

Good morning, for the record I'm Chris Reitan, superintendent with Craig City School District. I'm testifying in support of HB 139, an act relating to funding for correspondence study programs, that advocates for a Base Student Allocation of 1.0 with the 1.2 Special Needs multiplier for students attending correspondence/homeschool programs.

School 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.

CCSD's PACE correspondence/homeschool program, as well as other district operated correspondence/homeschool program across our state, provide Alaskan families additional educational choices, curricula options, and scheduling flexibility for families to determine the most appropriate educational environment for their student(s).

CCSD is in support of HB 139 and requests that the House Education Committee passes HB 139 moving it forward to the House Finance Committee. HB 139 ultimately helps improve our state's educational model by ensuring our students with identified disabilities attending correspondence/homeschool programs receive the same level of foundation support as their peers attending traditional brick-and-mortar schools.