



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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Democrats Offer Comprehensive Plan for School Funding

Guess, Kapsner, and Gara author bills to hold schools harmless, inflation-proof, and provide future funding for class size reduction and compliance with No Child Left Behind

JUNEAU – Alaska schools are facing what some districts say are the worst budget cuts ever. Inflation and higher overhead costs, combined with under-funded government mandates, have proven to be a recipe for devastation in schools from Barrow to Bayshore, from Northway to North Pole.

“Hundreds of teachers face losing their jobs,” says Senator Guess. “Some schools may close the doors, and class sizes are growing. It is time for all legislators to move from lip service to action and make a long-term commitment to Alaska’s students.”

“Businesses account for inflation. We inflation-proof the Permanent Fund,” says Representative Kapsner. “We need the legislature to prioritize in such a way that puts education funding up front.”

“Parents and educators from across the state testified they fear job losses again this year,” says Representative Gara. “Alaska’s students deserve vibrant schools, not crowded classrooms. Our students deserve better.”

In response to years of inadequate education funding, the Democrats, through Senator Guess’ Senate Bill 11 and Reps. Gara and Kapsner’s House Bill 477, introduced a three-phase process as a first step for solving this education crisis.

- 1) This year, increase the base student allocation to \$4,600 (a \$87M increase) to hold districts harmless from increased overhead and FY04’s \$10M in state cuts.
- 2) In the future, inflation-proof state education funding.
- 3) For the next five years, increase education funding two percent a year after inflation-proofing for the purposes of class size reduction and compliance with No Child Left Behind.

A recent non-partisan legislative report, attached, shows state education funding erosion due to inflation.

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Sen. Bettye Davis, Sen. Johnny Ellis, Sen. Kim Elton, Sen. Lyman Hoffman, Sen. Hollis French, Sen. Gretchen Guess, Sen. Georgianna Lincoln, Sen. Donny Olson, Rep. Ethan Berkowitz, Rep. Sharon Cissna, Rep. Harry Crawford, Rep. Eric Croft, Rep. Les Gara, Rep. Max Gruenberg, Rep. David Guttenberg, Rep. Reggie Joule, Rep. Mary Kapsner, Rep. Beth Kerttula, Rep. Albert Kookesh, Rep. Carl Moses