

January 18, 2023

Re: AS 14.17.430 State Funding for Correspondence Study

Dear Senate Education Committee:

We write to you regarding AS 14.17.430 State Funding for Correspondence Study.

The Galena City School District (GCSD), Yukon Koyukuk School District (YKSD), Denali Borough School District (DBSD), Craig City School District (CCSD), Nenana City School District (NCSD), Chugach School District (CSD), and Alaska Gateway School District (AGSD) all operate correspondence school (homeschool) programs. Students attending our correspondence programs are funded at 90% of the Base Student Allocation (BSA). For this school year (FY 23), districts operating correspondence programs receive \$5,337 for each Full Time Equivalent (FTE) correspondence student, or 90% of the \$5,930 BSA. For next school year (FY 24), districts operating correspondence programs will receive \$5,364 for each FTE correspondence student, or 90% of the \$5,960 BSA.

Districts with correspondence programs have the responsibility to serve correspondence students with identified disabilities with the same level of support as students with identified disabilities attending brick-and-mortar schools. Alaska regulation 4 AAC 33.432 appropriately requires that correspondence programs enroll special education students on the same basis as brick-and-mortar students. As such, districts operating correspondence programs must provide school psychologist, speech/language pathologist, and occupational/physical therapy support for students who qualify for these services, yet no additional instructional monies are provided to help offset these responsibilities. No school is allowed to refuse a free and appropriate public education to a student based on a disability. These students deserve the same level of support as their peers who attend brick-and-mortar schools.

The undersigned school districts urge the 33rd Legislature to recognize the responsibility of Alaska's correspondence programs to serve students with identified disabilities and to provide the same State funding support for special education correspondence students that is provided for students attending brick-and-mortar schools. We request allocating funding for correspondence students by multiplying the Average Daily Membership (ADM) of the correspondence program by 90 percent (already in statute) plus a special needs funding multiplier of .20 of the ADM (statute change). Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Johnson
GCSD Superintendent

Dan Polta
DBSD Superintendent

Kerry Boyd
YKSD Superintendent

Chris Reitan
CCSD Superintendent

Patrick Manning
NCSD Superintendent

Scott MacManus
AGSD Superintendent

Ty Mase
CSD Superintendent

Enclosures: School Board Resolutions