, Anchorage; Lorraine Trask, Self, Fairbanks; Christopher Benshoof, Self, Fairbanks; Steve Atwater, Kenai Peninsula School District; Charlene Arneson, Chugach School District, Whittier; Sarah Monkton, Self, Anchorage.

#### SUMMARY

HB 278 EDUCATION: FUNDING/TAX CREDITS/PROGRAMS

HB 278 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#hb278

HOUSE BILL NO. 278

"An Act increasing the base student allocation used in the formula for state funding of public education; repealing the secondary student competency examination and related requirements; relating to high school course credit earned through assessment; relating to a college and career readiness assessment for secondary students; relating to charter school application appeals and program budgets; relating to residential school applications; increasing the stipend for boarding school students; extending unemployment contributions for the Alaska technical and vocational education program; relating to earning high school credit for completion of vocational education courses offered by institutions receiving technical and vocational education program funding; relating to education tax credits; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date."

[5:31:30 PM](#)

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY

[5:33:57 PM](#)

PEARL BROWER, ILISAGVIK COLLEGE, BARROW (via teleconference), testified in support of the extension of the Alaska Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP) through 2024 as a regional training center under the North Slope education and training cooperative. She stated that Ilisagvik College requested inclusion in the list of regional training centers funded under TVEP for 10 percent of the funds or approximately 4.5 percent of the college's entire budget. She requested the inclusion of the college and noted the offering of 247 classes in the 2012/2013 academic year, which served 1,877 students.

[5:36:46 PM](#)

KATHY LEARY, ILISAGVIK COLLEGE, BARROW (via teleconference) commented on the funding request provided by Ms. Brower. She informed the committee that the college partnered with

companies in the oil, gas, construction, maritime and utilities fields. She noted that the North Slope Borough funded two-thirds of the college's budget. She discussed the partnership with Highland Mountain Correctional Center for credits and education for inmates to facilitate successful reentry to society. She encouraged support for the TVEP aspect of the bill.

[5:39:17 PM](#)

KATHLEEN ROCK, ILISAGVIK COLLEGE, BARROW (via teleconference) testified as a student at Ilisagvik College. She listed many of the classes that she was interested in for career advancement. She stated that she worked with the oil and gas industry, and hoped to further her training for career advancement. She urged the inclusion of the TVEP portion in the legislation.

[5:41:27 PM](#)

BEN GLOVER, ILISAGVIK COLLEGE, BARROW (via teleconference) pointed out that the college served the work force development needs in the area. He noted that operations existed to serve Highland Mountain Correctional Center for the reduction of recidivism rates. He worked to expand classes in Fairbanks and Anchorage. He stated that he wished to cater to the needs of the community. The college required \$1.7 million in state funding.

[5:43:44 PM](#)

DANNY FRAZIER, SUPERINTENDENT, DILLINGHAM CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, DILLINGHAM (via teleconference), discussed his school district's successes. He stated that the district required funding to continue the school system in Dillingham. He explained that school districts would cut positions without requested funding. He highlighted the need for increases for the district's preschool program.

[5:45:56 PM](#)

MARIA CALHOUN, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference) testified in favor of early education tax credits through HB 278. She shared that the program evaluation outcomes indicated substantial benefits including increases in family strength. She stated that families and agencies struggled to meet demands. The tax credits would allow for future

sustainability of the programs. She added that Parents as Teachers increased college graduation rates. Many other early childhood education programs would benefit from the funding.

[5:48:26 PM](#)

KAREN SHEMET, SELF, HOMER (via teleconference) testified in support of the legislation. She stated that the investment allowed access to the vital services. She shared that she understood the value of the support personally and stressed that funding the legislation would allow Parents as Teachers to thrive.

[5:50:09 PM](#)

DONNA GIRARD, SELF, ANCHOR POINT (via teleconference) testified in support of funding for Parents as Teachers. She mentioned the business SPROUT that helped her grandchildren thrive. She stated that her grandchildren suffered from fetal alcohol syndrome and she could not raise the children without the service.

[5:52:17 PM](#)

TODD HINDMAN, ANVIL CITY SCIENCE ACADEMY, NOME (via teleconference), testified in favor of the implementation of new charter schools and continued operation of well-established charter schools. He stated that the facility operated solely on state-generated funding. He explained that one-time appropriations did not benefit the Anvil City Science Academy. He stressed that state-generated funding was essential. He wished for a compromise in the legislation.

[5:53:39 PM](#)

STEWART MCDONALD, KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT (KIBSD), KODIAK (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill, specifically the Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase. He stated that inevitable reductions would occur without an increase in funding. He stated that opportunity grants allowed choices in the community. He mentioned the project including the language of the opportunity grant to be included in the bill.

[5:56:11 PM](#)

TIM PARKER, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (NEA) ALASKA, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified as an educator in support of the bill. He stated that the delegate assembly affirmed the support. He supported student learning in public schools. The current budget situation placed public schools in a difficult financial situation. He stressed that increased class size did not improve student learning. He pointed out that the challenging directives allowed for the measurement of student growth.

[5:59:20 PM](#)

TRACEY MARTINSON, NEA ALASKA, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of increasing the BSA. She stated that she wished to improve her community's opportunity for education. She informed the committee that the class sizes in Fairbanks were held at a minimum, which benefitted her son. She spoke about the decreases in teaching staff. She noted that the increase in class size was detrimental to children's education.

[6:01:37 PM](#)

FRED VILLA, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) spoke in support of the TVEP portion of HB 278. He explained that technical education and vocation was his focus. He hoped for an increase in existing funding rather than cutting the entire funding. He stated that TVEP offered more than 100 industry-recognized work force certificates.

[6:03:51 PM](#)

PETE LEWIS, SUPERINTENDENT, FAIRBANKS SCHOOL DISTRICT, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) supported an increase to the BSA. He stressed the importance of maintaining quality programs and appropriate class sizes. He discussed the facility needs of charter schools.

[6:06:09 PM](#)

SEAN GENSON, TEACHER, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation. He stated that both parents and teachers worked hard to support children. He asked the state to do its part for the team. He stated that the BSA maintained schools. Reasonable class sizes

allowed students to receive individual attention emotionally and academically. He noted that funding factors were critical to quality education. He noted that the BSA fell behind inflation, which discouraged the maintenance of schools.

[6:08:05 PM](#)

HEATHER DAMARIO, TEACHER, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of education funding. She testified as a mother who wished to keep class sizes small. She wished for an increase in the BSA. She urged the committee to value education.

[6:09:35 PM](#)

RICHARD BENNEVILLE, SELF, NOME (via teleconference) testified as an employee of the public school in Nome in support of the legislation. He mentioned that the children were a large part of the equation and he urged the committee to give them the highest priority. He noted that the state and country's constitution mandates the provision of public education.

[6:11:24 PM](#)

PHYLLIS CARLSON, JUNEAU SCHOOL DISTRICT, JUNEAU, testified in support of the legislation and an increase to the BSA. The resolution passed by the Juneau School Board was sent to the committee last week. She explained that 100 jobs were cut along with considerable administration support. Students would be better served if the energy spent on budgets was spent in the classroom. She advocated for a multi-year funding plan that addressed expanding costs.

[6:14:09 PM](#)

PAT OLSEN, TEACHER, KODIAK, testified in support of the legislation. She stated that the borough was forced to cut 10 teaching positions, which resulted in program cuts and increased class sizes. She stated that large class sizes allowed fewer opportunities between students and teachers. Students that felt valued had better attendance. She requested an increase in the BSA.

[6:15:48 PM](#)

SIOBHAN O'HARA, TEACHER, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation. She stated that children must be educated. She shared difficult stories about her students.

[6:18:15 PM](#)

ROBERT WHIPPLE, LOWER YUKON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, testified in support of the legislation. He supported a significant increase to the BSA.

[6:19:05 PM](#)

TIFFANY JACKSON, ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, testified in support of an increase to the BSA. She was involved in the budgeting process in her district, which was increasingly difficult with flat funding. She stated that she wished to provide Common Core Standards and Teacher Evaluation Requirements, which would increase funding needs. The estimated cost of implementing the programs was \$300 thousand for her district. She spoke about her district's efforts to decrease costs.

[6:21:15 PM](#)

ROBERT CLAUS, CRAIG CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, CRAIG, testified in support of the legislation and a reasonable increase to the BSA. He stated that the Craig City school district achieved good results by cutting energy costs in all of the buildings. He stated that utilizing non-qualified teachers resulted from the decreased funding. Increased class sizes and limited advisory positions were also results of the decreased funding.

[6:23:06 PM](#)

LAUREN SMOKER, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in support of the legislation. She pointed out her many accomplishments as a parent. She noted that many teachers helped her son with less and less funding. She advocated for an increase in the BSA.

[6:24:10 PM](#)

SUNNY HILTS, KENAI PENINSULA, BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, SOLDOVIA (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation. She stated that progress was slowed by the

flat-funded BSA. She stressed that the vocational education program was detrimental to the success of some students. She encouraged the public school support. Charter schools provided a wonderful service.

[6:26:28 PM](#)

DR. LISA PARADY, SUPERINTENDENT, NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, BARROW (via teleconference), testified in support of an increase in the BSA to assist with the increasing costs experienced by her district. She commented on the added costs associated with the implemented cause of the No Child Left Behind mandate. The request to adjust the BSA allowed quality education for children. The proposed increases in HB 278 contained less than optimal annual increase.

[6:29:47 PM](#)

HEATHER HANDYSIDE, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), supported a BSA increase beyond the level in the legislation. She discussed that the issue impacted all Alaskans; everyone recognized the importance of a good education system. The current school funding was not sufficient. She reminded the committee that prioritizing education worked; she spoke to successes of funding increases and impacts on the state's schools. She urged the committee to increase the BSA by \$400 to provide stable and predictable funding.

[6:32:14 PM](#)

JAMES PARKIN, TEACHER, ANGOON (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Southeast Career Consortium. He discussed the successes of the program over the years.

[6:34:27 PM](#)

LISA RIEGER, COOK INLET TRIBAL COUNCIL, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the continuation of educational tax credits to allow programs to leverage funds. She was supportive of changes to the charter school legislation. She testified in favor of funds for pupil transportation. She was grateful for the funding of the residential stipend portion of the bill. She thanked the committee for its focus on education.

[6:35:55 PM](#)

ED HAYES, SELF, HAINES (via teleconference) testified in support of an increase in the BSA beyond the level proposed in HB 278. He supported TVEP and the Southeast Career Consortium. He believed that a partnership approach would allow fresh ideas and resources for the students and community.

[6:36:45 PM](#)

GEOFFREY HUMPHRIES, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) spoke in support of assessments for evaluation and tracking of school performance. He cautioned the committee that that an application of programs vetted in other parts of the country may not have the same result in Alaska. Additional time was required for evaluating the impact of programs developed outside of the state.

[6:37:52 PM](#)

JOEY ESKI, AQUARIAN CHARTER SCHOOL, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified that the state's charter schools remained at a disadvantage over other public schools. The bill failed to address funding equity and only entitled charter schools to funds through the BSA formula. She spoke to facilities expenses; the bill contained no provision to help charter schools to pay for facilities. She spoke about expensive lease agreements for charter schools. She stated that no other public school was burdened by the expense. She asked the committee to include mandating language to increase BSA formula.

[6:41:26 PM](#)

MEGHAN STEENBURGH, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke about her daughter in a charter school. She discussed that charter schools had been operating with half the funding of neighborhood schools and were required to pay rent, maintenance, utilities and insurance. She spoke about recent cuts to the charter school's programs. She stressed the frugality of her school. She discussed high rent and maintenance costs. She proposed a state-funded per-pupil facilities allowance, which existed as a successful model in other states. Many charter schools were currently at a breaking point. She stressed that charter schools were supported by both Democrats and Republicans.

6:43:55 PM

ROBIN WITTRUCK, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of increasing the BSA by a minimum of \$400. She spoke about her children in the Anchorage School District. She was happy with the education her children were currently receiving, but she was troubled over funding to education in recent years. She pointed to busy teachers and limited resources in schools. She spoke about the dedication teachers had to their students in the state. She stated that teachers would lose their class periods and would no longer be able to run after school or attend extracurricular activities.

6:46:58 PM

DONNA VANFLEIN, CHARTER SCHOOL PARENT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of charter school funding. She pointed to a statute related to charter schools with annual program budgets. She stated that the amount generated by students enrolled in the charter school ought to be determined in the same manner as in a public school. She stated that charter schools in Anchorage were receiving roughly half the money neighborhood schools received. She discussed funds used for operating expenses. She spoke to high facility costs and costs for janitorial services. The costs should be covered by the school district. She stated that charter schools were thriving in Alaska. She encouraged dedicated facility funding. Funds should be spent on education and not building costs.

6:50:30 PM

PAMELA SAMASH, SELF, NENANA (via teleconference), was heartbroken by testimony begging for state money. She mentioned the dedication teachers had to the state's schools and students. She did not want Common Core, Obamacare, or No Child Left Behind. She was saddened by the state of the education system. She asked the legislature to make a stand against the federal government. She asked the legislature to have a heart.

6:53:14 PM

REGAN BROOKS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for charter schools. She asked for an

increase in the BSA of \$400 or more. She shared that her decision to remain in the state was due to the state's education system. She was concerned that cuts to education jeopardized the system. She implored the committee to consider an increase.

[6:54:59 PM](#)

GREG REYNOLDS, SOUTHEAST CAREER CONSORTIUM, SITKA (via teleconference) stated that TVEP had been created to support education; however the consortium was still underfunded. He stressed that students in Southeast Alaska deserved the same resources and quality education as the rest of the state. He shared that the consortium was the only group in the region with a plan and had extensive training experience with high schools and communities.

[6:57:12 PM](#)

LON GARRISON, SITKA SCHOOL BOARD PRESIDENT, SITKA (via teleconference), asked the committee to include funding for the Digital Learning Initiative. He communicated that a digital learning program would make a large difference to students in the district's schools. He hoped for additional funding in the BSA; it would take a \$500 increase to make the district whole. He spoke to the ability to plan and budget in the future. He talked about costs that would come from the operating budget of the district. He stated that the bill did not include sufficient funding increases.

[6:59:18 PM](#)

KARI SAGEL, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference) supported a substantial increase to the BSA.

[6:59:57 PM](#)

WENDY RANNEY, PARENT, CORDOVA (via teleconference), voiced support for library funding in the schools. She asked the committee to increase the BSA to a realistic number. The investment would be directed to children and the state's future. She spoke to the necessary multitasking of teachers given the current lack of funds. She stated that the children were suffering because of budget cuts. She did not want to see increased classroom sizes or a loss of services.

[7:02:20 PM](#)

JOAN DIAMOND, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) asked for an increase in the BSA by a minimum of \$400. If a child could not learn to read by the third grade it was difficult for them to catch up. She shared a story about bringing students to the appropriate grade level; some students did not have support at home.

[7:05:25 PM](#)

MICHAEL REHBERG, WINTERBERRY CHARTER SCHOOL, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for charter schools. He asked for an increase in the BSA. Charter school budgets were typically small. He requested an annual increase that would allow charter schools to plan. He spoke to the small size of the school; it had relatively small staff levels. He hoped the committee would consider a BSA increase.

[7:07:23 PM](#)

VIVIENNE MURRAY, PUBLIC EDUCATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of public education. She stated that public schools provided her children with a good education. She was nervous about the cutting of operating funds or stagnant funding that was causing schools to make cuts. She spoke to a scholarship cut from the prior year. She did not believe it was right for children to miss life-changing opportunities. The communities had an obligation to help the children. She encouraged the committee to fund education through HB 278.

[7:09:56 PM](#)

ALISON ARIANS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of an increase of the BSA at a minimum of \$400 and for forward-funding by at least three years. She spoke to estimates for high classroom sizes. She was not alone in her concerns. She was unhappy with cuts to teachers and counselors. She testified that all types of individuals were upset by the cuts. She spoke to parents' involvement in the issue. She spoke to different ways parents were working to be involved. Education was the primary issue for many voters in the current year.

[7:12:30 PM](#)

BECCA BERNARD, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of an increase of the BSA at a minimum of \$400 and for forward-funding by at least three years. She stated that there had not been an increase in education funding since 2011. The trend was dangerous. She stated that graduation rates had risen from 66 percent to 79 percent. She stressed the importance of maintaining the successes. She spoke about her son who attended a charter school. She discussed the low staff levels at the school. She emphasized that it was hard to imagine what would be cut without an increase to the BSA. She spoke about a new coalition supporting education.

[7:15:01 PM](#)

TAM AGOSTI-GISLER, ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of increased funds to the school district. The district was struggling to keep teachers in the current year; 140 teaching positions had been cut. She spoke to a lack of funds and cuts across the board at the district. Some of the cuts had increased efficiency; however, some areas were cut too much. She questioned the impacts on teachers. The cuts would have an impact on increased graduation and reduced dropout rates. She supported a BSA increase of \$400 in the current year. The district had been innovative with tax funding. She asked for a three-year increase in the BSA.

[7:18:30 PM](#)

TINA BERNOSKI, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), appreciated the governor's bill; however, the proposed BSA increase was not sufficient. She believed it made economic sense to invest in the state's children. She appreciated the opportunity to speak. She urged the committee to make a significant increase to the BSA by at least \$400.

[7:21:07 PM](#)

JESSIE MENKINS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified in support of public education. She spoke about her personal experience in education. She understood the state's unique challenges related to various interests and the vast landscape. She testified in support of public schools including charter, vocational, neighborhood schools. She believed legislators all cared about the state

and its future. She stressed that the state was on the precipice of many exciting plans. The state needed a vibrant workforce to put the plans in action. She believed the governor's proposal fell short. She spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. She urged the committee to prioritize and forward-fund education.

[7:24:48 PM](#)

DEENA MITCHELL, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), stressed funding for public education. She relayed that if children were not educated, the state's future would not be successful. She spoke from the perspective of an involved parent. She stressed that schools were not failing. She provided statistics showing significant improvement. Some of the progress had stagnated due to a lack of funds. She stated that paid teachers and support staff needed to be maintained for schools to succeed. She pointed to significant cuts in recent years.

[7:27:56 PM](#)

DANIEL SULLIVAN, TEACHER, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), spoke to sections 18 through 20 of the legislation. He spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. The increased level of funding would allow for teacher retention. The current bill failed to meet the goal. He believed in every child and that they deserved every opportunity to succeed.

[7:29:57 PM](#)

JON DUFENDACH, PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS, DELTA (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation. He spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. He appreciated the help.

[7:32:03 PM](#)

TIM WALTERS, TEACHER, MAT-SU (via teleconference), spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. He stated that flat or minimal funding increased class sizes. He stated that increases in class size compromised the education of children. He stressed that children were the best investment made by the society.

[7:33:50 PM](#)

ERNIE KIRBY, SELF, MAT-SU (via teleconference), spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. He stated that the small increases to the BSA included in the governor's budget were inadequate. Ideally the BSA ought to be able to keep up with inflation.

[7:35:15 PM](#)

JOE BOYLE, MATANUSKA SUSITNA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (MSEA), MAT-SU (via teleconference), spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. He stated that flat-funding the BSA made it difficult for people to do their jobs. He stated that elementary teachers were forced to take on many alternative duties with the lack of funding. He suggested that the teaching careers were less appealing.

[7:37:27 PM](#)

KAREN BARNARD, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified as a product of the Anchorage School District. Her tension was exacerbated by the lack of pre-k education. She stated that she had taken eight years of higher math. She spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. She spoke in favor of smaller class sizes and the restoration of music and sewing classes in the schools.

[7:41:22 PM](#)

CELIA ROZEN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), discussed her experience as a PTA mother. She noted the operating expenses taken by the PTA. She spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. She stated that she experienced a flat budget at work. She stated that a budget that was unsustainable led to loss of career counselors and teachers and scholarships.

[7:46:01 PM](#)

DAVID NEES, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified in support of the governor's proposed model of BSA increase. He suggested targeting funding increases to teachers. He opted for language specifying direct education, which would allow a higher percentage of state money to be used by districts.

[7:48:05 PM](#)

LISA PAESANI, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), addressed prior testimony regarding the figures and effects of large class sizes provided by Mr. Nees. She commented on the increased graduation rates resulting from a past increase of the BSA. She supported the bill, but recommended further increases in the BSA to \$400 or more. She urged the committee to amend the bill to allow the BSA to keep pace with inflation.

[7:51:37 PM](#)

RITA DEXTER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. She noted the importance of test preparation, which was compromised by the funding cuts. She spoke about her wonderful experience in high school.

[7:53:01 PM](#)

LILIAN WORL, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. She supported the maximum increase to stem the cuts in Alaska school districts. She mentioned that 10 percent was cut in the Juneau School District. She pointed out the impacts of the cuts. She spoke about increases in graduation requirements and rates.

[7:57:00 PM](#)

JANEL WALTON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. She mentioned the increases of utility costs among the state. She questioned the testimony of David Nees. She testified in opposition to the bill introduced by the governor. She spoke about the benefits of increasing the BSA as seen in the last few years. She wished to inflation-proof the BSA.

[7:59:42 PM](#)

LORRAINE TRASK, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. She spoke in favor of small class sizes. She informed the committee that her daughter had 28 other children in her classrooms.

[8:01:17 PM](#)

CHRISTOPHER BENSHOOF, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference) testified in support of the legislation. He spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more. He spoke about the reasons that teachers leave the profession.

[8:03:21 PM](#)

STEVE ATWATER, SUPERINTENDENT, KENAI PENINSULA SCHOOL DISTRICT (via teleconference), commented on section 5, items (d), (e), (f) and (g) that provided a charter school a process to appeal a local school board's decision to deny a charter school application. He encouraged striking the items from the bill. He commented on section 18 regarding the BSA. He stated that his district faced a large deficit and had cut \$1.5 million already. He appreciated the proposed increase to the BSA, but recognized that the amount was not sufficient to affect the deficit. He proposed an increase to \$5930 for next year, \$6055 for FY16 and \$6180 for FY 17.

[8:05:24 PM](#)

CHARLENE ARNESON, CHUGACH SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITTIER (via teleconference), testified in support of sustaining educational services for students with the limited resources available. She expressed pride in her staff. She spoke about the value of prioritizing education.

[8:07:58 PM](#)

SARAH MONKTON, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference) testified in support of the education bill. She stated that she volunteered in the neighborhood school and was very happy with the small class sizes. She spoke about her many duties as a volunteer and spoke about different children's learning styles. She spoke in support of a BSA increase of \$400 or more.

[8:12:03 PM](#)

Co-Chair Stoltze acknowledged the time spent by committee members allowing the testifiers the opportunity to speak.

Co-Chair Stoltze CLOSED public testimony. He appreciated committee members' suggestions that David Teal, Director, Legislative Finance Division present figures related to the history of education funding and the rates of funding and

the impact on the increases of the budget growth. He believed that the information would be accurate and non-biased if coming from Mr. Teal.

Representative Wilson asked about the historic difference between state and federal funding.

Co-Chair Stoltze asked members to direct their questions for Mr. Teal to his office.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[8:17:17 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.