

The Alaska Legislature

What Happened in 2016 and What's Likely to
Happen in 2017

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Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth

When the 29th Legislature Convened in January 2016

- Alaska North Slope crude @ \$30/barrel
- Alaska operating budget @ record \$3.5 billion deficit
- Gov. Walker proposes cuts, tax increases, draw on Permanent Fund earnings to fill gap
- Alaska Legislature agrees on budget cuts but little else



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When the 29th Legislature Adjourned in June

- Gov. Walker vetoed \$1.3 billion from budget approved by Legislature, including \$58.3 million from K-12 Education:
 - Foundation formula: cut \$6.35 million
 - Pupil transportation: cut \$6.35 million
 - One-time funding outside formula: cut \$4.7 million
 - School debt reimbursement: cut \$30.5 million
 - Rural school construction fund: cut \$10.4 million



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30th Alaska Legislature

Senate Majority

Senate President
Pete Kelly (Fairbanks)



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Senate Finance Committee Co-Chairs



**Lyman Hoffman
(Bethel)**



**Anna McKinnon
(Anchorage)**



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Other Senate Leaders



Sen. Peter Miccichi
Majority Leader

Kevin Meyer
Rules Committee Chair



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Senate Education Committee



Shelly Hughes (Palmer)



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30th Alaska Legislature House Leadership



House Speaker
Bryce Edgmon
(Dillingham)



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House Finance Committee Co-chairs



Neal Foster (Nome)



Paul Seaton (Homer)



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Other House Leaders



Chris Tuck
Majority Leader



Gabriel LeDoux
Rules Committee Chair



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House Education Committee



**Harriet Drummond
(Anchorage)**



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Major Issues

State Fiscal Plan

- North Slope crude oil sells at \$45 a barrel (October price): up 50 percent from January.
- Daily production at 498,000 barrels (2016)
- Caelus discovery of potentially large oil deposit on North Slope probably a decade away from production.
- Constitution Budget Reserve at \$6.3 billion (July 1)
- FY 17 Budget Deficit \$3.1 billion (estimated)



Major Issues

State Fiscal Plan

(Large Targets)

Budget Cuts

- Formula programs, i.e. K-12 foundation
- Permanent Fund Dividend
- Oil Tax Credits
- *Reference: Resolves 2.1 (Fiscal Plan) 2.2 (Education Funding)*

New Revenues

- Permanent Fund draw
- General taxation (income/sales tax)
- Oil & other resource taxes



Major Issues Cost Shifting

PERS-TRS Retirement

- SB 207 & 208 proposed major shift of employer costs to municipalities and school districts.
- Buck Consultants estimated \$2.1 billion over 20 years in TRS costs added to districts.
- Reference: AASB Resolve 2.19

School Debt Retirement

- Governor's veto of 25 percent of state reimbursement funds shifts more costs to local govts.
- Veto of rural school fund transfer doesn't impact projects immediately, but may set precedent for future cuts.
- Reference: AASB Resolve 2.12



Major Issues School Improvement

Teacher & Superintendent Vacancies

- 64 vacancies in classrooms statewide at beginning of school. Substitute shortage, as well (Source: *Alaska Teacher Placement*)
- Superintendent turnover high

AASB Position

- **Resolve 4.4** Bolster training & incentives for special education teachers
- **Resolve 4.5** Flexibility & incentives for teachers & administrators
- **Resolve 4.10** Re-open Retire-rehire



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School Improvement Cost Cutting

Efficiencies to date:

- Repealed exit exam
- Eliminated 70% waiver paperwork
- Focused training mandate for crisis intervention to essential staff
- Collaboration & consolidation
- On-line classes

Efficiencies to come?

- Consolidate School Districts (see Resolve 1.2)
- Statewide salary & benefits system (see 2015 study by UA researchers)



Grassroots Lobbying



- Get to know your legislator
- Make contact before session starts on January 17th



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Congratulate Them

- Send a note congratulating them for election or re-election (if they were on the ballot)



Show Them Your Schools



- Invite them to visit schools or district offices
- Send them your district newsletters
- Notify them of success stories (students & staff)



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Get Acquainted With Staff

- Staff in district or in Juneau play a key role in any legislative process
 - Staff often have longer tenure at the legislature than most legislators. They are an important source of historical information about issues. Staff also work full-time; legislators are at the Capitol only part-time.

Twenty-Ninth Legislature Staff List, March 16, 2010

Phone / Fax	Staff	
Phone # 465-2327	Peter Fellman	
Phone #	Brittany Hutchison	
	John Manly	
	Michael Smith	Financial
Phone # 465-3779	Wendy Focose	Kenai
Phone # 465-2833	Sharon Kelly	
	Tyra Smith MacKinnon	
	Thomas Wright	465-6



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Social Media & Newsletters

BE SOCIAL

CONNECT WITH US!



- Get connected to social media of your legislators
- Newsletters can be informative: get on the mailing list



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Legislative Fly-Ins

- Ask for an appointment well in advance
- AASB Fly-Ins scheduled for early February & Mid March



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Do Your Homework



Prepare for your visit

- Who will tell your story and when will they speak?
- Bring handouts



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Thank You Follow-up

- Send a note of thanks to every legislator you visit



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