



2026 Board of Education Legislative Priorities

Support Student Achievement

- **Support CTE and the Alaska Reads Act with Targeted Funding:** Provide school districts with the resources necessary to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways and sustain the success of the Alaska Reads Act. This can be accomplished by introducing and supporting legislation that provides targeted funding for CTE and early literacy, ensuring these critical priorities are fully supported.
- **Achieve State Class Size Targets:** Our District is committed to meeting the class size standards established in HB 57 (23 students in grades K-6 and 30 students in grades 7-12). With legislative support, we can fulfill this mandate and ensure students benefit from the individualized attention and high-quality instruction that appropriately sized classes make possible. To achieve this goal responsibly and equitably across all schools, the district requires at least \$3.7 million in additional continuous funding to recruit and retain the high-quality educators needed to meet the state's expectations and to sustain these class size targets over time.
- **Special Education:** Approximately 22% of our students receive Special Education services, including students enrolled in our brick-and-mortar schools, those in homeschool programs, and students requiring services outside traditional classroom environments. To meet our obligations and ensure every eligible student receives appropriate, legally required support, the District needs increased funding that reflects both the growing number of students requiring services and the rising cost of specialized services. This includes staffing, administrative support, transportation, extended school year programs, assistive technology, and individualized supports that are essential for student success.

Targeted Investments For Critical Programs & Student Supports

- **Free Breakfast and Lunch (HB 12):** Providing meals at no cost is proven to increase student attendance, a critical need as absenteeism has risen sharply since the pandemic. Support HB 12, which offers all Alaska students free breakfast and lunch. Providing nutritious, universal meals improves attendance and strengthens student achievement by supporting students' ability to focus and engage, while reducing stigma and creating a more equitable learning environment.



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- **Transportation:** Ensuring predictable, sustainable funding will allow districts to continue providing consistent access to school for all students. Increase transportation funding to keep pace with inflation and actual costs (whichever is more), allowing districts to maintain safe, reliable student transportation. Adequate transportation funding directly supports student achievement by reducing barriers to attendance and helping combat chronic absenteeism.
- **Deferred Maintenance:** With \$435 million in deferred maintenance and the state having not funded a major improvement project in our district since 2013, limited capital investment continues to delay essential work. North Pole High School's Mechanical and Electrical Upgrades (ranked 8th on the FY27 Major Maintenance Grant list at \$12,803,053) illustrate the urgent facility needs within our District. We urge the state to increase capital funding and allow more than one major improvement project per year for large districts, ensuring safe, functional learning environments and preventing further deterioration of school facilities.
- **Energy Subsidy:** Request the State to subsidize energy costs for public school districts across Alaska. Rising energy expenses continue to erode the Base Student Allocation (BSA). Targeted funding for energy costs will help ensure that more education dollars reach classrooms and programs that directly impact student learning.
- **Support National Board Certification - AS 14.20.225** was created to help districts encourage teachers to pursue National Board Certification, but its funding was vetoed. Restoring this support would strengthen our competitiveness in attracting and keeping excellent teachers, bringing Alaska in line with other states that incentivize this advanced credential.

Policy Improvements

- **Health Benefits:** Pass legislation that allows school districts to opt into AlaskaCare or other state health care options, giving districts flexibility to explore and offer the best available coverage for their employees. Access to competitive, high-quality health benefits supports recruitment and retention, helps meet the diverse needs of staff, and allows districts to leverage the state's buying power to secure more affordable and sustainable healthcare options.
- **Provide a Defined Benefits Retirement System:** Create a defined benefits retirement system with shared risk between employers and employees. A strong retirement package is essential for attracting and retaining educators, providing them with retirement security, and making Alaska competitive with other states. We want to incentivize teachers to work or stay in Alaska, increasing workforce stability.



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- **Federal Impact Aid:** Alaska is the only state that deducts federal impact aid, funding to compensate districts for tax-exempt federal property. The practice disproportionately harms small districts and is projected to cost our district \$9.6 million in FY26. Eliminating the deduction of Impact Aid will ensure that federal funds are used as intended in providing equitable per-pupil funding across Alaska.
- **Equitable Testing Requirements:** Currently, only 13% of homeschooled students in Alaska participate in state assessments. To ensure equitable expectations for all Alaskan students and strengthen accountability for public education resources, we support establishing clear testing expectations for homeschool programs. One option is to incentivize participation in the AK STAR assessment by linking allotment eligibility to students in grades 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11 taking AK STAR: Alaska System of Academic Readiness.
- **Open Enrollment for Correspondence Schools:** We ask the Legislature to carefully examine how open enrollment in correspondence programs affects local school districts and municipalities.
- **Local Governance & Charter Schools:** Recognizing the interest in charter schools and their value for student and family choice, we urge the legislature to re-evaluate statutes regarding funding and application procedures and timelines for charter schools. Administrative costs for charter schools exceed the amount of per-student funding that districts keep, and current timelines and appeal processes prevent and preclude meaningful collaboration between academic policy committees and school districts that are essential for mutual success. These combined challenges hinder local governance of school districts and create inequities in the public school system.

Adequate Funding for Education

- **Base Student Allocation (BSA):** Permanently increase the Base Student Allocation to at least \$7,768 within the first 45 days of the legislative session and incorporate an inflation-adjustment mechanism into the funding formula. This ensures long-term sustainability and alignment with the rising cost of education.
- **School Funding Formula:** The existing formula discourages local economic development by penalizing communities that offer property tax exemptions, as those exemptions are not excluded from the full value determination. Amend the school funding formula so that as community property values grow, the state does not reduce funding to local school districts. Current reductions force local taxpayers to shoulder a disproportionate burden.