

Advocacy Update Are YOU ready?



**Lon
Garrison**
Executive
Director



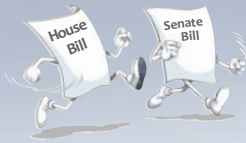
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What I will cover...

- Education Legislation
- Upcoming election – House and Senate Races
- Governor’s Priorities
- AASB Legislative Priorities
- Your advocacy opportunities
 - Local information about your district needs
 - AASB Resolutions – due in to AASB by
 - AASB Legislative Fly-in – February 8-11 in JNU



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2nd Session – 33rd Legislature

All about Education


It truly was the session on education!

70 pieces of education law were introduced:

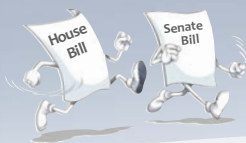
- 67 bills
- 2 House Joint Resolutions
- 1 House Resolution

8 bills were approved by both bodies

- 5 were signed into Law
- 2 were not signed and became law
- 1 was vetoed




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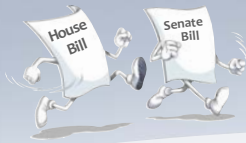
2nd Session – 33rd Legislature

Bills Passed

1. HB 140 SCS CSHB 26(FIN) - Council for Alaska Native Languages
2. SCS CSHB 148(FIN) AM S – Alaska Performance Scholarships; Eligibility
3. HB 193 – Internet for Schools
4. SCS CSHB 202(FIN) AM S(EFD ADD S) – Schools: Overdose Drugs, Correspondence Programs
5. SCS HB 230(EDU)AM S(EFD ADD S) – Teachers: Out-of-State Experience, Retired
6. CSHJR 18(STA) – Social Security Benefit Reduction Repeal
7. SB 13 – University; Textbooks/Materials Cost
8. CSSSB 75(FIN) – Audio & Speech-Language Interstate Compact




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2nd Session – 33rd Legislature Bills Passed

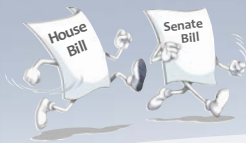
CCS HB 268(Corrected) – Appropriations: Operating Budget; Capital; Supplemental; Amending

- K-12 education - \$174.7 million for a one-time, *outside the BSA* payment of \$680 per student;
- Pupil Transportation – increase of \$7.3 million;
- Alaska READS Act support - \$5.2 million;
- Maintenance of Equity - \$11.8 million;
- Head Start - \$5.2 million;
- Funding for one additional trip home for Mt. Edgecumbe Students (Sen. Stedman added that this would allow these students to spend Christmas with their families).



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2nd Session – 33rd Legislature Bills Passed

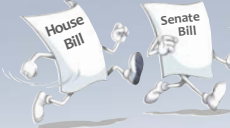
HCS CSSB 187(FIN) AM H – Appropriations: Capital; Reappropriations; Supplemental; Funds; Amending

The capital Budget included **\$62.8 million for School Major Maintenance**, funding the top 26 projects on the DEED Major Maintenance list.



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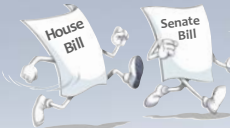
2nd Session – 33rd Legislature Governor's Vetoes

Operating Budget Education Vetos

- Increase to the Head Start Grants to Provide Grantees with Additional Matching Funds - **\$2.6 million**
- Funding for one additional trip home for MEHS students - **\$500,000**
- Federal Maintenance of Equity Requirement - **\$11.9 million**
- Broadband Assistance Grants - **\$11.2 million**
- \$180 for all K-3 Students & \$100 for Title I Students (**Alaska Reads Act**) – **\$5.2 million**




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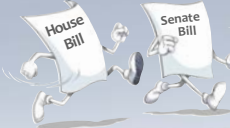
2nd Session – 33rd Legislature Governor's Vetoes

Capital Budget Education Vetos

- MEHS Deferred Maintenance (Girls Dorm Roof & Window Replacement) - **\$2.806 million**
- ASD – Mears Middle School Supplies & Equipment - **\$50 thousand**
- ASD - Klatt Elementary School Supplies & Equipment - **\$50 thousand**
- ASD – Overview Elementary School Supplies & Equipment - **\$50 thousand**
- ASD – Bettye Davis East HS Stadium Safety Upgrades & Drainage mitigation - **\$500 thousand**
- Ketchikan - Norman Walker Field New Grandstand - **\$755 thousand**
- Sitka HS – Shop Dust Collector - **\$200 thousand**
- Soldotna Regional Sports Complex – Design - **\$690 thousand**




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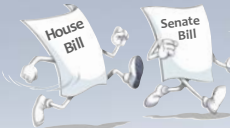


2nd Session – 33rd Legislature
How did Education fare?

We came within 1 vote of overriding a veto and increasing the BSA by \$680 –
 This would be an 11% increase.




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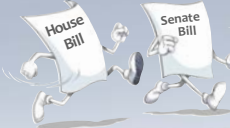


2nd Session – 33rd Legislature
How did Education fare?

Instead, we got \$174.4 million in one-time funds. **WE START OVER WITH THE BSA AT \$5960**




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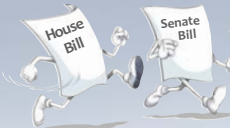


2nd Session – 33rd Legislature
How did Education fare?

Access to the AK Performance Scholarship improved, and the scholarships are larger.




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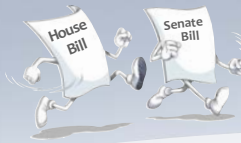


2nd Session – 33rd Legislature
How did Education fare?

Out-of-state teachers receive credit for more previous experience, retired substitutes can work up to 165 days, and National Board certification funding is available




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2nd Session – 33rd Legislature

How did Education fare?

Opioid overdose drugs are provided to schools and must be available; staff must be trained.




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2024 Statewide Election

Systemic Process or Utter Chaos?

- Statewide Election – November 5
- Ranked voting is the law in Alaska, which is “blurring” party lines.
- Alaskans understand ranked-choice– some just don’t like it.
- 2020 Census Redistricting re-drew election boundaries in all 40 House districts and 19 Senate districts. Only Senate district T remained the same (Sen. Donny Olsen (D) Golovin) and does not require an election in 2022.



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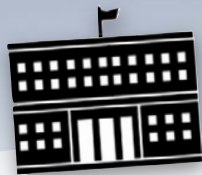
U.S. House Race

Rep. Peltola won in the 2022 election and was a surprise to many, with her success attributed to the ability of many to cross party lines under ranked voting. Will that hold true for 2024? Only running against one candidate now that Nancy Dahlstrom dropped out – could be close!

- Nick Begich (R)
- Mary Peltola (D) Incumbent



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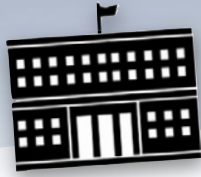


Alaska Senate Races

- 10 of the 20 Senate seats are up for election.
- 3 Senate seats are unopposed, District B – Jesse Kiehl, District J – Forrest Dunbar.
- 1 Senator is retiring – Click Bishop.
- The 17-3 supermajority is likely to be diminished
- If the 5 close races all go to candidates not aligned with the majority, the new balance could be **12-8**
- **Major implications for veto overrides**



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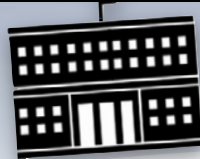
Alaska Senate Races

5 Close races:

- District D... Jesse Bjorkman (majority) vs. Ben Carpenter vs Tina Wegner(Dem)
- District L... Kelly Merrick (majority) vs Jared Goecker
- District N... David Wilson (majority) vs S. Wright vs R. Yundt
- District P... S Kawasaki (majority) vs L. Hajdukovitch
- District R... M. Cronk (R) vs S. Fletcher (Undeclared)



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Alaska House Races

- 33 incumbents(82.5%) are running for reelection
- 9 House members are running unopposed.
- At present there are 10 races that look to be close but for the most part it appears there is no significant change in what could become a majority
- The Bush caucus will likely remain intact but could be affected by the result of House District 38 (Bethel) – Rep. McCormick was not the top vote-getter in the primary
- Whatever majority is created, it will be slim – I anticipate a lot of negotiation and a lengthy organization.




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What Might the Political Landscape Look Like in 2025?

- The Presidential election will have an enormous effect and it is tough to predict but the performance of each candidate could have significant down-ticket influence
- It is appearing more plausible that the House could go to the Democrats with a thin majority
- Control of the Senate is a toss-up. Races in Montana, Arizona, Florida, Georgia and others are very close.
- We have 2 more years of the Dunleavy administration.
- The Alaska Senate majority will undoubtedly remain with the R's but it could be reduced to less than a super majority.
- The Alaska House is "anyone's guess." There are no indications of any major swings that would create a majority with greater power.




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What will be the Governor's priorities?

- Resistance to a BSA increase without policy concessions
- Separate authorizers for public charter schools – *this was the single most contentious issue last session*
- Charter schools outside of local school districts
- Correspondence school allotments for use with private & religious schools
- Setting the foundation for vouchers or Education Savings Accounts
- Changing the Foundation Formula - better accommodating charter schools and correspondence programs
- **Limiting local governance**



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What are School Districts Seeing as the Most Important Issues?

1. **Funding** – The 33rd Legislature provided a \$30 “bump” in the Base Student Allocation. One-time funding outside the BSA has continued to be the modus operandi. Every school district in the state is feeling the “pinch.” The uncertainty and inadequacy of funding have rapidly eroded our capabilities, and it shows.



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What are School Districts Seeing as the Most Important Issues?

2. **Teacher Recruitment & Retention** – Teaching positions all across Alaska remain unfilled. Districts are allocating both staff time and money in an attempt to fill positions. Retirements are increasing, fewer are entering the profession, and increasing numbers are leaving for better careers.



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What are School Districts Seeing as the Most Important Issues?

3. **Major Maintenance** – While the state finally provided some capital for major maintenance, we still need several hundred million dollars. Erosion, climate change-driven disasters, and infrastructure that averages well over 40 years old or more hurt learning environments



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What are School Districts Seeing as the Most Important Issues?

4. **Student Wellness** – We continue to grapple with student mental health issues and some lingering effects of the pandemic. The negative impact of social media is present as school funds continue to decline; opportunities that support and engage students, like extracurricular activities, begin to go away.




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AASB's Legislative Priorities

- Sufficient and Sustainable Funding
- Retention & Recruitment of Teachers, Administrators, and Staff
- Student Wellness and School Safety



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ADVOCATES for EDUCATION EXCELLENCE

Association of Alaska School Boards

Who We Are
The Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) has represented Alaska's school boards for over 70 years, with a membership of 330+ locally elected board members managing education in neighborhood, correspondence, and charter schools across Alaska.

What We Do
Our seasoned staff offers a range of innovative support services to districts, schools, families, and communities to boost student achievement.

Building A Stronger Education System Together
AASB promotes stable funding, safe, inclusive learning environments, and quality teachers. We provide board member training, facilitate family and community involvement, and build strategic alliances to enhance educational outcomes for all Alaskan students.

www.aasb.org





ADVOCATES for ALASKA'S YOUTH

It's Our Primary Mission
"AASB advocates for children and youth by assisting school boards in providing quality public education, focused on student achievement, through effective local governance."

Dispelling Myths
Contrary to popular misconceptions:

- ✓ We care deeply about students and teachers.
- ✓ We support education choice and parental rights.
- ✓ We support all public school models: neighborhood, correspondence, charter, and tribal compacting.
- ✓ State education funding received by districts directly supports teachers and classroom resources.

Check Us Out
Visit aasb.org to explore our Board Development, Conditions for Learning, and Legislative Advocacy services. Discover how our workshops, events, and resources support educational excellence.

Items of Interest

AASB Legislative Priorities - We advocate for 3 priorities on behalf of school districts statewide: Funding, Educators, & Students.

Harvard Charter School Study Analysis - Fairbanks math & statistics teacher Beth Zarbes compares the performance of neighborhood and charter schools.

Scan Codes to Learn More




www.aasb.org





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The Time is NOW To Address Alaska's Education Crisis!

Underfunding is Impacting Student Learning

Chronic underfunding has led to:

- Overcrowded classrooms
- Program cuts
- Teacher exodus
- Reduced education quality
- Decreased student achievement

What Are the Results of Investment?

Investing in Alaska's public education system protects schools from economic downturns and provides key elements for academic success:

- Smaller class sizes
- Student support
- Fair teacher wages

Be An Advocate for Excellence

Encourage your local legislators and candidates to invest in our public education system, to ensure every Alaska student can excel.

- **Stable Funding:** Increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA) annually to match inflation.
- **Teacher Retention & Recruitment:** Competitive retirement program, rural teacher housing.
- **Student Wellness & Safety:** Address mental health, prevent sexual abuse, reduce school violence.

Investing in Education PAYS OFF in Student Performance

School Funding = Academic Success!

Recent studies consistently show increased school funding boosts academic performance and educational outcomes, emphasizing the impact of financial investment on student achievement:

- **Education funding decline has resulted in a decline in student achievement.**
- American University School of Education
- **There is a strong statistical relationship between increased school spending and student outcomes.**
- Journal of Policy Analysis & Management
- **Students in schools with higher budgets showed significant gains in both reading and mathematics.**
- Center for American Progress
- **School resources linked to higher achievement rates include smaller class sizes, student support services, and increased teacher compensation.**
- Albert Shanker Institute

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Scan the Code to Learn More

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Who Controls the Flow of Funding for Alaska Schools?

The Legislature
The legislature decides how much money school districts get each year.

The Governor
The governor of Alaska can reduce the flow by vetoing school funding, which he has done the past two years.

Local & Federal Government
Local & Federal governments contribute limited annual amounts.

School Boards
School boards decide how the district distributes the funds in their bucket.

If your school district's funding bucket is empty, talk to the people who control the flow.

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CALL FOR RESOLUTIONS!
Proposed New and Amended
Resolution Submissions for 2025

AASB 2025 Resolutions

August 1, 2024 Re: Call for Resolutions (Response due by Oct. 5, 2024) AASB is soliciting resolutions, resolution amendments and ...

[READ MORE](#)

New or amended resolutions due to AASB
Oct. 5th



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Advocacy Begins With You

1. Connect with the Senator and House members in your school district – (NOTE: this may include multiple Senate and/or House districts inside a single school district)
2. Following the election, arrange for a meeting with legislators and the school board (i.e. in-person or virtually)
3. Provide legislators with your district's needs
4. Develop a personal relationship with your legislators
5. Invite legislators for school visits



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Advocacy Begins With You

6. Place legislators on lists to receive school and district newsletters
7. Notify legislators of special school events
8. Notify legislators when students are recognized (i.e. sports, academics, awards, etc.)
9. Read every weekly copy of AASB's legislative newsletter, *The Session*, to keep up with what is occurring in the legislature
10. Attend the AASB Fly-in (February 8-11, 2025)

