



Alaska State Senate

State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

January 22, 2024

Dear Madam Speaker and House Leadership,

On behalf of the Senate Majority, we are pleased the conversation on education funding is a priority for the House. We look forward to working closely with you this session to address public education needs for all Alaska's children.

Senate Bill 140 left the Senate as a straightforward broadband internet bill. This weekend, the House Rules Committee passed a committee substitute for SB 140, with many significant policy changes that have not been fully vetted by both Senate or House Committees. These amendments risk slowing down or even jeopardizing Alaska's ability to receive broadband internet funding. In its amended form, the Senate Majority will have a hard time supporting significant unvetted policy changes in SB 140 that affect the delivery of public education, the loss of local control, increased classroom sizes, and continued hardship on our dedicated educators.

While we understand that the House Rules Committee BSA increase is just the beginning of the conversation, we cannot support a \$300 BSA increase that leaves schools woefully short-funded, sending the wrong message that schools must do more with less.

For the Senate Majority, education is our top priority this session. We hope the House will further consider the concerns expressed in public testimony on SB 140, before passing education funding and policy changes to the Senate.

We look forward to working with the House this legislative session and maintaining good communication to address the challenges our public education system faces and to make Alaska's education system the best in the nation to attract and keep working families in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Gary Stevens in blue ink.

Senate President Gary Stevens
District C

Handwritten signature of Cathy Giessel in blue ink.

Senator Cathy Giessel
District E

Handwritten signature of Bill Wielechowski in blue ink.

Senator Bill Wielechowski
District K

Handwritten signature of Bert Stedman in blue ink.

Senator Bert Stedman
District A

Handwritten signature of Lyman Hoffman in blue ink.

Senator Lyman Hoffman
District S

Handwritten signature of Donny Olson in blue ink.

Senator Donny Olson
District T

Handwritten signature of Elvi Gray-Jackson in black ink.

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
District G

Handwritten signature of Click Bishop in black ink.

Senator Click Bishop
District R