

Budget Process

(shared by Kerry Irons, KIBSD Board Member, February 2024)

Hi everyone,

If you pay attention to the school district budget discussions you are probably aware that there is a **projected** shortfall of over 5 million dollars for the next school year. The reasons for this huge deficit are many, but essentially the district's revenue sources are dropping (or are being eroded from inflation) and its expenses are rising. Just like family budgets.

Given the projected deficit, Superintendent Cyndy Mika was asked by the school board to look for potential ways to cut expenditures, to "leave no stone unturned." To look at all programs and positions and find ways to save money – not just some, but a LOT. She and her team have done that. We will begin to discuss some of these **potential** "savings" at the board meeting on Monday evening. While we **MUST** consider ways to make ends meet, each one of these possible cost-saving measures diminishes the quality of education we are able to provide our students. This is a heart-wrenching process.

As you learn about what is being considered and begin to talk with your family, friends, and co-workers about these potential changes to our schools and the possible impact on our students' education, please keep these things in mind:

- One of the jobs of the school board is to oversee the budget for the school district. We **MUST** pass a balanced budget by **April 30th** each year.
- The way school district budgets work in Alaska is complicated and challenging – partly because the budget needs to be finalized **BEFORE** we know how much money the state will provide the district.
- The Base Student Allocation (BSA) – how much money the state provides the district for each student - has not increased in 7 years. In that time, inflation and increased costs have diminished our buying power by 27%. That's the equivalent of **cutting** our budget by more than a quarter.
- Retaining and growing our teachers is essential to effective instruction and student learning. When teachers are uncertain about their job stability, they are likely to look for jobs elsewhere. That has a huge impact on our instructional programs. We don't want to lose **ANY** of our positions.
- One frustrating thing is that this grim outlook could all change overnight. The legislature is working on education funding right now in Juneau. If it approves an increase in the BSA and the governor doesn't veto it, our budget outlook will look much more positive. But we don't know – and we **MUST** have a plan. Last year, the governor vetoed the increase in funding at the last minute, and districts around the state had to scramble to adjust their budgets.

And please do remember that your school board is a group of community volunteers who care deeply about public education, **AND**, absolutely, about providing the best possible education for Kodiak's kids. In the current state of education funding in Alaska, we are doing the very best we can with woefully inadequate financial resources.

If something doesn't change at the state level, we will be going through this process again a year from now - when it will be even more challenging...

Can you help? **YES!** You absolutely **CAN** help. The sooner you can do this the better.

State Representatives' Contact Information <https://akleg.gov/house.php>

State Senators' Contact Information <https://akleg.gov/senate.php>

Thank you for taking the time to understand.