

RESOLUTION #2021-05

Encouraging collaboration that fosters new approaches to public education, and sufficient and consistent funding.

WHEREAS, it is the State's constitutional obligation to establish and maintain a system of public education; and

WHEREAS, the State currently provides more than half of overall education funding, local government contributions and local impact aid makes up the remainder; and

WHEREAS, school districts are challenged to recruit and retain teachers, and meet the needs of students, without strong and stable budgets; and

WHEREAS, the State appropriates funds for school construction and major maintenance as available, and school construction and major maintenance funding has diminished over the years, and generally not fully funded the entirety of the need; and

WHEREAS, school bond debt reimbursement has increasingly been unfunded and that cost shifted to local governments; and

WHEREAS, 39 of 56 school districts are municipal, corresponding to home rule or first class boroughs or cities responsibilities, and the remainder are Regional Educational Attainment Areas (REAs); and

WHEREAS, the boundaries of REAs are inconsistent with current statute, 2nd class cities within the unorganized borough do not contribute directly to education funding, and without taxing authority those school districts are reliant on the State; and

WHEREAS, the State's fiscal challenges increases the potential for additional costs to fall on boroughs, and home rule or first class cities in the unorganized borough; and

WHEREAS, the total contribution made by the State, federal and local governments is insufficient to meet the needs of Alaska's public education system; and

WHEREAS, new approaches may be necessary to consider as part of addressing these issues.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML communicates its interest in working with AASB, ACSA, ALASBO and others to address the following issues, and others, and in support of negotiated solutions:

1. Review of potential statewide revenue development to meet public education funding needs, including removing mandatory, dedicated taxation at the local level to allow for maximum local control.
2. Evaluation of the equalization formula as it relates to district costs, local contributions, mandated expenses, and the needs of public education.
3. Processes that reflect the State's commitment to school construction and major maintenance, including to meet current obligations and the needs of maintaining a public education system
4. District boundaries consistent with statute and regional needs, as well as the effective and efficient delivery of public education