

# ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

## Alaska Municipal League Resolution #2024-01

### **A resolution in support of possible legal action to determine the full extent of the State's constitutional obligation to provide for a system of public education.**

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

WHEREAS, the value of the Base Student Allocation and Pupil Transportation Funding programs have eroded due to inflation and have been in decline since 2009; and

WHEREAS, school districts face increasing energy, maintenance, personnel, and insurance costs; and

WHEREAS, local governments cover an increasingly larger portion of education funding; and

WHEREAS, the State has underfunded school construction and major maintenance for decades, with fewer than 14% of identified priorities addressed on average; and

WHEREAS, local governments have insufficient resources to address capital needs of the State's schools, especially in Regional Education Attainment Areas, which are the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Development; and

WHEREAS, increasing local contributions to keep pace with rising costs means trade-offs for each local government, including increasing taxes and decreased spending on other essential programs, such as public safety and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the ending of the school bond debt reimbursement program has further limited the opportunity to jointly address the needs of schools; and

WHEREAS, education is by far the largest budget item for those local governments with education powers, and is required of all boroughs, and home rule and first class cities in the Unorganized Borough; and

WHEREAS, the education funding formula designed by the State results in Alaska remaining one of the few states that implements an equalization formula so that it can use federal impact aid to offset its own obligations, and which is meant for localities; and

WHEREAS, AML has a resolution in place correctly identifying Impact Aid as local; and

WHEREAS, the local contributions plus required State funding are no longer adequate to maintain Alaska's schools, with many districts facing school closures, growing class sizes, and the loss of valuable educational programs due to budget cuts.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML would consider providing support to members in relation to litigation that clarifies and/or establishes the responsibility of the State of Alaska to fund public education adequately and equitably, including for school construction and maintenance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the outcome of this litigation should determine the scope of local government's ability to contribute to local educational attainment and activities beyond the obligation of the State.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.