

HB

28

## School bill

P.O. Box 700  
Anchorage, Alaska  
January 28, 1977

Dear Editor:

Attached is the bill I wish you could run for us. The following information will give you some background on the problem.

BY SWANSON

### HOUSE BILL NO. 28

Section 1. AS 14.03.080 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(f) If a public school is located within two miles of the residence of a pupil enrolled in a centralized correspondence program provided under AS 14.07.020(9) and transportation provided under AS 14.09.010 is available from that pupil's home to the school, the parents of the pupil shall remit to the regional educational attendance area or the city or borough school district the amount of money which that area or school district would have received had the pupil attended the public school. The commissioner shall determine the amount to be remitted to the area or district in accordance with AS 14.08.121 or AS 14.17.021, respectively.

Two years ago, a bill was passed by the Senate allowing all or any desiring student to enroll into the Correspondence Study Course as an alternative to the public school system even if the student lives in an urban area.

A large number of students, with parents' consent, have enrolled in the alternative program which, in some cases, have cause fund reduction to some schools.

Mr. Swanson, the sponsor of HB-28, is receiving pressure from five of his school board superintendants of his area. Their stated problems are, as an example, a school (that he refused to name) has a man living outside the school in a trailer giving POT to the students during their recess. A lot of these kids pass out upon returning into class to a warm temperature from the cold of the outside area. This caused a problem for that school, because some of the children enrolled into Correspondence Study. Of course the bill he is proposing does nothing to correct the school problem.

It appears he is trying to sacrifice the whole Correspondence program because of a few isolated problems.

All concerned parents should be urged to write their representatives immediately!

Luther L. Jones  
Member of the Advisory  
Committee for  
Correspondence Study

AN TIMES FEB 3, 1975

... want to say

# Home Pupils May Pay District

By DENNIS JOHNSON  
Times Staff Writer

Most Anchorage students in the state's correspondence study program would pay \$2,100 to \$2,200 in lost state aid to the local school district under a bill set for introduction in the House next week.

It amends the funding section of the correspondence program to require students living within two miles of a school or school bus route and taking correspondence classes to pay their school district the equivalent of state aid which would go to

the district if they attended regular public schools.

Rep. Leslie "Red" Swanson, D-Nenana, said yesterday he will introduce the legislation in the House early next week.

The state aid ranges from \$2,100 to \$2,200 per student in Anchorage and up to \$3,500 per student elsewhere in the state.

"This is legalized blackmail," said M.Sgt. Luther Jones of Elmendorf Air Force Base, who has three children in the correspondence program. He said the majority of correspondence students in the Anchorage would be directly affected since they live within two miles of a school or school bus route.

Of the 441 students in the statewide program, 125 of them are in Anchorage, Jones said. And of the 125 students here, 115 live within the two-mile limit, he said.

Swanson said the bill is being introduced to get correspondence students living near schools back into them. "We can't ask the taxpayer to support two school systems," he said yesterday via telephone from Juneau.

The correspondence program goes back to territorial days, said

program director Wanda Cooksey. However, in 1975 the state legislature amended the eligibility requirements to include all students, not just those in outlying areas, she said.

Correspondence study accommodates students who are continually traveling with their parents or who want an alternative to regular schools, Ms. Cooksey said.

"What I'm trying to do is go back to the original law," Swanson said. He said correspondence study is causing deterioration of the schools in his area, which includes Delta Junction, Ft. Yukon, Tok, Tanana and the Railbelt School District.

"I met with these regional superintendents last fall and correspondence study was one of the problems they discussed," Swanson said. He said students in the alternative program are influencing their friends to drop out of school and take correspondence study.

"Between 122 and 196 kids (in the program) could be going to bona fide schools," he said.

Nat Cole, state Department of Education deputy director, said he is familiar with Swanson's bill but he doubts if the bill's wording would solve the problems Swanson men-

tioned.

Cole said some method of controlling program entry is needed for students who have the option of attending a regular school. However, he did not give specific solutions. The Department of Education was opposed to the legislation opening the program to all students in 1975, he said.

Currently, the state cannot stop students from entering the program if they enroll by the end of the first quarter, said Ms. Cooksey. She said if a student wants to enter after that, approval must be obtained from the commissioner of education.

The central program headquarters is in Juneau, although 18 of the 52 state school districts have local programs, she said. The Anchorage program is administered from Juneau.

The Department of Education also has requested \$210,000 for additional correspondence program administrative costs, Swanson said. Cole said the request is to accommodate increased correspondence enrollment.

Swanson called the request unnecessary.

March 11, 1977

STATEMENT REGARDING CENTRALIZED CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAM FUNDING PROCEDURES

Prepared by the Parent Advisory Committee

Centralized Correspondence study students can not participate fully in many programs because they are, by definition, not enrolled in a district school. They especially do not qualify for funds such as local taxes or in lieu of local taxes, funds for students not on a public transportation route, PL 874 (Federal Impact) funds, distance equalization funds, etc. This discriminatory situation means that of all students in the State, only Centralized C/S students are funded at a bare foundation level. Students enrolled in a district C/S program have the same needs exactly, yet they are eligible for and do receive all of the special funds.

*Request to request info from DOE regarding these program areas?*

HB 28

MINUTES OF HOUSE HESS COMMITTEE

April 5, 1977

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Parr at 3:05 p.m. Those present: Parr, Phillips, Chatterton, Bennett, Nakak, Cotten & Beirne with Mrs. Buchholdt coming in later.

Absent: Ose.

Mr. Parr announced to the committee that a group of correspondence students were present from various places in Alaska and asked Mrs. Wanda Cooksey from the Department of Education to introduce the students.

HB 390

Chairman Parr then announced that HB 390 would be first on the agenda and asked Representative Lethin to speak on the bill. Mr. Lethin said that he had introduced the legislation at the request and was supported by the Literacy Project and the money applied for would be spent for the project. Said he had wanted to make sure that this money was earmarked specifically for that Project. There was discussion as to what the program is and how it operates and the need for the money. Questions were asked as to whether it is a non-profit organization, how it got started and how long it has been operating. Mr. Lethin said it has been going for several years, that it is a non-profit organization and is being done all over the nation.

Eula Ruby spoke from the sidelines stating that the project has been operating for 3 years, that it started out small with 3 volunteers and now it has grown to where they have had to turn students away. She stated they work with the most illiterate adults.

Action

Mr. Phillips moved to pass the bill out of committee. There being no objection, the motion carried.

HB 28

Swanson

Next on the agenda was HB 28 and Mr. Swanson spoke on the bill. Mr. Swanson said the program was originally initiated for students that had no way of going to school. He stated 3 years ago the statute was amended by the legislature so that it was open to anyone to take the courses, regardless of where they live. He stated he had been asked to introduce this legislation by some of the REAA's in his district. He stated after consulting with the Dept. of Education he had taken the information to the attorneys to draft the legislation. He said he felt the Area Boards or the Department of Education should have some measure of control over the program. He stated there are about 441 students enrolled in the program, 245 are in rural Alaska where there are no schools at all but the others could go to public schools.

Mr. Swanson stated in parts of his district there is a correspondence program where there is a director in the district and where some children live right on the school bus route and others live within half a mile of the school. He stated there were 7 on correspondence and felt they were being used to build a bureaucracy.

Questions were asked of Mr. Swanson as to how he came up with the figure in the bill of having to live 2 miles or more away from transportation or a school.

Questions were asked regarding the 2 types of studies, where the local school board in the REAA has to approve the one and if in a Centralized Program, the Commissioner of Education has to approve the applicant.

Cole  
Next to testify was Dr. Cole from the Department of Education. Dr. Cole stated that the law provides that a parent is not compelled to send a student to school who lives 2 miles from a school or 2 miles from a bus route. He stated 2 years ago the option was created by members of the legislature, wherein parents could put their children on correspondence courses no matter where they lived. Said the Department opposed it then and they still think there is a problem with this type of option.

Mr. Parr asked of Mr. Cole in the instance where the Commissioner determines the tuition rate, what "ball park" figure are we talking about? Mr. Cole stated it could cost somewhere around \$2750 per child. Mr. Cole said the Department had a hard time with the tuition portion of the bill, said this is letting someone buy an empty seat in the school house and he really had a hard time with this.

Discussion was had regarding the fact that a child can still take correspondence study if he doesn't qualify for the programs by paying tuition (under the bill). Mr. Cole felt the Dept. might be able to support the bill if the tuition portion were eliminated.

Mr. Parr said there appears to be more and more parents who are putting their children on correspondence study or sending them to private schools. Said there seems to be a rising dissatisfaction with the public schools and felt that there was a problem with the way the schools are being run or something. Wondered if we had the right to prevent them from this program.

Cooksey  
Mrs. Wanda Cooksey, Administer of the Centralized Correspondence Study Program spoke to the amendements that were suggested by some of the parents of children presently on the program.

Mrs. Cooksey said it was the Advisory Committee's opinion that they would like to see the problems worked out through the Department of Education, if possible, and not through legislation. If legislation has to happen, then they recommended the amendments, but they would prefer to handle the problems in other ways.

There was discussion about wiping out the decentralized program all together.

Mrs. Cooksey was asked if she thought the amendments proposed were good ones and she stated the bill would be better with the amendments than without them.

There was discussion as to whether a school district received money for children on correspondence study programs.

Mrs. Cooksey was asked if academically, evidence showed that correspondence students profited as much as regular school students from public schools. Mrs. Cooksey said she would say "yes" because there was no way a correspondence student could make it if they couldn't read. She also said the children that go through the correspondence study program prove to be real responsible. There was discussion as to whether the courses were now mostly on cassette tapes and it was brought out that the potential to do this was there but still are mostly written.

Ranney  
Next to testify on HB 28 was Steven Ranney from Taku Harbor. Mr. Ranney said that he is in 10th grade this year and taking a correspondence course. Stated that last year he went to high school and felt he learned much more from the correspondence study program than he had in high school. Said he was in the centralized program, felt it was much more demanding than high school was. Stated he is taking an English course and there are more than 50 written assignments. Questions were asked of Mr. Ranney as to how far he lives from an available school, how he got his assignments, through the mail, etc. and whether he required help from his parents. Said he had required very little help from his parents.

Geraghty  
Next to testify was Mr. Jim Geraghty from Tokeen. Mr. Geraghty questioned if this bill were passed, if the handicapped students who are unable to go to schools would then be unable to take the correspondence study program. He further asked about schools such as Craig where the schools are non-accredited and wondered if the students who wished to take accredited study courses would be unable to do so.

McKinnon  
Next to testify was Margaret McKinnon, Registrar for the Centralized Correspondence Study Program. She stated they do have quite a few secondary students who are old enough to not go to school but who do choose to take the correspondence study program and finish their high school education. She felt a school board may not tend to approve this type of situation

and felt if a student was determined enough to take a correspondence study program and finish his education he should have the opportunity to do so.

HB 28 was held over for further consideration.

Chairman Parr told the Committee HB 212 was next and asked the committee's pleasure on it as to whether they wanted to hear testimony or wanted to wait on it due to the lateness of the day. Mr. Nakak asked if Mr. Cole could perhaps go over the breakdown on the fiscal note. Mr. Cole was asked to walk the committee through each section of the fiscal note which he did.


There was much discussion as to the cost differential, the isolation factor.

Mr. Nakak proposed an amendement to the Committee Substitute which would put the 5% differential back in. Mr. Cotten said he was not prepared to do anything with the bill and Mr. Nakak asked that the bill be held over.

Mr. Cole was asked to give the committee figures for putting the 5% back in.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30. p.m.

# Copper River School District



Chistochina  
Copper Center  
Gakona  
Glennallen  
Kenny Lake  
Paxson

School Board  
Box 108  
Glennallen, Alaska 99588  
(907) 822-3234

March 25, 1977

Honorable Charles H. Parr  
Alaska House of Representatives  
Pouch V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

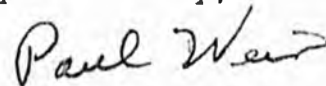
Dear Sir:

The Copper River School District would like your cooperation in opposing HB 28 in the original and amended version. We still feel that this bill would:

1. Eliminate parent's right of choice for the education of their children.
2. Increase the number of drop-outs in the 15-18 year old students.
3. Impose an extra financial burden on religious and minority groups.

Thank you for taking the time to read our expressions.

Very sincerely,



Paul Weir, Legislative Chairman  
Copper River School District Board  
P.O. Box 275  
Glennallen, Alaska 99588

PW:pm

cc: Bill Overstreet

TO: House HESS Committee Members

FROM: Wanda J. Cooksey  
Administrator  
Correspondence Study Programs  
Department of Education

February 17, 1977

9 copies

Write SB members

1. Centralize CS
2. Under what conditions should kids be on CS when schools are available?
3. Oversight by Cooksey
4. Who makes decisions?  
Appeals procedure?