



Interior Distance Education of Alaska
Fairbanks Field Office / 2157 Van Horn Rd. / Fairbanks, AK 99701

February 18, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Tim Cline and I am the Director of the Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) Correspondence Program. Today I am writing this letter in support of HB 102 that if passed would provide educational funding for students in residential psychiatric treatment centers.

This year marks my thirty-fifth year in education in Alaska. Prior to 2000 when I started working for IDEA, I was a teacher and principal in rural Alaska. During my tenure I experienced what happens when a child is in crisis and needing care away from their home. I recall times that students left our school only to return at a later date after receiving some necessary care. We did our best to pick up educationally where we left off and continue on but never knew what, if any, education took place while they were away. I was always grateful to have our students back safe and sound but wondered why there was so little progress academically. I simply wrote off the results as if there was nothing that could be done given the circumstances.

Fast forward to 2010. IDEA began a partnership with North Star Behavior Health Center to provide correspondence educational support to those high school students residing at North Star as part of IDEA's dropout recovery and prevention program. From the beginning, we were determined to build the best correspondence program we could. We kept our focus on meeting the needs of the child. We quickly learned what can happen when an educational program is customized to meet the needs of a child in need of extraordinary support. Not only could these children thrive, I believe the school work and success was having a profound impact on their attitude about school. Some of the success we experienced was due to the customized plans we developed. The rest was because of the dedicated North Star staff that stepped in to work with each student, one-on-one. There was no learning curve for those adults working on the ground because they understood the unique setting and circumstances for the children they were helping. While we have continued our partnership (now in its fifth year), our support is limited to distance education.

I urge our legislators to pass HB 102 so our children receive the kind of support on the ground that we now know can make the difference. These hospital settings are quite unique and the student turnover is often great. Regardless, this bill would put the ownership of educational progress in the hands of those who work with the children in this challenging setting. Let them customize a program for this setting. As a long time educator in Alaska, I know it will make the difference for these children.

Thank you in advance for your support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Timothy Cline". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

K. Timothy Cline
IDEA Director