



Anchorage School District

Education Center

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March 9, 2016

Senate Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Beltz 105 (TSBldg)
Juneau, AK 99801-3004

Honorable Members of Senate Judiciary:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the Senate Judiciary Committee that has not yet been presented in your review of SB 103, Residential Psychiatric Education Funding.

The Anchorage School District agrees with most of the legislative findings set forth at Section 1 of this bill. Students admitted to residential treatment facilities are entitled to educational services and those services should not be compromised by virtue of the fact that a student needs psychiatric treatment.

Where ASD disagrees is with paragraph (3) of Section 1, which provides that a treatment center, in some instances, is able to provide more effective educational services to a student than a school district can provide. Additionally, ASD disagrees with paragraph (7) that there is a demonstrated need to provide uniform requirements to allow school boards to enter into contracts for treatment centers to provide educational services.

School districts exist to meet the educational needs of students. That is their primary role. ASD is unaware of any statistics or anecdotal information supporting the premise that psychiatric treatment centers are more able to provide educational services to students than the public school district.

ASD believes that a strong working relationship with these treatment centers is critical so that the corresponding needs of students for education and treatment can be accomplished. However, ASD also believes that this bill is not premised upon a need of students; but rather, upon a desire of certain private treatment centers to take over educational services at public expense. For this reason and others, ASD does not support SB 103.

The Anchorage School District has several psychiatric treatment facilities within its geographical boundaries. Under current law, ASD is obligated to and does serve all students who are admitted to these treatment facilities, regardless of whether they are ASD students or students from other Alaska school districts. These current laws include both state law (AS 14.30.186, AS 14.30.340, and AS 14.14.090) and federal law (34 CFR 300.323).

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