



# KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Assistant Superintendent

Dave Jones

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The Honorable Shelley Hughes  
Senate Education Chairs  
State Senate  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 9980-1182

Chair Hughes, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dave Jones, I am the Assistant Superintendent for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD). I would like to start by thanking you for previously funding K-12 education as a priority in the State of Alaska.

Senate Bill 96 addresses many educational issues, but I would like to discuss only one issue today and that is the proposed changes to the school size factor adjustment.

The school size factor adjustment was initiated in 1998 by the passage of Senate Bill 36. SB 36 was based on the McDowell study which used empirical data to establish the costs associated with operating different sized schools across the State of Alaska. This portion of the foundation formula has subsequently been reviewed in the ISER studies, and most recently by the APA Review of Alaska's School Funding Program all with favorable reviews. I would also note that Senator Begich has previously stated that Alaska is known for having one of the better funding formulas in the nation.

My concern with SB 36 is that it uses a capacity formula designed to determine need for additional instructional space to adjust the Foundation Funding formula. The capacity formula has not been vetted for reliability as the school size factor adjustment has. In fact, the capacity formula has known weaknesses to it that should limit or defer it from being used to alter the school size factor adjustment. The capacity formula does not include any type of adjustment or input for Special Education space usage or need. It also does not allow for any adjustment or input for Pre-K space usage. Both of these space usages are critical to school buildings, but neither is reflected in the capacity formula. As such, usage of the capacity formula to determine decreases to foundation funding should not be allowed.

Any adjustments to foundation funding need to be based on empirical data derived from the type of studies previously discussed. SB 96 reduces funding to buildings below 80 percent capacity and within 25 miles of each other. Both the 80 percent and 25 mile factors have been

arbitrarily determined, and as such, do not provide a proper basis for determining educational funding.

Recent Alaska Legislatures have a strong history of properly funding K-12 education based on defensible education cost studies. I would urge that you do not take action to change the school size factor adjustment until and if such action can be based on a defensible study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Taylor Jones". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Thank you for the opportunity to testify today."