Friday, March 3, 2023

To the Honorable Representatives Ortiz, Dibert, Carrick, Schrage, Armstrong, and Himschoot:

Thank you for your co-sponsorship of House Bill 65. Its $1,250 adjustment to the Base Student Allocation is very closely aligned with the needs of the Anchorage School District, which has calculated that an inflation proofed BSA for FY24 would need to increase by $1,268, to $7,228.

Currently, ASD has $80 million less in purchasing power than it did during the 2016-2017 school year. This is due to seven years of an unchanged Base Student Allocation, declining enrollment, and inflationary drivers. Although ASD has closed schools, generated new revenue streams, promoted a variety of efficiencies, and relied on one-time funding to maintain programs, services and staffing, its FY24 budget is relying heavily on remaining federal relief funds and fund balance in order to balance next year’s $68 million structural deficit. Without any adjustments to the BSA, ASD’s structural deficits will increase to $78-85 million during FY 25, $91-105 million during FY 26, and $104-125 million during FY 27.

Both ASD and the Municipality of Anchorage have prioritized an increase to the Base Student Allocation, as well as inflation-proofing the BSA, as shared legislative priorities for this current session. Our bodies recognize that prioritizing and investing in public education is critical to our students’ success and a thriving community. Thank you for your commitment to that future.

Sincerely, and in service,

Margo Bellamy, School Board President

Suzanne Lafrance, Assembly Chair

Carl Jacobs, School Board Vice Chair

Christopher Constant, Assembly Vice Chair

Dora Wilson, School Board Clerk

Daniel Volland, Assembly Member

Robin Dern, Assembly Member

Kelly Lessens, School Board Treasurer
Dave Donley, School Board Member

Pat Higgins, School Board Member

Andy Holleman, School Board Member

Kevin Cross, Assembly Member

Kameron Perez-Verdia, Assembly Member

Austin Quinn-Davidson, Assembly Member

Felix Rivera, Assembly Member

Meg Zaletel, Assembly Member

Pete Petersen, Assembly Member

Joey Sweet, Assembly Member

Randy Sulte, Assembly Member