

SB

185

<TARGET><BILL>SB 185</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
185</SUBJECT><COMM>SEDC28</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

JUNEAU

STATE CAPITOL BLDG. RM 417
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SENATOR BERTA GARDNER

SENATE DISTRICT H

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 185 - Charter Schools: Funding and Facilities

Public education continues to be central to our national identity and to our future. SB185 is part of our goal of expanding access, increasing choice, maintaining accountability, spawning innovation, and empowering students in the public school system. It is our duty as legislators to provide adequate support for our education system to ensure future generations have a meaningful access to the tools for success.

Charter Schools have emerged as an alternative to the traditional system of education, providing school choice to parents, students and teachers within our public school system. Families can select a school that offers a unique learning environment and provides parents with more decision-making authority than do most traditional schools.

On average, Charter Schools receive 70% less operating funds than other schools because they usually pay their own facility costs and are also assessed an administration fee by the school district.

Senate Bill 185 expands the opportunities for Charter School formation and helps bridge the funding gap.

- Increases the Base Student Allocation by ten percent for Charter Schools to help pay for facility costs.
- Charter School Start-up Grant Program for curriculum and program development.
- Provides a path for neighborhood schools to convert in whole or part to Charter Schools if there is majority of support from parents.
- Removes the sunset for the Federal Charter School Grant Program which is set to expire July 2015.

By implementing stronger statutes to support our Charter Schools we are creating more opportunities for success for our students.

- Increase learning opportunities.
- More access to quality education for students.
- More choice for parents and students within the public school system.
- A system of accountability for results in public education.
- Encouragement of innovative teaching practices.
- New professional opportunities for teachers.
- Encouragement of community and parent involvement in public education.

I hope you will join me in supporting Senate Bill 185.

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Senate Bill 185 Sectional Analysis

Section 1: Amends AS 14.03.250(b) to require school boards to adopt a process for the conversion of existing schools into charter schools.

Section 2: Adds a new subsection to have a school district assist a charter school applicant in converting an existing neighborhood school into a charter school. The school board can approve the applicant (a majority of parents of students who attend the existing school) if all the requirements are met. Once approved, the school board shall transfer operation, furnishings, materials and fixtures to the advisory body of the charter school. Lastly, the district shall continue to pay for costs associated with operating the school from the district budget and may not charge rent to the charter school.

Section 3: Creates a charter school state grant program. A charter school will be able to receive a onetime grant from the Department of Education and Early Development equal to the amount of \$500 per child enrolled in the school of Oct. 1 of the first year the school applies for the grant. The grant is to be used for educational services such as curriculum development, program development and special education services. The Department will develop regulations for application and expenditures of the grant. Lastly, subsection (c) states if insufficient funds are allocated to cover the full grant the charter school may apply in the subsequent fiscal year for the remaining balance.

Section 4: Adds clean-up language to ensure students who attend a charter school converted from a neighborhood public school continues to serve the students who were previously enrolled.

Section 5: Adds a new subsection to prioritize enrollment for the converted charter school. The first priority would be students that were enrolled in the school before conversion, then students who reside in the area, then all other applicants.

Section 6 and 7: Adds a 10% increase to the BSA for students that attend a charter school.

Section 8: Removes the sunset for the federal charter school grant program.

Alaska Charter Schools Legislator Information

By Joey Eski –Chair of Academic Policy for Acquarian Charter School

Our goal is for the State of Alaska to equitably fund charter schools across the state.

Above all, inequity in facility funding is the largest barrier to new charter school start-ups as well as the single most significant challenge hindering charter school sustainability and growth.

Alaska's charter schools are **public** schools authorized by and run under any of the state's local school districts. Every charter school employs public school teachers who are part of the teachers' **union**. Charter schools must adhere to all the same standards and regulations of any school within their authorizing district. Charter schools differ in the fact that they are exempt from certain curriculum purchases within districts and they are governed by a parent board (APC) responsible for curricular and budgetary decisions. If the charter school employs a principal, the principal is hired by and reports to the APC, but remains a district employee.

Alaska's Charter Schools are established under AS 14.03.250. Alaska's current charter school law allows for educational collaboration between local districts and charter schools while prohibiting outside interests from capitalizing on our Alaskan educational dollar. Even though Alaska's charter school laws offers public educational choice as well as accountability, charter school laws, as they relate to charter school funding are open to a great deal of interpretation resulting in significant differences throughout the state in the way charter schools are funded by the local districts. AS 14.03.260 dictates that charter schools be funded "in the same manner as it would be for a student enrolled in another public school in the district". However, through conversations with charter schools operating all around the state, we have determined that charter schools are funded very differently, district by district.

As parents of charter school students, we believe the following items are needed to further strengthen the state's charter schools:

- **Provide state-funded per pupil facilities allowance or 25% charter school BSA bonus, plus allow excess dollars to roll over each year** - charter schools must provide all operations out of one budget – that includes teachers' salaries and benefits, textbooks, copiers, etc. Unlike traditional, optional, or alternative schools, charter schools in Anchorage must also pay rent, maintenance, insurance, and utilities. Public schools are not permitted to hold excess dollars in their accounts at the end of the fiscal year and that prohibits charter schools from saving for future expenses. Rollover exemptions would be needed, with approval of a facilities allowance or BSA bonus, in order to save for charter school construction and maintenance.
- **Mandate that funding shall follow the public school student** – all local dollars, state funding allocations (like energy relief and safety / security grants), and federal (dollars for military families) and transportation monies;
- **Reinstate and/or fund state grant programs for charter school facilities** (Examples include: **AS14.11.105-AS14.11.120, AS14.11.121, AS14.11.125, AS14.11.126, AS14.03.263**) – provide assistance for charter-school start-ups as well as savings for future construction and maintenance;
- **Cap state-mandated indirect fees at 4% of BSA (prior to adjustments)** – Aquarian, for example, pays nearly 5% of what it receives for funding back to the school district. We ask that you establish a reasonable, consistent rate, and require transparency in the current fee calculation; and,

- **Provide property tax exemption for all properties on which a charter school is operating** – presently, charter schools on property held by a private owner [for example, Winterberry (school) – Criterion (construction company / mortgage holder)] must pay property taxes. Exemption should be provided.

Why try to mandate equalities on the state level?

Charter schools are governed by state law. Those current charter school laws are open to a great deal of interpretation allowing for significant differences throughout the state in the way charter schools are funded at the local district level. Strengthening the state charter school laws regarding funding will allow equal opportunity for a charter school to succeed no matter what district they are operating in while maintaining the collaborative relationship with the local districts.

Differences across the districts are significant; funding variations range from districts that pass through all available funds (Mat-Su) or house charter schools rent free in district facilities (Kenai), to districts that provide no assistance with facilities (Anchorage / Fairbanks) and are charging above the state-determined indirect fees (Fairbanks). Additionally, districts provide varying degrees of support with regard to specialized services including special education services. That, in turn, hinders the ability of charter schools to educate children with special needs.

A data request to the state office (2/3/2013) for detailed charter school funding information revealed that the state is not currently keeping data of this sort. The only way to identify the differences is to contact each district, or even school, on an individual basis.

Why should funding follow the public school student?

Currently, depending on which district a charter school operates in, a charter school can receive as little as half the funding a local neighborhood school receives. Yet our charter schools are public schools required to adhere to all local, state and federal policies and standards, open to all Alaska children for no cost. The funding requirements established by the current state laws only mandate a portion of available funds go to charter schools. We believe all local, state, and federal funding formulas used for neighborhood public school students must also be applied to optional, alternative, and charter school students.

What funds are charter schools missing?

As a result of the discrepancy between funding formulas, charter schools are unable to access to the following:

1. Local tax dollars. In the current legislation, the only mandated local dollars are the required local contribution amount. Therefore any additional dollars distributed to a local district by the local municipality currently are not required to be passed on to the charter schools.
2. State special operative funds. For the past two years the Governor's office has passed on to the local districts energy relief funds. These funds have not been distributed down to the charter schools on a per-pupil basis in all districts, including to charter schools which pay their own utility costs. Other special grants and safety and security dollars are also left to the discretion of the local district.
3. Federal monies. Federal impact dollars, received by a local district that are a result of a student count that includes students attending a charter school, are not currently passed to the charter school in which the student attends.

Why should the state assist with facilities?

Charter schools in Alaska are currently, by law, only receiving money for an operational budget. But many charter schools, including each one in Anchorage, must cover all facilities' costs out of this budget; there are no additional means of support. This leaves charter schools in districts that are not providing a facility at an extreme disadvantage. Currently we only know of one district (Kenai) in which charter schools are housed rent free by the district. However, charter schools in the Kenai district say that this facility structure undermines Kenai's ability to assist new charter schools, which have recently been approved, because it lacks the capacity to support its desired growth.

Why should the state place a cap on indirect fees?

Presently, charter schools pay indirect fees to their local school districts out of the BSA received per pupil. The indirect fees vary each year – from roughly less than 3% to more than 6%. While charter schools recognize and appreciate the symbiotic relationship with the individual school districts, there is no transparency with regard to the benefits received as a result of these indirect fees and there is no consistency as to the amount of the fee itself. The Department of Education and Early Development sets the indirect fees and it appears as though some districts may also add on to that. We ask that, for planning purposes, the local district submits to the state the value of services received and that the amount be capped at 4%.

Why should schools receive a property tax exemption?

All schools should be exempt from local property taxes (and any possible state property taxes in the future). The current funding structure has forced some of Alaska's charter schools to seek private solutions for school construction. The private solutions are tremendously costly – hundreds of thousands of dollars a year with the option to purchase the building at today's value in 20 years – but they also come with a tax bill. Schools in this predicament, like Winterberry in Anchorage, pay tens of thousands of dollars in property taxes every year, out of the education budget, to the Municipality of Anchorage.

Why do charter schools need a per-pupil facilities allowance and a state-funded grant program for facilities?

A per-pupil facilities allowance is the simplest and fastest way to get money to the charter schools which are in dire need of facility monies, including rent and maintenance. Grant programs are a long-term solution that would require investments on an annual basis to provide for savings for future construction and maintenance. A grant program would require incorporating into the DEED system or creating a new one to support charter schools. Charter schools can assist in structuring the program.

In HB 278, it is proposed that state charter schools are given access to grants under AS 14.11. However, if charter schools are pooled with local district neighborhood schools, there is very little chance of access to construction funds due to the first-come first-serve basis employed by the districts. Additionally, discussions with the district have also revealed they are not in a position to assist financially at this time, beyond simple maintenance projects.

Why do charter schools need transportation dollars?

Charter schools provide individualized learning with diverse approaches. This environment is especially conducive to low-income students. Data shows that at Aquarian Charter School, economically-disadvantaged students are performing at the same level as non-economically disadvantaged students. Public transportation dollars could be provided solely to low-income families who would not access a charter school otherwise.

Why mandate union teachers?

Recruiting is always an issue in Alaska. It is even more so in the teaching profession. The best teachers desire greater compensation and benefits. Right now, that is provided by the teachers' union. If charter schools were mandated to accept non-union teachers, it would not only be difficult to recruit teachers, but impossible to hire and retain highly-

qualified teachers. Union exceptions for non-teaching positions are welcomed to hold back costs as recruiting is not as much of an issue.



Anchorage Charter School Facilities Analysis

	Total Budget 12/13 BSA state funding formula	Facilities Expense	Enrollment	Per student allocation	per student facilities expense	% of budget used for facilities
Ak Native Charter School	\$1,756,593.00	\$489,065.00	195	\$9,008.17	\$ 2,508.03	28%
Aquarian Charter School	\$2,946,426.00	\$368,066.00	375	\$7,857.14	\$ 981.51	12% see notes
Eagle Academy Charter	\$1,550,328.00	\$346,513.00	166	\$9,339.33	\$ 2,087.43	22%
Family Partnership	\$2,405,901.00	\$132,944.00	545	\$4,414.50	\$ 243.93	6% see notes
Frontier Charter School	\$1,403,890.00	\$146,207.00	318	\$4,414.75	\$ 459.77	10% see notes
Hiland Tech	\$2,013,517.00	\$500,467.00	230	\$8,754.42	\$ 2,175.94	25%
Rilke Schule	\$2,850,594.00	\$749,600.00	360	\$7,918.32	\$ 2,082.22	26%
Winterberry	\$1,948,640.00	\$463,180.00	235	\$8,292.09	\$ 1,970.98	24%
Total Anchorage charter	\$16,875,889.00	\$3,196,042.00	2424			

notes:

Family partnership & Frontier are home school programs - buildings do not need to house students or meet state and national code requirements

Aquarian Charter School rents an older facility directly from ASD - all payments are made to ASD for a fully depreciated building.

Outdoor Site Committee

We will be meeting after school Tuesday February 5 at 3:45 in the lobby. There will be updates on the outbuildings, schoolyard habitat and other projects for this summer. Your input and participation is very welcome! Let's plan our gardens, trees, water courses and hobbit holes! Contact - Donna Mears mears@alaska.net 632-6382

How Charter Schools are Funded

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While most of us would much rather concentrate on more interesting things, financial realities sometimes force us to focus on aspects of our students' education that are more like getting your child to eat their broccoli. As we go into the season for some of our major fund raising efforts, it might be helpful to understand how charter schools are funded and why we need to raise extra funds.

Let's start out with the top level numbers. The Anchorage School district for the 2011/2012 school year had an income of \$835,234,718. The biggest single revenue source is the state of Alaska contribution of \$312 million, followed by the Municipality of Anchorage contribution at \$237 million. (Local municipalities are required to provide some funding and an additional amount is optional. Most cities and boroughs choose not to supplement the required funding.) The total population of the Anchorage School District in 2011 was 49,091 students.

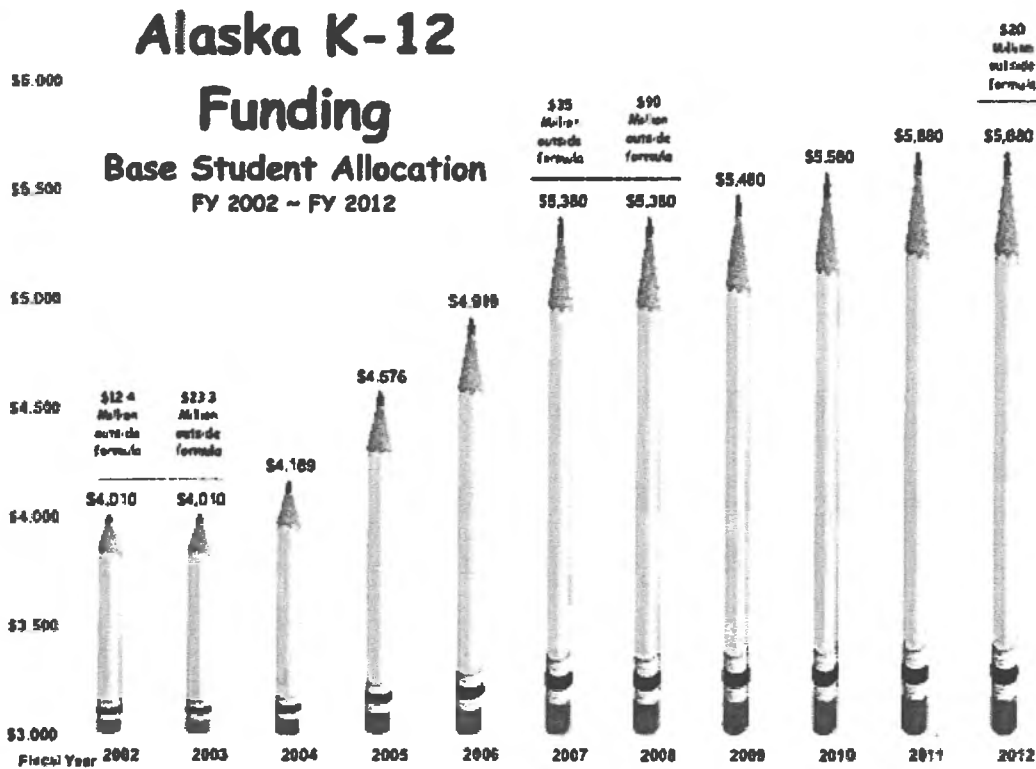
This means that for all programs, the district received \$17,014 dollars per student from all sources. This includes all the money that was earmarked for this, that, and the other, but that is the overall number.

Source, Anchorage School District Comprehensive Annual Fiscal Report, 2011-2012

As a charter school, Winterberry receives funding under the Alaska State statutes governing charter schools. The funding equations that generate program funding for charter schools are the same as those that generate program funding for the rest of the Anchorage school district, except that charter schools do not receive the out of program funding for things like buses and other special programs and capital matching. Our funding per student in 2011/2012 was \$8,832 per student for everything we do.

How do you arrive at this number? The minimum funding for any charter school is spelled out in the Alaska statutes.

It all starts with the "Base Student Allocation," an amount determined by the legislature, which was \$5680 per student for fiscal year in 2011 and remained unchanged for 2012. This number is under debate in the state legislature, as this article is being written, and it will very likely remain unchanged for 2013 as well.



This number is then multiplied by a variety of factors. These are canonized in several statutes, which I won't bore you with, but the principle is:

Alaska Statutes 14.03.260. Funding for charter school.

(a) A local school board shall provide an approved charter school with an annual program budget. The budget shall be not less than the amount generated by the students enrolled in the charter school less administrative costs retained by the local school district, determined by applying the indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Education and Early Development. The "amount generated by students enrolled in the charter school" is to be determined in the same manner as it would be for a student enrolled in another public school in that school district.

The simplest factor is the district size factor, which for us is 1.0. This factor adjusts for districts in the state where costs are higher, like the Aleutians Region at 1.736. Other urban districts like Mat-Su and Fairbanks are similar to us at 1.01 and 1.04 respectively. (See Alaska Statutes 14.17.460.)

The school size factor is where it gets a bit complicated. The school size factor essentially adds money per student for smaller schools because the overhead is usually higher due to economies of scale. It does this by adjusting the actual number of students to a number called the ADM, or Average Daily Membership. (See Alaska Statutes 14.17.450.)

For Winterberry the relevant factors are:

If our number of students during the October count is between 150 and 250, the school size factor is $218.1 + 1.08 \times (\text{number of students} - 150)$

Example: Assume we have 220 students. The $ADM=218.1+1.08 \times (220-150)=293.7$

The equation is different for school sizes below 150 students and that results is what is called the "150 student cliff." The result is a bit more than half the per student funding between 149.9 students and 150.1 students. No charter school ever wants to drop below 150 students.

The ADM is then multiplied by the special needs factor of 1.2. (See Alaska Statutes 14.17.42)

Example: $297.7 \times 1.2 = 352.44$

This number is then multiplied by the district adjustment of 1.0 and the Base Student Allocation.

Example: $352.44 \times 1.0 \times \$5680 = \$2,001,859$.

We are not done yet, hold on, the hard part is over. We still need to add the quality schools initiative funding of \$16 per ADM per Alaska Statutes 14.17.480 and subtract the district overhead.

This adds $16 \times 352.44 = \$5639$ for the quality schools initiative

The district overhead for 2011/2012 was 3.21%, but grew to 4.57% for this year. For 2011/2012 the overhead was $2,001,859 + 5639 \times 0.0321 = \$64,440$

The result is \$1,943,057 total for 220 students, or \$8,832 per student

So, why the big difference between us and the rest of the Anchorage School district? On the surface, it looks like we get a little over half of what ASD is working with. The reason is fairly complex, and is the sum of many small contributions to the overall funding picture, but the biggest thing is that the Anchorage School District has not elected to provide the optional share of the revenue that the district gets from the local tax revenue.

There is also funding for transportation, currently \$384 dollars per ADM under Alaska Statutes 14.09.010. Since all ASD charter school students contribute to the ADM, the money is provided to the district from the state but charter schools do not receive transportation funding from the district. If Winterberry, with our 220 students, were to receive this funding and were allowed to use it for other purposes, this would add $293.7 \times 384 = \$112,780$ dollars to our budget, more than enough for another teacher.

In addition, there is funding from the federal government in the form of impact aid for federal employees and members of the military. There are also grants for capital building and the state has a matching program when districts want to build new schools.

I hope this give you a little window into the funding issues in charter schools in Alaska and Winterberry in particular. One of the most important issues in these funding formulas is that it is all based on the base student allocation approved by the legislature, and if this number is not adjusted for inflation each year, our real income (budget) shrinks, and the difference has to come out of the program.

Table 16

Percentage Capacity - 2014-15 to 2019-20

School Name	Actual			Projected			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Abbott Loop	79%	77%	74%	79%	82%	82%	82%
Airport Heights	99%	101%	94%	98%	100%	106%	108%
Alpenglow	98%	95%	98%	101%	99%	98%	99%
Aurora	83%	84%	87%	93%	97%	105%	108%
Bartlett	77%	76%	76%	78%	77%	76%	77%
Baxter	80%	79%	80%	85%	86%	88%	89%
Bayshore	97%	93%	94%	97%	98%	101%	101%
Bear Valley	75%	75%	73%	76%	78%	81%	80%
Begich	105%	107%	104%	102%	103%	105%	106%
Benson SAVE/SEARCH	66%	66%	66%	66%	65%	64%	64%
Birchwood ABC	83%	89%	90%	94%	95%	96%	98%
Bowman	99%	99%	92%	92%	93%	93%	95%
Campbell	93%	94%	95%	99%	101%	102%	104%
Central	85%	83%	84%	90%	90%	92%	98%
Chester Valley	90%	89%	87%	90%	92%	91%	90%
Chinook	93%	96%	99%	104%	106%	106%	106%
Chugach Optional	108%	109%	108%	108%	108%	108%	110%
Chugiak Elem	88%	88%	88%	93%	94%	94%	95%
Chugiak High	59%	58%	59%	59%	60%	60%	61%
Clark	96%	97%	95%	94%	96%	98%	98%
College Gate	77%	78%	79%	79%	81%	83%	88%
Creekside Park	99%	99%	104%	105%	105%	110%	107%
Denali Montessori	79%	80%	80%	83%	84%	85%	86%
Dimond	89%	89%	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%
Eagle River Elem	88%	96%	94%	98%	102%	102%	101%
Eagle River High	86%	89%	89%	89%	90%	91%	92%
East	87%	87%	89%	90%	88%	88%	89%
Fairview	79%	81%	84%	87%	88%	91%	92%
Fire Lake	86%	83%	84%	88%	88%	88%	91%
Girdwood K-8	96%	101%	101%	102%	101%	99%	100%
Gladys Wood	82%	79%	76%	78%	81%	83%	86%
Goldenview	85%	85%	86%	84%	85%	87%	88%
Government Hill	83%	85%	87%	88%	90%	91%	94%
Gruening	91%	91%	88%	85%	85%	87%	103%
Hanshew	97%	96%	94%	93%	94%	94%	96%
Homestead	68%	67%	68%	70%	73%	75%	80%
Huffman	88%	84%	82%	83%	81%	83%	83%
Inlet View	87%	89%	90%	93%	95%	97%	99%
Kasuun	96%	93%	91%	94%	96%	96%	99%
Kincaid	116%	116%	113%	115%	116%	117%	117%
Klatt	93%	91%	88%	91%	92%	92%	94%
Lake Hood	72%	69%	66%	64%	65%	67%	70%
Lake Otis	96%	96%	94%	99%	100%	102%	103%
Mears	110%	105%	105%	109%	109%	111%	112%
Mirror Lake	77%	79%	79%	79%	79%	81%	79%
Mount Spurr	93%	99%	93%	93%	91%	93%	96%
Mountain View	72%	73%	74%	76%	77%	79%	80%
Muldoon	91%	90%	91%	96%	98%	99%	100%
North Star	80%	79%	79%	80%	80%	81%	84%
Northern Lights ABC	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	102%
Northwood ABC	84%	84%	85%	87%	90%	92%	92%
Nunaka Valley	83%	85%	86%	89%	94%	96%	96%
Ocean View	76%	78%	80%	82%	85%	87%	88%
O'Malley	74%	74%	76%	74%	74%	74%	71%
Orion	84%	88%	87%	89%	92%	92%	95%
Polaris (K-12)	93%	93%	91%	91%	91%	90%	90%
Parmigan	88%	86%	84%	90%	94%	96%	100%

Table 16

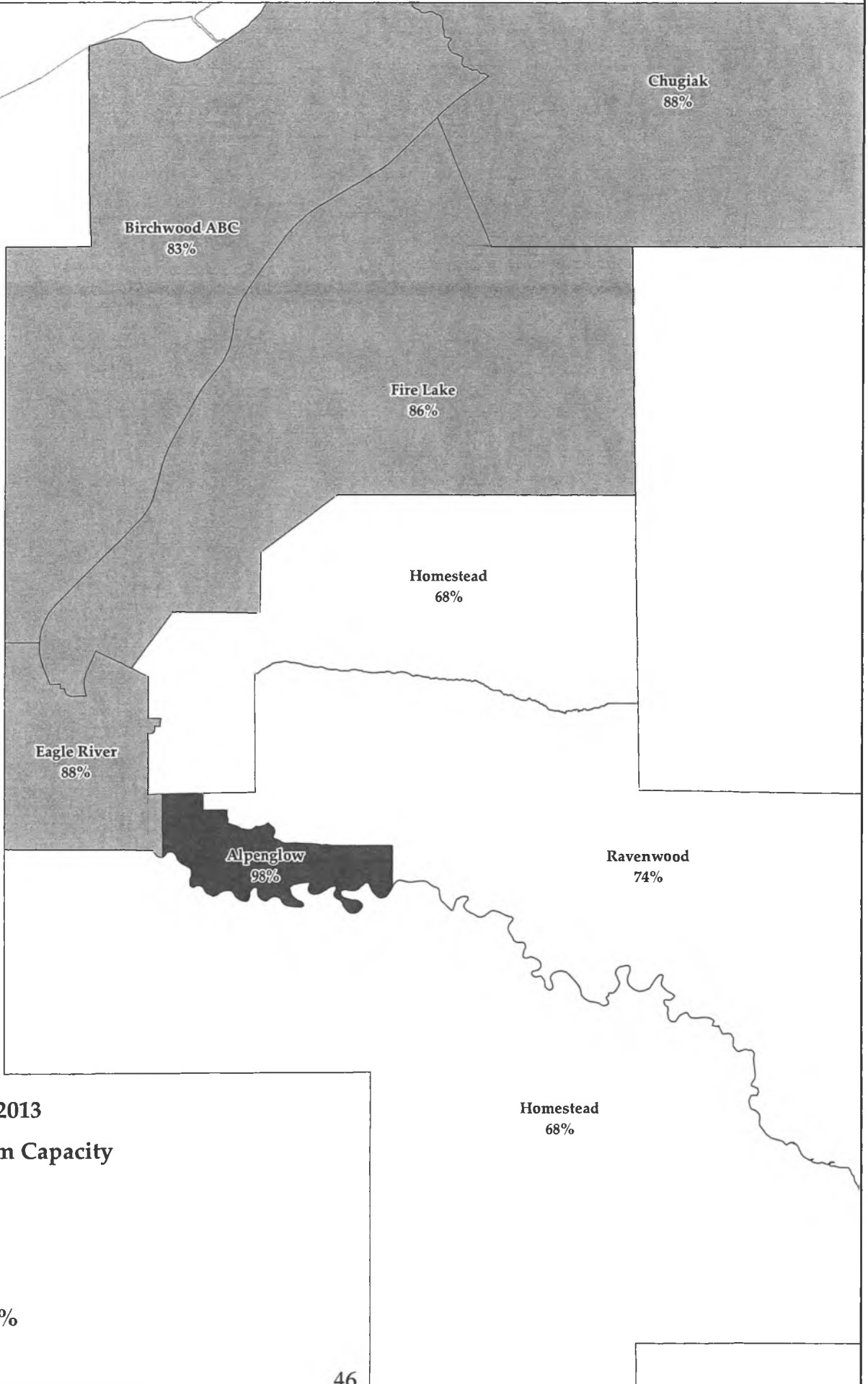
Percentage Capacity - 2014-15 to 2019-20

School Name	Actual		Projected				
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Rabbit Creek	105%	105%	105%	105%	105%	106%	105%
Ravenwood	74%	71%	74%	77%	78%	81%	82%
Rogers Park	101%	102%	101%	102%	102%	101%	100%
Romig	100%	102%	98%	97%	97%	98%	98%
Russian Jack	79%	82%	82%	82%	87%	88%	86%
Sand Lake	102%	101%	102%	105%	108%	107%	108%
SAVE I	76%	76%	76%	75%	76%	75%	75%
Scenic Park	94%	94%	95%	95%	98%	99%	100%
Service	75%	75%	76%	76%	76%	76%	76%
South	85%	85%	86%	86%	86%	86%	87%
Spring Hill	105%	101%	103%	107%	108%	109%	108%
Steller (7-12)	99%	100%	97%	98%	97%	96%	96%
Susitna	88%	91%	91%	95%	98%	98%	98%
Taku	104%	104%	102%	105%	106%	108%	110%
Trailside	88%	84%	84%	85%	88%	89%	90%
Tudor	83%	82%	81%	83%	84%	83%	84%
Turnagain	92%	94%	92%	94%	96%	96%	96%
Tyson	80%	83%	84%	87%	88%	90%	91%
Ursa Major	80%	82%	85%	85%	85%	85%	88%
Ursa Minor	111%	117%	110%	100%	99%	98%	101%
Wendler	74%	72%	72%	72%	73%	74%	76%
West	108%	108%	110%	109%	110%	110%	113%
Williwaw	95%	95%	93%	95%	97%	98%	99%
Willow Crest	89%	89%	93%	95%	98%	100%	99%
Wonder Park	75%	76%	80%	80%	79%	80%	81%

Note: 1) Percentages calculated using membership that included intensive special ed students, but not preschool students.
 2) Charter schools are not included.

Percent of Program Capacity by Elementary Attendance Area






N



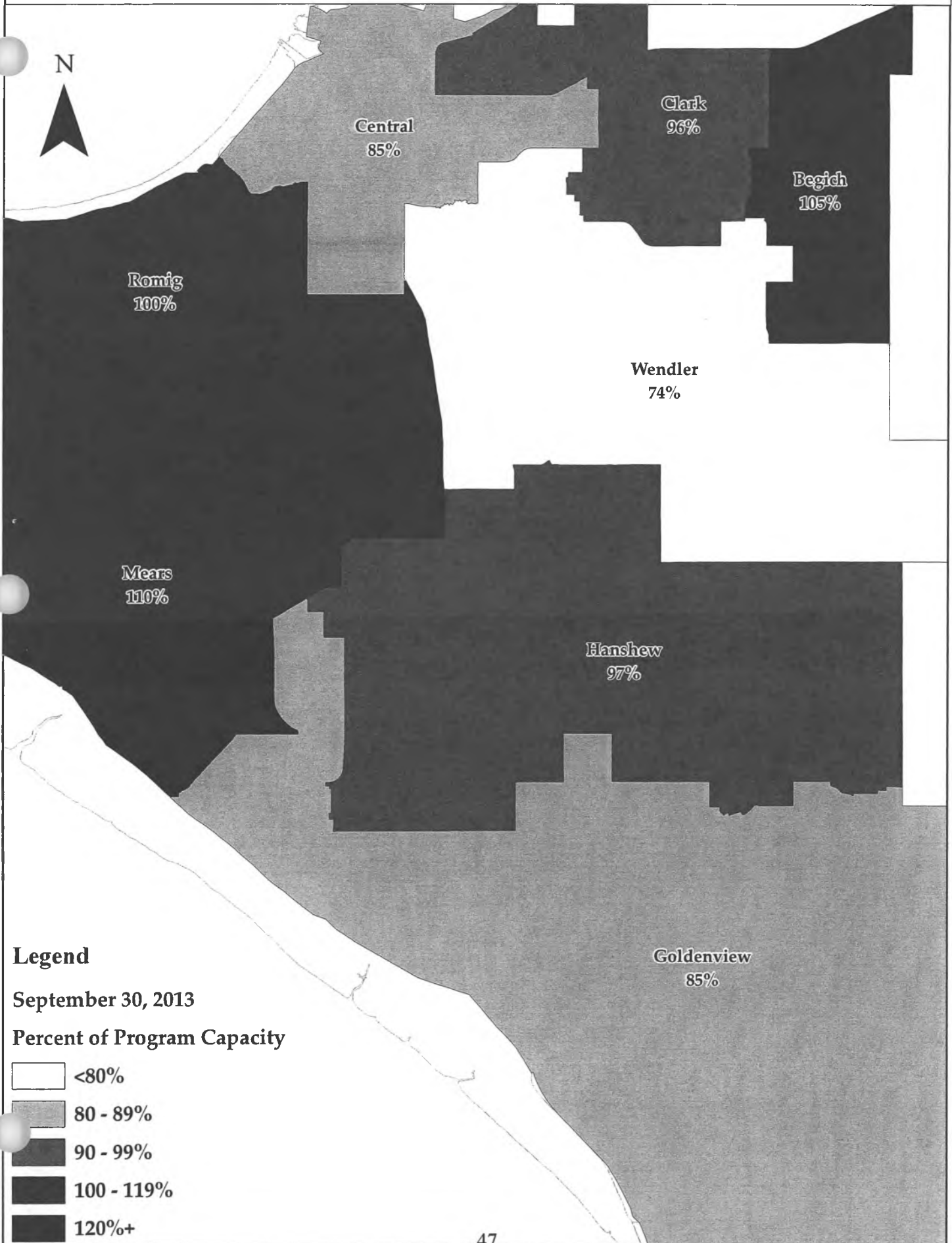
Legend

September 30, 2013

Percent Program Capacity

-  <80%
-  80 - 90%
-  90 - 99%
-  100 - 119%
-  120%+

Percent of Program Capacity by Middle School Attendance Area



Legend

September 30, 2013

Percent of Program Capacity

- <80%
- 80 - 89%
- 90 - 99%
- 100 - 119%
- 120%+

Percent of Program Capacity by Middle School Attendance Area

N



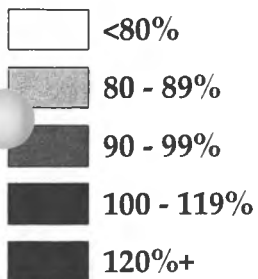
Mirror Lake
77%

Grüening
91%

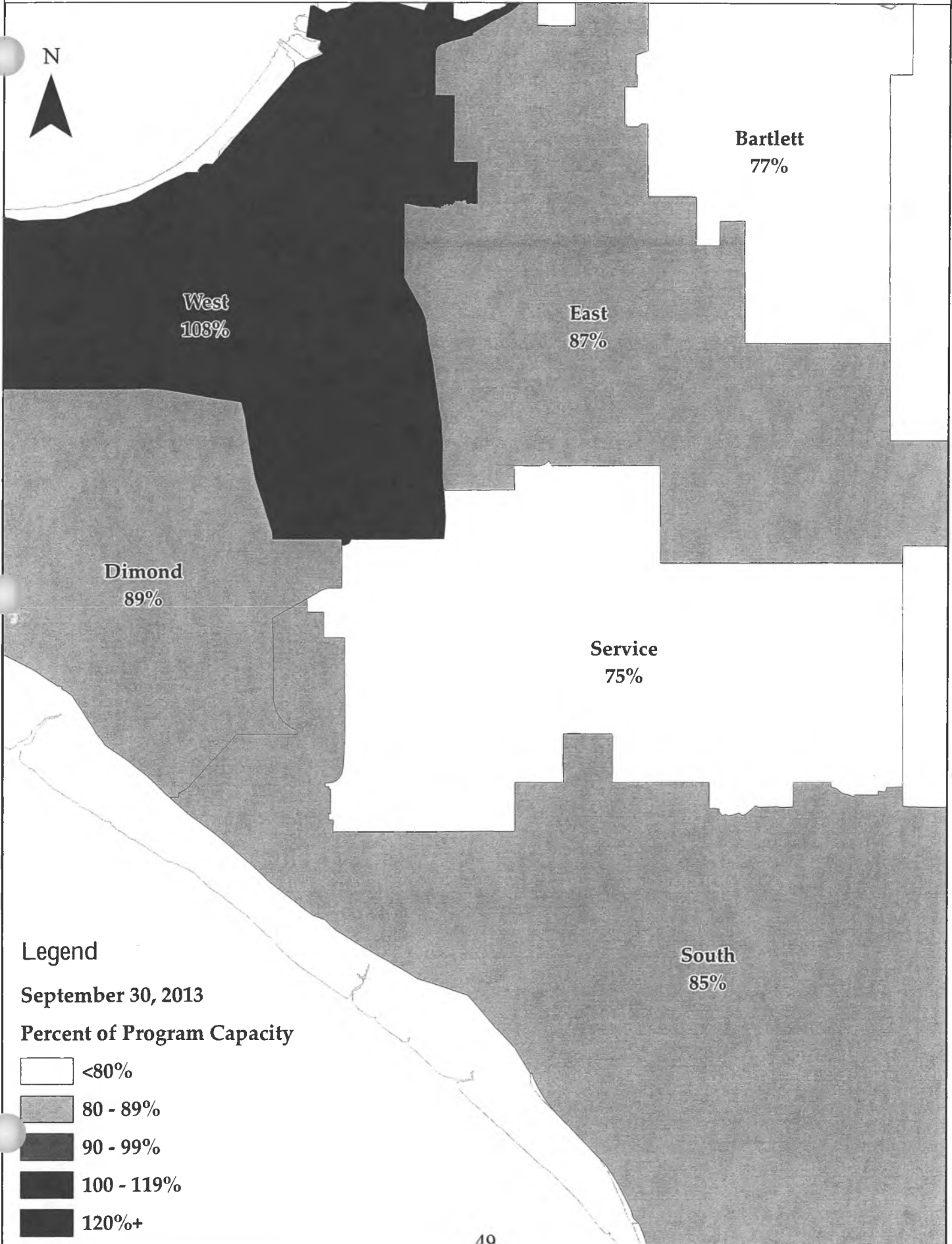
Legend

September 30, 2013

Percent of Program Capacity








Percent of Program Capacity by High School Attendance Area



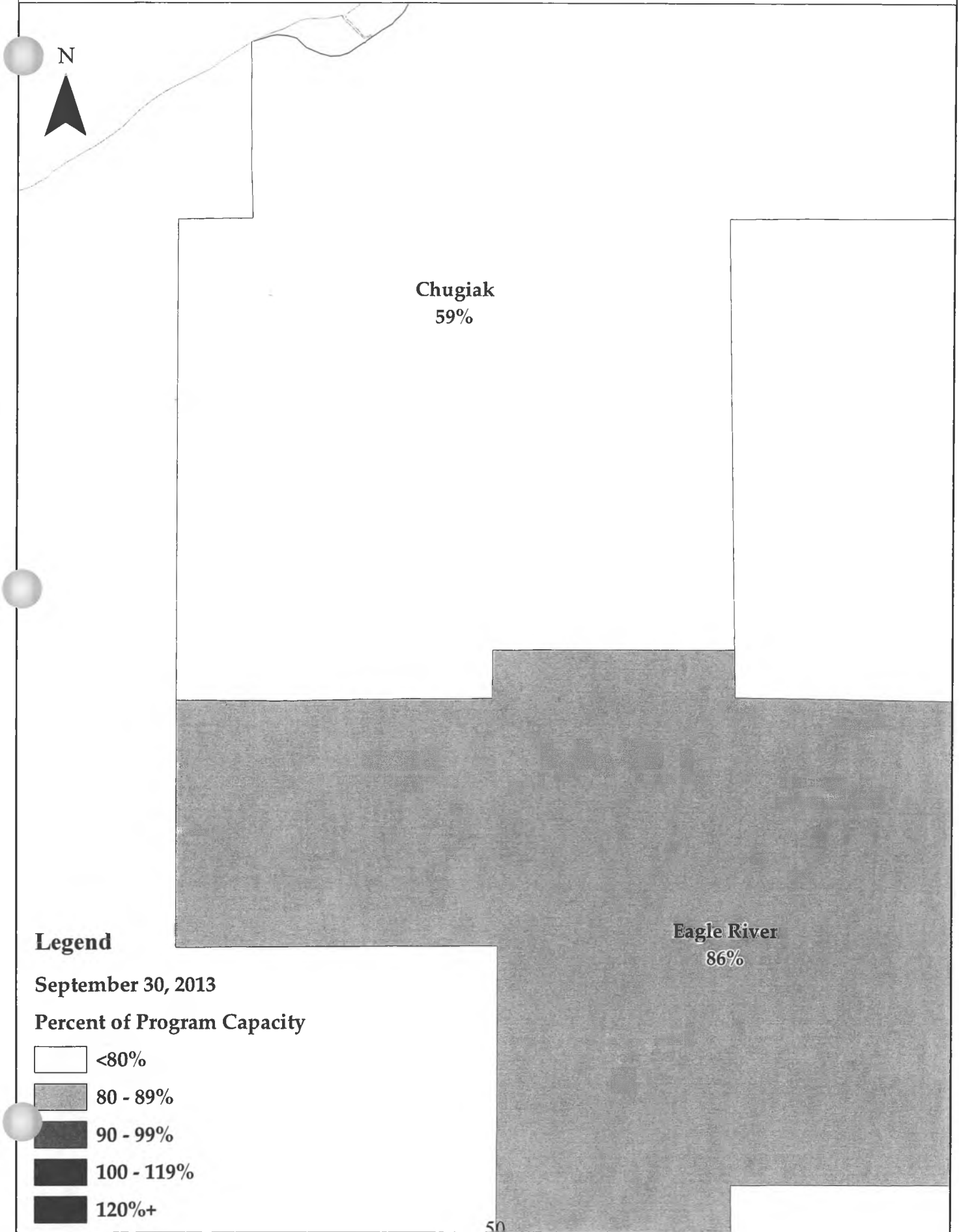
Legend

September 30, 2013

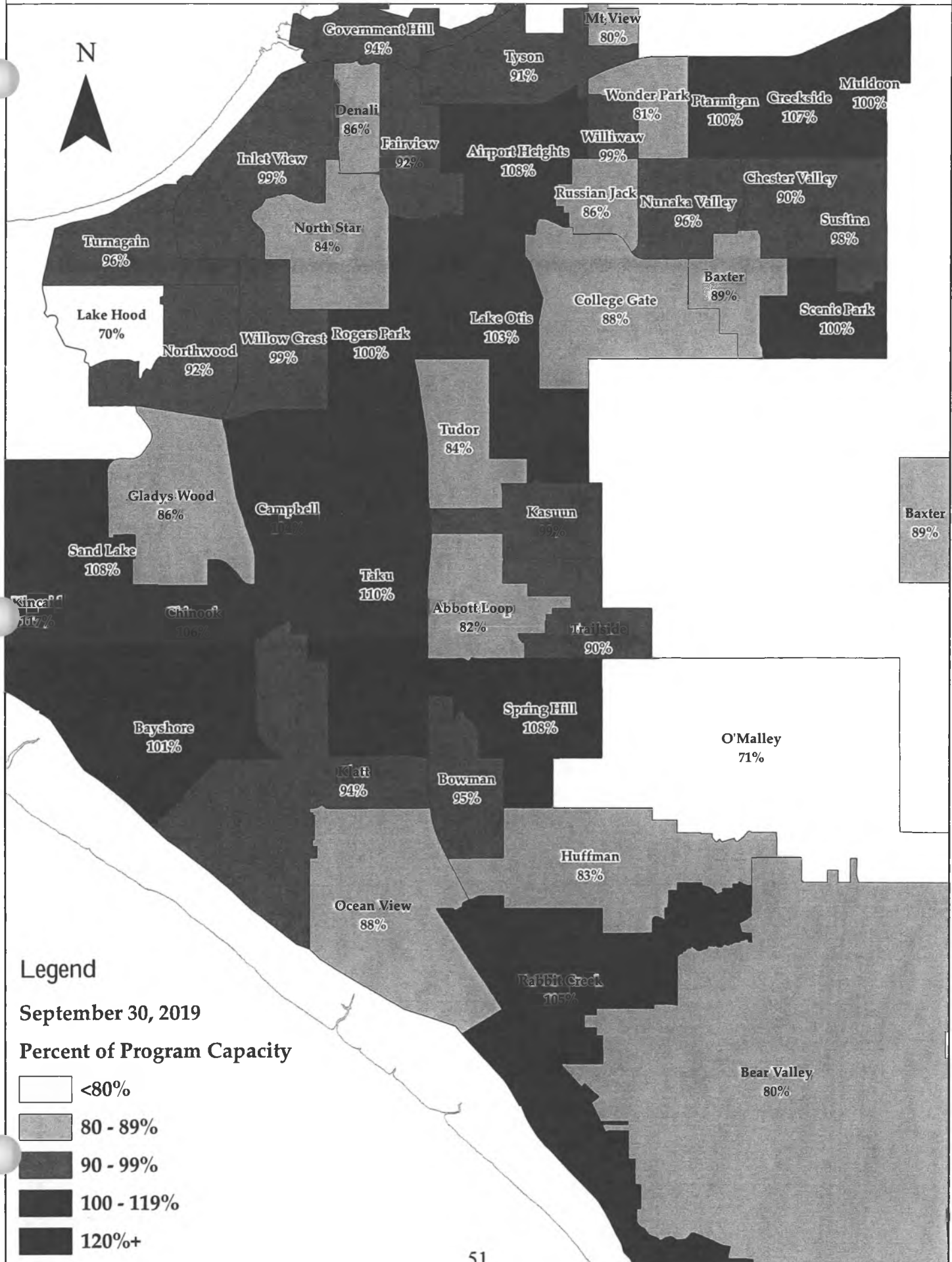
Percent of Program Capacity

-  <80%
-  80 - 89%
-  90 - 99%
-  100 - 119%
-  120%+

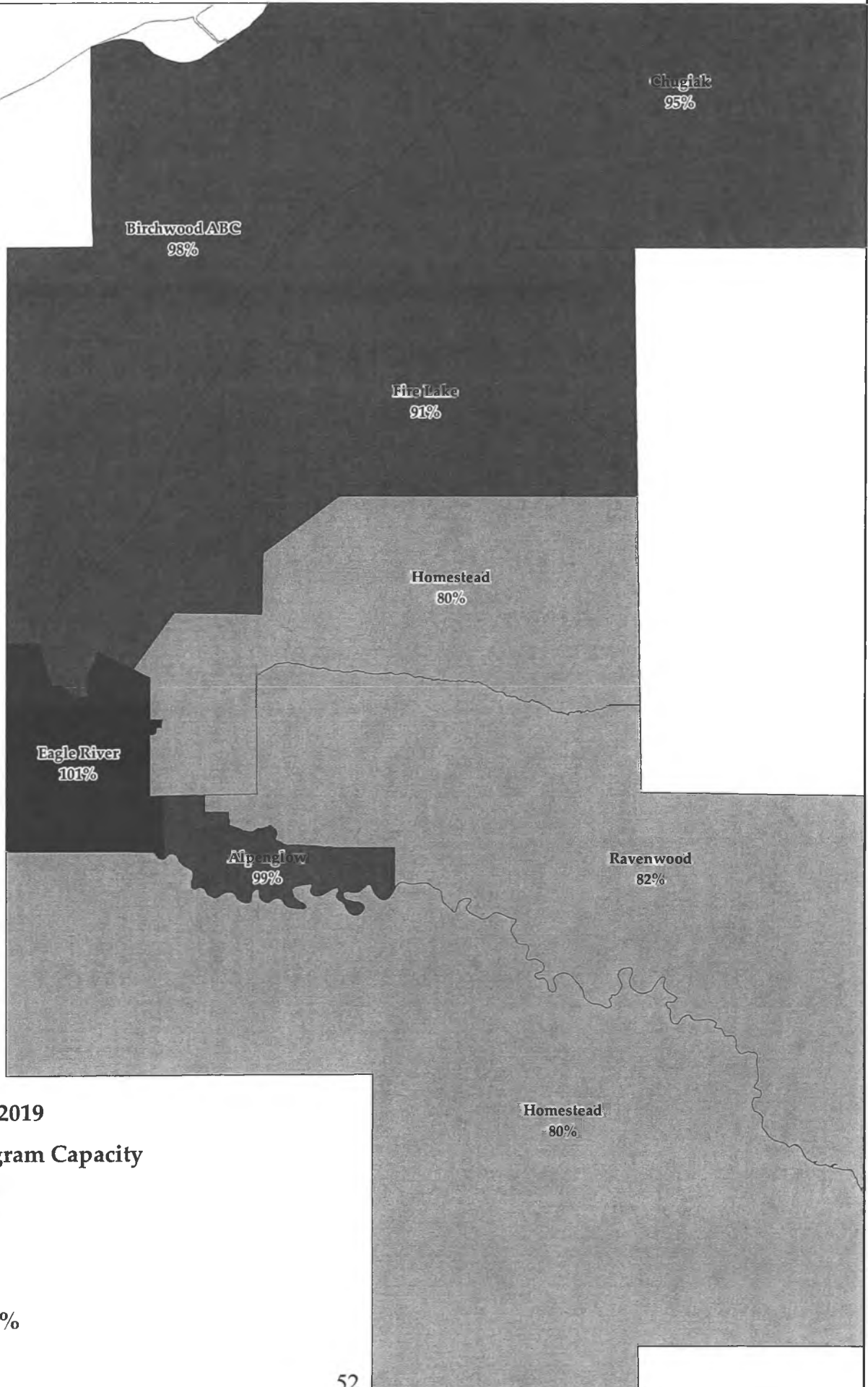
Percent of Program Capacity by High School Attendance Area



Percent of Program Capacity by Elementary Attendance Area








Percent of Program Capacity by Elementary Attendance Area



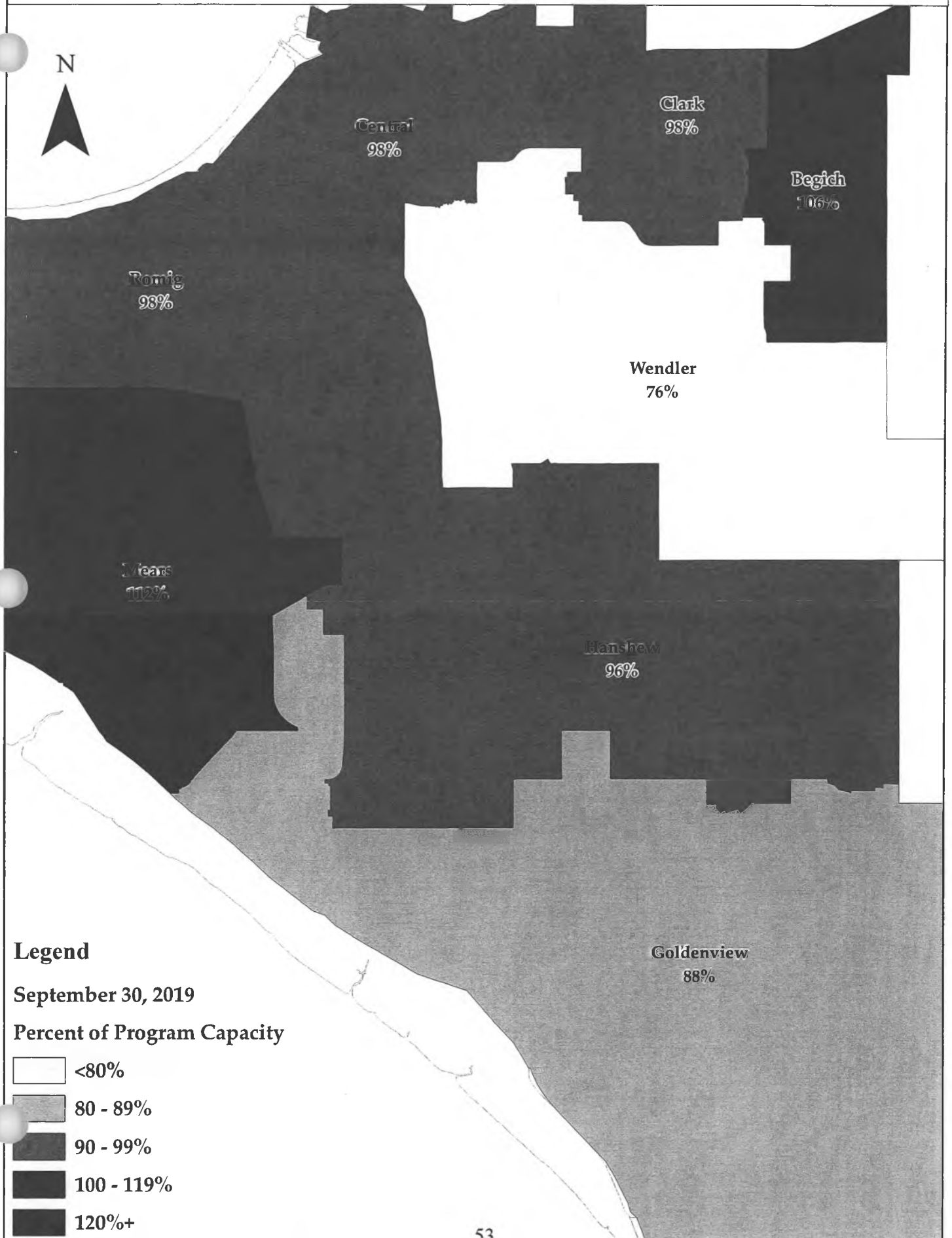
Legend

September 30, 2019

Percent of Program Capacity

-  <80%
-  80 - 89%
-  90 - 99%
-  100 - 119%
-  120%+

Percent of Program Capacity by Middle School Attendance Area



Percent of Program Capacity by Middle School Attendance Area

N








Mirror Lake
79%

Gruening
103%

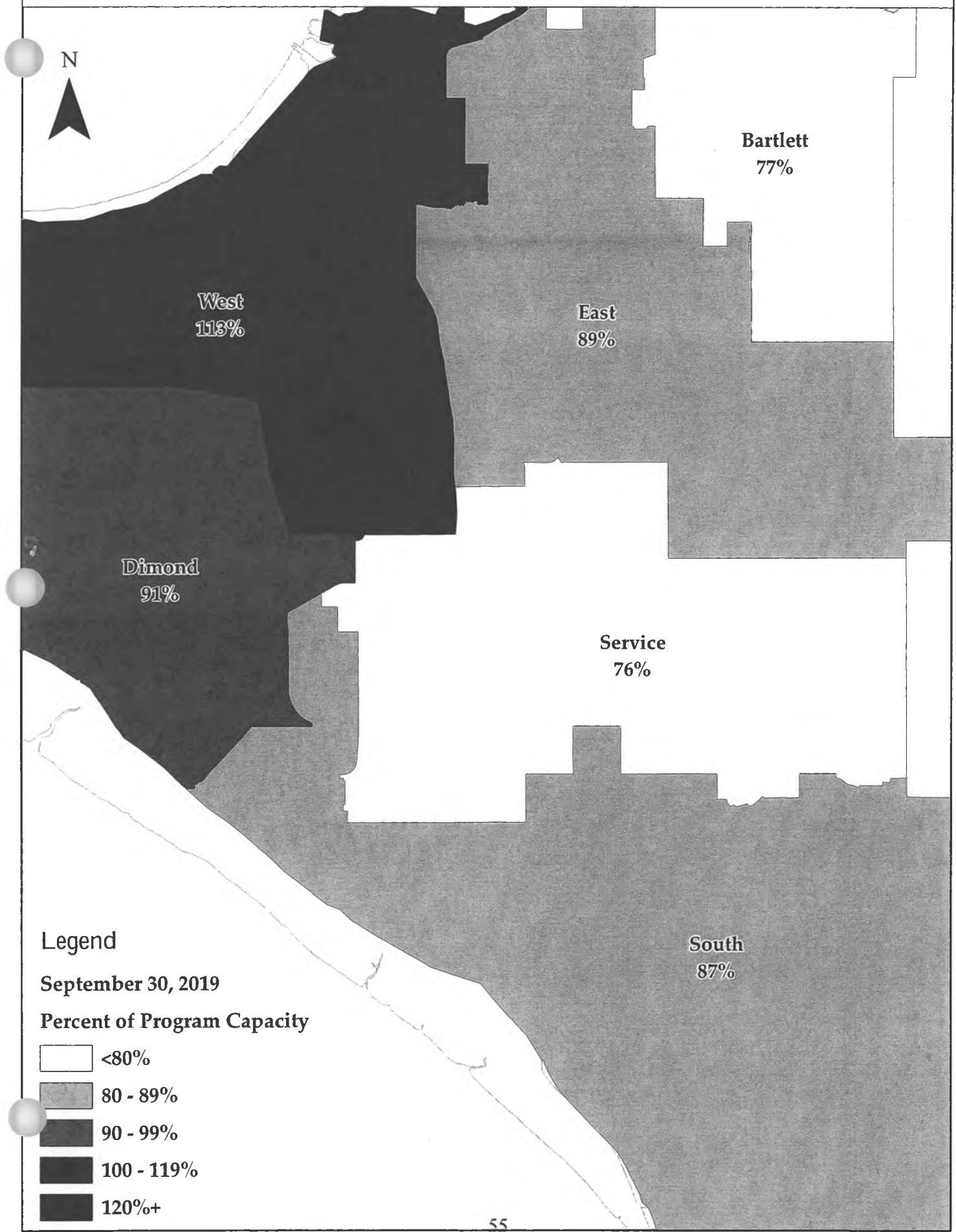
Legend

September 30, 2019

Percent of Program Capacity

-  <80%
-  80 - 89%
-  90 - 99%
-  100 - 119%
-  120%+

Percent of Program Capacity by High School Attendance Area



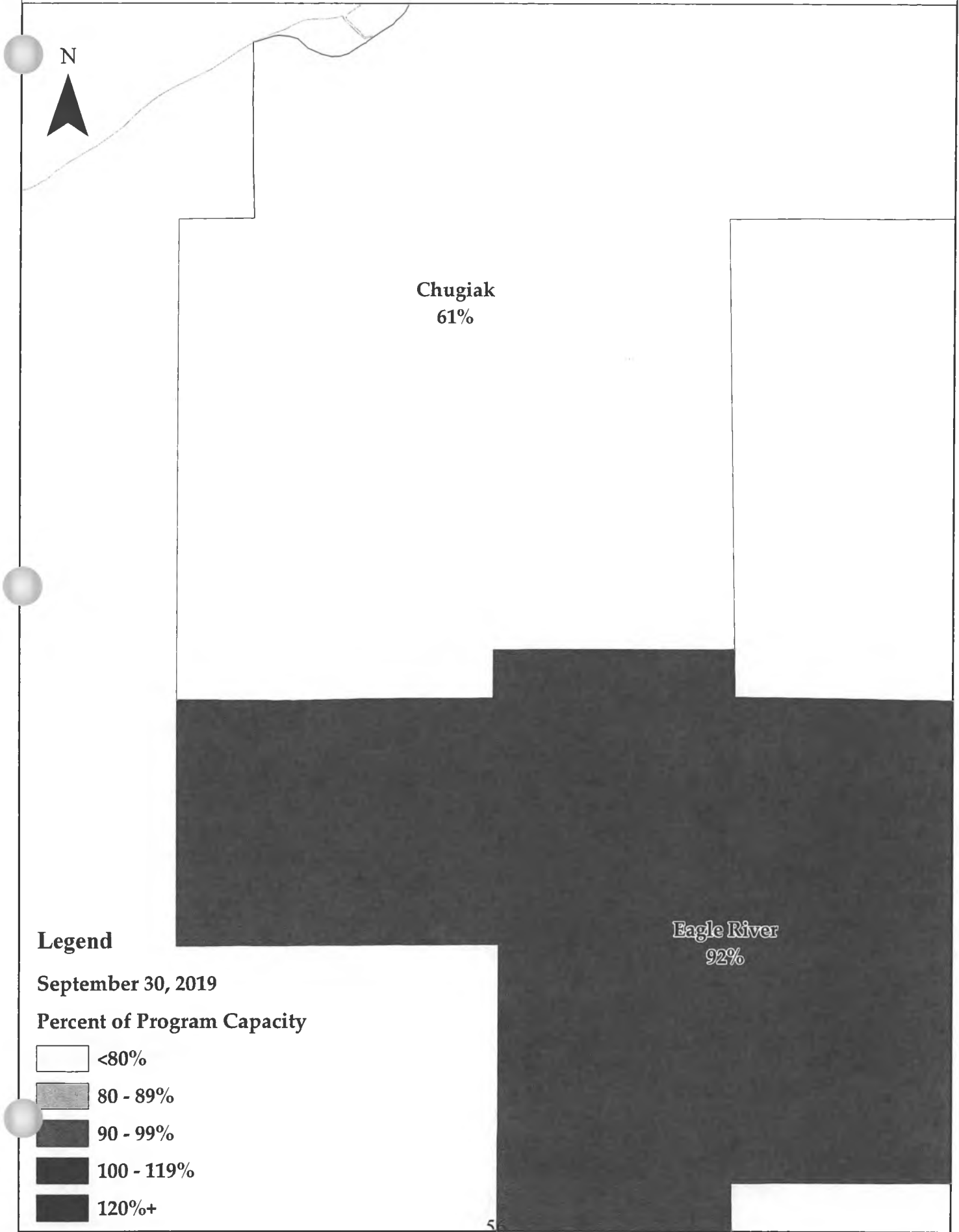
Legend

September 30, 2019

Percent of Program Capacity

- <80%
- 80 - 89%
- 90 - 99%
- 100 - 119%
- 120%+






Percent of Program Capacity by High School Attendance Area



Legend

September 30, 2019

Percent of Program Capacity

-  <80%
-  80 - 89%
-  90 - 99%
-  100 - 119%
-  120%+

Noah Hanson

From: Michael J. Rehberg <mike@rehbergs.net>
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2014 11:53 AM
To: Sen. Berta Gardner
Cc: Michael J Rehberg; Noah Hanson
Subject: RE: How Winterberry Charter makes it work, and changes that can help us succeed

Hello Senator,

Thanks, we've had a look at SB 185.

- The 10% state-funded differential could offset some facility costs, which will be helpful.
- The charter school startup grant won't help existing charters who are seeking new space or have other needs, but it would benefit establishment of new charters. I believe our school received a startup grant on establishment in 2005.
- The neighborhood school conversion provision probably won't help existing charters sited in existing facilities on long-term lease, but it does create a novel method to establish charters to a motivated group of neighbors and teachers. If that's what neighborhoods think can help their schools thrive, that could be a way to make it happen.

Below I've copied some discussion I made about this to Rep Tuck's staff about the similar house bill that explains it better:

As expressed during my public testimony at the caucus meeting Saturday, it will be important as the charter support bills move forward to be sure existing charter schools like ours are similarly given some pathway toward either expanding their existing facilities under their current long-term leases (via substantially increased annual facilities budgets) or, ultimately, a pathway to either school district or nonprofit ownership of their current existing buildings (via either access to grants, bonds with state reimbursement or access to [loans, say through AIDEA or AHFC, which cover 100%] of facility purchase/construction costs).

It is any Anchorage charter's dream to have a facility provided and maintained by the District free of charge, as proposed by your bill.

Unfortunately I doubt any existing Anchorage charter school can find a neighborhood school sufficiently empty to move their entire student body into, without displacing the current neighborhood students. Winterberry is one of the smallest charter schools and I doubt there are 230 empty desks available for us in any existing school.

What your charter school bill does offer, and it's a novel and interesting idea, is the opportunity for neighborhoods to organize themselves to establish their own place-based charter schools. That's a new model for charters in Anchorage, and I think it could offer a lot to a motivated set of neighbors and teachers. But I have trouble seeing it working for the charters already trying hard to succeed.

I'm glad to have your feedback.

Best,

Mike Rehberg

-----Original Message-----

From: Michael J Rehberg [mailto:mike@rehbergs.net]

Sent: Monday, March 03, 2014 7:57 AM

To: Sen. Berta Gardner

Subject: How Winterberry Charter makes it work, and changes that can help us succeed

Dear Senator Gardner,

I am writing again as treasurer of Winterberry Charter School in Anchorage. Thank you for making charters a big part of the conversation this year.

Our Anchorage charter school is entirely dependent on BSA formula funding.

Annually the first 25-30% of these funds are consumed by our commercial lease, utilities, maintenance, school district overhead and property tax.

We receive straight BSA formula funding. We do not receive facilities, Federal impact aid, recent state energy aid, or state transportation aid.

We've increased our class sizes to 28 to compensate, we run a fine program with a very lean staff in a basic facility, but this year our flexibility is gone and we face cuts. We have few tricks left up our sleeve.

The formula is our lifeblood as a charter, and we are counting on returning it to where it would have been with continued steady increase since 2011.

While increasing BSA would help us survive as we are now, changes to charter school law would help make us sustainable into the future.

Ensuring logical federal and state funds pass through to charters would be a very helpful first step. Further, facilities costs eat our lunch. A mechanism for capital construction, operations or purchase of our existing facility will help. A differential on top of BSA to account for lease and utilities would help. Property tax relief would help. Even the simple ability to secure zero-down state loans for purchase or construction would benefit our school.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope this year's conversation continues on ways to support our state's parent-founded charters this year.

I'm happy to discuss or answer questions by email or on my cell at 632-6376.

Best regards,

Mike Rehberg
Treasurer, Winterberry Charter School APC

Compass: State should build on success of public charter schools

<http://www.adn.com/2014/02/24/3344118/compass-state-should-build-on.html>

By JOEY ESKI

February 24, 2014

This is, officially, the Education Session in Juneau. You have our attention.

Actually, you had our attention at the State of the State address. It was during this speech that Gov. Sean Parnell acknowledged public charter school success. He specifically mentioned Aquarian Charter School, in Anchorage, but he could have named any of the state's charter schools as examples of success in public education. He called for replication of successful public charter school programs and pledged to do more to give Alaskan families choice in public education by strengthening the state's charter school system.

Charter schools in Alaska are very misunderstood. Alaska's charter schools are public schools equally open to students regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic background, or the neighborhood in which one lives. Charter schools employ public school teachers who are part of the teachers' union. No tuition is charged to attend. A parent body governs each charter school making curriculum and budget decisions that uphold the school's charter.

There are currently twenty-seven active public charter schools in Alaska. Each public charter school operates under a local school district, adhering to all the standards and policies within each particular district. Working with the local school districts in this manner allows for innovation in education while providing the accountability of a traditional public school. Charter schools, statewide, reduce the load on neighborhood schools and create distinct learning environments some students crave or desperately need. For instance, Aquarian Charter School provides differentiated learning and math blocking which gives students the opportunity to work at their individual level (higher or lower). Aquarian's program is academically rigorous but also infused with the arts resulting in a balanced approach to learning.

Other charter schools within the state focus on various specialties, including the continuation of and appreciation for Alaska Native language and culture, technology, German, and creative learning through the arts and outdoor education. While Alaska charter schools are different in many ways, they are united in one common problem: the lack of adequate funding.

Although all charter schools are part of our public education system, not one of the state's public charter schools receives total funding on par with other types of schools such as traditional, optional or alternative schools. As they are currently written, Alaska's charter school laws do not entitle charter schools to receive many of the additional funding allocations other schools receive. A few examples of funding sources unavailable to charter schools include: special state

allocations (such as energy cost offsets), a substantial portion of local tax dollars from property taxes, transportation dollars, and capital funds.

In Anchorage, public charter schools receive the Base Student Allocation (adjusted for enrollment factors) to educate a child. That's it. From this smaller amount, charter schools must cover all operating expenses, including principal and teachers' salaries and benefits, textbooks, and supplies. However, unlike other types of schools in the district, charter schools must also use this money to pay for facility costs including rent, maintenance, utilities, and, in some cases, even local property taxes.

Lack of facilities funding is the biggest barrier to new charter school start-up and the single most significant challenge hindering charter schools' sustainability and growth. An increase in the state's BSA, while essential, will not solve the state's charter school issues. Supporters of the state's charter school programs understand legislative changes to charter schools' funding must occur this education session. These changes should ensure the sustainability of charter schools and allow for growth.

We applaud our governor and legislators for both recognizing and making a priority public school choice. We are encouraged by the governor's bill, HB 278, as well as Rep. Chris Tuck's current bill addressing charter schools, and will work together to further strengthen them. Adequately funding charter schools will ultimately allow for more public school choice, lowering the long wait-lists and opening access for economically-disadvantaged families.

So, Juneau, you have our attention. Thank you for recognizing us. We ask you to support Alaska's public education choices. Adequate funding of our state's public charter schools is the ideal compromise in Juneau this session.

Joey Eski is a parent and chairwoman of the Academic Policy Committee at Aquarian Charter School in Anchorage.

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

BY SENATOR GARDNER

TO: SB 185

1 Page 1, line 12:

2 Delete "a new subsection"

3 Insert "new subsections"

4

5 Page 2, following line 8:

6 Insert a new subsection to read:

7 "(e) A school district shall provide transportation services on the same terms

8 as the district provides transportation services to other students in the attendance area

9 for a student who resides in the attendance area of a school that was converted to a

10 charter school and who enrolls in the charter school."