

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 6, 2024

3:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Löki Tobin, Chair  
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair  
Senator Jesse Bjorkman  
Senator Jesse Kiehl  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 97

"An Act authorizing lump sum payments for certain teachers as retention and recruitment incentives; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 97

SHORT TITLE: TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/08/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/08/23	(S)	EDC, FIN
03/24/23	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/24/23	(S)	Scheduled but Not Heard
04/03/23	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/03/23	(S)	Heard & Held
04/03/23	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/06/24	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

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

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered a brief overview of SB 97 on behalf of the administration.

RANDY TRANI, Superintendent  
Mat-Su Borough School District  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Invited testimony for SB 97.

DAYNA DEFEO, Director  
Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR)  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Invited testimony for SB 97.

NICOLE LYKE, Counselor  
Klatt Elementary School  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Invited testimony for SB 97.

DAN MACLEAN, Teacher  
Service High School  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Invited testimony for SB 97.

NATASHA GRAHAM, Teacher  
Service High School  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Invited testimony SB 97.

JUDY CARSTENS, representing self  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

CHRIS HELDEMANN, President  
Juneau Education Association  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

MICHELLE OLDS, Teacher  
Klatt Elementary School  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

TOPAZ STOTTS, Teacher  
Klatt Elementary School  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

SARAH CAMPBELL, representing self  
Ketchikan, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

JOHN HARGIS, Superintendent  
Lower Yukon School District  
Mountain Village, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

LOGAN PITNEY, Teacher  
South Anchorage High School  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

LON GARRISON, Executive Director  
Association of Alaska School Boards  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

PETER HOEPFNER, Vice President  
Cordova School District  
Cordova, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

MARGARET MCDONAGH, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

JULIANA ARMSTRONG, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

WILL MULDOON, Finance Chair  
Board of Education  
Juneau School District  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

PAMELA BLODGET, representing self  
Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 97.

RIANNE ASTER, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

CAROLE BOOKLES, representing self

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

MICHAEL BUCY, representing self

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 97.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:30:59 PM](#)

**CHAIR LÖKI TOBIN** called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Kiehl, Gray-Jackson, Stevens, and Chair Tobin.

CHAIR TOBIN stated this is the second hearing on SB 97.

#### **SB 97-TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT**

[3:32:50 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 97 "An Act authorizing lump sum payments for certain teachers as retention and recruitment incentives; and providing for an effective date."

[3:33:19 PM](#)

DEENA BISHOP, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), Juneau, Alaska, offered a brief overview of SB 97 on behalf of the administration. She moved to slide 2 and shared the mission, vision, and purpose of the department:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### **Mission**

An excellent education for every student every day.

#### **Vision**

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

#### **Purpose**

DEED exists to provide information, resources, and leadership to support an excellent education for every student every day.

[3:33:54 PM](#)

MS. BISHOP moved to slide 3 and shared what Alaska's Education Challenge is and its five strategic priorities:

[Original punctuation provided.]

### **Alaska's Education Challenge**

#### **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.

[3:34:21 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 4 to discuss teacher turnover rates in Alaska. She provided background on teacher turnover, noting that Northwest research shows a 22 percent turnover rate interstate, with rural Alaska facing an acute turnover of nearly 33 percent annually. This high turnover leads to numerous negative outcomes for students, including disrupted classrooms, opportunities, loss of teacher-student relationships, and negative impacts on academic achievement and teacher morale. Replacing teachers is costly, with 2017 data from the Center for Alaska Education Policy Research showing attrition costs exceeding \$20,000 per year, and inflation has driven this figure higher:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### **Teacher Turnover Rates In Alaska**

Produced by Regional Laboratory Education Northwest:

**10 percent** gap between **urban** and **rural-remote teachers**

**16 percent** gap between **urban** and **rural-remote principals**

**2020/21 annual turnover rates**

	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>PRINCIPALS</b>
Rural-remote	31 percent	26 percent
Rural-hub/fringe	25 percent	20 percent
Urban-fringe	18 percent	20 percent
Urban	21 percent	10 percent

[3:35:35 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 5 and explained that Alaska's first-day certified position vacancy rates are tracked by the department. The impetus for SB 97 to attract and retain teachers is to reduce this vacancy data point. She emphasized that this issue affects school success across all districts, with no district immune to the challenge of hiring and retaining high-quality teachers. For the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest report, a vacancy is defined as any unoccupied certified position on the first day of a teacher's contract, which varies by district. Vacancies can result from new positions, unfilled advertised positions, or positions where a teacher was hired but not present:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Alaska First Day Certified Position Vacancy Rates**

2020 - 155  
2021 - 227  
2022 - 313  
2023 - 394  
2024 - 507

[3:36:05 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS joined the meeting.

[3:36:34 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 6 and outlined the steps taken to address teacher recruitment and retention, grounding the discussion in the context of SB 97. She shared that the Alaska Challenge, initiated in 2016 by the State Board of Education, selected teacher recruitment and retention (TRR) as a strategic priority. In April 2020, Governor Dunleavy established a TRR working group with statewide stakeholders and allocated funding for the effort. This led to the TRR Action Plan, which included 18 recommendations across six areas. In August, a comprehensive playbook was released, revising these recommendations, and outlining implementation strategies defined

by stakeholders. The plan focuses not only on policy changes but also on actions that districts, communities, schools, and educators can take to improve retention. Dr. Goyette and Dr. Adams were highlighted as key figures in the stakeholder engagement process.

[3:38:50 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 7 and discussed the six essential areas of the TRR (Teacher Recruitment and Retention) Action Plan. These areas include enhancing recruitment efforts, streamlining certification, creating paraprofessional pathways—highlighting an exciting new apprenticeship program for paraprofessionals—restructuring retirement options, developing leadership, and strengthening working conditions. She emphasized the interconnectedness of these steps, particularly noting that recruitment is key and supported by evidence. The Action Plan defines fiscal opportunities, such as incentives for school districts to augment teacher salaries, under the recommendation to strengthen working conditions. She highlighted that these suggestions stemmed from educators, with over 4,000 respondents contributing to the report. She noted that Senator Tobin's reference to a 27 percent response rate from Alaska educators is notably high for such work.

[3:40:23 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN acknowledged Senator Bjorkman joined the meeting.

[3:40:25 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP moved to slide 8 and discussed the role of policymakers in supporting teachers in Alaska, highlighting the stakeholders involved—districts, state administration, partner organizations, communities, and elected officials. She emphasized the collective responsibility to create excellent working conditions for teachers. SB 97 authorizes lump sum payments as retention and recruitment incentives for certain teachers, with a focus on classroom teachers as the core of education. SB 97 establishes a pilot program offering incentives of \$5,000 to \$15,000 per year, paid out twice annually, to attract teachers to remote and rural areas and encourage them to stay for the full school year.

MS. BISHOP explained that the pilot program spans three years, with funding requested for that duration, to assess its impact on reducing teacher vacancies and turnover. She noted that while empirical evidence on the effectiveness of bonuses is mixed, Alaska teachers identified this as an area policymakers could impact. The data from open positions on the first day of school

will be one measure of success, along with the broader goals of reducing retraining costs, stabilizing school programs, and ultimately improving student achievement and outcomes. Retention incentives will help Alaska compete with other sectors and states for qualified teachers.

[3:43:14 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP concluded her presentation.

[3:43:23 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked where in SB 97 a two-payment payout is mentioned.

[3:43:42 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP stated her belief that the lump sum payments were not in SB 97 when it was conceptualized. The intent was to structure the payments to both attract and retain teachers. She explained that under the proposed system, a \$5,000 incentive could be split, with \$2,500 paid at the beginning of the school year and the remaining \$2,500 paid at the end, contingent on the teacher staying for the full year. The goal is to encourage retention by incentivizing teachers to commit to the following school year, ensuring the payment is not a one-time annual lump sum but distributed to support long-term retention efforts.

SENATOR KIEHL noted that if the committee is reviewing the substitute version, it clarifies why the payments occur once after July 1, which he found helpful. He then inquired about the study element, specifically asking who will be responsible for gathering the data and conducting the analysis.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP responded that a specific entity has not yet been named to conduct the study, but it will be part of the process to evaluate. She mentioned potential options like the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) or other entities with relevant expertise. The department would likely issue a bid to select the most qualified group to carry out the study and analysis.

[3:45:06 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked if there is an estimated cost in the fiscal note for the study.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP stated her belief that there was not.

[3:45:20 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS stated bluntly that the legislature is in major negotiations over education funding with the governor. SB 97 faces difficulties. He suggested that the only way to fund the lump sum payments would be to reduce the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Drawing on his experience in school administration, he noted that if districts receive increased funding through the BSA, they are likely to use it partly for teacher salaries. He cited one district that guaranteed half of any BSA increase would go toward teacher salaries, raising the question of whether the BSA is the wrong mechanism for increasing teacher pay.

[3:46:28 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP acknowledged the complexity of teacher retention and school funding in Alaska and reducing the issue to just two items. She stated that she couldn't definitively answer whether the BSA is the best way to increase teacher salaries but noted that some districts already provide bonuses without additional funds. Reflecting on her tenure as a superintendent, she highlighted the unprecedented federal funding for public education in the past three years, questioning whether enough was done for educators during that time. She urged consideration of past actions and the desired future, noting that, after 34 years in public education, the challenges with the BSA have always been present.

[3:47:12 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP emphasized that while investing in public education is vital, there remains dissatisfaction with outcomes. She argued for aligning investments with desired results and pointed out that teachers are the most valuable part of the system outside of students and parents. She said SB 97 is a direct response to feedback from educators. However, she warned against simply providing more money without clear goals, stating that the cycle of asking for more funds without improved outcomes will continue unless both outcomes and inputs are clearly defined.

[3:49:12 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN followed up on the mention of federal dollars funneled into schools over the last three years, clarifying that her understanding was those funds were intended for pandemic response and reimagining education in a different modality, not simply to fund pre-pandemic and post-pandemic education services. She asked for confirmation on whether this understanding was correct or if she had misunderstood the purpose of the funds.

[3:49:32 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied that while the federal funds were directed at pandemic-related responses and reimagining education, the people carrying out that work were teachers. She emphasized that investing in teachers is inherently part of any pandemic response, as they are the ones responsible for implementing those changes and ensuring education continues.

CHAIR TOBIN asked if the federal dollars were for responding to the pandemic, not necessarily to pay teachers or cover existing services.

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied yes, and teachers are part of responding. They work with the children.

[3:50:11 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN responded to the commissioner's rhetorical question, stating that the federal funds received by school districts were used similarly to the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds from 16 years ago. He explained that these funds primarily preserved staff, programs, and educational opportunities, allowing teachers to keep their jobs and continue teaching rather than being laid off. Additionally, some of the funds were used to raise teacher salaries. However, he pointed out that changes at the beginning of the Obama administration led to salary increases being offset by healthcare premiums tripling. He emphasized that with 80 percent or more of a school district's budget going to personnel costs, the money is indeed going to educators. He noted that many negotiated agreements direct BSA increases toward salaries and questioned the validity of comments suggesting otherwise.

[3:52:01 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP acknowledged understanding collective bargaining and agreed that salary increases alone have not resulted in more take-home pay for teachers, citing health care cost increases. She clarified that the incentive payment being discussed was intended as additional compensation beyond salary, as requested by teachers in a survey, to improve competitiveness within and beyond Alaska. Other incentives discussed included plane tickets, improved working conditions, and leadership opportunities. She emphasized that school funding and the Base Student Allocation (BSA) should support personnel, as education depends on teachers, and the incentive payment was designed to aid in attraction and retention.

[3:53:29 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN mentioned that, according to the teacher retention and recruitment survey, the top priority identified was adequate compensation and salary increases. The second priority was positive workplace conditions, followed by personal connections with students, retirement benefits, and health care. Positive school culture ranked sixth, and manageable workload was seventh, while bonuses ranked fifteenth.

[3:53:59 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL asked if there was guidance from the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) recommending school districts not use COVID funds for reoccurring costs.

[3:54:18 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BISHOP replied she would get back to the committee because she did not work for the department then. She stated that the federal government gave guidelines. However, it is common knowledge that commitments using one time funding require careful consideration. Sometimes one time funding is renewed and sometimes it is not.

SENATOR KIEHL stated that this effectively settles the question of whether the one-time pandemic assistance was inappropriately withheld from teachers.

[3:55:06 PM](#)

At ease

[3:55:28 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting and announced invited testimony for SB 97.

[3:55:52 PM](#)

RANDY TRANI, Superintendent, Mat-Su Borough School District, Palmer, Alaska, referenced Teacher Bonus for Recruitment and Retention: An Alternate Approach, a document he created and shared on BASIS. He stated that, by his calculations, the proposal reduces the upfront cost to the state by about one-sixth in the first year and would reduce total costs over time, while increasing the compensation teachers receive over time. He modeled this after the Alaska Teacher Scholarship Program from the 1980s and 1990s, which forgave an increasing portion of a teacher's college debt for each year they taught in rural Alaska. He compared it to "golden handcuffs" meant to retain teachers long-term and noted that he himself benefited from it, staying in Alaska for 34 years.

[3:57:27 PM](#)

MR. TRANI mentioned challenges with hiring teachers with J-1 visas, specifically those from the Philippines, as the current system grants \$15,000 annual bonuses over three years, totaling \$45,000, which leaves the state when teachers must return home due to visa restrictions. He discussed his following bonus proposal:

Teacher Bonus for Recruitment and Retention:  
An Alternate Approach

Plan: Incentivize longer retention through progressive bonuses. Rationale:

- Mimics old Alaska Teacher Scholarship Loan process that worked in the 80's and 90's.
- Allows employees to "grow roots" hopefully resulting in longer retention after the bonus period is exhausted.
- Does not send money away to foreign countries as rapidly as the current proposal.
  - Currently we have plenty of applicants from the Philippines...the bottle neck for those folks is not the money. It is the J1 Visa process.
    - Therefore we do not need to attract them.
      - Since they can only stay for three years on a J1 Visa we can not retain them.
        - We would be wasting money on someone we can not retain and already can attract

Logistics:

Tier 1	Incentive
Most Rural	
Year 1	\$2500
Year 2	\$5000
Year 3	\$7500
Year 4	\$10,000
Year 5	\$12,500
Year 6	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$52,000

Tier 2                      Incentive  
Rural

Year 1	\$1500
Year 2	\$3000
Year 3	\$4500
Year 4	\$6,000
Year 5	\$7,500
Year 6	\$10,000
TOTAL	\$32,500

Tier 3	Incentive
Urban	
Rural	
Year 1	\$750
Year 2	\$1500
Year 3	\$2250
Year 4	\$3000
Year 5	\$3750
Year 6	\$4500
TOTAL	\$15,750

[3:58:26 PM](#)

MR. TRANI added that because some people will washout of the program, in the long run, it would be cheaper for the state to institute this bonus structure.

**Additional Ideas for the Bonus:**

- Triggered on a BSA of \$6640.
- Alternately, allow districts to select which areas/positions they award bonuses with a 50 percent match from state.

**Additional idea to address concerns regarding current employees, certificated and classified.**

- To encourage continued retention of current employees consider a Permanent Educator Fund similar to the PFD. All current teachers receive some annual bonus, tiered by area.

[3:59:26 PM](#)

MR. TRANI added that while his district has been able to fill teaching positions relatively well, districts face difficulties finding and hiring other positions like therapists and other support staff.

CHAIR TOBIN asked about the application costs associated with J-1 visas, noting that some districts struggle to cover these upfront expenses, which impacts their ability to recruit educators. She mentioned that the process can take about a month and inquired if incentive programs could be adjusted to support

districts in recruiting from other places, particularly if Base Student Allocation (BSA) funds are insufficient. She requested thoughts or insights on how to address these costs effectively.

[4:01:28 PM](#)

MR. TRANI responded that he did not feel he was the most qualified to discuss J-1 visa issues, as the Mat-Su district has not needed to utilize J-1 visa educators. He suggested reaching out to the superintendent in Kodiak, who has an interesting program for recruiting these employees, as well as the superintendent from Aniak, as both could provide valuable feedback on this topic.

[4:02:28 PM](#)

DAYNA DEFEO, Director, Center for Alaska Education Policy Research (CAEPR), Anchorage, Alaska, an associate professor of education policy, stated she was invited to discuss research conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) on Teacher compensation in Alaska: Bonuses, benefits, and pay bonuses for teachers. She noted that while ISER's work on bonuses is limited, they have done more extensive research on overall teacher compensation, of which bonuses are a part. She planned to first address bonuses and then provide a broader overview of teacher compensation research to offer context for the discussion.

[4:03:25 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 2 - 3 and explained that she was advised to answer the question directly before presenting evidence. Regarding whether bonuses work, she said it is complicated, and the evidence is inconclusive. She noted that local control in Alaska leads to varied salary and benefit packages, which complicates assessment. The small number of teachers receiving different packages means practical effects may not always show statistical significance. She emphasized that a lack of evidence does not mean bonuses are ineffective but rather under-researched. She highlighted the importance of listening to those in the field and stated that ISER provides research evidence, which she would present.

[4:04:37 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 4 and said explained that the yellow circles in her presentation link to the full report at the end, with corresponding references for more detail. She clarified that while teacher bonuses were not a direct focus of ISER inquiry, their research addressed bonuses in two studies. In 2023, ISER conducted an inventory of collective bargaining

agreements as part of the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiative. They categorized and analyzed teacher benefits across Alaska and compared them with national agreements. ISER then did a brief evidence review around the effectiveness of the different benefits in recruiting and retaining teachers. Another study from 2015 developed a model for equitable compensation across Alaska schools, examining how compensation—including salary and benefits—affected teacher recruitment and retention.

[4:06:01 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 5 and said stated that ISER looked at signing bonuses included in collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). These bonuses are used both in Alaska and in the lower 48 to attract teachers. At the time of their review, seven districts in Alaska included such bonuses, ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000, with another district offering them for hard-to-staff schools. She noted a wider range of bonuses in the lower 48 due to varied teaching contexts but confirmed that signing bonuses are used in both regions to entice teachers to take jobs.

[4:06:46 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 6 and said the evidence for signing bonuses is unclear, as it is difficult to determine their direct impact on convincing someone to take a job. She explained that candidates might have accepted the job without the bonus, making the effect challenging to isolate. While there is a lack of research, she mentioned ISER would be eager to study this if implemented. She referenced a study in Massachusetts around 2000, which suggested signing bonuses might have helped recruit teachers, but many of those teachers were already committed to a teaching career. Additionally, when she and her colleague Matt Berman modeled teacher compensation, signing bonuses did not show significant effects, likely because the bonuses they examined were relatively small. She concluded that the presence of signing bonuses typically indicates an imbalance in the labor market—a shortage of qualified individuals to fill teaching positions.

[4:08:17 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 7 and stated that ISER also reviewed longevity and retention bonuses in Alaska, which were included in 14 collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). She noted that one additional district uses these bonuses for specific school sites. There is significant variation in the amount, eligibility, and timing of these bonuses, both in Alaska and nationally. She confirmed that longevity and retention bonuses

are a type of benefit used by some districts in both Alaska and the lower 48.

[4:08:57 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 8 and discussed the evidence for longevity bonuses, noting that it is limited, partly because these bonuses are often implemented sporadically in small districts, making them hard to evaluate. She explained that it is difficult to determine if recipients would have stayed regardless of the bonus. She referenced an evaluation in the U.S. Southwest, where turnover increased after teachers received their lump sum payment. She also mentioned an Alaska district that offered significant bonuses, but the requirement of 10 years of service resulted in few teachers staying long enough to qualify.

[4:10:03 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slides 9 - 10 and discussed compensation. She stated that Alaska teacher salaries are lower than they should be. She referenced her first study with ISER, conducted about 10 years ago, which modeled the salaries needed in each district to attract and retain qualified teachers. The 2015 study compared the modeled ideal salaries with actual salaries, finding that statewide salaries were, on average, 15 percent below the level needed to retain teachers. She noted significant variation, with some districts meeting or slightly exceeding the recommended salaries, while many others were paying significantly less than what the models indicated was necessary.

[4:11:24 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 11 and explained that the slide depicted two main points: teacher pay relative to Anchorage (on the y-axis) and the proportion of qualified teachers schools could attract for that pay (x-axis). Each triangle on the chart represented a school, with dark purple triangles indicating remote rural schools and light purple triangles representing other schools in Alaska. Anchorage was marked by a red square. She highlighted that schools ideally want to be on the green line, meaning they are matching salary levels to attract 100 percent qualified teachers. Although some districts paid more than Anchorage, as indicated by dots above the red square, many were still not attracting enough qualified teachers. She pointed out the large variation in salaries across the state and noted that, despite higher salaries, many schools, especially remote and rural schools, remained to the left of the green line, showing they struggled to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

[4:13:08 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN asked if the Mat-Su core schools, represented by the blue dots clustered around the green line, indicated that Mat-Su was paying an appropriate salary to attract high-quality teachers.

[4:13:21 PM](#)

MS.DEFEO replied that Chair Tobin's interpretation was correct, that in 2015 Mat-Su's salaries were sufficient to attract and retain highly qualified teachers. She added that the study needs updating to determine if salaries are still appropriate.

[4:13:49 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 12 and said the graph was from a paper ISER released on [March 5, 2024], which builds on a study published in Alaska Economic Trends from last fall. She explained that the graph essentially shows the same findings as the article: Alaska teacher salaries are, on average, about 10 percent higher than the national average.

[4:14:13 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 13 and stated that the graph was still from the same ISER study released [March 5, 2024], but her team adjusted the salary figures to reflect the cost of living in Alaska.

[4:14:39 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 14 and mentioned that she had previously testified about adjustments to per-pupil spending, using 2019 data, which showed spending was 7 percent below the national average after adjustments. She noted that the graph with green bars and the graph on slide 13 with a yellow bar use a similar approach, but instead adjusts average teacher salaries. She stated that, after adjusting teacher salaries in 2019, Alaska was 24 percent below the national average, and in 2021, this figure was 25 percent below the national average.

[4:15:40 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 15 and stated that teachers are hired in a national market, meaning Alaska competes with other states. Since most teachers are imported, Alaska must be aware of what is happening in other states.

[4:16:04 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved slide 16 and said she recently gave a presentation for Educators Rising and shared some facts about Alaska schools. She noted that there are about 443 public

neighborhood schools in Alaska. For context, Maryland, which is much smaller in landmass, has 1,400 public schools. She added that the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) covers an area roughly the size of West Virginia but has just one school district, compared to 57 in West Virginia. She emphasized that while Alaska must stay competitive with national teacher salaries, it is also crucial to consider Alaska's unique educational context.

[4:16:58 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 17 and stated that salary and benefits are not the only factors driving turnover—working conditions also matter significantly. She noted that improving working conditions could lead to longer teacher retention, even without increasing salaries:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Salaries matter to teacher retention, but it's more than just dollars.**

- 2018: we surveyed teachers about their satisfaction with various school, community, & work conditions
- Biggest predictors of teachers' decision to leave = satisfaction with
  - Parent & community relationships
  - School & district leadership
  - Community characteristics

[4:17:27 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 18 and said solutions are hard and there is not always a straightforward way to solve problems. There is work to do at every level of recruiting and retention of educators.

[Original punctuation provided.]:

**This is a wicked problem.**

**The problem is**

- Complex
- Systemic
- Highly variable
- Characterized by distributed responsibility

**Solutions**

- **There's no single solution.**

- Some solutions are objectively "good" or "bad" for the outcome.
- Some solutions create new tensions.
- Efforts will need to be coordinated.
  - Communities
  - Schools
  - Districts
  - State
- The effects of our efforts will not be immediate

[4:18:07 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO moved to slide 19 and said in addition to her contact information she provided links to the sources used in the presentation.

[4:18:22 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN CHAIR TOBIN asked if there were any available data correlating bonuses with inadequate salaries. Specifically, she inquired whether individuals receiving an inadequate salary were more likely to stay if they were also receiving a bonus.

MS. DEFEO replied she was not aware of any research specifically to that effect.

[4:18:47 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL found the information helpful and asked which bonus structures are most successful. He inquired if hiring bonuses, end-of-year payments, or splitting bonuses into installments were more effective.

MS. DEFEO stated that the research on bonus structures is quite limited, so there is no straightforward answer on the most effective approach. She hoped that the evidence provided could help structure something that seems supported by available data but noted ISER do not have direct evidence to answer the question definitively.

[4:19:42 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN asked if Ms. DeFeo had any recommendations on how to structure a study to determine if bonuses are effective.

[4:20:07 PM](#)

MS. DEFEO said she would need some time to think about structuring such a study. She suggested using a combination of methods due to the complexity of the question, likely including a retrospective analysis and a choice experiment. She indicated

that this would involve ISER economists and education research experts and offered to draft a detailed proposal if desired.

[4:20:40 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN said she would appreciate even a brief outline to provide insight.

[4:20:53 PM](#)

At ease

[4:21:25 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting.

[4:21:41 PM](#)

NICOLE LYKE, Counselor, Klatt Elementary School, Anchorage, Alaska, invited testimony for SB 97, provided a presentation on SB 88. She shared that she and other family members are educators who love Alaska. As a school counselor, she emphasized that a lot of good work is being done for students at Klatt Elementary. She mentioned that her daughter aspires to become a teacher. However, she expressed concern that without a pension, she and her husband may not have sufficient funds for retirement.

CHAIR TOBIN informed Ms. Lyke that the hearing was for SB 97. She asked if she had any comments about SB 97.

[4:27:39 PM](#)

MS. LYKE expressed a major concern about "education tourism," where educators come to Alaska for adventure, gain experience, and leave after five years due to a lack of long-term incentives. She opined that, as a school counselor, she does not qualify for the bonuses being offered and that bonus money will leave the state with the temporary educators it attracts. She stated that bonuses do not provide the long-term financial security her family needs to stay in Alaska.

[4:28:18 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON stated her understanding that it is Tier IV that does not offer a defined benefit not Tier III. She asked if there is a difference between the Teachers' Retirement System TRS and the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS).

[4:28:35 PM](#)

MS. LYKE replied Tier III does not have a defined benefit.

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON thanked her for the clarification.

[4:29:11 PM](#)

DAN MACLEAN, Teacher, Service High School, Anchorage, Alaska, thanked the committee and acknowledged Governor Dunleavy for emphasizing the need to improve educator salaries and benefits. He agreed on the importance of improving teacher retention. He introduced himself as a science teacher and department chair at Service High School since 2007, after graduating from UAA with a master's in teaching (MAT). He noted that he and his wife have three children in the Anchorage School District.

[4:29:49 PM](#)

MR. MACLEAN stated that bonuses are not a workable solution for three main reasons. First, bonuses cost more than the defined benefit outlined in SB 88. Second, bonuses have not improved teacher retention in other states where they have been implemented. Third, Alaska's retirement system for teachers is uniquely unfair, and bonuses do nothing to address this issue.

[4:30:15 PM](#)

MR. MACLEAN elaborated on his first point, stating that bonuses are projected to cost \$58 million per year for three years, whereas SB 88 is projected to cost, at most, \$40 million in the first year if everyone opts for the defined benefit. He mentioned Senate Finance Committee and the Ghilarducci report which indicated that subsequent years would save at least \$76 million annually. He concluded that a defined benefit saves money over time, while bonuses represent an ongoing cost.

[4:30:42 PM](#)

MR. MACLEAN continued by stating that other states have tried bonuses. He referenced the ISER presentation and the Alaska Beacon article from February 29, which discussed the experiences of Massachusetts, North Carolina, Denver, and 52 other educational entities. All saw only slight retention increases while bonuses were in place, which disappeared once the bonuses ended. He noted that those states found that year-to-year pay and consistent support for schools were more impactful for retention.

[4:31:25 PM](#)

MR. MACLEAN addressed the third drawback, stating that Tier III teachers in Alaska have the worst retirement plan compared to any employee in the United States, including Alaska PERS Tier IV workers. He explained that becoming a teacher in Alaska results in a 50 percent reduction in Social Security benefits for both previous and future non-teaching earnings. He emphasized that

teachers lose retirement money simply by working in Alaska due to federal law, which affects state employment.

[4:31:57 PM](#)

MR. MACLEAN continued, stating that when someone becomes a teacher in Alaska, they see how the state undervalues teachers. He noted that PERS workers either receive Social Security benefits or the equivalent amount is contributed to their Supplemental Benefits System (SBS) accounts, whereas teachers do not receive this benefit. As a result, teachers miss out on 13 percent of their salary, compounded over their careers.

[4:32:30 PM](#)

MR. MACLEAN emphasized that when someone becomes a teacher in Alaska, they eventually need to leave the state to secure better financial stability. He noted that, financially, it is preferable for teachers to leave as soon as possible to make up for the financial losses incurred while working in public schools in Alaska.

[4:33:26 PM](#)

MR. MACLEAN shared his initial reaction to the bonus proposal, saying it sounded appealing at first. However, upon further consideration, he realized the money would end up going out of state. He explained that his oldest daughter, an outstanding student planning to become an engineer, does not want to attend the University of Alaska due to budget cuts. Instead, she will attend an out-of-state university, meaning the \$5,000 increase in his income would simply be reflected on the FAFSA form and ultimately go toward higher tuition. He added that \$5,000 does not compensate for even one year's 50 percent reduction in Social Security benefits, the missed SBS contributions, or the unfairness of the current retirement system. He mentioned that, during a recent conversation with principals from two major high schools, they referred to the bonuses as "moving money," predicting that teachers would use it to leave Alaska once they hit five years of service, seeking better retirement systems in other states.

[4:34:27 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated that the SB 97 clearly indicates that the \$5,000 bonus will be reduced by both the employee and employer contributions to the Teachers' Retirement System (TERS) before taxes, resulting in an actual bonus amount of \$4,400.

[4:34:46 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN noted for the record that an updated fiscal note is available on BASIS, indicating the initial cost of the SB 97 is \$61 million.

[4:35:19 PM](#)

NATASHA GRAHAM, Teacher, Service High School, Anchorage, Alaska, invited testimony SB 97 provided the following testimony:

[Original punctuation provided.]

I am a lifelong Alaskan, born on Elmendorf Air Force Base, a graduate of the Kenai Peninsula School District, and the University of Alaska Anchorage.

My two oldest children graduated from Service High School in Anchorage and my youngest will be an Anchorage School District grad in 2033.

I am currently an English Language Arts teacher at Service High School in Anchorage. I began my teaching career as a military spouse stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in 2000.

I am grateful that the Governor is acknowledging that educators should be paid more. I would love a bonus but I need a pension and Alaska's students deserve adequately funded schools.

[4:36:14 PM](#)

MS. GRAHAM continued:

The legislature's own analysis and the fiscal notes available clearly indicate that the annual cost of the proposed bonuses will cost the state more money than a defined benefit pension for all Alaska public employees. Furthermore, offering a pension could save the cost of recruitment expenditures.

Alaska already has a high teacher turnover rate - four times higher than the national average. When I was growing up under the Tier I program educators flocked to our state and Alaska students did well when measured in national standardized tests. Without the ability to retain

our current educators we will continue to see fresh faced folks from Outside come here for 5 years, gain experience, get vested and then leave. High teacher turnover rates are directly linked to poor student achievement; we need to support student achievement not contribute to its decline.

My own experience in North Carolina where a bonus system was utilized proved bonuses to be divisive, did not incentivize longevity, nor improve student outcomes.

I would rather our limited state dollars go to improving the overall educational experience of my students. That would include smaller classroom sizes, paraprofessionals receiving a living wage, and programs that foster engagement and a love of learning.

[4:37:33 PM](#)

MS. GRAHAM continued:

Our underpaid paraprofessionals are essential to the students' learning however it is common knowledge that they can make more money working at Target. My school has had 8 unfilled paraprofessionals openings all year. This means that dozens of students with disabilities are not receiving the services they should and are required by law to have. I worked alongside a paraprofessional who worked with our highest needs students in the life skills classroom. After 17 years as an educator, he only earned \$40,000 a year; he had to work 3, and sometimes 4, other jobs to be able to provide for his family. He left the education profession at Christmas to become a firefighter.

More friends, colleagues, and acquaintances than I can count have left our profession, or left the state, because of a lack of retirement and no opportunity to earn Social Security as an educator. Fewer opportunities and fewer people also hurts our economy.

Teaching for me is very much a public service. I teach because I want to help improve society, and I know I can have a small part of that by educating young people to be critical thinkers and capable communicators. Those of us in public service deserve a defined benefit pension.

I have not met a teacher who prefers the bonus over a pension. Everyone I know wants to see the investment going into overall funding for schools and students. Most Alaskans were heartened to see the focused and bipartisan agreement to prioritize and increase funding for education. Bonuses will cost us more and will not result in better student outcomes.

[4:40:06 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN opened public testimony on SB 97.

[4:40:34 PM](#)

JUDY CARSTENS, representing self, Kodiak, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She thanked the committee for their service and gave a brief personnel history. She stated that she and Kodiak board members oppose a one-time bonus, citing reasons shared by others. She emphasized that all school staff, including cooks and janitors, play a crucial role in supporting students. She concluded that the one-time bonus is not a good idea, noting Kodiak has its own negotiated bonuses.

[4:43:21 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS thanked Ms. Carstens for being a great advocate for education.

[4:44:02 PM](#)

CHRIS HELDEMANN, President, Juneau Education Association, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. He appreciated the governor's acknowledgment of the need for higher teacher pay and recognition of the recruitment and retention issue but stated his belief that bonuses were not the right solution. In his district, schools are closing, unprecedented numbers of teachers are being laid off, and class sizes are increasing. He opined that these are problems a one-time bonus won't solve. He argued that only a substantial, permanent increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) could address these issues effectively, benefiting both students and educators. He also highlighted that the pension bill passed earlier would cost around \$44 million, while this bonus bill is projected at \$61 million. He urged the

legislature to override any veto of the bipartisan education bill if the governor chooses to veto it, emphasizing that such a veto would directly impact educators facing layoffs.

[4:46:24 PM](#)

MICHELLE OLDS, Teacher, Klatt Elementary School, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She thanked the committee and expressed gratitude for the proposed teacher bonuses but stressed that increasing the BSA through SB 140 is the long-term solution. She noted that the BSA has not increased since 2017, leading to larger class sizes and reduced individualized instruction. As a fifth-year educator, she shared that she has been displaced twice in five years due to flat funding, which causes uncertainty and distracts from her role as an educator. She urged for an increase in the BSA to better support student learning.

[4:48:09 PM](#)

TOPAZ STOTTS, Teacher, Klatt Elementary School, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She appreciated the governor's acknowledgment of the need for better teacher pay but stressed that increasing the BSA is essential for reducing class sizes, especially in K-2, to improve student success. She noted that since 2017, BSA stagnation has increased teacher-pupil ratios, leading to larger class sizes, which hinder effective instruction. She stated that bonuses are less important than manageable class sizes and a pension plan for retaining teachers. Alaska teachers lack Social Security or a pension, with Tier III teachers having only a 31 percent chance of retirement success after 30 years, which is unacceptable. She urged the legislature to pass SB 140 and appreciated the ongoing collaboration.

[4:50:40 PM](#)

SARAH CAMPBELL, representing self, Ketchikan, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She said she is a 24-year teacher from Ketchikan, testified that hiring deficits have worsened since COVID, affecting all job classifications. The lack of a defined benefit pension hampers attracting and retaining educators, leading many long-term teachers, some with as many as 15 years invested, to leave for states offering real pensions. She shared that her own teachers, who had Tier I retirement, still reside and contribute to Ketchikan, unlike current Tier III educators who leave due to lack of retirement and Social Security. She urged the committee to fund schools properly and provide meaningful retirement benefits, not temporary payouts, to foster long-term educator commitment.

[4:53:21 PM](#)

JOHN HARGIS, Superintendent\* Lower Yukon School District, Mountain Village, Alaska, testified with concerns on SB 97. He said on behalf of the Lower Yukon School District, he expressed reservations about SB 97, which proposes \$15,000 bonuses for full-time teachers after a full year of teaching. He raised concerns about unintended consequences, including difficulties in distinguishing deserving educators based solely on longevity and creating pay disparities between teachers and administrators, which could lead to divisions. He noted that bonuses could also create inequities between districts based on geography and funding. He argued for a more sustainable approach, suggesting increased base salaries, professional development, and investment in resources rather than temporary bonuses, to better address teacher retention and educational quality.

[4:56:19 PM](#)

LOGAN PITNEY, Teacher, South Anchorage High School, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. He shared his concerns about whether he can afford to make a career in teaching, support his family, retire, and send future children to college. He emphasized that many teachers, despite their dedication, are considering leaving due to financial instability. While he appreciates the proposed bonuses, he likened them to a "band aid on an arterial bleed" compared to what is needed. He advocated for increasing the BSA and restoring the defined benefit retirement system to reduce turnover and provide stability. He thanked Senate leadership for their efforts and urged continued support for meaningful investments in education.

[4:59:08 PM](#)

LON GARRISON, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. He stated that one of the Association of Alaska School Boards' (ASB) legislative priorities for 2024 is teacher and staff retention and recruitment. He spoke in support of SB 97, citing four ASB resolutions included with his written testimony. He emphasized that having highly qualified teachers is essential for student success, but current issues like unpredictable funding, insufficient salaries, lack of retirement benefits, and worsening working conditions make recruitment and retention difficult. He noted that while SB 97's bonus proposal is presented as a targeted effort to retain teachers, ASB sees it as just one tool, and by itself, is unlikely to produce the desired results. He pointed out that some districts already use

bonuses for recruitment or retention, but more comprehensive action is needed to benefit all staff, not just teachers. To effectively support educators, he suggested stabilizing school funding, investing in infrastructure, and providing opportunities for professional development and recognition. He urged the legislature to treat SB 97 as part of a broader strategy, alongside other initiatives aimed at improving staff training, retention, and overall working conditions. He concluded that while ASB appreciates SB 97's focus on supporting teachers, it cannot be the only measure used to address recruitment and retention challenges in Alaska's schools.

[5:01:43 PM](#)

PETER HOEPFNER, Vice President, Cordova School District, Cordova, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. He said he appreciated the governor's recognition that teachers need higher pay but argued that bonuses are not the right solution. He emphasized that administrators and other school staff also deserve pay increases, noting that Cordova pays paraprofessionals \$17.35 per hour while city workers earn \$20 as receptionists. He criticized the proposed three-year incentive pilot program, highlighting its \$61 million cost, lack of empirical evidence of effectiveness, and dependency on annual legislative approval. He added that the teacher retention workgroup identified adequate compensation as the primary request from teachers and warned that the incentives might drive teachers to move out of state, particularly to Washington, which offers better pay, retirement benefits, and social security. He concluded that increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and reforming the retirement system are necessary for addressing Alaska's teacher retention problem.

[5:04:45 PM](#)

MARGARET MCDONAGH, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She said she has worked in the Anchorage School District for 25 years, transitioning from a classroom teacher to a counselor. She agreed with others opposing SB 97 and argued that Alaska must fix the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) to effectively recruit and retain teachers. She considered herself fortunate as a Tier II employee receiving defined benefits, and she emphasized that the absence of defined benefits is deterring quality individuals from teaching in Alaska. She added that her mother received Tier I benefits, which she believes all teachers deserve.

[5:06:43 PM](#)

JULIANA ARMSTRONG, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She said she is a retired teacher and administrator, with a husband who was also a teacher and children who are grateful graduates of the Anchorage School District (ASD). She focused her comments on her perspective as a retiree. She worked many extra hours but loved the work. She emphasized that Alaska's retirement system showed her that her work was valued. Now, as a retiree, she lives modestly, and is thankful for a stable retirement and health insurance. She argued that occasional lump sum payments do not provide the same security, comparing such incentives to bribes that treat teachers like children.

[5:08:38 PM](#)

WILL MULDOON, Finance Chair, Board of Education, Juneau School District, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. He agreed with the testimony of Mr. Heldemann. He stated that his district is facing a \$9.7 million deficit due to flat funding and declining enrollment. The proposed Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase would provide \$5.2 million, which is less than what is needed but better than SB 97. He argued that SB 97 will not solve the district's financial challenges. He cited research indicating that bonuses are not what teachers want and will not address recruitment and retention issues, urging the legislature to trust educators, support local control, and listen to communities opposing SB 97.

[5:10:15 PM](#)

PAMELA BLODGET, representing self, Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska, testified in support of SB 97. She said she is a teacher in North Slope, expressed uncertainty about linking the retention bonus with all the other issues in Alaska's education system. She acknowledged that teacher turnover has a devastating effect on students and stated that if SB 97 can help reduce turnover, she supports it. However, she suggested that reallocating the bonus funds to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) might be a better objective. Her main concern is addressing teacher turnover effectively.

[5:11:32 PM](#)

RIANNE ASTER, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She stated she previously worked in oil and gas as an engineer before earning a master's degree in education and is now in her second-year teaching high school chemistry. She knew teaching would involve a pay cut but expected to still have a reasonable retirement plan, which under the current system, is not the case. She noted that her husband's federal

and military pensions allow her to continue teaching, but many of her colleagues do not have that option. She argued that bonuses are a short-term fix to a long-term problem, whereas offering a pension is an effective way to retain teachers.

[5:14:01 PM](#)

CAROLE BOOKLES, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. She stated she is a teacher and highlighted findings from the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey. She noted that teachers' top priorities are, first, a competitive salary, which is linked to the Base Student Allocation (BSA); second, salary steps, which are also linked to BSA; third, a defined benefit retirement plan; and fourth, retention benefits. She expressed disbelief that retention benefits are what is currently being offered to teachers. She provided examples of why teachers leave, including unreasonable workloads. Fifteen years ago, she noted, salaries and retirement plans were strong enough that teachers moved to Alaska for a good lifestyle, even if their families lived elsewhere. She added that the teachers who will benefit most from the proposed bonus are those who already have a secure retirement plan from earlier tiers and are not planning to leave.

[5:16:30 PM](#)

MICHAEL BUCY, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 97. He said he is a teacher and remarked that doubling his pay while on the Titanic, a sinking ship, would not make much difference. As a Tier II teacher, he looks forward to retiring in a few years, noting that the Tier II retirement system was the reason he returned to teach in Alaska. He described the challenges of teaching music without adequate resources, especially when students are required to take the course despite having no interest, which undermines those who are genuinely interested. He argued that offering a bonus without also increasing the Base Student Allocation (BSA) is not a responsible approach.

[5:18:45 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN held public testimony on SB 97 open.

[5:19:14 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Tobin adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 5:19 p.m.