



# Anchorage School District

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## Education Center

5530 E. Northern Lights Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99504 • 907-742-4000 • [www.asdk12.org](http://www.asdk12.org)

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Les Gara  
Alaska House of Representatives  
State Capitol Room 511  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for Proposed Bill Increasing BSA

Dear Representative Gara,

I am writing in support of your proposed bill to increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) by \$100. Alaska's BSA has not been adjusted to keep pace with continued rising costs. Your public and sustained support for education in Alaska has brought necessary resources to provide the best possible schools for Alaska's children.

Last February, you shined the light on what reductions in funding education means. You wrote, "Classroom funding for teachers and staff in our public schools is \$25 million less than two years ago." One-time funds were provided in some years without an increase to the BSA. As we are two decades into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, learning has changed dramatically for students. The way we operate and structure learning must continually change and be fluid to meet the needs of students. The future for our students is now.

In Anchorage, the District has experienced shifting demographics and population changes. Over the last three years, the Anchorage School District has experienced a decrease in enrollment of about 1,000 students. That alone has meant decreasing funding for ASD. Expenses, however, do not go down at the same rate. During the last five years, ASD has made staffing cuts of 394 fulltime equivalent positions, including classroom teachers. Transparent accountability is one of three primary ideals under which ASD operates. Being accountable and responsible means that ASD operates efficiently and effectively. We do more with less. ASD education programs and innovative methods are scalable and we operate the District on staffing ratios and metrics. Staffing follows students and the needs of student resources.

As you know, the Municipality of Anchorage generously supports our schools, funding locally to the cap. On many levels, we depend on the commitment of our community for the success of our schools. In addition to the local funding, ASD enjoys partnerships with more than 300 local businesses and non-profit organizations, as well as contributions from hundreds of volunteers. Daily, committed community members, parents, and family members come into our schools to work, be engaged, and support our children and classrooms.

*Educating All Students for Success in Life*

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Fundamentally, public education in Alaska is provided by the State Legislature through the BSA. While other funding formula factors attempt to provide equity throughout the State, the BSA is a beginning dollar amount provided for each student in Alaska's schools. Public education is a people business. Spending in ASD for all staff and benefits represents approximately 87 percent of the District's budget, including all teachers, support staff, administration, and employees on the business side. Through its economy of scale, ASD's administration is the leanest of the state's five largest districts (referred to as the "Big 5"). We are nimble so that we maximize resources for all students. In Anchorage, through planning, we constantly shift resources to provide teachers, support staff, supplies, curriculum materials, and business services for more than 130 programs and schools.

Your continued support for students and public education is greatly appreciated. Timely and accurate examination and evaluation of our schools is necessary. ASD is constantly planning and retooling to spend education dollars wisely, providing the best education we can for every student in every school every day in Anchorage. We cannot do it alone. We need the support of every Alaskan to the mission of student learning and success.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deena M. Bishop", written over a horizontal line.

Deena M. Bishop, Ed.D.  
Superintendent