

SB

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SENATOR KIM ELTON

MEMORANDUM

March 2, 2005

To: Senator Fred Dyson, Chair
Senate Health Education & Social Services Committee

From: Kim Elton 

Re: SB 111

I respectfully request the Senate HESS committee hear SB 111 at your earliest opportunity. The importance of education funding can't be overstated, and I hope the committee can send the bill on to Finance in time to have it heard alongside other bills that raise the base student allocation.

I have attached a sponsor statement and some supporting documents for your consideration.

SENATOR KIM ELTON

SB 111 – Increasing Education Funding

Sponsor Statement

SB 111 increases the base student allocation in the education funding formula to \$5,120. This is the funding level requested by statewide education advocates, and many of our largest school districts.

Over the years, the buying power of education funding in Alaska has not kept pace with the erosion of inflation. More recently, increases in the mandatory costs for school districts have prompted the legislature to provide funding for schools that outstrips inflation, but these mandatory costs have not allowed the extra money to go into the classrooms where they benefit children.

With ever-increasing demands on our schools from the state, the federal government, and the need to keep our children's education competitive with other nations, it is past time that we make a major investment in our classrooms. SB 111 will allow Alaska school districts to do more than meet their fixed cost increases. It will provide \$111.5 million that our educators can use to restore some of what they've had to cut over the years.

Whether these funds add teachers, tutors, special education aides, or textbooks, they will make a significant difference for Alaska children.

I respectfully ask for your support.

02/08/2005 TUE 11:27 FAX

001

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ASDR 2004-2005-10**

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED STATE FUNDING OF THE
ALASKA PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, state funding for public schools is essential to maintain an education system that meets the needs of the children of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Governor Frank Murkowski has recognized the importance of increasing public school funding by recommending that foundation formula funding for public schools be increased; and

WHEREAS, public school students will require adequate education programs in order to meet student achievement requirements imposed under both state and federal law; and

WHEREAS, adequate education programs will require a significant increase in state education funding to allow school districts to have the education resources to meet student needs; and

WHEREAS, school districts are experiencing increased fixed costs in their retirement systems and in other areas including fuel and electricity; and

WHEREAS, improvements to the public school system require a combination of strategies including improving instructional quality, decreasing class sizes, providing safe and efficient transportation, and providing adequate employee compensation; and

WHEREAS, providing increased education funding benefits all the public schools in the state and all residents of the state by developing our most precious natural resource - children, and providing a foundation for economic growth; and

WHEREAS, in order to prevent program cuts, to assure a maintenance level of public school funding, and to make modest reduction in class sizes, public school funding will need to be increased by \$112 million dollars for the next fiscal year;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage School District strongly supports increasing state support for public schools; and

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002

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Anchorage School District requests the Governor and legislature to increase the base student allocation in the foundation formula to \$5,120, which would provide an additional \$112 million dollars in state support for public schools.

DATED this 7th day of February 2005.

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD



Tim Steele, President

Crystal Kennedy
Jake Metcalfe
Macon Roberts

John Steiner
Jeff Friedman
Mary Marks

Carol Comeau, Superintendent

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
BOARD OF EDUCATION
RESOLUTION #05-05**

A RESOLUTION ON STUDENT FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Governor recognizes the challenge of creating a quality educational system and desires to continue to improve education; and

WHEREAS, the Governor said in the State of the State Address: "...increases in the retirement system costs and unforeseen energy expenses have put too great a burden on local governments in the short term," and he introduced a funding bill to increase the foundation funding by \$62 million resulting in a base allocation of \$4,880; and

WHEREAS, increasing student achievement and improving school performance (required by both the No Child Left Behind Act and Alaska statute and standards) will require schools to go beyond status quo operations and institute new or improved programs over the long term to address the specific unique needs of each student; and

WHEREAS, increasing student achievement and improving school performance require resources *beyond* those needed to simply address the increased costs of the retirement system and the unforeseen energy expenses; and

WHEREAS, the City and Borough of Juneau School District recognizes that improving student achievement will require at a minimum a combination of the following strategies and at a cost of \$5,120 base student allocation (BSA):

- reduce pupil teacher ratio
- support students to meet district, state and federal achievement expectations
- enhance graduation rate; and


WHEREAS, reaching a level of truly adequate foundation funding that will lower pupil teacher ratio, increase student achievement and improve school performance will require a reasonable and dependable trend of funding increases over a number of years; and

WHEREAS, the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) \$4,995 is a base that relates to a financial trend line and whereas we accept the positive trend line, the Juneau School District's financial needs for its students requires more than this base student allocation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City and Borough of Juneau School District respectfully requests that the Legislature and the Governor approve additional funding beyond a base student allocation proposed by AASB in order to put children first in the State of Alaska.

ATTEST:


Mary Becker, President


Rhonda Bort, Clerk

**KAKE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
RESOLUTION #021605-01**

Jesse

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASED STATE FUNDING FOR
STUDENTS ATTENDING ALASKA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

WHEREAS, state funding for public schools is essential to maintain an education system that meets the needs of the children of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Governor Frank Murkowski has recognized the importance of increasing public school funding by recommending that foundation formula funding for public schools be increased; and

WHEREAS, public school students will require adequate education programs in order to meet student achievement requirements imposed under both state and federal law; and

WHEREAS, adequate education programs will require a significant increase in state education funding to allow school districts to have the education resources to meet student needs; and

WHEREAS, school districts are experiencing increased fixed costs in their retirement systems and in other areas including fuel and electricity; and

WHEREAS, improvements to the public school system require a combination of strategies including improving instructional quality, developing curricular offerings to meet the needs of all students, providing adequate opportunities for participation in Fine Arts curriculum, and providing adequate employee compensation; and

WHEREAS, providing increased education funding benefits all the public schools in the state and all residents of the state by developing our most precious natural resource - children, and providing a foundation for economic growth; and

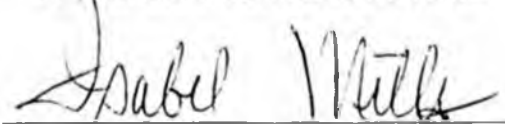
WHEREAS, in order to prevent program cuts, and to assure a maintenance level of public school funding, public school funding will need to be increased by \$112 million dollars for the next fiscal year;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Kake City School District strongly supports increasing state support for public schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Kake City School District requests the Governor and legislature to increase the base student allocation in the foundation formula to \$5,120, which would provide an additional \$112 million dollars in state support for public schools.

DATED this 16th day of February 2005.

KAKE CITY SCHOOL BOARD

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Isabel Mills", written over a horizontal line.

Isabel Mills, President

Stanley Adams, Vice President
Kimberly Moler, Secretary/Treasurer
Delbert Kadake, Member
Patti Handy, Member

Eric Gebhart, Superintendent

From: Jim Elliott [jelliott@crsd.k12.ak.us]
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2005 2:11 PM
To: Rep. Peggy Wilson
Subject: Shortfall

JAN 26 2005

Even if the Alaska Legislature increases the base student allocation to the level recommended by the Governor in FY-06 (from \$4,576 to \$4,880) to cover PERS/TRS increments and inflation, the Copper River School District will still have to reduce both its teacher and classified staff by at least two and three positions respectively, principally because of increases in salaries and anticipated increases in insurance premiums.

Alaska Kids Count!

February 7, 2005

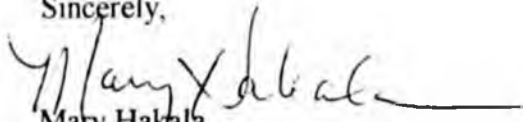
Representative Mark Neuman
Chair, House Special Committee on Education
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Neuman,

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 House Special Committee on Education 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!



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.

Alaska Kids Count! Juneau

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 and Auke Bay School has a third grade class with 30 children this year. As parents, we see the need for smaller class sizes and know how fewer children in a classroom allow teachers more 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. This 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 school districts' needs.