

Good evening, for the record I'm Chris Reitan, superintendent with Craig City School District. I'm testifying in support of HB 65 that advocates a \$1250 increase to the Base Student Allocation.

I have been a superintendent in Alaska for 12 years and an educator in the state for 29 years. I will note that for 26 years of my education career I have worked with districts that are strong advocates for school choice options with strong viable correspondence/homeschool options coupled with strong local community school options. I am a strong proponent of district operated school choice options that are developed at the local level.

I will note that the committee has heard some testimony tonight about Alaska's current NAEP results which provides one accountability measure but doesn't take into account the myriad of ways students and our schools showcase their growth and excellence.

Our Alaskan public schools do not work in a vacuum and unfortunately have to address on a daily basis the reality of working with students who are products of a state that experiences the highest domestic violence rates and sexual abuse rates in the nation. Our Alaska public schools face this reality on a daily basis with compassion and professionalism and perform at an exceptional degree despite these egregious domestic violence and sexual abuse statistics that impact every school in some capacity on a daily basis.

Since our last BSA increase in 2017 Craig City School District has experienced the following impacts to our annual operating costs.

- Health care costs that are 5X the national average and have increased 5% annually over the last 5 years for CCSD.
- CCSD has experienced a 41% increase to heating fuel over the last 5 years.
- Workman's Comp costs has increase over 30% over the past 5 years.
- Property/Liability Insurance has increase over 23% over 5 years.
- CCSD has experienced significant increases in transportation costs for diesel.
- A January 30, 2023 memo from the Legislative Finance Division calculated that the BSA would need to increase by \$1,348 to match the buying power of peak year 2015.
- There are over 2,000 fewer educators in Alaska classrooms today than 10 years ago.
- As of today, There are over 1500 open education positions across the State of Alaska advertised on the Alaska Teacher Placement website.

CCSD as well as every school district in our great state is doing exceptional work on behalf of our families and students we are privileged to serve in light of the abuse rates noted previously, the significant inflationary costs all school districts are experiencing that are profoundly impacting the monies available at the classroom level, the lack of consistent investment in our most critical resource, our children, and the exceptionally difficult recruiting environment all school districts are navigating. CCSD is in support of HB 65 and requests that the House Education Committee passes HB 65 and moves it to the House Finance Committee which will ultimately improve our state's educational model by beginning the process of developing a sustainable, predictable investment in our Alaska schools.