

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

May 8, 2024

3:36 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Löki Tobin, Chair
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 266

"An Act relating to standards-based assessments; relating to correspondence study programs; relating to student fund accounts for correspondence study programs; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 266 (EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 266

SHORT TITLE: CORRESPONDENCE STUDY PROG; STUDENT ACCTS

SPONSOR(S): EDUCATION

04/26/24	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/26/24	(S)	EDC
04/29/24	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/29/24	(S)	Heard & Held
04/29/24	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
05/01/24	(S)	FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER EDC
05/01/24	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/01/24	(S)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
05/03/24	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/03/24	(S)	Heard & Held
05/03/24	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
05/06/24	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/06/24	(S)	Heard & Held
05/06/24	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)

05/08/24

(S)

EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

MICHAEL MASON, Staff
Senator Löki Tobin
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the summary of changes for SB 266, version B to S.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:36:42 PM](#)

CHAIR LÖKI TOBIN called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:36 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kiehl, Gray-Jackson, and Chair Tobin.

SB 266-CORRESPONDENCE STUDY PROG; STUDENT ACCTS

[3:37:36 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 266 "An Act relating to standards-based assessments; relating to correspondence study programs; relating to student fund accounts for correspondence study programs; and providing for an effective date."

She stated the committee would consider a CS for SB 266.

[3:38:17 PM](#)

MICHAEL MASON, Staff, Senator Löki Tobin, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, said that following a Superior Court ruling that struck down two key statutes regarding correspondence school programs in Alaska, the Senate Education Committee put forward SB 266, which seeks to provide clear guardrails for Alaska's correspondence school programs. He provided the following explanation of changes for SB 266, version B to S:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Senate Bill 266 - Correspondence Study Programs
Explanation of Changes - Version B to Version S**

Section 1 - Version S changes the blanket withdrawal provision to allow parents to object to standards-based assessments by selecting an alternative to the

assessment or a student portfolio based on criteria established by DEED.

MR. MASON stated the use of student portfolios for assessing the progress of students was included in the Alaska Reads Act that was signed into law in 2022.

Section 2 - Version S changes the reporting requirements in Section 2 to align with the existing reporting statutes governing what must be included in the annual report to the Alaska State Legislature from the State Board of Education and Early Development.

MR. MASON said specifically, the report must include information about performance of Alaska's correspondence study programs and their students, as well as information on accreditation, assessment results, enrollment, graduation, and other information. Subsection (d) requires school districts that offer correspondence study programs to submit an annual report to the Alaska Department of Education that includes the information called for in subsection (c).

Section 3 - Version S repeals and reenacts AS 14.03.310 to allow correspondence study programs to continue offering allotments to parents or guardians of students. Allotment funding is for the purpose of providing student textbooks, materials, and services determined under the students individual learning plan created under AS 14.03.300. Version S requires the State Board of Education and Early Development to adopt regulations requiring expenditures to be approved by DEED or the school district that provides the allotment. Ten percent of allotment funds may be rolled over from year to year.

Subsection (e) on page 4 from lines 14 to 21, stipulates that allotments may not be used to pay for services provided by family members and for out-of-state travel if the travel is approved by the governing body or superintendent of a school district.

Version S includes subsection (f), which allows up to 15 percent of allotment funds to be used to contract with a private individual to provide tutoring in fine arts, music, or physical education if the tutoring is part of the student's individual learning plan.

MR. MASON said Sections 4, 5, and 8 were in version B of SB 266. Section 8 sets an immediate effective date.

[3:41:29 PM](#)

At ease

[3:42:35 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting.

[3:42:50 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated public testimony voiced concern regarding tutors. The language in version S is similar to version B regarding tutoring in art, music, and physical education. He asked why tutoring in core subjects is not explicitly mentioned.

CHAIR TOBIN referenced SB 266, page 3, lines 29 - 30, and said regulations to be promulgated by the department include services. Services may include individual tutoring in core subjects.

[3:43:57 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN solicited a motion.

[3:43:58 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 266, work order 33-LS1578\S, as the working document.

[3:44:17 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN found no objection and CSSB 266 was adopted as the working document.

[3:44:32 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN solicited the will of the committee.

[3:44:34 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to report CSSB 266, work order 33-LS1578\S, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:44:51 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN found no objection and CSSB 266 (EDC) was reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[3:45:34 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee,
Chair Tobin adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee
meeting at 3:45 p.m.