

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 2, 2024

8:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Jamie Allard, Co-Chair
Representative Justin Ruffridge, Co-Chair
Representative Mike Prax
Representative CJ McCormick
Representative Tom McKay
Representative Rebecca Himschoot
Representative Andi Story

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Dan Ortiz

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION(S): DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

- HEARD

SENATE BILL NO. 13

"An Act relating to costs of and charges for textbooks and other course materials required for University of Alaska courses; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 13

SHORT TITLE: UNIVERSITY: TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS COST

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MYERS

01/18/23	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
01/18/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/23	(S)	EDC
03/13/23	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/13/23	(S)	Heard & Held

03/13/23 (S) MINUTE (EDC)
 03/20/23 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
 03/20/23 (S) Moved SB 13 Out of Committee
 03/20/23 (S) MINUTE (EDC)
 03/22/23 (S) EDC RPT 4DP
 03/22/23 (S) DP: TOBIN, GRAY-JACKSON, STEVENS, KIEHL
 05/05/23 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 05/05/23 (S) VERSION: SB 13
 05/08/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 05/08/23 (H) EDC
 02/02/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

DEENA BISHOP, Commissioner
 Department of Education and Early Development
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint, titled "Education Financial Deep Dive."

KAREN MORRISON, Director
 School Finance and Support Services
 Department of Education and Early Development
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint, titled "Education Financial Deep Dive."

SENATOR ROBERT MYERS
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented SB 13.

DAWSON MANN, Staff
 Senator Robert Myers
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave the sectional analysis for SB 13, on behalf of Senator Myers, prime sponsor.

SARA PERMAN, State Relations Manager
 Office of Government Relations
 University of Alaska System
 Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 13.

BENJAMIN SHIER, Chief Information Technology Officer

University of Alaska System
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 13.

ACTION NARRATIVE

8:00:01 AM

CO-CHAIR JAMIE ALLARD called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Representatives Prax, McKay, Himschoot, and Allard were present at the call to order. Representatives McCormick, Story, and Ruffridge arrived as the meeting was in progress.

The committee took an at-ease from 8:00 a.m. to 8:02 a.m.

PRESENTATION(S): Department of Education and Early Development

8:02:28 AM

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the first order of business would be the presentation, titled "Education Financial Deep Dive."

8:03:57 AM

DEENA BISHOP, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), began a PowerPoint presentation, [hardcopy included in the committee packet], titled "Education Financial Deep Dive." She noted that the request was made to review all accounts. She began on slide 2, titled "Mission, Vision and Purpose," and focused on "Vision," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

"All students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them - Alaska Statute 14.03.015."

8:05:28 AM

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 3, titled "Alaska's Education Challenge," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Five Shared Strategic Priorities:

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

[8:06:04 AM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 4, titled "Agenda," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Funding Sources to School Districts

- Federal Grant Awards
- State Grant Awards
- State Aid to Schools
- Local Aid to Schools
- FY2024 Budget Unreserved Fund Balance

COMMISSIONER BISHOP welcomed questions during the presentation and added there are three pieces of backup information for research purposes, and that the information is as detailed as possible as was requested by Co-Chair Allard.

[8:07:37 AM](#)

KAREN MORRISON, Director, School Finance and Support Services, Department of Education and Early Development, continued the PowerPoint presentation. She pointed out that enclosure 1 is a spreadsheet, and she moved to slide 5, titled "FY2024 Projected K-12 School District Revenue Sources \$2,696,944.3." She explained that the amount is a projected combined total. She said that 50 percent comes from state grant and state aid, 30 percent comes from budgeted local funding sources, and 13 percent is received through federal grant funds.

[8:09:22 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked which districts receive private grants.

MS. MORRISON replied that that topic would be addressed further down in the slides. She continued to slide 6, titled "Federal Grant Awards to K-12 School Districts," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Title I, Part A Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies** \$68,848.5 awards to 51 districts

- Title I, Part C Education of Migratory Children \$28,875.5 to 41 districts

- Title 1 (Improving Education for the Disadvantaged & Struggling Students (Competitive) \$458.9 to 4 districts

- Title I, Part D Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk \$596.3 to 6 districts

- Title II, Part A Preparing, Training and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other School Leaders** \$14,275.6 to 53 districts

**Federal grant program which allows carryforward of unused awards.

[8:11:43 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON moved to slide 7, titled "Federal Grant Awards to K-12 School Districts," which she stated was a continuation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Continued)

- Title III, Part A Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students** \$2,104.0 to 13 districts

- Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) \$9,858.0 to 49 districts

- Title IV, Part B 21st Century Community Learning Centers** \$5,882.1 to 8 districts
 - School Improvement 1003a \$4,512.0 to 31 districts
 - McKinney-Vento Homeless** \$357.6 to 22 districts
 - Migrant Literacy \$310.6 to 36 districts
- **Federal grant program which allows carryforward of unused awards.

[8:12:49 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON moved to slide 8, titled "Federal Grant Awards to K-12 School Districts," featuring Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA), which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Individual with Disabilities Education (IDEA)

- Title VIB** \$53,868.7 to 54 districts
- Disabled 619, Preschool** \$1,531.7 to 53 districts
- Special Education Discretionary \$544.0 to 4 districts
- Disabled 619 Discretionary \$60.0 to 2 districts

Other Federal Grants

- Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) \$4,758.3 to 43 districts
- Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) \$15,081.7 to 28 districts
- Alaska Trauma Recovery in Schools (TRIS) \$80.5 to 1 district

**Federal grant program which allows carryforward of unused awards.

[8:13:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY sought confirmation that the federal grants are awarded to the districts to help supplement programs and the intent is to meet children's needs.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP confirmed that was correct.

[8:14:48 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON proceeded to slide 9, titled "Federal Grant Awards to K-12 School Districts," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Other Federal Grants Continued

- Project Aware (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) \$1,420.7 to 3 districts
- Stronger Connections \$4,325.7 to 9 districts
- Child Nutrition Programs- Actual Disbursement through October 2023 \$27,580.7 to 46 participating districts
- Institute of Museum and Library Services \$2.5 to 2 districts
- National Endowment for the Arts \$6.5 to 1 district

[8:17:37 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY brought up child nutrition programs and asked whether the federal government had increased their contributions.

MS. MORRISON said she would get back to Representative Story with an answer at a later date.

[8:18:41 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON moved to slide 10, titled "Federal Grant Awards to K-12 School Districts," which focused on expired COVID-19 grant awards. She summarized the slide, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

COVID-19 Grant Awards that Expired 9/30/2023

- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund CRRSA Act \$1,259.7 to 12 districts - Expired 9/30/2023
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund CRRSA Act Reserve \$296.8 to 13 districts - Expired 9/30/2023
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund American Rescue Plan - Individual with

Disabilities Education Act \$3,142.3 to 15 districts -
Expired 9/30/2023

- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund American Rescue Plan - Individual with Disabilities Education Act Preschool \$280.3 to 9 districts - Expired 9/30/2023

[8:20:09 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked if there were any funds left over.

MS. MORRISON replied that she would follow up. She proceeded to slide 11, titled "Federal Grant Awards to K-12 School Districts," which focused on current COVID-19 Grant Awards, and read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Current COVID-19 Grant Awards

- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund American Rescue Plan \$109,670.2 to 43 districts
- American Rescue Plan - Homeless \$193.4 to 5 districts
- American Rescue Plan - Homeless II \$781.5 to 14 districts
- American Rescue Plan - After School (Competitive) \$444.3 to 2 districts
- American Rescue Plan - Summer Program (Competitive) \$1,732.4 to 8 districts

[8:21:29 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked whether there were any improvements in the education system with all the additional funds.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied that the department can provide those data in the spring.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked whether the reading data would come through with the Alaska Reads Act

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied yes.

[8:22:10 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE brought up the subject of improvement and whether there was any data that would be available before this spring.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied the department has mid-year data from early learning assessments, which she related would be on DEED's website shortly.

[8:23:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked what funds helped buy computers.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said the funds were directed to districts and they determine their programming. She added it is determined at the local level, not the state level.

[8:24:31 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON continued on slide 12, titled "Private Grant Awards to K-12 School Districts," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Alaska State Council on the Arts Private Grant, Rasmussen Foundation \$3.2 to 1 district
- Alaska State Council on the Arts Private Grant, Margaret A Cargill Foundation Private Grant, MACF \$69.8 to 11 districts

MR MORRISON proceeded to slide 13, titled "Additional State Funded Grants to School Districts," featuring six different grant awards, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Alaska State Council of the Arts (General Fund Match) \$18.5 to 9 districts
- Pre- K Grants \$3,017.1 to 9 districts
- Alaska Reads Act \$2,999.9 to 7 districts
- Youth In Detention \$1,100.0 to 6 districts
- Alternative Schools \$302.9 to 9 districts

- Career and Technical Education CTE Programs of Study (CTEPS) Grants \$925.0 to 13 districts 13

\$ in thousands

[8:26:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY drew attention to the third point regarding the Alaska Reads Act, she asked whether the amount was the Pre-K money and to what districts.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP offered her belief it was in regard to a competitive grant.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY sought clarity that it is not the districts that were rated as needing the most help in reading.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied no, they were specifically grants that districts applied for to do special programs.

[8:27:23 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON continued on slide 14, titled "State Funded Grants to School Districts," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Suicide Prevention \$235.8 to 8 districts
- Broadband Access Grant \$6,221.7 to 25 districts
- Residential Schools projected \$9,190.2 to 7 districts

\$ in thousands

[8:28:09 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked whether there was an increase in funds for the suicide prevention grant during the pandemic.

MS. MORRISON replied that she would provide the answer at a later date.

[8:28:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK asked whether the department has been "behind it all" in paying out state-funded grants and, if so,

whether there is anything the body can do to help ensure those payments are made timely.

MS. MORRISON replied that she is not on the grant side of the house, but she would follow up and provide the answer at a later date.

[8:29:19 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON moved to slide 15, titled "K-12 State Aid to School Districts Based on Fall 2023 OASIS Data," that featured five appropriations, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Pupil Transportation \$70,840.0 to 46 districts *
- Quality Schools \$4,127.1*
- Dividend Raffle \$499.7*
- Onetime Funding \$87,443.0
- Base Student Allocation / Foundation Award \$1,150,514.5*

*Preliminary numbers; 30-day district comment period ends February 3, 2024

\$ in thousands

[8:30:54 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON moved to slide 16, titled "FY2024 Local Revenues in School Districts' Budgets." She said the following are budgeted numbers, not awards, submitted to DEED. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- City/Borough Appropriation \$530,070.4 to 32 districts
- In-Kind Services \$20,292.2 to 14 districts
- Earnings on Investments \$5,949.7 to 39 districts
- Other Local Revenue \$9,403.1 to 47 districts
- Tuition from Students \$235.0 to 3 districts

- Tuition from Districts \$530.0 to 2 districts

\$ in thousands

[8:32:22 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON concluded on slide 17, titled "FY2024 Local Revenues in School Districts' Budgets," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- E-Rate Funding \$95,493.0 to 53 districts
- Federal Revenue \$129,143.8 to 44 districts
- Transfers In \$5,139.4 to 8 districts
- FY2024 Budgeted Unreserved Fund Balance \$200,037.7 in 44 districts

\$ in thousands

[8:33:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX expressed curiosity regarding how the unreserved fund balance is sorted.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP responded that the money is utilized to provide programs. She added it is the districts' budgeted money they are taking from their savings to create a balanced budget.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether it is fair to say that the unreserved fund balance has nothing to do with the earnings on investments.

MS. MORRISON confirmed that is correct.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there is a way to identify how much the total investments are by district.

MS. MORRISON said the requirement for the budget submittal is to report earnings on investment, but DEED does not have information on what the sources of the earnings are.

[8:36:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked Commissioner Bishop how she used the COVID-19 funds when she was a superintendent in Anchorage

COMMISSIONER BISHOP shared a general sense of how the funds were utilized, which included additional staffing, personal protective equipment (PPE), computers, full scale summer schools, and at times, food services.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked what Commissioner Bishop kept in the fund balance.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD reminded the committee that Commissioner Bishop is "our commissioner," and opined that her speaking of her time as a superintendent may not be relevant to this meeting.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP confirmed she would just speak to the city ordinances and board policy. She said board policy in the Anchorage School District (ASD) is to have an 8 percent unreserved balance.

[8:39:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT referred to the 10 percent fund balance that was suspended through 2025 and asked how many districts are in excess of the 10 percent.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said the department provided a fund balance report last December and will have another in February. She added that the balance now can go over 10 percent. She said DEED does not collect monthly fund balance reports, they are collected at the local level.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked about the general purpose of federal funding.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied that there was a report in the 1960s that demonstrated that students have learning levels that many times depend on where the students start, as some kids show growth in school but some start at different levels. The federal government then tried to provide funds to states to equalize the resources for students, she said.

[8:42:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked for an example of a district making an investment.

MS. MORRISON said it could be a savings account earning interest or certificate of deposit (CD). She added it could be money that is not needed at that very moment.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked for confirmation that if federal money came in, and a district put it into a six-month CD, 5th district could increase the amount it received, and then in six months it would have that much more.

MS. MORRISON replied that is not correct. Grants are based on a reimbursement system so "you" must have the actual expenditures.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP added that aside from federal grant funds, other funds could be invested.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT brought up the Alaska Reads Act grant and opportunity funds. She asked if all seven districts took advantage of that.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said they can provide information on the districts that receive a preschool grant outside the Act.

[8:46:18 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON added that it is all on the spreadsheet [included in the committee packet].

[8:46:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX sought more information on the reserve funds and the earnings on investment.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP said many of the funds could have been from local contribution and the state foundation formula.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX suggested to "dig into this more" and he noted that at least half comes out of the state budget. He opined there may be a more financially efficient way to meet the need.

[8:49:47 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE referred to the spreadsheet under the column labeled "budget unrestricted fund balance" on line 3 and sought more understanding of the line item.

[8:51:33 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON clarified that fund balance is a measure of equity between revenues and expenditures and not necessarily related to a savings account. It is past funds that created this balance.

[8:55:11 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE expressed his confusion of fund balances being a mixture of dollars which, over time, may have accumulated but are now needed to balance the budget. He asked for help to "put those things together."

MS. MORRISON acknowledged that school finance is complicated. She clarified that they are only talking about the operating budget. She gave a brief explanation of how the ending fund balance is calculated.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE offered an example of the ASD budget of unreserved funds. He asked whether it was a correct statement that ASD utilized "ninety some" million dollars of its unreserved funds in its 2024 budget to create a balanced budget.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP clarified that districts pool their fund balance, but ASD did not use \$98 million to make its budget.

[8:59:26 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked for clarity that the \$200 million is just money that is unreserved and not being used.

MS. MORRISON said DEED could provide the beginning fund balances and the ending per the budgets to give a perspective.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE said he did not see the number referenced regarding a starting balance on his spreadsheet.

MS. MORRISON said it may be helpful to have a comparison for the actual balance at the end of fiscal year 2023 (FY 23) that comes from the audited financials. She noted these would be projections.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP added that the budget is a plan to utilize funds, so those audited numbers would reflect what was actually utilized.

[9:03:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY requested to see a new pencil chart of the last 10 years that would show the total amount of money that went to education from all five sources and divide it by the average daily membership (ADM) for each of those years.

[9:05:23 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE expressed that he is still trying to understand the unreserved fund balance and focused on Kenai for an example on the spreadsheet.

MS. MORRISON replied that the 172.5 million is a total of every column in the spreadsheet and the unreserved fund balance is included.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE said he could do the quick math, but still tried to come to grips with what was being budgeted.

[9:09:19 AM](#)

MS. MORRISON stated that without having the ending fund balance numbers, she could not give a solid answer.

[9:10:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK remarked that there is a lot of specific information on what districts are paying for, and he sought more specifics on expenditures down to the items.

[9:11:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD asked how much each student in the ASD gets according to the numbers on the spreadsheet.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied she does not have the number, but it could be provided at a later date.

[9:13:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY commented that Juneau would be happy to talk about the budget.

[9:14:18 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:14 a.m. to 9:17 a.m.

SB 13-UNIVERSITY: TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS COST

9:17:06 AM

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the final order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 13, "An Act relating to costs of and charges for textbooks and other course materials required for University of Alaska courses; and providing for an effective date."

9:17:23 AM

SENATOR ROBERT MYERS, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented SB 13. He proceeded with the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

For decades a major roadblock to the acquisition of higher education in this country has been costs. Students in Alaska and throughout the United States have often found themselves in difficult situations attempting to balance the various costs of higher education such as tuition, room and board, and course materials. For many students the cost of material can be a deciding factor in the decision to take a course due to the sometimes-exorbitant prices of required course materials. Students often find themselves as consumers subject to a captive market that has experienced a colossal growth in price over the last several decades. The costly and unique nature of the textbook and course material market has led to many students being forced to "shop around" and attempt to engage the market as informed consumers.

The Textbook Cost Transparency Act provides students with vital information about their textbook and course materials while they are registering for classes, allowing them to make informed choices and financially plan. The goal of this legislation is to provide students with as much information regarding cost as early as possible in the registration process with clearly defined definitions integrated into the University of Alaska's shared online course catalog (UAOnline). By allowing students to see which classes come at "zero-cost" or "low-cost" they will be able to make more informed financial decisions more easily.

While faculty will remain the paramount deciders of class materials, we believe that by providing students

with this information we will be building towards a more equitable and cost-effective University System for students at the class level.

[9:19:44 AM](#)

DAWSON MANN, Staff, Senator Robert Myers, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Senator Myers, prime sponsor, gave the sectional analysis for SB 13, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1: Page 1, Lines 4-6

This section establishes that this act may be known as the "Textbook Cost Transparency Act".

Section 2: Page 1, Lines 7-14, Page 2, Lines 1-16

This section outlines the information that the University of Alaska must provide in the University systems online course schedule relating to class materials and automatic fees required for the materials. This section provides statute definitions for "course materials", "online course schedule", "zero-cost resources", and "low-cost resources". This section also directs that the universities online course schedule must include search functions to identify courses with only zero-cost or low-cost materials required.

Section 3: Page 2, Line 17

This section establishes an effective date for the bill of July 1st, 2026.

MR. MANN offered his appreciation to the representatives from the University of Alaska (UA) for building the student information system modernization project from the ground up and having this legislation in mind.

[9:21:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked how the bill related to Representative Carrick's bill.

SENATOR MYERS said the bill is word for word what Representative Carrick introduced on the House side.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT referred to the changes to the online system and asked whether UA would absorb those costs.

SENATOR MYERS replied that UA is putting in new computer systems from the ground up, and it would be easier and cheaper to put something in as it is building the system.

[9:23:16 AM](#)

SARA PERMAN, State Relations Manager, Office of Government Relations, University of Alaska System, stated that UA did not put a fiscal note forward because in 2022, the legislature appropriated \$20 million for student information systems upgrades. She added that UA took a previous platform and extended it through 2023, and recently began implementing the funding.

[9:24:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX opined there is no reason not to pass SB13. In terms of managing textbook costs, he questioned what would be accomplished.

MS. PERMAN said SB 13 did not specify decreasing costs; however, both this bill and another Act from 2008 require cost transparency.

[9:26:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK asked for a ballpark figure on the flat fee.

MS. PERMAN deferred to [Mr. Shier].

[9:27:08 AM](#)

BENJAMIN SHIER, Chief Information Technology Officer, University of Alaska System, said the number is around \$230, which is a partnership with Barnes and Noble.

[9:27:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD opened public testimony on SB 13. After ascertaining no one wished to testify, she closed public testimony.

[9:28:10 AM](#)

SENATOR MYERS noted that in the bill packet there are letters of support.

[9:28:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD set an amendment deadline for SB 13.

[SB 13 was held over.]

[9:29:13 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.