

HB

1

SFIN

FILE

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 3/3/05

REPORTED OUT
MAR : 6 2005
SENATE FINANCE
COMMITTEE

FURTHER: Rules

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE: 16 March 2005

Finance Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 1(HES)

HB 1 INCREASE AMT OF BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION

"An Act relating to the base student allocation used in the formula for state funding of public education; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with S CS CS HB 1 (FIN)
- adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:
 Same Title
 New Title

House Bill:
 Same Title
 Technical Title Change
 New Title w/ SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Ind.	Zero	FN#
SPIN/EED	3/16/05	32,018.6			6

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Ind.	Zero	FN#

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:		DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
Bunde	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
Hoffman	<i>[Signature]</i>			✓	
Olson	<i>[Signature]</i>			✓	
Stelman	<i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
Dyson	<i>[Signature]</i>				✓
Wilken	COCHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
Green	COCHAIR: <i>[Signature]</i>	✓			

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 1(FIN)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES GATTO, Chenault, Wilson, Lynn, Neuman, Thomas

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to the base student allocation used in the formula for state funding of
2 public education; and providing for an effective date."

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

4 * Section 1. AS 14.17.470 is amended to read:

5 Sec. 14.17.470. Base student allocation. The base student allocation is
6 \$4,733 [S4,576].

7 * Sec. 2. AS 14.17.470, as amended by sec. 1 of this Act, is amended to read:

8 Sec. 14.17.470. Base student allocation. The base student allocation is
9 \$4,919 [S4,733].

10 * Sec. 3. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
11 read:

12 CONTINGENT EFFECT OF SECTION 2 AS 14.17.470, as amended by sec. 2 of
13 this Act, takes effect only if the Twenty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature during its First
14 Regular Session passes a version of an Act that entirely replaces the existing defined benefit

1 plan for teachers established in AS 14.25 for teachers and members of the teachers' retirement
2 system with a defined contribution plan for persons who are first employed as teachers and
3 members covered by that system after that Act's effective date, and that entirely replaces the
4 existing defined benefit plan for public employees established in AS 39.35 for members of the
5 public employees' retirement system with a defined contribution plan for persons who are first
6 employed as members covered by that retirement system after that Act's effective date, and
7 that Act takes effect on a date that is not later than June 30, 2006.

8 * Sec. 4. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
9 read:

10 RETROSPECTIVE EFFECT OF SECTION 2. If under sec. 3 of this Act, sec. 2 of
11 this Act takes effect, and the effective date of sec. 2 is not earlier than July 1, 2005, and not
12 later than June 30, 2006, the amendment made to AS 14.17.470 by sec. 2 of this Act is
13 retrospective to July 1, 2005, and applies to the calculation of the formula for payment of state
14 funding of public education under AS 14.17 for state fiscal year 2006.

15 * Sec. 5. Section 1 of this Act takes effect July 1, 2005.

16 * Sec. 6. If, under sec. 3 of this Act, sec. 2 of this Act takes effect, it takes effect on the
17 later of the effective date of sec. 1 of this Act or of the Act described in sec. 3 of this Act.

18 * Sec. 7. Sections 3 and 4 of this Act take effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
Bill Version: SCS CSHB 1(FIN)
(S) Publish Date: 3/16/05

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development
Title: "An Act increasing the base student allocation for state funding of public education..." RDU: K-12 Support
Sponsor: Rep. Gatto Component: Foundation Program
Requester: Senate Finance Committee Component No: 141

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	32,018.6					
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	32,018.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	32,018.6					
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	32,018.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: 0.0
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill would increase the Base Student Allocation to \$4,733 for FY 2006.

Prepared by: Senate Finance Committee Phone: _____
Division: _____ Date/Time: 3/16/05 8:48 AM
Approved by: _____ Date: 3/16/2005
Agency: _____

FY06 Base Student Allocation Increase to \$4,733

School District	FY06 Projection		Difference
	@ \$4,576	@ \$4,733	
Alaska Gateway	4,915,667	5,065,670	150,003
Aleutian Region	1,059,727	1,083,040	23,313
Aleutians East	3,501,788	3,644,037	142,249
Anchorage	223,154,797	233,596,762	10,441,965
Annette Island	1,398,131	1,487,662	89,531
Bering Strait	17,205,353	18,026,913	821,560
Bristol Bay	1,239,140	1,306,676	67,536
Chatham	1,733,593	1,796,983	63,390
Chugach	1,905,637	1,938,796	33,159
Copper River	6,032,438	6,245,535	213,097
Cordova	3,087,845	3,217,976	130,131
Craig	3,698,050	3,840,330	142,280
Delta Greely	8,942,900	9,248,796	305,896
Denali	4,597,598	4,774,294	176,696
Dillingham	4,263,506	4,437,774	174,268
Fairbanks	72,823,842	76,239,078	3,415,236
Galena	16,058,992	16,392,779	333,787
Haines	1,563,785	1,645,882	82,097
Hoonah	1,535,829	1,596,694	60,865
Hydaburg	767,366	783,683	16,317
Iditarod Area	4,427,089	4,517,694	90,605
Juneau	23,648,457	24,839,469	1,191,012
Kake	1,190,539	1,237,538	46,999
Kashunamiut	2,546,629	2,678,521	131,892
Kenai Peninsula	46,190,905	48,424,071	2,233,165
Ketchikan Gateway	11,703,837	12,254,781	550,924
Klawock	1,331,394	1,362,659	31,265
Kodiak Island	15,580,674	16,273,521	692,847
Kuspuk	4,610,680	4,811,516	200,836
Lake & Peninsula	5,980,874	6,292,027	221,153
Lower Kuskokwim	39,975,145	41,015,415	1,040,270
Lower Yukon	18,120,223	18,965,622	845,399
Mat-Su	83,064,669	86,439,779	3,375,080
Nenana	3,922,379	4,058,969	136,590
Nome	6,359,841	6,605,698	245,855
North Slope	8,451,990	9,115,783	663,793
Northwest Arctic	22,227,553	23,103,969	876,416
Pelican	404,184	410,429	6,245
Petersburg	3,691,527	3,853,164	161,637
Pribilof	1,258,266	1,319,973	61,707
Saint Mary's	1,992,370	2,061,131	68,761
Sitka	7,265,034	7,609,774	344,740
Skagway	710,547	748,377	37,830
Southeast Island	3,069,832	3,139,714	69,882
Southwest Region	6,817,409	7,134,603	317,194
Tanana	1,027,629	1,064,645	37,016
Unalaska	2,465,593	2,512,274	106,681
Valdez	3,664,508	3,865,330	180,822
Wrangell	2,276,615	2,375,040	98,225
Yakutat	991,431	1,031,435	40,004
Yukon Flats	4,617,236	4,726,992	109,756
Yukon Koyukuk	11,059,846	11,481,221	421,373
Yupit	4,225,753	4,425,352	199,599
Mt. Edgecumbe	1,842,250	1,931,099	88,849
AMYA	4,299,078	4,518,627	219,549
Other	26,096,100	26,096,100	0
TOTALS	766,554,303	798,572,950	32,018,647

Adopted 3/16/05

WORK DRAFT

WORK DRAFT

WORK DRAFT

24-LS0001\S
Mischel
3/14/05

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BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

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SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
3/16/2005 COMMITTEE ACTION

Bill Number	HB 1		
Amendment	CS "S"		
Motion	adopt		
<u>Motion by</u>	Wilken		
<u>Objection by</u>	Hoffman		
<u>Removed</u>	✓		
<u>Second Objection by</u>			
<u>Committee Member</u>	Y	<u>Vote</u>	N
Senator Dyson			
Senator Hoffman			
Senator Olson			
Senator Stedman			
Senator Bunde			
Co-Chair Wilken			
Co-Chair Green			
<u>Tally</u>			
Yea			
Nay			
Absent			
<u>MOTION</u>	Passed		



Official Business

Alaska State Senate

Senate Finance Committee

Mail Stop 3100
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE: 16 March 2005 TIME: 10:20 am

TO: Legal Services

NUMBER OF PAGES, INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 1

FROM: MINDY ROWLAND
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE SECRETARY
PHONE: 465-4935
FAX: 465-2187

NOTES: Final Please

SCS CS HB 1 (FIN) 24-LS0001\5
Mischel
3/14/05

no changes

Thanks
Mindy



HB 1

Public
Comments

HB 1 provides the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District with the opportunity to pay our increased fuel costs in the 18 schools heated with fuel oil or propane and to pay the retirement obligations for our current employees. Obviously we are thankful that it doesn't look like we will have to cut further positions in order to meet these fixed obligations. But, the false hope that our school district could do much of anything to affect the large class sizes or bring back vocational, music, art, physical education or other offerings is wrong - the amount proposed in HB1 simply won't do it.

Information is power. I would like to share three informational items with you in this testimony. The first is what school looks like for our current juniors in high school. Beginning in their seventh grade year (5 years ago) the course offerings began being reduced. The District was desperately doing everything possible to work smarter and more efficiently so that the classrooms would be the last impacted area. We've done everything (shared services for administration, nursing, counseling, secretaries) right up to and including closing a school. The seniors next year have done without textbooks, desks in some cases, and certainly without the rich array of opportunities traditionally associated with schools. Couple that with their increased requirements for graduation and you can understand why when I talk to them, they think the adults in their world have royally screwed up. What price have they had to pay for the lack of investment?

The second informational item I'd like to share with you is about the cost study. For six years we have been following the rules, going to Juneau, being patient. The statutory requirements of SB 36 required this review. The results are in and they are clear - there is no other district in the state as under funded as the Kenai Peninsula Borough. What would we have done with that money? Can you imagine classes in our 16 schools of under 100 students that had more than one teacher for 20 students in 5+ grades? Can you imagine a staffing formula that allows teachers to not have 30 high needs students crammed into rooms built for 24 students? Can you imagine programs for students that helps them reach their highest personal potential? That's what the equity of the cost study would have done for us. We've finally hemorrhaged - the bleeding and reductions can no longer be contained by the band aid fixes being applied in the area of funding. The 44 schools on the Kenai Peninsula need immediate and substantial financial help, well beyond that provided in HB 1.

The last piece of information that may be of interest is anecdotal. When children leave our system at any point, we attempt to interview parents and see why. Six years ago the answers we got were things like "I'm mad at a teacher or principal and I'm going to home school." Four years ago the majority of answers were things like, "I'm headed to MatSu or Anchorage because that's where the jobs are." Beginning two years ago, the answers we heard go like this, "This state is so messed up that we can do much better outside, especially for our kids." In other words there's a degree of urgency if we are going to address the hopelessness felt by many Alaskans.

Remember, information is power. You have the information and you have the power. I'd like you to picture the bright flame burning in our students as they receive the skills to become productive members of society - that's the dream of public education. Over the last few years on the Kenai, that bright flame has been reduced to smoldering coals. Pretty soon there will be just the ashes left from those of use still trying to make a difference, no matter the odds. I speak on behalf of the 9500 students, the 1100+ employees, and the 50,000 Borough residents who expect the constitutionally mandated public education to thrive. By not addressing both adequacy and equity in education funding, the message is that on your watch, by your action (or inaction), you have decided that the students of the Kenai Peninsula are worth less than others.

Senate Finance Committee

HB 1 Hearing

March 9, 2005

My name is Sandy Wassilie; I am vice-president of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District from Seward.

I appreciate the attention the Legislature is giving to **EQUITABLE, ADEQUATE AND EARLY** funding for K-12 education.

The inequitable Area Cost Differential (ACD) for our district (1.004) over the years has led to a serious inadequacy of funding. The Base Student Allocation (BSA) of \$4919 proposed in HB 1 is helpful. It does not, however, allow us to provide the kind and number of programs we need to meet increasing mandates and an increasing achievement gap that seems to be going hand in hand with an increasing poverty rate, about 40%, at least on our side of the Peninsula.

To close the achievement gap, we need to address the programming gap. To close the programming gap, we need to address the funding gap. With adequate funding, we can continue to reduce class size to the levels of three years ago, add teachers and more classes—more classes in terms of both subject matter and number of sections. For instance, we have classes of 30 or more students in rooms built for 25 or less. For instance, we have too few teachers and classes to provide full day programming at the Seward Middle School, and most district high schools. The number of "home releases" at junior and senior grade levels is increasing. We have been reducing academic and technical offerings and the level of adult supervision young people deserve.

I would urge you to support HB 1 and add to the BSA. Our board has passed a resolution stating we need: a total of \$5200 per pupil based on the current ACD. This will provide a quality education that enables our students, first of all, to graduate, and then, to take advantage of college, technical training and the numerous job opportunities a gas line and mining are opening up in the near future.

We are very heartened by the findings of the recent Alaska School District Cost Update by ISER. It gives our district a reasonable figure of 1.171. Monday night, our board passed another resolution in support of this study and asking for legislation that phases in the recommendations resulting in a more equitable distribution of funds, **BUT NOT AT THE PRICE OF ADEQUACY OF FUNDS FOR ALL DISTRICTS.**

In closing I would urge you to consider K-12 funding not as a state cost but a wise investment. Thank you.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Finance
 (committee name)
 committee on House Bill 1, dated March 9, 2005.
 (bill/subject)

I urge you to raise the base student allocation from \$4,919 to \$5,200, to adequately fund education here.

In our town the schools and community have been doing the best with what we have. I am concerned that programs and teachers have been cut. There is no gifted education at the high school level and it has been reduced to once a week, at the lower levels. Music has been cut and we have no feeder program for high school. Parents in our town are choosing to move out of state elsewhere to take advantage of increased educational options or they are choosing home schooling or private teachers. Our children are our future. Please increase funding to \$5,200 base student allocation.

Signed:

Karen Chase
 (Testifier)

Self
 (Representing / Optional)

P.O. Box 667 Seward, AK 99664
 (Address)

907-224-3261
 (Phone No.)



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Finance
(committee name)
committee on House Bill 1 dated 9 March, 2005
(bill/subject)

The K.P.B. S.D. District is not and has not been funded adequately for many years. This is because it is funded at the same level as the Anchorage District, but geographically and in school populations, we are the same as a bush district. Consequently, here in Seward, we have begun to lose some of our best students because the school can no longer offer enough challenging courses to keep them. Middle school students are in science classes with more than 30 kids. No art, no music for middle school. No gifted program for the high school. Fewer teachers every year.

Signed:

Deborah Dixon
(Testifier)

The Dixon Family
(Representing / Optional)

Box 1058, Seward AK 99664
(Address)

907-224-5851
(Phone No.)

The K.P.B.S.D. needs a minimum funding level of \$500 in order to stop cutting programs.



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
(committee name)

committee on HB1 Student Funding dated March 9, 2005
(bill/subject)

Seward Schools are a proud part of the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District yet we have taken a beating over the last several years. We have over 30 kids in classrooms with a single teacher and have no music program provided by our schools. While we appreciate the halting of funding cuts, we now need to rebuild from a position of extreme weakness. Based on the current area cost differential, we need \$5200 per child, not the \$4919 per child that is proposed.

There is no doubt that the schools are cursed with funding PERSTERS. Given that this is not going to change in the immediate future, we need to insure that our classrooms are able to maintain themselves. My children are in classes with 32 other kids and a single teacher. This means that many students get no individual attention. Our gifted and talented program has been reduced to nothing, and our athletic programs have been crippled.

The people in Seward are resourceful & many have found alternative ways to support education. This doesn't work for everyone, leaving many kids in our community left with an inadequate education, contrary to what is in our state constitution. Please do the right thing & provide our schools adequate funding at \$5200/student! Thank you for your support.

Signed:

S. Johnson
(Testifier)

Self
(Representing / Optional)

PO Box 1873 Seward, AK 99664
(Address)

907-224-4705
(Phone No.)



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Finance
 (committee name)
 committee on HTBI dated 3/9/05
 (bill/subject)

Thank you for having this public hearing to allow parents & community members to voice their opinions. I am the parent of four children, products of the Anchorage School District, Kenai Peninsula School District and two homeschool programs. I only have one child left in school, an eighth grader. I have watched the educational program in my local schools erode steadily since the first day I put my 25 year old in kindergarten. Money may not be the answer but it is part of the solution.

Did you hear Alan Greenspan speaking before a Congressional hearing recently (I believe the same day the House voted to raise educational funding but not to a level that actually improves the current situation in my local schools)? He responded to a question about the growing gap between upper income and lower income Americans by quite a long response about education and how it essential it was for our country. He didn't suggest anything other than education as the way to close the gap.

How can education close the gap if we are not supplied the funds to put sufficient numbers of teachers in front of kids and kids don't receive a high quality education? Greenspan said we're still behind the rest of the world... while our fourth graders are on track by 12th grade we've dropped the ball and we're behind in the game (my words not his more eloquent description). Our economy is going global. Our kids need to compete globally.

My son attends a middle school without a librarian, without art, without music, virtually without field trips, without computer classes, without shop. His school does have the distinction of the shortest day in our district and science classes with over 30 students. Kenai Peninsula Schools have been shortchanged by the foundation formula for over a decade. As you vote to spend the excess earning this year, please temper your votes by the educational needs of our Alaskans and save of those earnings for schools this year and in the future.

Signed: Lynn Hall
 (Type)

 (Representing / Optional)
Box 333 Seward 99664
 (Address)
274-7300
 (Phone No.)



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record by testimony to the (S) FIN
COMMITTEE NAME
 committee on HBI, dated 3-9-05
SUBJECT TODAY'S DATE

You often hear people jokingly say - "It's the Secretary that really runs the school." Well, that saying is becoming more and more true every year - and it's not funny any more. In the 8 years that I have been at McNeil Canyon, there have been cuts to teachers, custodians, nurses and the principal. My job has grown significantly.

There used to be a full time nurse. We now have nursing services one day a week. That means I am now the nurse 4 days a week. I pass out medications, take out slivers, sooth hurts, check for head lice, take temperatures, wash and bandage scrapes and on average see 12 students a day. Since we no longer have a custodian all day, I can often be seen carrying 5 gallon water bottles down the hall to put in one of the water coolers when they run out.

The past two years, our principal's hours have been cut. Last year he was at Razdolna School part of the time and this year he is expected to teach half of the day. I have heard rumors that the district is considering having regional principals. Does this mean there will be a sub for the principal in the building when he is at another school? My guess is probably not, since there was never a sub for my principal when he had to go to Razdolna last year. Most likely, a teacher will be asked to shoulder the additional responsibility of being in charge for the day - in addition to her regular teaching duties and without additional compensation for this huge responsibility. This means that for the entire day, if there is a situation that the principal (or charge teacher) needs to deal with - the student or parent or I will be waiting even longer for a solution or answer or assistance because the principal is in another building and the teacher is in class. This kind of a situation is not fair to the principal, the teacher, the secretary, the parents or the students. When the principal is out of the building, technically a teacher is put in charge but realistically, it's the secretary who is dealing with everything.

As secretaries, we love our jobs and are doing the best we can, but our "To Do" list grows longer every day. I respectfully ask that you adequately fund education. This downward trend cannot be continued.

Signature: Laura Sheldon Laura Sheldon
TELEPHONE (907) 235-5950
 ADDRESS: Box 15181, Fritz Creek AK 99603
 TELEPHONE: 907-235-5950

Stephanie Allison
9414 Long Run Drive
Juneau AK 99801
Phone: 780-2092
Fax: 780-6407

**Stephanie L. Allison,
CPA**

Fax

To: Mindy Rowland	From: Stephanie Allison
Fax: 465-2187	Date: March 8, 2005
Phone: 465-4935	Pages: 2 w/cover
Re: Testimony	CC:

Urgent For Review Please Comment Please Reply Please Recycle

Comments:

Ms. Rowland,

Due to a sick child I am unable to personally testify at the Senate Finance Committee meeting today at 9:00am. I would like the following letter to be a part of the record. Please call me if you have questions.

Thank you
Stephanie Allison

Stephanie L. Allison, CPA

March 8, 2005

Senate Finance Committee
First Session
Twenty-Fourth Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Ladies & Gentlemen;

I am writing out of concern for the under funding of our states education system. I have lived in Alaska for 28 years, receiving all of my secondary and post-secondary education within the state. When I attended Chugiak High School in the early 80's the only class with 30 students was band. The rest of my classes never exceeded 25 students. I cringe when hearing of classes at Juneau Douglas High School exceeding 35 pupils. The class sizes in other schools within the Juneau School District are not much better. At Glacier Valley Elementary, where I am on the site council, both fifth grade classes have 31 students, one 4/5 grade class has 30 students, one 2nd grade class has 27 students and both 1st grade classes have 26 students.

My own son's kindergarten class had 25 students. Although his teacher worked hard, had parent assistance every day of the week and greatly cared for her students, the students didn't get everything they needed. This caring teacher spent a great deal of time advocating for her students whose parents couldn't or wouldn't advocate themselves. This activity drained the teacher of time and energy. I believe that these parents didn't advocate because they didn't know how or that they should. The reason they didn't have this knowledge or skill was because of their own education, and a state that failed them.

This great state, which is not by any means poor, is failing its children. We are reaping our rewards and will be paying for this for many years to come. Our undereducated citizens will need financial assistance when they can't food or house their families. Our undereducated citizens will face incarceration, a cost the state supports. Our undereducated citizens will continue to rely on overworked teachers to advocate for their children.

The fallout of under funding education will continue to snowball until we are no longer a great state, but a desperate one. Please, increase the base funding for our children. I support the Alaska Kids Count and Anchorage School District proposal of \$6120 per student and I hope you do as well.

Respectfully,

Stephanie L. Allison

Stephanie L. Allison, CPA

1983 Chugiak High School Graduate
1989 and 1993 UAF Graduate

9414 Long Run Drive Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 790-3092 cell 773-3092 fax 790-6407
jareda@jpi.net

FAX TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: Mindy Rowland
FROM: Margarita Bell *MB*
DATE: March 8, 2005
PAGES: 3 (including cover)

I am unable to attend the hearing scheduled for 9:00 a.m. and would like to submit the attached comments. If you need additional information, please contact me at 907-488-7306. Thank you!

**North Pole High School PTSA
601 North Pole High Boulevard
North Pole, AK 99705**

DATE: March 8, 2005

TO: Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Margarita Bell, President
North Pole High School PTSA

SUBJECT: HB 1

On November 9, 2004, the North Pole High School PTSA unanimously approved Resolution 2004-01: North Pole High School Increase in Staffing to Improve Academic Achievement by Reducing Classroom Sizes (see attached).

Although the resolution is specific for our school and location, the expectations and impact are the same for all schools in the State of Alaska. The North Pole High School PTSA supports an increase in the amount of base student allocation sufficient to reduce class sizes

Our future depends on the success of our students and their success is due to the education they receive today.

2004-2005 Officers:

**Margarita Bell, President – Karen Lane, Vice President
Kim Schmitz, Treasurer – Cindy Simpson, Secretary**

NORTH POLE HIGH SCHOOL PTSA

RESOLUTION 2004-01

NORTH POLE HIGH SCHOOL INCREASE IN STAFFING TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT BY REDUCING CLASSROOM SIZES

WHEREAS, the Department of Education has acknowledged that smaller classes are effective in helping to improve academic achievement and has accepted research that indicates that the threshold for classes lies between 15 and 20 students; and,

WHEREAS, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District requires students to pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam in areas of mathematics, reading, and writing; and,

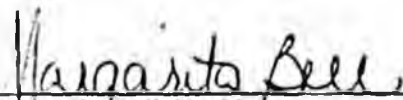
WHEREAS, the colleges requires high school graduates to have several credits in mathematics, English and sciences; and,

WHEREAS, the North Pole High School has class space to provide for four additional classes in core academic areas such as mathematics, language arts, and science; and,

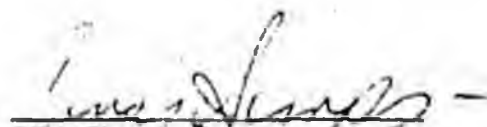
WHEREAS, the North Pole High School has 13 English classes, 6 mathematic classes, 8 social studies, and 4 foreign language classes over 27 students and 16 science classes over the safety capacity of 24 students; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that North Pole High School Parent Teacher Student Association supports the increase in academic staffing at North Pole High School and encourages the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board of Education to approve additional staffing for North Pole High School.

PASSED AND APPROVED:


Margarita Bell, President
North Pole High School PTSA

ATTEST:


Cindy Simpson, Secretary
North Pole High School PTSA

Barbara Thurston
628 Scater Street
Juneau, AK 99801
March 8, 2004

Members of the Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senators:

I am unable to attend the March 9 hearing on HB1, but wanted to send in my written thoughts.

I am very concerned about the school funding level that was approved by the House in HB1. At a base student level of \$4919, most schools in the state will be facing cuts in the amount of money available to educate children.

I have had a child in the Juneau School District for five years, and have witnessed the effect that the consistently decreasing funding levels has had on the children. Class sizes have grown significantly across the board in the past few years, with some kindergarten and first grade children in classes with 25 or more students. Elementary schools have cut back on music, gym, extended learning, art, and other areas that are critical to a child's success in school. High schools have very overcrowded classes, with fewer materials and fewer elective classes available to students.

If HB1 passes the way it is currently written, these cuts will only increase.

I urge you to increase the Base Student Allocation in HB1 to the \$5120 that has been recommended by a number of groups. Alaska has enough money to pay for these costs; we simply need the legislature to take the leadership and make our children the priority they need to be.

Thank you.


Barbara Thurston

Audrey and Bill Diebels, Jr.
8342 Betty Ct.
Juneau, AK 99801

bdiebels@qci.net
907-789-4872

March 9, 2005

Re: HB 1

Dear Finance Committee Senator:

I urge legislative approval of increased funding for education at a base student allocation of \$5120. Some have questioned whether more money will meet our education needs. While more money will not solve ALL our problems, it will help immensely to:

- ensure every student has a desk in the classroom
- allow quality instruction with manageable class sizes (especially for labor-intensive subjects such as English)
- keep instructional materials current in this quickly changing world.

Class size does matter!

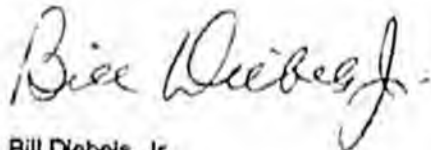
My son is in college and my daughter is a junior at JDHS in Juneau. My reasons for caring about education funding and the effect it would have on my kids have essentially vanished. However, I care about Alaska and its dim future if we continue to under-fund education of our most precious resource: our kids.

In closing, let me offer this anecdote. After growing up in Juneau I went to college in Wisconsin, then worked 10 years in Seattle. In 1990 my family returned to Juneau to be closer to family and raise our kids in "a small town". Quality of schools was a factor in our decision and at the time schools in Juneau were roughly equivalent to schools in Redmond, WA where we lived. As an involved parent who has been on site councils and participated in parent groups throughout my kids' education I have seen first-hand the impact of inadequate funding.

What troubles me is that if parents of young kids were to ask my advice on whether to make a similar move, I would have to warn them that education is not a priority for Alaska and advise them to consider look elsewhere to raise their family. With our current approach to education we are implying that mediocrity is acceptable and it makes me fear for the future of Alaska.

Please make adequate funding for education a priority.

Sincerely,



Bill Diebels, Jr.

March 7, 2005

Co-chair Senator Green and Co-chair Senator Wilken and fellow Senate Finance committee members.

My name is Lillian Melisa Worl. As a representative of Auke Bay Elementary Site Council, a member of Alaska Kids count, and as a concerned parent of two children who attend Auke Bay I wanted to share a few words for the record on HB1.

I recognize that most of you are quite familiar with education, funding and foundation formulas. What I want to share with you is what I've been seeing in the classrooms over the last four years. For the last few years, I've been volunteering in the classroom, in my daughter and son's class each week. I began volunteering initially to ease my child's transition into school. However, from the first day of school I was truly overwhelmed at the high level of demand required of the teachers.

To this day, I am impressed with how much teachers are doing with their scarce resources. In these past years, in the efforts to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind, I've helped the teachers with math assessments, working with small reading groups, walking between the tables and desks helping the kids with their writing.

I've felt frustrated when I see how often one child, who desperately needs help from a special education teacher, can halt the class teaching as they act out their learning and behavioral frustrations. The teachers have no choice but to stop and help get that child's emotions under control, meanwhile 23 or more other students stand-by and watch. It is frustrating to me because I know with more resources, that child might get the help they need and more students could progress at a rate they need to meet the high academic standards placed upon our teachers.

I'm disappointed that I'm increasingly paying for public education through pushing my children's gift wrap sales, garden sales, art auctions, paying \$2 here, \$3 there for buses for field trips. And also while I'm juggling car pools to save gas on picking up my son from kindergarten now that there are no longer school kinder-buses, my two sisters don't have that option and must pay more of their limited income on Rally. Or worse, I worry about my nephew who walks to school along a heavy traffic, snowy road in the dark because the side-walks are not yet plowed and he doesn't live more than 1 ½ miles from his school so he no longer gets picked up by a school bus. Can it really be expected for a 5-year old, or even a 10-year old, to do so safely? If you think so, remember Skyler Lee Kim.

I'm sad that my aunt who adopted a foster child is not getting the help she needs to continue the tutoring that child needs to learn the core requirements for reading.

You have all heard about crowded classrooms, torn textbooks, leaking roofs. What I am seeing in the classrooms is more than just that. I'm seeing kids who are already struggling to succeed, never mind meet the core, as early as kindergarten and second grade. I'm concerned that if they're struggling now, will they make it to graduation or even to high school. I'm seeing families, who make just enough money to pay their mortgage, food and childcare, who do not have the extra money to pay for after school programs like piano, dance, soccer. Those children are not getting the "luxuries" of art and sports since those programs have long been cut-back in the schools to mere half-time positions. My kids get library, music, and gym on a rotating monthly basis in school. Is it enough? I don't think so, but fortunately, my family is able to supplement. But what about the at-risk and lower-income kids who could benefit and be motivated from music, sports and art where perhaps the other academic areas are not.

What I'm trying to say is your vote to increase funding is critical. It will provide much needed special education specialists to help the students who need it most, reduce the class sizes giving teachers a number of students they can manage more productively, provide classroom supplies out-dated and worn, and possibly fund some of the basics we've cut from our schools over the years and have accepted as adequate. I am here to say as a parent and school site council representative, our education funding is not acceptable and is not adequate.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Lillian Melisa (Lisa) Worl
9159 Wolfram Way
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Ivy J. Frye

From: Carlile [carlile16mile@gci.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 06, 2005 1:02 PM
To: Sen. Lyda Green
Subject: School funding

Dear Senator Green,

After years of insufficient funding and rapidly rising costs, we can no longer afford to do anything but make education funding a TOP priority in Alaska. I have watched the effects of this funding inadequacy take different forms as my own children have moved through the public school system in Juneau: a first grade teacher stopping notes home to parents because the school had run out of copy paper; multiple elementary classes being divided up weeks after the start of school to take advantage of one more teacher added when enrollment numbers just squeaked up over the target; requests for parent contributions from the middle school to replace outdated computers; high school teachers, with 150 students coming through their door each day, expected to give quality feedback on essays. The list goes on and on. Our students deserve no less than current textbooks, smaller class sizes, adequate counseling, diverse and quality course offerings, teachers with adequate resources to prepare students for life beyond high school.

Last year's legislative efforts at staving off further cuts were laudable, but did nothing to IMPROVE the plight of our schools. The public is not fooled by claims of an "increase" in the BSA to \$4919 this year. It's no secret that this amount doesn't even maintain the status quo, much less turn the tide toward real improvements. Yes, it will take courage and creativity to make substantive change; but it's time we paid the price for putting education on the back burner for years and begin to move forward. I expect the legislature to do whatever is necessary to provide the funding to not only prevent further cuts, but take a substantial step to improve things. This year, I fully expect to pay my part. As it is, I pay by contributing piecemeal to the critical needs in my own kids' classrooms.

A BSA of \$4919 is unacceptable. At \$5120, we can prevent further cuts AND begin to make the kind of improvements the students of this state deserve. You showed us you cared last year by facing up to this funding deficit and preventing further cuts. Show us with your vote this year that you are committed to making a real difference - permanent changes that set us on the road to real improvement.

Sincerely,
Jan Carlile
789-4746

3/7/2005

Ivy J. Frye

From: Shelagh Sands [ssands@alaska.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 06, 2005 11:59 AM
To: Sen. Gary Wilken; Sen. Lyda Green; Sen. Con Bunde; Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson
Subject: base foundation formula, parent

Dear Senators,

I am a parent of three here in Juneau. I am on the PTA and will not be able to make it to the capitol on Thursday to testify.

I believe strongly that the foundation formula should be raised to \$5,120. I have volunteered for 10 years in the schools and have worked diligently to help the schools in many ways.

Over the years I have seen how these cuts have effected education and we need to lower class size and bring back art, music, gym and extra ESL money to the districts. The schools have pared down to the bone. It is time to make a commitment to make them better. If you raise this base foundation formula you will affect the class and it is desperately needed.

There is a reason we rank 43rd in the country for drop out rate. We have not inspired our children at a young age to remain engaged in education. We stress the academics and cut all that make a child want to be in school. Art, music, gym, time to talk with a friend as the class is smaller. Time to be part of a smaller community as then the shy can be heard.

The high school has a drop out rate of one third here in Juneau. Many of the elective teachers are no longer at the school, classes are huge and children give up.

I will relate a personal story. My son is in 9th grade and was in a Japanese class of 37. At mid semester I got him switched to the Japanese class of 16. He kept saying "this won't make any difference mom". After a month I ask him how it was going. He said he was surprised because now he liked the subject much more as he felt the class was much more a community. He no longer had to just sit and listen to lectures as in the larger class. This class the teacher had time to involve discussion and smaller projects between the kids. I asked him if he was surprised as being a teenager, they know it all. He replied "I guess you were right on this mom".

Let the children have an effect in the class and raise the funding for HB 1.

Thank you for your time.

Shelagh Sands
Harborview PTA

Ivy J. Frye

From: Mary Pat Schilly [marypats@alaska.net]
Sent: Saturday, March 05, 2005 10:25 AM
To: Sen. Lyda Green
Subject: Education Funding

Dear Senator Green,

I am writing to ask that you increase funding for public education. I have volunteered in my son's and daughter's classrooms for many years. Over that time I have observed ever increasing class sizes with limited assistance or support to teachers, while expectations for teacher performance and workload has only increased.

There is much that is good and positive in our public schools, but there are also problems. I have two children currently at Juneau Douglas High School; one that studies hard and manages to cruise through the system quite easily, even though she doesn't feel particularly challenged, while the other struggles daily to survive in the classroom because he is not a typical learner. Because of the large class sizes and teachers being spread too thin, my son does not receive the attention that he needs and deserves to be successful, and I feel that neither of my children, for very different reasons, are learning to appreciate or find joy in the learning process. My son has commented on several occasions that he "feels guilty" asking for help because of all that the teachers already have to do.

I want my son and daughter to receive the help they need, when they need it, and to be challenged. To make this possible, we need smaller class sizes.

\$5120 allows for modest improvements in Alaska's public schools. \$4919 requires cuts to most schools in this state and will continue to reduce the quality of instruction available to students.

Please increase the BSA to \$5120.

Sincerely,
Mary Pat Schilly

Traci C. Carpenter

From: Michelle Locks [michellelocks@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, March 04, 2005 10:21 AM

To: Sen. Gary Wilken; Sen. Lyda Green; Sen. Con Bunde; Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. John Cowdery; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Gretchen Guess; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Albert Kookesh; Sen. Ralph Seekins; Sen. Ben Stevens; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Gene Therriault; Sen. Tom Wagoner

Subject: Funding for our Schools

Dear Senator,

I am writing to ask that you increase funding for public education. I have volunteered at my son and daughter's school for 2 years. Over that time I have observed the lack of educational materials (TEXT BOOKS!!), lack of teacher student ratio (too many children in classes), and too many parents and other locals having to donate money and items for our children's education.

There is much that is good and positive in our public schools, but there are also problems. Again, lack of text books. That is a big one for me. I myself struggled in school and so does my oldest daughter. With out the use of a text book to refer to, I have no idea how I would have graduated high school. I used those text books to my full advantage. They were my "bible". I am truly disappointed that my daughter, now in the 4th grade, has never had one text book to bring home. And I find that I have to learn the "new" math that is being taught in order to help my child. Class size is also an issue. There is not enough of the teacher to go around. She/He can not meet every child's needs when class size is so large. I also find that many parents, businesses, and locals are stepping up to the plate to help fund the items needed. This is not our job.

I want my son and daughters to receive the help they need, when they need it, and to be challenged. To make this possible, we need smaller class sizes.

\$5120 allows for modest improvements in Alaska's public schools. \$4919 requires cuts to most schools in this state and will continue to reduce the quality of instruction available to students.

Please increase the BSA to \$5120.

Sincerely,

Michelle Locks

Mother, Business Woman, and Volunteer of two children attending Riverbend School.

(907)789-0459

Smile.....It makes people wonder what you're up to! 😊

Celebrate Yahoo!'s 10th Birthday!
Yahoo! Netropective: 100 Moments of the Web

Traci C. Carpenter

From: Lynn Spence [lspence@jaybrant.com]
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2005 9:06 AM
To: Sen. Lyda Green
Subject: EDUCATION FUNDING

Dear Senator,

I am a parent and a voter asking you to increase funding for education. As a parent I see teachers struggling to maintain a high quality of teaching while their class size increases to unmanageable levels. I say unmanageable levels because we ask a lot of our teachers today that we did not ask in decades past. We main stream, we have major discipline and respect issues, we have family problems and lack of family interest problems that enter our classrooms. Teachers today are not only educators, they are social workers. In my experience, teachers have addressed the educational and social issues that come with each group of kids but they cannot do the job we are asking of them if we do not recognize that schools are under funded and class size needs to be reduced.

Adding teachers costs a lot and as a voter I want you to know that I am willing to pay. I work full time and encourage you to consider an income tax to pay for education in the future, and for now, I encourage to use the money we have to fund education at an increased level. I do not feel the \$5120 level is high enough but I realize it is hard for you to take a stand above this level. It is my hope that one day the legislature will make a bold move to take care of our kids and our society without thought for reelection.

Please give increased education funding your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Spence

Ivy J. Frye

From: Tom Conley [prophet@ptialaska.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 06, 2005 12:28 PM
To: Sen. Lyda Green
Subject: CSHB 1

Dear Senator Green, I hope when CSHB 1 comes to the Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday March 9 that you can see your way clear to enhancing the Base Student Allocation. We are very appreciative of the Governor's initiative increasing the BSA to \$4880 and the House's move to up the BSA to \$4919.

Sadly, though the monies are significant, the erosion of purchasing power engendered by the TRS/PEKS fiasco and the increases in utilities, insurance, and the general cost of doing business still leave most districts in the red. Sitka is actually in better position than most, but even at \$4919 we will see only a \$35,000 increase in purchasing power over FY 04-05. Many of the larger districts will actually experience serious declines. We, like other districts around the state, had hoped that the generally more robust financial situation of the state exchequer would let us start to seriously address the mandates we have been given in regard to No Child Left Behind, Adequate Yearly Progress, and the High School Qualifying Exam. As it is we will be, at best, left at the point of stagnation.

Your help in getting the BSA increased to at least \$4995, or if you want to seriously promote education as a priority matter \$5120, would be much appreciated. Our kids and their parents are depending on you.

Thanks, Tom Conley, Sitka School Board

Ivy J. Frye

From: Gary Lehnhart [lehnhart@gci.net]
Sent: Saturday, March 05, 2005 2:34 PM
To: Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Con Bunde; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Wilken; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Lyda Green
Cc: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Subject: school funding

Dear Senate Finance Committee members,

I am a parent of four children in the Alaska public schools and I spend as much time as I can volunteering in the schools. I am painfully aware of many children who are not making it, who need more attention and support systems, smaller classrooms, more opportunities, more family outreach, art and cultural options. The basic needs have been determined, an amount that will simply allow all schools in Alaska to not have to make further cuts, as we've been continuously doing for years, but to begin to build in improvements. That amount, unanimously, is 5,120 BSA. I understand that hearts were heavy in the House Chambers because many, many legislators, across party isles, recognized that their vote for less than that was not doing well by Alaska children. We parents wait expectantly to see if you will amend this and meet the stated need. We are tired of our schools going down hill. It just doesn't make sense. Please raise the BSA to 5,120.

Thank you so much for your time and service on behalf of all of us, Nancy Lehnhart Juneau (907) 789-5421

Alaska Kids Count!

March 9, 2005

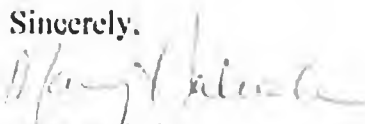
Senator Lyda Green
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Green,

Attached is a proposal from Alaska Kids Count, regarding increasing state funding for public schools. Alaska Kids Count is a nonpartisan network of parents, educators, and community members who are committed to making improvements to Alaska's schools.

We would request that when considering bills on education funding in the Senate Finance Committee that you also give serious consideration to the funding level suggested in this proposal. It is our hope that education funding will be significantly increased for the next fiscal year, in an effort to provide school districts with the financial resources to meet the needs of public school students of Alaska.

Sincerely,


Mary Hakala
Facilitator
Alaska Kids Count

Alaska Kids Count! Juneau

February 2005

Our Goals for Foundation and Local Funding for Public Schools

Juneau's class sizes continue to grow and as a result the quality of our children's education continues to erode. For example, Harborview School has a kindergarten class with 26 children, almost half of whom have special needs, and Auke Bay School has a third grade class with 30 children. As parents, we see the need for smaller class sizes and know how fewer children in a classroom allow teachers time for individual attention to meet each child's learning needs.

Alaska Kids Count supports reducing average class size to reach the Juneau School Board's published class size goals. These are modest ratios and do not reflect an ideal.

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Board Goal</u>	<u>Current Average Class Size</u>
K-2	20	K-5 combined at 25
3-5	25	
6-8	30	32
9-12	30	32

Alaska Kids Count also supports meeting specific instructional needs that affect the classroom such as special education and English as a Second Language, and matching requirements for independent Arts for Kids grant initiatives. These services directly impact the quality of education available to Juneau's students.

To meet these goals, *Alaska Kids Count* supports an increase in Foundation funding of approximately \$112 million statewide, \$50 million more than the Governor's proposed funding level. This would generate an increase of approximately \$1.8 million in state education funding for Juneau. It requires an estimated Base Student Allocation of \$5120.

The Governor's proposal is a \$62 million increase with \$38 million for retirement and \$24 million to compensate for inflation. Even assuming a \$900 thousand local contribution (to the "cap"), the Governor's proposal requires \$600 thousand in cuts to Juneau's schools. While *Alaska Kids Count* appreciates the Governor's proposal, we ask the Governor and the Legislature to do more for Alaskan students.

Our example is specific to Juneau, but is representative of other schools' needs.

It is time for improvement in Alaska's public schools. Alaska is a wealthy state and can afford good schools for our children.



March 9, 2005

Alaska Kids Count

Senate Finance Committee
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senators,

Enclosed is testimony from a parent and English teacher at Juneau-Douglas High School. She is unable to attend the hearing today since she is teaching, and grading student work.

Please take a few moments out of your very busy day, to look at the magnitude of her job.

In the attached packet you will find the rubric, or guide, by which she evaluates each student composition. Two essays, from Juniors, are enclosed as examples of work submitted by students. These are two, out of ninety-nine papers she will evaluate for this one assignment.

Her conclusion: "I believe lowering class size through the hiring of additional teachers will have a dramatic impact on student performance. The results would be noticeable in both the graduation rate and passing rate on the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam."

Put yourself in her shoes, and review the student essays. Time yourself. Multiply that by ninety-nine. Then ask yourself if class size matters.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mary Hakala, Coordinator
Alaska Kids Count!

First, let me say I love teaching English at Juneau-Douglas High School. I have been teaching for 17 years, at all grade levels. I have a Bachelor of English degree from the University of California, Davis, and a Master of Education degree from the University of Alaska, Southeast. According to federal guidelines, I am a Highly Qualified teacher.

My purpose is to provide information regarding my particular assignment at the high school. This year my English course load is comprised of five classes, whose enrollments are listed below:

Class	Grade Level	Number of Students
American Literature	11	31
American Literature	11	33
American Literature	11	35
Contemporary Literature	12	38
Introduction to Literature	09	20

You will notice the lower number of students in the freshman class; the English department made a conscious effort to keep class sizes lower for freshmen, who are adapting to high school culture. In an English class, 22 is a realistic number of students. Our pupil-teacher ratio in English classes at the high school is currently 31.5 to 1.

One way to see the impact of large class size is to consider the hours required to grade a set of essays for this class load. For the last set of 38 senior papers, I spent approximately thirty minutes evaluating each one, providing comments on ideas and content, sentence fluency, organization, grammar, and word choice. Additionally, I inserted editing marks and commentary, in order to provide helpful feedback to students. Given thirty minutes per paper, I spent an extra 19 hours outside of class time grading one set of senior essays.

Since our classes meet four days a week, once an essay is turned in, student work cannot simply stop. Students continue to turn in daily assignments, which are usually shorter, but still written in essay form. So for my current student load, I accept approximately 628 papers each week to grade. Students deserve my careful consideration of each one, but my time is limited.

Another consequence of huge classes is the overcrowded classroom. My room currently has 31 desks, which leaves seven seniors without a desk. We squeezed a table and chairs into the room in order to add seating. I can assure you, my classroom was not designed to hold 38 seventeen and eighteen-year-old students. We are elbow to elbow, with little room to move around. Discussions are difficult because not everyone can see the speakers. For small group work, students have to meet in the hall in order to hear each other.

I hope this information is helpful in giving you a picture of the effects of high pupil-teacher ratio at the high school. I believe lowering class size through the hiring of additional teachers will have a dramatic impact on student performance. The results would be noticeable in both the graduation rate and passing rate on the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam.

Carol Pratt
English Teacher
Juneau-Douglas High School

Essay Scoring Guide

	EXCEEDS STANDARD	MEETS STANDARD	IN PROGRESS
Ideas and Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writing is exceptionally clear, focused, and interesting. New insights and ideas hold the reader's attention. There is strong support for the thesis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main ideas are clear Support is present though it may be limited or unclear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing is unclear Minimal development of ideas
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall strong order and structure Essay has a clear thesis statement and conclusion. Supporting points work well where they are placed Smooth and effective transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay has an introduction with a thesis statement, a body with adequate support, and an effective conclusion. Adequate transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing lacks a clear organizational structure Essay has an unclear or missing thesis statement, introduction, body, or conclusion. Transitions are ineffective or overused.
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words communicate the message in an exceptionally interesting, accurate, and natural way. The writer uses a rich, broad range of words that have been carefully chosen and thoughtfully placed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choices do not necessarily make the writing more lively and interesting, but they are functional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words are flat, repeated, general, or vague
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer demonstrates mastery of a variety of standard conventions, even in complex and less common situations. Errors, if any, are not obvious or significant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer demonstrates competent handling of standard conventions. Errors do not confuse or change the meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Errors distract and confuse the reader Writer demonstrates limited control of standard conventions Lack of control over simple sentences
Sentence Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are consistently varied and fluent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are somewhat varied, making oral reading easy Writer demonstrates strong control over simple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are choppy, awkward, rambling, or incomplete. Essay is difficult to follow or read aloud

Why Evolution?

In a massive number of instances the theory of evolution by natural selection contradicts the Bible. By doing this it opposes religions based on the Bible and makes major alterations to the interpretation of the Bible. However, the Theory of Evolution, by natural selection, is an extremely well supported scientific theory. Evolution by natural selection is an excellent explanation for how life came to exist as it presently does on Earth; there is evidence for it wherever you look in nature and there is no evidence against it.

Natural selection is a scientific theory that, in times of evolutionary pressure, describes how organisms that are better adapted to their environment will survive and those that are less adapted to their environment will over time die off and become extinct. It is important to remember that in natural selection survival refers to a species' ability to continue and not the survival of an individual of that species. A species being defined as a group of organisms that can, in nature, interbreed to produce a continuing line of offspring (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). It is also important to remember that an organism's adaptation to its environment refers to its ability to survive long enough to produce fertile offspring that will give rise to fertile offspring and not directly its own ability to live through environmental changes in other respects (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). For instance some of the most evolutionarily capable species are in the domains of bacteria and archaea. However, the majority of these species have very short life spans relative to many other organisms that are evolutionarily less capable, and these individual organisms

die off very quickly to environmental change relative to other organisms that are evolutionarily less capable. On the other hand, the populations, as a whole, of these species have an excellent ability to adapt to their environment and will survive environmental changes that most other organisms could not survive.

It is bacteria's and archaea's ability to survive environmental changes that lead to the diversity of organisms that we find in the world today. The entropic coming together of molecules in Earth's primordial atmosphere that gave rise to organic molecules which formed the first organisms over the first several billion years of Earth's history lead to all life on Earth (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). Through the adaptive radiation of these first prokaryotic organisms the domains of bacteria and archaea came into existence. These organisms came into existence in an extremely harsh environment, which most organisms today could not survive in (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). Organisms adapted to be able to survive the environment, filling those niches that were available to them. The most capable organisms survived most often and a multitude of species formed.

Amongst these organisms was a group of species called cyanobacteria, commonly known by the inaccurate name of blue-green algae (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). The cyanobacteria used H_2O , water, rather than H_2S , hydrogen sulfide, to reduce CO_2 , carbon dioxide, for energy (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). Over the next few billion years these organisms filled the Earth's atmosphere with O_2 , oxygen gas, which caused a mass extinction and a mass evolution of new organisms that used oxygen to reduce organic molecules for energy (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). These

organisms then diversified over the next few billion years into the organisms that exist today (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999).

This current view of evolution works according to natural selection. It also is supported by our current analyses of genetic similarity and differences, the same analyses that enable us to manipulate those organisms in existence to become new organisms, an example being Monsanto corn. Further more, it is supported by and supports our current understanding of genetics. The same genetic understanding we use in our modern medicine and understanding of disease. We also use this understanding of genetics in our agriculture, molecule biology, nutrition, and almost all, if not all, of our other biological fields. This theory of evolution by natural selection is the basis of biology and as such is indirectly the basis of America's economical growth since the beginning of the green revolution.

This theory of evolution by natural selection is not only supported in modern societies, but in nature as well. Wherever you look in nature there is evidence of evolution (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). You can follow paths of how one organism lead to another which led to another. A perfect example of this is seen in plasmodial slime molds, cellular slime molds, and multicellular organisms such as fungi and animals. Even though the genetic placement of some of these organisms is currently unknown they demonstrate an evolutionary path quite well. The plasmodial slime molds have a stage of life where they are a huge (for single celled organisms) unicellular organism with a multitude of nuclei (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). From there it is not hard to imagine how the cellular slime molds came into existence. Cellular slime molds can live independently

but can also come together and function as a single organism that is on the edge of being multicellular (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). Then there are multicellular organisms such as some less complex molds where the cells acting together as an organism differentiate and take on specific functions to keep the organism as a whole alive. This path, although quite possibly inaccurate, shows how one thing that provides an organism an advantage is carried on and modified to provide an organism with a greater advantage within its environment.

Another example of evolution, which is supported and not just demonstrative of an idea, is the classic example of the Galapagos Finches. The Galapagos Finches are the finches that live on the Galapagos Islands. Each species of these finches is well suited to its particular environment (Smith, Jonathan, 2005). They have adapted over generations to be able to survive and thrive within their environment. There are also other species of finches in South America and in other places in the world with climates more similar to the Galapagos Islands than South America. If the finches had been created placed there wouldn't it make more sense for them to be more similar to the finches in environments to their own than the finches in South America? Why bother with making finches that are suited to an environment that is basically the same as another environment, but have less in common with the finches in a similar environment than the finches that are on the neighboring continent in a different environment (Smith, Jonathan, 2005)? The finches that inhabit the Galapagos Islands are much more similar in appearance and genetically to the finches on the nearby main land of South America, than the finches in other parts of the world with climates that are basically the same. This wouldn't make much sense if all of the finches were created in their environment, however if the finches on the

Galapagos Islands came from those on the main land and then evolved to be able to survive in their new environment the similarity to the finches on the main land and the differences with the finches in other parts of the world would be explained (Smith, Jonathan, 2005).

Another example along the same lines is seen in the Guppies (*Poecilia reticulata*) in Trinidad, a Caribbean Island. Two populations of guppies that were originally almost identical are less than one-hundred meters apart, but they are separated by a waterfall. In one population the guppies are feed upon by a fish called a killifish, which preys predominately on small, juvenile guppies. In the other population the guppies are eaten by pike-cichlid, which primarily eats relatively large, sexually mature individuals. The guppies in the population exposed to the pike-cichlids have more offspring, reproduce at younger ages, and are smaller at maturity than the guppies that are exposed to the killifish (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). This demonstrates natural selection. Those guppies that were more suited to their environment survived to produce offspring more often than those that didn't and thus the population on average changed. As time continues to pass the two populations of guppies will gradually become more different from each other. If the two populations continue to remain separate they will continue to change in the same manner as they have so far. If enough time is allowed to pass and then the two populations were reintroduced to each other they would eventual have gotten to the point where they could no longer interbred to produce viable offspring, either due to prezygotic barriers, such as gametic isolation, or postzygotic barriers, such as reduced hybrid viability. The two populations would become different species; they would have evolved due to natural selection.

A fourth piece of evidence for natural selection is found in the very existence of fungi, in particular the reproductive habits of fungi. Two lineages of the same species of fungi can go on for hundreds of generations dividing through mitosis to form identical clones of themselves. However, if the environment changes so that evolutionary pressure is applied to the fungi, for instance if the humidity in their environment changed, then the two lineages of fungi would suddenly undergo syngamy, the fusion of two gametes to form a zygote (Smith, Jonathan, 2005). This would cause new fungi that were genetically varied from each other and their parents, due to random recombination of the DNA, genetic material, by the process of meiosis (Smith, Jonathan, 2005). The range of variation would cause those fungi that were the most suited to the change in environmental conditions to survive and be able to reproduce again, while eliminating the fungi that were less suited to their environment. If this continued to happen over a multitude of generations the fungi that would result could no longer mate with the species of fungi from which they came. In the example of the humidity change the new fungi would eventually not be able to live in a climate with the humidity that the original species could live in and this would cause a prezygotic barrier that would stop there from being any possibility of the two different fungi mating in nature. The two fungi would be different species. The one fungus would have evolved by natural selection into a new species. The very existence of a sexual life cycle built specifically suited to allow survival of generations over other organisms by natural selection would be a tremendous advantage if natural selection was indeed the mechanism by which evolution occurs. The implementation of this reproductive life cycle by one of the most successful groups of organisms that currently exists on this planet is some of the most compelling evidence

that could possibly exist to support natural selection. Considering that two of the oldest, largest, and best adapted organisms on this planet are fungi that have been found in the United States, and that fungi are some of the most evolutionarily adapted organisms in existence, to say that they were not one the most successful organisms would be ridiculous (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). This is but a miniscule amount of the evidence for evolution by natural selection that's available in the world.

Given this colossal amount of evidence that supports evolution by natural selection for there to be as many people as there are that consider it to incorrect or false there must be some evidence against it? Right? Unfortunately, for those that would argue against the theory of evolution by natural selection, there currently is no evidence against it what so ever! Thousands of attempts to disprove evolution by natural selection have been made. None of them have yielded results that oppose evolution by natural selection and many have actually supported it in their failure to disprove it. Yet there are people in the world today, which live off of an economy based on information that supports natural selection and would be refuted if natural selection was to be refuted, who still believe evolution by natural selection to be a flawed concept.

There are very few arguments made against evolution. One of the main arguments against evolution is that it is just a theory (Campbell, Neil A., Jane B. Reece, Lawrence G. Mitchell, 1999). This argument is less than worthless. Evolution by natural selection is a scientific theory. In science a theory is as good as it gets (Smith, Jonathan, 2005). Sometimes theory can be incorrect, but most often as support for a theory increases the probability of that theory being incorrect decreases. Darwin's theory of

evolution by natural selection is one of the most supported theories in all of science! It is almost as well supported as Newton's theories of gravity and friction are supported! To say evolution is just a theory is a way to disprove it is about as ridiculous as saying everything in science is disproved because, at best, they are just theories. The reason for this argument is a general misconception that most people have due to the misuse of the word theory.

Most people consider a theory to be an educated guess, partially due to the misuse of the term in such things as Sherlock Homes and other mystery novels. An educated guess is actually a hypothesis, but for some reason, authors of these books decided to use the word *theory*, possibly because they thought that it sounded cooler. For whatever reason the general population usually considers a theory to be a hypothesis. In actuality a theory is an explanation of why something is the way that it is based on the entirety of available information that has something to do with the explanation.

If new information causes a problem with a theory the theory is modified so that it is compatible with the new information (Smith, Jonathan, 2005). If new information shows that a theory is exceptionally off the theory is done away with. This is why the current theory of evolution by natural selection is not just a guess it is the best explanation for why life is the way it is on the planet Earth that we have been able to come up with thus far!

In actuality the theory of evolution was immediately accepted, even by the Catholic Church (Smith, Jonathan, 2005). However, natural selection being the mechanism of evolution was not accepted by certain religious groups because it contradicted the Bible on several points. For one it contradicted the Bible on how long

the Earth had existed. Secondly, it contradicted all forms of life being made by god, also known as creationism. It also undermined the significance of humans and made us seem to be rather unremarkable. These are the main reasons that were given for opposition to the theory of evolution by natural selection, and with the given information, all opposition that has occurred has been, at best, exceedingly absurd.

There is one creationist view that the theory of evolution by natural selection does not contradict. At some point, the creation of the original matter of the universe is unexplained. The view that an all powerful being or force could have created this starting matter is currently unopposed by any commonly known hypothesis or scientific theory.

“Descended from the apes! My dear, let us hope that it is not true, but if it is, let us pray that it will not become generally known.” That was said by the wife of the Bishop of Worcester after she heard about the *Origin of Species*.’ (Horan, Patricia, 1979, page v). Ever since the publication of the *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin in 1859 the theory of evolution by natural selection has had strong opposition from people including those in several religious groups. The opposition to this theory is due to it contradicting one of the most powerful and influential books ever written, the Bible. In a massive number of instances the theory of evolution by natural selection contradicts the Bible. By doing this it opposes religions based on the Bible and makes major alterations to the interpretation of the Bible. Creationism is more of a ledger of rules by which human beings are ethically and morally guided. It provides a certain level of comfort to know that there is an omniscient, omnipotent Being in charge of our worlds. However, the Theory of Evolution, by natural selection, is an extremely well supported scientific theory. Evolution by natural selection is an excellent explanation for how life came to

exist as it is presently does on Earth; there is evidence for it wherever you look in nature; and there is no evidence against it. Some might argue that while evolution is merely a theory, others might argue that creationism is at best, a good story for the ages.

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Capital Punishment is the most controversial form of criminal punishment. The United States is one of the last modernized countries that still executes its criminals. People are put to death and later found innocent of the same crime. It is a cruel and immoral method of punishment and the U.S. should stop using it as a form of sentencing criminals. The U.S. should ban all methods of capital punishment and substitute life in prison as the maximum sentence.

The risk of putting innocent people to death is very high. Since 1973, 102 have been acquitted of their charges, mainly because they were proven innocent by DNA. Just within the past four years, 17 people were found innocent after being sentenced to death. In Illinois, over a twenty-year period, they freed more people from death row than they executed. Today, police have opened at least 9 cases in that state in which they have found evidence that contradicts other evidence used to sentence people to death.

Malcolm Rent Johnson was sentenced to death by the state of Oklahoma in 2000. A year and a half after his execution, he was proven innocent. Johnson was convicted based on testimony of Oklahoma City police chemist Joyce Gilchrist who found that they blood type of Johnson matched sperm found in a 76-year-old woman's apartment who was killed in 1981. The Oklahoma City police reexamined the evidence and found that there was no sperm found at all. Oklahoma City police claim they simply have stretched the truth.

The practice of the death penalty is cruel and degrading. One method of the death penalty is electrocution, where the executioner sends a jolt between 500 and 2000 volts into a metal skullcap attached to the prisoners head. 11 states use the electric chair. The main method for the death penalty in the United States is by lethal injection. A prisoner is first drugged with an anesthetic that will put them to sleep. Then a paralyzing solution is injected to stop the breathing. Finally, a lethal dose of toxic agent is given and causes the inmate to go into cardiac arrest. Usually, the whole process of execution by lethal injection takes anywhere between 5 and 18 minutes to complete. The process of capital punishment is crueller as the original crime because it is completely premeditated.

The United States is one of the last civilized countries that still exercises capital punishment. The U.S. is also one of the few countries that executes mentally ill persons, persons with very low IQ, and murderers under the age of 18. Most modern developed nations have stopped executing prisoners and instead the most severe form of criminal punishment is a life sentence in prison. Recent polls show that there is an increase of people wanting life in prison as the maximum sentence.

Supporters of the death penalty argue that it is the best deterrent for murder. This only works when executions are carried out immediately. The idea of deterrence is supposed to encourage people not to kill. However, it sends a message that killing is okay. Studies show there is no unusual increase in murder in countries without the death penalty. Countries such as Sweden, the Netherlands, and Belgium have abolished the death penalty and have had no increase in murders. 112 countries have banned the death penalty. Life in prison works just as well as the death penalty in persuading a person not to commit a violent crime.

Supporters also claim the death penalty is a necessary form of retribution for terrible crimes. They say that people who have taken lives deserve to have their life taken. One supporter said, "If we fail to execute murderers, we have allowed the killing of a bunch of innocent victims." Life in prison is not allowing killings of innocent people but allowing the murderer to repay the damages to the family as well as be punished. Taking lives as a punishment lowers the social standards to the criminal and justifies what he or she did. The death penalty not only punishes the murderer, but his/her family and they too have a family member killed as a result.

Another position in favor of the death penalty is that it is a lot cheaper than to hold prisoners in jail for life. However, holding a person in jail is far cheaper over time than executing someone. The cost of executing someone is accumulated immediately, but the cost of life in prison is spread out over a longer period of time. For example, a million dollars today is a lot harder on the state than a million dollars that can be paid over a 40-year time period. Death penalty cases are clearly more expensive because of all of the appeals and cases being overturned. In America, only about 12% of the people sentenced to death are actually put to death. In Texas, the average cost of an execution costs about 3 times as much as 40 years in a maximum-security prison. Nearly every state that uses the death penalty spends millions extra per year on death penalty cases.

The death penalty is a brutal method of punishment and doesn't work any better than life in prison in regards to deterring crime. Every year people on death row are proven innocent and freed. It justifies the crime that a murderer commits and is more expensive than imprisonment. Executing a killer doesn't bring back the victim. The United States should stop practicing capital punishment altogether.

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NEA-ALASKA

Affiliated with the National Education Association

Bill Bjork's Testimony before Senate Finance March 9, 2005

Good Morning Co-Chair Wilken, Co-Chair Green and members of the Senate Finance Committee. For the record my name is Bill Bjork and I serve as President for the more than 12,500 members of NEA-Alaska.

To begin, let me say a hearty thank you and acknowledge the committee's efforts last year in providing our schools with funds to cover inflation, pay for the increases in the TRS/PERS contributions and \$27 million for instructional programs. The entire \$82 million was appreciated as it avoided the vast majority of proposed cuts to education in FY '05. Last year under a fragile budget situation, when there was an expected draw on the Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) you still found the courage to make a historic increase to K-12 education.

I also applaud the committee for allowing testimony from across Alaska to determine the needs of K-12 education across Alaska and the level of state funding to meet those needs. I am not going to spend a lot of time describing the funding needs. I will leave that to the parents, teachers, school employees, administrators and citizens, who have ably described those needs to other legislative bodies to date. Let it suffice to say that CSIB 1 (HESS) with a Base Student Allocation (BSA) of \$4,919 DOES NOT meet the needs of a single school district in Alaska.

As a matter of fact the statements by legislators to date have all acknowledged that \$4,919 IS NOT ADEQUATE and does not meet the needs of our schools for FY '06. It does cover the costs of the increase in TRS/PERS contributions. It does cover the cost of inflation. It does provide \$9 million for the classroom.. It does not avoid the PINK SLIPS being issued, which will result in the loss of gifted, young teachers to our classrooms. Thus, it does simply let us know early this year how bad the pain is going to be.

Rather than talking about the needs of our schools, I will take the time to talk about the means to adequately fund our schools. To date the primary reason provided by legislators as to why CSIB 1 (HESS) is less than last year's efforts is that there is no revenue source. Such rationale bewilders me. It makes no sense to me that in a year in which we will have a surplus of over \$300 million and will not draw a penny from the CBR, we are saying we cannot do as well as we did last year when, in March, we were expecting to have at least a \$150 million draw on the CBR.

As Sen. Wilken has stated many times, every other state in the nation would be happy to have our "problem." We are the richest state in the nation. A more accurate statement might be that there is no political will to utilize the revenue sources we do have.

As a matter of fact several proposals for revenue sources are already in bill form and before this legislature. SB 88 and HB 143 provide the opportunity to draw from the CBR and the Earnings Reserve Account (ERA), which total over \$4.2 billion. To add an additional \$50 million to CSHB 1 (HESS) would only require a little over 1% of these reserves. Another option is the POMV approach contained in HJR 11 and SJR 8. This approach could generate monies far in excess of the \$78 million additional funds needed to reach NEA-Alaska's BSA recommendation of \$5,315. A third option is to use a portion of the FY '05 windfall funds. With Alaska North Slope crude a mere six cents from \$50.00 per barrel on March 7, the surplus is conservatively estimated at \$300 million with no draw from the CBR.

You are the experts as to the finances of the state and I am sure know of many other options available to establish a long-term fiscal plan for Alaska, which contains a funding solution to meet Alaska's constitutional mandate to K-12.

On behalf of 133,000 students and 12,500 teachers and education support professionals I implore you to look at the healthy financial situation and make a real commitment to address adequate funding in this budget. NEA-Alaska is recommending a BSA number of \$5,315. This level of funding would put about \$85 million into the classroom after meeting PERS/TRS and inflation.

Thank you for your time today and I would be happy to attempt to answer any questions.

EDUCATION FUNDING POSSIBILITIES FY '06

IMPACT ON CLASSROOM

	BSA	Total New \$	TRS/PERS	Inflation	Classroom
Last year	\$4,576	\$82 million	\$35 million	\$20 million	\$27 million
Gov. Murkowski	\$4,880	\$62 million	\$38 million	\$23 million	\$1 million
CSHB 1 (HESS)	\$4,919	\$70 million	\$38 million	\$23 million	\$9 million
School Board Assn	\$4,995	\$82 million	\$38 million	\$23 million	\$21 million
Kids Count	\$5,120	\$111 million	\$38 million	\$23 million	\$50 million
NEA-Alaska	\$5,315	\$148 million	\$38 million	\$23 million	\$87 million

In order to have a funding for classrooms to show a real positive trend upward the Total New \$ must be at least \$89 million. To achieve adequacy by the date set by No Child Left Behind the Total New \$ must be at least \$111 million and closer to \$148 million.

March 8, 2005

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Andrea Story, I am a Mother of two in the Alaska Public School system. I am a Member of the Juneau School Board and I am a Member of Alaska Kids Count!

I am testifying today in support of increasing the Student Base Allocation to 5,120. The current amount of the Student Base Allocation is 4,919, that means 300,000 dollars in cuts to the Juneau School district. This also assumes the City will fund to the new CAP, which is a 900,000 dollar increase. If they do not, it will mean more cuts. Juneau traditionally funds to the Cap. 43 percent of our education budget is paid by the City.

As a School Board member I watch closely your decision on what to appropriate to public education. As you know the Legislature appropriates, the School Boards allocates. I can tell you that as a School Board member I find this a difficult process. For instance in Juneau, since I've been on the Board parents are advocating for lower class sizes, that was one of the main reasons I ran for the Board, to lower class sizes. In the budget process last year the Board to balance the budget planned to cut three bus routes whose students live 1.5 miles or closer to school. The Board listened to parents testifying about safety concerns and how they worry for their 5, 6, 7 year olds safety as they walk 1.5 miles to school. We received 2 petitions signed by over 140 parents requesting that their bus service not be cut. We funded the buses at the expense of being able to lower class sizes in three primary classrooms. I see how there are tough choices to make. Right now the budget shows a 300,000 in cut, which we passed by reducing the 3 school bus routes that we funded last year and reducing the 3 Dropout Counselor positions.

As a new Board Member, I hear that education does receive a huge amount of money, it is the 2nd largest expenditure for our state. So I ask myself, "Our School Boards asking for too much money for our schools?" I went looking for sources comparing what other states are doing. I know it is a big expense to all states. I know children are

expensive to educate. I went to Education Week, which is a non-profit organization based in Washington D.C. who's purpose is to raise the level of the public and professionals information on issues concerning education. For the last nine years they have done a State – by- State Report card. This year's report card, which is adjusted for regional cost differences rates Alaska 30th out of 50 in the amount of money spent on education (www.edweek.org) This tells me that Alaska is below average in the amount of money our state spends on education. It tells me that is not unreasonable for School Boards and principals and parents to be asking for more money in the Student Base Allocation.

In Juneau our school site councils have put an unfunded critical needs list together for if we had increased funding. It shows what is wanted, the amount it costs, and the additional foundation formula amount needed to get that service. For example to enhance graduation success which helps meet NCLB requirements, an English as a Second Language Teacher costs 61,000, that is an increase of 8 dollars. Summer School Support is 75,000 dollars an increase of 10 dollars to the foundation, the 3 Dropout Counselors cost 172,000 and increase of 23 dollars to the foundation. To reinstate the buses it would be 33 dollars.

Funds are also needed to enrich the basic educational program. Lowering class size in Juneau to Board policy costs 978,000 or 128 dollars in additional foundation formula. My point is, every dollar amount that the Legislature increases the foundation formula, that has a direct benefit to resources available to the school districts you represent across the state. My point is also that School Boards struggle with what to fund as there are many unfunded critical needs.

I urge you to appropriate a Student Base Allocation of 5,120.
Thank you for listening.

Andrea Story
12069 Cross Street
Juneau 99801
(907)789 - 4292

Juniata School District

1/24/2005

UNFUNDED CRITICAL NEEDS LIST

Enhance grad. rates

Add'l
Foundation
Needed

Reinstate Selected Reductions

2.0 FTE SpedEd Aides	\$55,720	\$7
3.0 FTE Dropout Prevention Positions	\$172,761	\$23
1.0 Montessori	\$53,295	\$7

5.0 FTE Special Education Aides	\$151,335	\$20
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1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher	\$61,822	\$8
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1.0 ESL/ELL Teacher	\$61,822	\$8
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Decrease PTR to Board Policy Target	\$978,000	\$128
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Summer School Support	\$75,000	\$10
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Textbooks

Elementary LA Textbooks	\$130,260	\$17
Voc Ed Textbooks	\$40,000	\$5
Fine Arts Textbooks*	\$35,000	\$5
Tech Textbooks	\$25,000	\$3

Tech Coordinator	\$89,540	\$12
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Technology Upgrades	\$1,400,000	\$184
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Increase Sub Pay	\$150,000	\$20
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Yaakoosge' Upgrade/Relocation	\$85,000	\$11
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Reinstate Buses (within 1.5 miles)	\$250,000	\$33
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Budget Reserve	\$400,000	\$52
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TOTALS

ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS

Advocates for Alaska's Youth

February 8, 2005

Statement by the Association of Alaska School Boards on Foundation Formula Funding

Carl Rose, executive director of AASB, issued the following statement today in testimony to the House Special Committee on Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Our 52 member school districts have a huge stake in the legislation before you. Nothing less than the future of our children, and the future of our state, will be shaped by the decisions the 24th Alaska Legislature makes in regards to education funding.

In late January, the AASB teleconferenced with our five largest districts to discuss the accelerated timetable the Legislature has established for considering the state operating budget. School districts appreciate the willingness of the Legislature to consider education funding early in the session. As a consequence, we need to establish our positions and make them known to the Legislature in a significantly shortened timeframe.

After discussions with our largest districts, AASB believes that the foundation formula increased proposed by the administration, while much appreciated as a starting point, simply won't provide the level of state support most of them require in fiscal year 2006. Our organization believes the precedent established last year, when the Legislature provided an increase of \$82.5 million in foundation funding, should guide this year's deliberations on the formula.

(more)

Using that yardstick, AASB urges the Legislature to increase the base student allocation to \$4,995 and appropriate an additional \$85 million in basic state support for K-12 education.

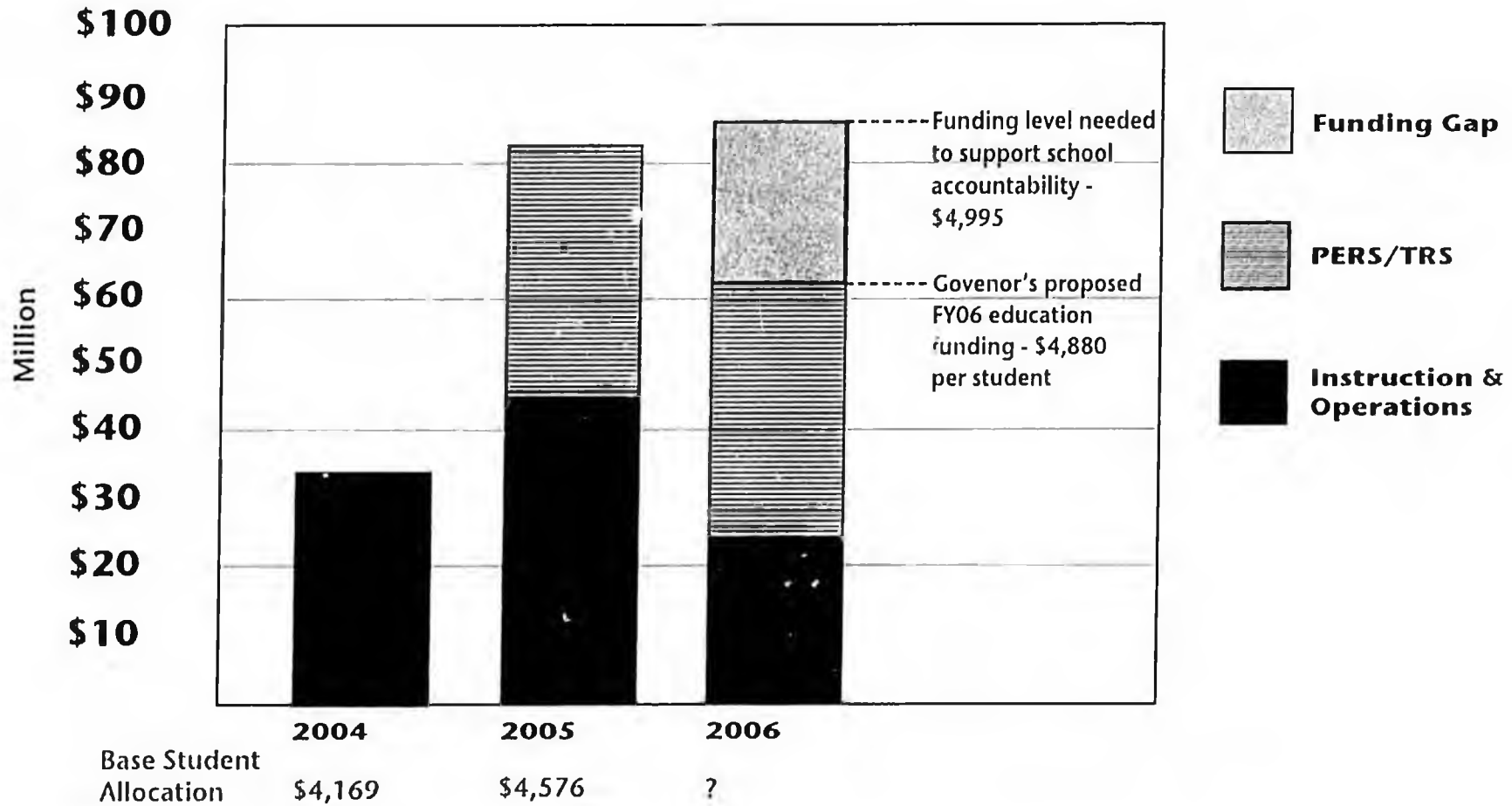
That is the minimum level of state support that is required by most of our school districts across the state. This increase is less than some teachers and parents support, but it is more than the administration has offered to date.

As you know, much of that extra state support will never reach the classroom. Because of requirements for funding increased retirement costs, \$38 million is earmarked for the PERS/TRS systems and \$47 million would go towards instruction and operations. (Note graphs that accompany this testimony).

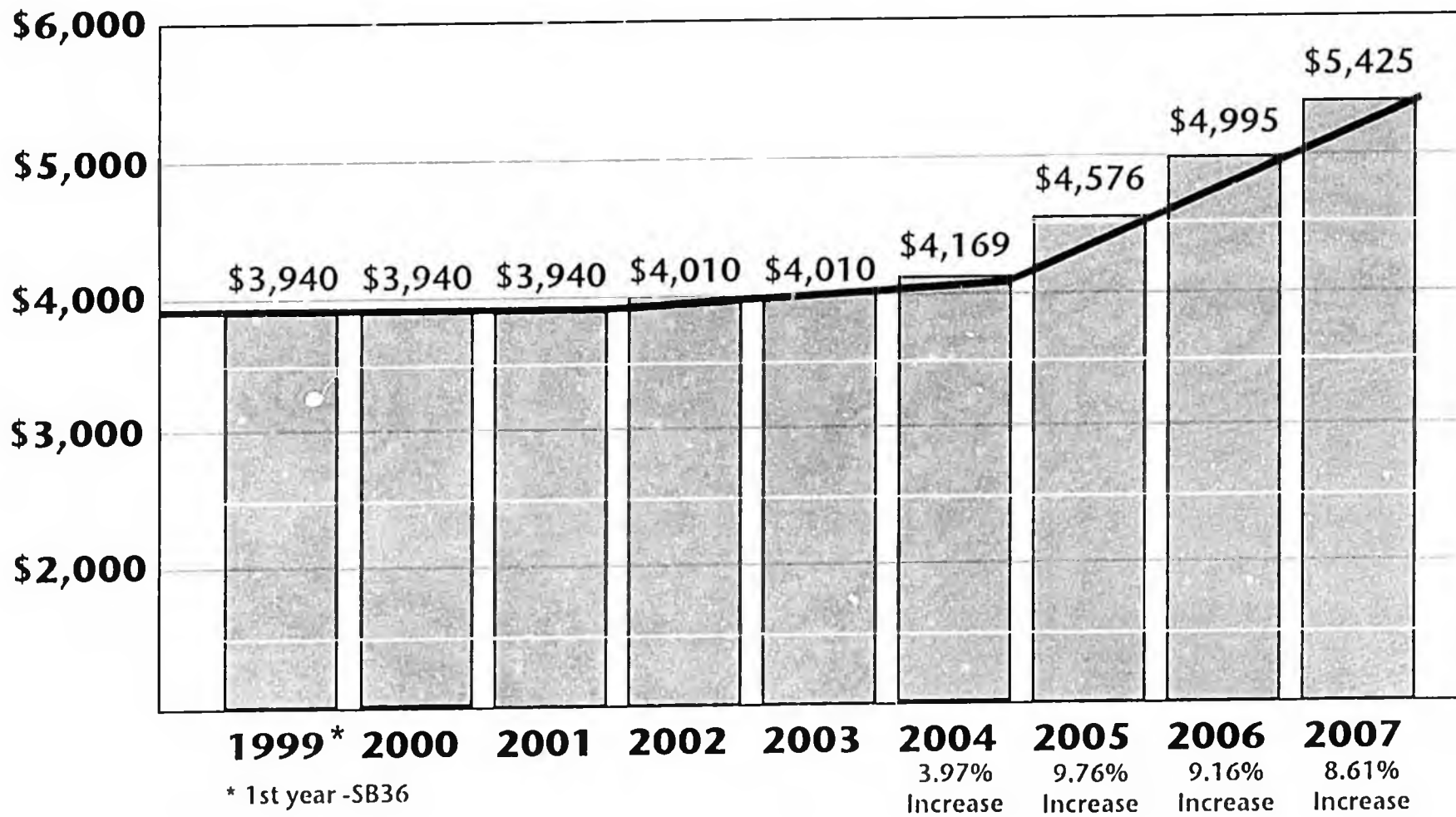
AASB believes that when the Legislature examines the need for increasing the foundation formula for K-12 education, you will see that this is a good investment in the future of Alaska. Certainly, the public will support you in making this investment happen.

Thank you.

Proposed School Funding



Base Student Allocation 1999-2007



3/9/05



Alaska Kids Count!

Who are we?

Alaska Kids Count! is a nonpartisan network of parents, educators and community members concerned about the quality of public education in Alaska and committed to making a positive contribution to improve Alaska's schools. It is a grassroots, volunteer effort.

The network's primary goal is to increase State funding to provide the resources needed to offer a high quality education to students in Alaska.

The network provides individuals with the tools and information needed to effectively voice concerns to state and local decision makers. Information is shared primarily through email. Participants are encouraged to attend legislative hearings, write letters to elected officials and newspapers, make phone calls and distribute information on education issues and pending legislation.

Our guiding principles:

- * Parents, voicing their individual and collective concerns, are a powerful and effective lobby.
- * Advocacy will be most effective if it is done collaboratively with parents, educators and organizations from across the state.
- * It is the State's constitutional obligation to provide a free K-12 public education. It is the Legislature's responsibility to determine the means of funding it.
- * To be effective, we must be persistent.

Alaska Kids Count! originated in January 2004 in response to parent concerns about diminishing resources and opportunities in Juneau's public schools. We have evolved into a statewide organization with contacts across the state, with our base of operation in Juneau.

To learn more about Alaska Kids Count! write to williwaw@earthlink.net or visit our web site at www.AlaskaKidsCount.org.

Alaska Kids Count! Steering Committee
Mary Hakala, Mike Sigler, Mike Ford and Andi Story
January 2005

Alaska Kids Count!
2005 Legislative Goals

* *Increase Foundation funding:*

Decrease Class Size, to increase student-teacher contact time
and
Improve instructional quality

* *Encourage parents' participation in the legislative process* and involvement in decisions impacting the quality of education in Alaska's public schools.

* *Provide adequate funding for safe & efficient transportation of students to and from school.*

How can you become involved?

* *Contact your Legislators.* To find out who your Legislators are, and how to contact them, go to the legislative web site, www.legis.state.ak.us, or call a Legislative Information Office (LIO), located in many of Alaska's cities. Juneau's LIO number is 907-465-4648.

* *Become a participant in the Alaska Kids Count! network.* Email us at williwaw@earthlink.net. We will provide you with information and ideas on how to effectively voice your opinion.

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SIGN-IN

HB 1-INCREASE AMT OF BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION

NAME: CARL ROSE Subject/Bill No: CSHB1
Co./Dept./Title: AASB Phone: 586-1083
Address: 1111 9th St Juneau Alaska Zip: 99801
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: LARRY SCANDLING Subject/Bill No: CSHB1
Co./Dept./Title: Principal Yakos AIHS Phone: 586 5742
Address: 10014 Crazy Horse Dr. Zip: 99801
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Theresa Rodriguez Subject/Bill No: CSHB1
Co./Dept./Title: Student, YK AIHS Phone: See above
Address: See above Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Pete Swanson Subject/Bill No: CSHB1
Co./Dept./Title: Principal, McNeil Cymon EL (PBI) Phone: 235-8181
Address: 52188 East End Road, Homer Zip: 99603
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Leslie Campbell Subject/Bill No: CSHB 1
Co./Dept./Title: Principal Anne Wren Elem Phone: (907) 451-7500
Address: 1501 Hampstead Ave. Zip: 99701
Fairbanks, AK.
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Principal PJ Ford Slack Subject/Bill No: ↓
Co./Dept./Title: North Pole High School Phone: 488 3761
Address: 6001 NPHS Blvd Zip: 99501
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Mike Ford Subject/Bill No: HB 1
Co./Dept./Title: AK Kids Count Phone: 780-6460
Address: 4487 Hillcrest Ave Zip: 99501
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Erica Kludt - Painter Subject/Bill No: HB 1
Co./Dept./Title: Principal, Stedman Elem. Phone: 772-4786
Address: Box 289, Petersburg AK Zip: 99833
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Lisa Prince - Smith Subject/Bill No: HB 1
Co./Dept./Title: Principal Wonder Park Elem Phone: 337 7512
Address: 5100 E 4th Ave Anchorage Zip: 99508
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Sheila Judge Hall Subject/Bill No: _____

Co./Dept./Title: Principal - Campbell Elem. Phone: _____

Address: Anchorage Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? ___ Yes No ___ Respond To Questions

NAME: Leslie Vandergaw Subject/Bill No: _____

Co./Dept./Title: Principal - Anch. Sch. Dist. Phone: 742-8411

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Respond To Questions

NAME: Ruth Michalscheck Subject/Bill No: _____

Co./Dept./Title: Principal A.S.D. Phone: _____

Address: Anchorage Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? ___ Yes No ___ Respond To Questions

NAME: Mike Sigler Subject/Bill No: Education Funding

Co./Dept./Title: Alaska Kids Count Phone: 780-6359

Address: Juneau Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? ___ Yes No ___ Respond To Questions

NAME: Tatianna Simhuber Subject/Bill No: Edu Funding

Co./Dept./Title: Yakos Alternative HS Phone: _____

Address: Juneau Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? Yes ___ No ___ Respond To Questions

NAME: Andi Story Subject/Bill No: 1
Co./Dept./Title: Member Juneau School Board Member Alaska Kids Count
Phone: 789-4292
Address: 12069 Cross St. Juneau Zip: 99901
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Mary Hakala Subject/Bill No: HB1
Co./Dept./Title: Alaska Kids Count! Phone: 780-4640
Address: 1606 Laurie Lane Juneau Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: BETH CHARNOV Subject/Bill No: 1
Co./Dept./Title: Member Alaska Kids Count Phone: 236-2210
Address: 256 Ocean Hwy, Juneau, AK Zip: 99901
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Barbara Nagengast Subject/Bill No: HB1
Co./Dept./Title: PK Assoc of Elem Principals Phone: 742 5450
Address: Spring Hill Elem
4911 Lake Chris Pkwy Zip: 99907
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____
Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

SIGN-IN

HB 1-INCREASE AMT OF BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION

NAME: Kristen Romanello Subject/Bill No: HB 1
Co./Dept./Title: Parent Phone: 463-7942
Address: 1014 Brown Dr. St. Zip: 91901

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____
Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

HB 1

NAME: Amy SKILBRED Subject/Bill No: CSHB 1

Co./Dept./Title: parent Phone: 780-4649

Address: 4477 Abby Way, Junear Zip: 99801

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: John Pothast Subject/Bill No: HB 1

Co./Dept./Title: Principal (H.S.) Phone: 262-8551

Address: Box 2717 Soldotna Zip: 99669

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: Denise Greene-Wilkinson Subject/Bill No: HB 1

Co./Dept./Title: Principal (K-12) Phone: 742-8700

Address: Polaris K-12 1444 Bowling Rd - Anchorage Zip: 99507

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____

Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions

NAME: _____ Subject/Bill No: _____

Co./Dept./Title: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Do you wish to testify? Yes No Respond To Questions