

## **Sponsor Statement SB 334**

SB 334, “An Act requiring a separate appropriation bill for funding public education; providing for an increase in the base student allocation used in the formula for state funding of public education; establishing a date by which the bill funding public education must be transmitted to the governor; and providing for an effective date” would assure school districts that know they will receive a minimum of \$4,500 in the state Foundation Formula appropriations for the succeeding school year by April 1st of each calendar year.

By state statute, school districts are required to submit funding requests to their municipal governments by May 1st of each year. In many instances, the Legislature and the Governor have not passed the operating budget until well after the first of May. This situation makes it difficult for school districts to prepare an actual financial plan and puts an added burden on local government officials developing their budgets. Over the years, the uncertainty has also caused school districts to layoff educators only to attempt to hire them again once the final budget has been approved.

[SB 334](#) solves this dilemma in three ways. Section one of the bill requires the Governor to submit a separate appropriation bill to the Legislature for public elementary and secondary schools before the fourth day of each regular session. Section two of the bill sets the base student allocation at \$4,500, an increase of \$331 from the current allocation, providing school districts with additional funding to offset the increasing costs of educating students. Section three amends a provision in the Executive Budget Act to reflect that a separate appropriation bill to fund education must be submitted by the Governor as part of the budget package.

School districts throughout Alaska are dealing with many issues including recruiting and retaining teachers, meeting new pupil performance standards and inflationary costs. The Legislature can assist school districts by giving them early notice of adequate state funding. Please join me in supporting this bill.