

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Mike Dunleavy
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SPONSOR STATEMENT

Sponsor Substitute for Senate Bill 100 Education Grants/Correspondence Study Program

Students come to school from diverse backgrounds with very different learning styles and issues unique to their particular circumstance. As a result, no one approach to education can meet the specific needs of all Alaska's children. Sponsor Substitute for Senate Bill 100 recognizes this challenge and makes several changes to the current correspondence study programs offered by 33 school districts.

Public correspondence/homeschool study programs serve almost 10 percent of the total Alaska student population. This approach to education is one of the fastest growing options in the state. Its individualized learning, low-cost approach appeals to independent learners and policy makers alike. A focus on student proficiency is at the center of SB100. Most programs provide a student allotment to purchase educational services or materials to meet the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Under SB 100, a parent may purchase services and materials from a private or religious organization with a student allotment to meet the student's ILP. In addition, each child's allotment may be rolled over to the next school year. The funding received by the school district for each student will go from 80% of the Base Student Allocation (BSA) to 100% of the BSA, currently \$5,680.

Two educational grant programs are established in SB 100. Through one grant program, school districts may combine local funds with grant dollars to purchase technology, along with professional development. With the assistance of this grant program, opportunities for one-on-one learning will increase statewide.

The second grant program recognizes that sometimes an innovative idea needs financial support to get started. Under SB 100, a school district may apply for small, one-time grant funds to help plan a different approach to learning that has promise. Residential schools, charter schools, correspondence schools, virtual schools are just a few of the possibilities in this grant program.

Sponsor Substitute of Senate Bill 100 embraces innovative approaches to learning and encourages school districts to develop such approaches in order to meet the educational needs of a growing diverse population of Alaska public school students.

I welcome your interest and support for Senate Bill 100.