



Alaska Association of Student Government

Resolution # 10

State Education Budget Release Date

Submitted by: Olivia Skan, Sitka High Student Council

Submitted: 10/11/2024

Be it Resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments that: AASG supports a requirement for the Alaska State Legislature to release the State Education Budget before school districts must decide their School District Operational Budget.

1. **Whereas**, over 90% of the funds for education funding come from the state government and other non-federal sources;¹
2. **Whereas**, Alaskan school districts are currently required to submit their School District Operating Budgets to the State by March, and to their local governments by April, before they are aware of the amount of money they will be receiving from the state;
3. **Whereas**, school districts cannot wait until the State Education Budget to create their operating budgets because school districts must notify tenured teachers that they may be non-retained before May 15, while non-tenured must be notified that they are being non-retained by the end of the school year;⁷
4. **Whereas**, the governor is the last person to sign off on the state budget, and has the power to veto the proposition or make budget cuts after school districts decide their School District Operational Budget;
5. **Whereas**, the governor didn't release the state education budget this year until June;
6. **Whereas**, school districts must submit their final School District Operating Budgets to the Alaska State Legislature by July 15 of each fiscal year;²
7. **Whereas**, the order of this process can make it so school districts face unexpected budget cuts once the state budget is released, cuts that weren't accounted for in their original operating budgets;
8. **Whereas**, unexpected budget cuts can result in districts not being able to afford teachers;
9. **Whereas**, due to this, school districts must finalize teacher reductions before the state budget is released or risk not being able to pay teachers;

10. **Whereas**, after all Alaskan school districts set their budget for the school year of 2023-2024, last year, Governor Dunleavy vetoed half of a \$175 million one-time funding boost for K-12 public schools;⁴
11. **Whereas**, this late change to the State Education Budget forced many schools to implement significant budget cuts or utilize their fund balance;⁴
12. **Whereas**, due to this financial uncertainty and other outlying factors, nearly 20% of Sitka School District teachers were laid off, with no knowledge of whether they would be hired back or not;⁶
13. **Whereas**, the Ketchikan School District was forced to lay off one third of its staff for a variety of reasons, one of which included financial uncertainty;⁶
14. **Whereas**, many teachers state that they are unlikely to return to teaching in Alaska because of the financial instability;¹
15. **Whereas**, Alaska is facing a recruitment and retention emergency, with four hundred educational positions going unfilled at the beginning of last year;⁶
16. **Whereas**, this statewide financial uncertainty has been a repeated cycle for over 15 years, with an exception for Sarah Palin's term, where there was a 3 year forward funding plan;
17. **Whereas**, schools require financial stability and certainty if they are to create a School District Operating Budget that will support the best interest of the students;
18. **Whereas**, Rep. Ben Carpenter stated that "If we would address those root causes [the timing issue], then some of the funding, the BSA formula funding problem would be less of a problem;"⁶
19. **Whereas**, members of the house attempted to pass the education bill early this past legislative session;⁶
20. **Whereas**, school districts would be able to accurately account for all the teachers they can retain and provide the best quality of education if they were able to know how much money they were receiving before submitting the School District Operating Budgets.
21. **Whereas**, "Advertising the budget and public hearings are a key part of the budget development process";⁵

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alaska Association of Student Governments supports the Alaska State Legislature being required to pass a finalized state education budget before school districts are required to submit their School District Operating Budgets.

Action Statement: if passed by the general assembly of AASG, this resolution will be sent to the legislature with the intent of conveying the severity of the situation created by the late passing of the State Education Budget for their consideration of implementation.

Sources:

1. *Funding for Students and Schools* | NEA.
www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/funding-for-students-and-schools.
2. *Budgets and Actual Reporting - Education and Early Development*.
education.alaska.gov/schoolfinance/budgetsactual#:~:text=School%20District%20Operating%20Budgets%20are,with%20Alaska%20statutes%20and%20regulations
3. *Sitka Education Association and Sitka School District Negotiated Agreement*. Sitka Education Association and Sitka School District, 1 July 2024.
4. Brooks, James. "Alaska Gov. Mike Dunleavy Vetoes Half of Proposed Funding Increase for K-12 Public Schools • Alaska Beacon." *Alaska Beacon*, 20 June 2023, <https://alaskabeacon.com/2023/06/19/alaska-gov-mike-dunleavy-vetoes-half-of-proposed-funding-increase-for-k-12-public-schools/>.
5. Pennsylvania School Boards Association. *Understanding the School District Budget Process*. www.psba.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/School-district-budget-process.pdf.
6. Beacon, Claire Stremple-Alaska. "Alaska School Districts Got a One-time Funding Boost. It Came Too Late for Many Teachers." *Alaska Public Media*, 12 Aug. 2024, alaskapublic.org/2024/08/12/alaska-school-districts-got-a-one-time-funding-boost-it-came-too-late-for-many-teachers.
7. *2023 Alaska Statutes :: Title 14. Education, Libraries, and Museums :: Chapter 20. Teachers and School Personnel :: Article 2. Employment and Tenure. :: Sec. 14.20.140. Notification of lay off or nonretention*. (n.d.). Justia Law.
<https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-14/chapter-20/article-2/section-14-20-140/>

Passes with unanimous consent

**Passed by the Fall 2024 General Assembly of AASG hosted by
Delta Junction High School**

Francis Myers

AASG Vice President, Francis Myers

Kathleen Navarre

AASG Executive Director, Kathleen Navarre