



AASB's 2023 Legislative Priorities

On behalf of our member school districts statewide, the AASB Board of Directors has adopted three legislative priorities: **Funding, Educators and Students**. Supporting resolutions can be found in [Where We Stand 2023](#).

Our Mission: The Association of Alaska School Boards advocates for children and youth by assisting school boards in providing quality public education, focused on student achievement, through effective local governance.

Sufficient and Sustainable Public Education Funding

Sufficient, sustainable and stable funding is required to meet Alaska's obligation to provide quality, public education for every Alaska student. Educating Alaska's youth is the best strategy for successfully meeting and safeguarding Alaska's prosperity.

- ▶ **Increase the Base Student Allocation (BSA)** – From 2012 to 2022, the BSA has only increased by \$250 per student (4.2%) while inflation has increased by at least 24% (Anchorage CPI), resulting in crippling staff shortages, school closures, and program eliminations. AASB advocates for not less than an **\$860 increase to the BSA for FY2024**.
- ▶ **Decouple education funding from the General Fund Budget** - Create an Education Permanent Fund/Endowment to provide reliable, stable, and predictable revenue to school districts.
- ▶ **Prevent cost-shifting of expenses** - Such as transportation, bond-debt reimbursement, major maintenance, and retirement contributions to districts and local communities.

Recruitment and Retention of Teachers, Administrators & Staff

School districts face an unprecedented crisis of retaining and recruiting qualified, effective teachers, administrators, and support staff which seriously hinders providing Alaska students with a quality education.

- ▶ **Implement recommendations** - of the Teacher Recruitment & Retention Task Force.
- ▶ **Reinstitute a competitive retirement program** - including both defined benefits and defined contributions.
- ▶ **Invest in teacher housing** - required for most rural school districts.
- ▶ **Grow Alaska teachers and administrators** - work with partners and the University of Alaska to improve and expand teacher training programs, teacher-mentor programs, and alternative certification pathways.

Student Wellness and School Safety

The pandemic has impacted student wellness for every demographic, especially students experiencing poverty or trauma. Violence, neglect, and sexual abuse have increased, resulting in reduced social-emotional well-being and academic achievement.

- ▶ **Address student mental health** - Support and fund mental health services for all Alaskan students, including trauma-engaged practices in Alaska schools.
- ▶ **Prevent student sexual abuse by school staff** - Support the implementation of policies and training regarding professional boundaries between staff and students.
- ▶ **Reduce school and student violence**. Support and fund the needed programs and services.

