



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Education  
& Early Development

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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March 15, 2025

The Honorable Rebecca Himschoot  
Co-Chair, House Education Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 411  
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Andi Story  
Co-Chair, House Education Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 403  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Co-Chair Himschoot and Co-Chair Story,

This letter serves as a response to a question addressed to the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) at the Wednesday, March 5, 2025, House Education Committee meeting on the presentation on "Special Education in Alaska" by front-line educators.

**1. Why doesn't the funding through the base student allocation (BSA) provide Special Education funding to districts for correspondence students?**

The fundamental question of "why" remains unanswered. However, in 2015, the Legislature commissioned an independent report on Alaska's foundation formula. The attached report titled *AlaskaFunding2015* suggests that Alaska's funding formula could improve by specifically accounting for the needs of special education students by incorporating a direct count of these students. It also recommends that funding for special education should include correspondence students.

Currently, Alaska's formula applies a block multiplier of 20 percent to address the collective needs of career and technical education, gifted education, English learner education, and non-intensive special education. However, this formula does not account for correspondence students or directly count students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The responsibility for meeting state and federal special education requirements falls on local school districts, which serve students across traditional brick-and-mortar schools, correspondence programs, and blended learning environments. Regardless of a student's educational setting or funding formula considerations, the IEP team remains responsible for ensuring Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities.

Co-Chair Himschoot and Co-Chair Story  
House Education Committee March 5, 2025, Follow-Up  
March 15, 2025  
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Please don't hesitate to reach out with additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Deena Bishop', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Deena Bishop, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

Enclosure: *AlaskaFunding2015*

cc: Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office