



## AKCHILD & FAMILY

Senator Mike Dunleavy  
State Capitol, Room 11  
Juneau, AK 99801

February 22, 2016

RE: Support of Changes to SB 103

Dear Senator Dunleavy:

I am writing in support of SB 103, and the changes to this bill that have occurred since the last time I wrote you back in February of 2015. As I noted last year, AK Child & Family serves approximately 150 of Alaska's most troubled children per day in a variety of mental health services in the Anchorage area. These services include psychiatric residential treatment services, treatment foster care, individual, group and family outpatient psychotherapy, and wrap-around treatment services for children and families who we can treat in their homes to prevent the need for out of the home services.

I am once again writing to request your support for Education Funding Equality for Children with Mental Illness, SB103. This important piece of mental health and education legislation will give children with severe mental health disorders the opportunity to receive an equitable and comparable education while they receive intensive mental health treatment. These are Alaskan children in a secure or semi-secure facility licensed by the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) that provides, under the direction of a physician, psychiatric treatment services on a 24-hour-a-day basis.

Once again this year I want to go on record as supporting this legislation as I believe it will:

- Increase the educational opportunities and measurable outcomes for children with mental illness so that they can successfully transition back to their traditional school after receiving intensive and sometimes lifesaving mental health treatment.

- Allow the licensed facility, in conjunction with the school district, to deliver appropriate educational and related services provided by licensed teachers and credentialed service providers to the student while the student is admitted to the facility.
- Allow for a more comprehensive continuum of care by individualizing each student's academic plan to complement their therapeutic treatment goals.
- Provide the state real time data that will assist the state with meeting the needs of other special populations such as students residing in rural villages.
- Increase the length of time students spend in school learning and track measurable outcomes to be reviewed by state stakeholders.

If SB 103 were passed by the legislature and signed into law by our Governor, this would give my semi-secure psychiatric treatment center, in conjunction with the school district, a chance to develop a full day school program for those students who cannot attend public schools due to the severity of their mental illness. This full day school would help keep these students on track to graduate with their classmates and prevent them from taking an unnecessary hit on their otherwise fragile self image. I ask you to support SB 103 as it will improve the provision of educational services to children with severe mental illness.

Sincerely,



Denis McCarville  
President and CEO  
AK Child & Family