

HB

464

(File 2)

Subject: re:HB464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 07:53:04 -0900

From: "Kacy and Sara Stafford" <kstafford@ideafamilies.org>

Organization: IDEA

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Mr. Dyson,

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB464, dated March 7, 2002, the following:

I am in support of HB464, co-sponsored by Reps James and Dyson. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend the hearing in person, but wish this statement of support for HB464 to be included as testimony.

Name: Kathleen Kacy Stafford

Address: 889 Chena Hot Springs Rd, Fairbanks, AK 99712

Phone: 907 457-5229

I am representing IDEA, as a parent of an IDEA high school student.

Thank you, Kacy Stafford



State Of Alaska
Legislative Affairs Agency
Kenai LIO
145 Main St Lp, Ste 217
Kenai, AK 99611
907-283-2030

Date: 3-7-02

Please accept the enclosed original(s) of written testimony for the House HESS teleconference hearing that was scheduled on 3-7-02.

A copy of this testimony was transmitted to your committee via fax on 3-7-02.

Thank You,

Mal Byrne



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I am in favor of HB 464 and would like to see it passed without further delay.
I am a homeschool parent and feel this bill benefits all Alaskan homeschoolers.

Thank you

Signed: Oma R. Murdoch
Testifier

IDEA Parent
Representing (optional)

37464 Riverbend Dr Soldotna, AK 99669
Address

907-262-1947
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I am completely in support of the Committee Substitute for HB 464 and request that this legislation is passed quickly.

Signed: Janice Habermann
Testifier

Self
Representing (optional)

36790 Steadman Street Soldotna, AK 99669
Address

(907) 262-3704
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on _____, dated March 7, 2002
HB 464
bill # / subject

Thank you for taking the time to consider the importance of the passage of this bill HB464. It is vitally important for this to pass in order to maintain the integrity and the high standards that homeschoolers have imposed upon themselves.

Signed: Tami Johnson
Testifier

IDEA Parent
Representing (optional)

51835 Pioneer St Kenai, AK 99611
Address

907-776-5597
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I have been homeschooling my two children for the past 4 years and have found it to be the single most rewarding thing that I do. As a parent who started out sending my children to traditional school I was frustrated with the fact that my son was very bright but needed to be challenged and my daughter needed extra help and there just wasn't enough time in the school day to take her aside and help her. Because IDEA allows me to choose all of the curriculum that my children need I have been able to formulate an education specifically targeted to each of their strengths and weaknesses. If the committee substitute of HB 464 does not pass the Alaska State Department of Education is going to institute changes in how homeschooling is done in all State funded homeschool programs. I will not be able to use many of the curricular materials that I have long found to be successful for my children because some of them are religious in nature. I strongly believe in the right to educate my own children and if HB 464 does not pass and the department of education chooses to pass their new rulings then I will be forced to pull my children from participation in any state funded homeschool program and educate them independently. Further more, I am getting really tired of having to defend the IDEA's homeschool policies every couple of years. The state department of education has come up with something new to try and gain greater control of state wide homeschool programs every two to three years for as long as I can remember. I believe HB 464 will effectively put a stop to parents having to constantly worry each year if they will have to change the way that they do things again. In closing I would like to say that the IDEA program has helped my children and I tremendously with everything from curriculum choices to giving the kids walking stick bugs for pets. My children are figure skaters and the IDEA staff are always interested in what new accomplishments they have achieved and where they will be competing next. The teachers are always available to meet with parents and are open and supportive as well as insightful. I do not see how making more restrictions on a highly successful program can help them or be beneficial in any way. IDEA is already a fantastic program and it's policies are there for the good of the children and their education, not the money.

Signed: Cathy Shearer
Testifier

IDEA Parent
Representing (optional)

P.O. Box 1 Sterling, AK 99672
Address

(907) 262-7040
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the H.S.E Committee
Committee name

Committee on HB464, dated 3/7/02
Bill/Subject

I agree with bill HB464 please
adopt the Committee substitute.
I believe Alaska's home-school
programs are a great benefit
to our children and I agree with
HB464.

Thank You,
Jimmy Boy

Signed: Jimmy Boy
Testifier

Idea
Representing (Optional)

11002-7685 Palmer, AK 99645
Address

746-2069
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the HES Committee name

Committee on HB 464 , dated March 7th 2002
Bill/Subject

I agree with the CS for House Bill 464. Please adopt the CS of HB 464 and pass on a timely basis. Supporting this bill makes sense and will support excellent program already succeeding!!

Signed: Anaela Dawson
Testifier

Idea
Representing (Optional)

PO BOX 442 SUTHER AK 9967
Address

746-2621
Phone number

Wayne and Christie Eberhardt
17791 Birchtree Street
Chugiak, AK 99567
18 February 2002

Sheila Box
Dept. of Education and Early Development
810 West 10th St.
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Board Members and interested parties:

Twenty-eight years ago when I came to Alaska to commercial fish and experience the "Last Frontier", I found far more than the breathtaking scenery that is our state signature. I discovered Alaska's uniquely wonderful lifestyle, which honors friendship, cooperation, and respect for individuality and adaptive innovation. Here I met my husband, a lifelong Alaskan whose parents homesteaded outside Fairbanks in 1947.

Thirteen years ago we began homeschooling our growing family. We knew it would in many ways be a sacrifice, but we considered it a privilege to tutor our children and instill our personal values.

We have seen homeschooling expand and develop over the years. In our family and nationwide, we have happily observed the positive results of diligent parental tutoring.

The IDEA program, which we joined three years ago, has faithfully promoted the cooperative spirit we identify with the Alaskan lifestyle. Their leaders have been very helpful in facilitating parental expertise and responsibility for our own children's education.

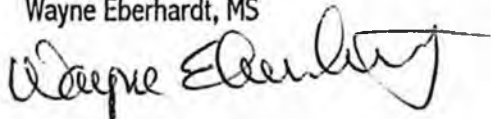
Personal freedom is a prime traditional value to Alaskans. In that light, we ask you not to implement the proposed regulations affecting homeschooling in our state. They run counter to the founding principles of IDEA; and they run counter to our family's ideals in homeschooling five of our children.

Thank you in advance for seriously considering our input, and that of other homeschool families, on this matter. We request you rewrite the proposed regulations after drawing on the collective wisdom gained from successful programs like IDEA, and those "veteran field teachers" like us who have lived out home education from "K through 12". We have particular concerns about these changes: (4 AAC 33.421 (d); 4AAC 33.421 (e)(1,2); 4AAC 33.421 (g)(2); 4 AAC 33.421 (e); 4 AAC 33.421 (f) (3); 4 AAC421 (h)(5); 4 AAC 33.450.

Sincerely,

Christie Eberhardt, PhD

Wayne Eberhardt, MS



Subject: CSHB464

Date: Wed, 6 Mar 2002 13:57:35 -0800

From: "wagar family" <kwagar@ideafamilies.org>

To: "Wilson" <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Stevens" <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Joule" <Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Dyson" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"coghill" <Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Cissna" <Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us>

Please adopt CSHB464 and save our homeschool program.

Thank you,

Kristin M. Wagar

1897 Badger Rd.

North Pole, AK 99705 488 1601

Subject: CSHB464

Date: Wed, 6 Mar 2002 14:03:16 -0800

From: "wagar family" <kwagar@ideafamilies.org>

To: "Wilson" <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Stevens" <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Joule" <Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Dyson" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"coghill" <Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Cissna" <Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us>

Please adopt CSHB464 and save my homeschool program (IDEA)

Thank you
Hannah Wagar
1897 Badger Rd
North Pole, AK 99705

907 488 1601

WES - WHAT SHOULD WE
DO ABOUT THIS?

Subject: 4AAC 33.421 Statewide Correspondence Study Program Requirements

Date: Sun, 13 Jan 2002 22:27:47 -0900

From: "Terri Terreault" <designer@mtaonline.net>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Representative Fred Dyson,

I am a parent involved in the Cyberlynx Correspondence Program and I write to you in opposition of the proposed regulations presently out for public comment that directly relate to the operation of Statewide Correspondence Study Program Requirements.

<?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

The proposed regulations are written by the Department of Education with little or no input from the home school population. The proposed regulations will severely limit parental choice and have a devastating impact on student opportunity.

A small percentage of children learn in "the box." Our public school system has failed the rest of our children miserably, which shows clearly in the AK Standards Bench Mark and High School Qualifying exam results. Classes are overcrowded, teachers have neither the time nor the resources to help these children, no matter how many regulations the school board institutes.

My daughter was one of these children. She began her public school career as an open, self-confident child, willing and excited about the prospect of learning. By the time she was in the 5th grade, she was convinced she was "stupid" because she continued to fall farther and farther behind. Her grades were acceptable; the teachers loved her because she was a manageable student. She was quiet, sat at her desk as she had been taught and didn't disrupt the class. By the time she was in the 6th grade she had become invisible. Although still very well behaved, she no longer attempted to participate or learn because she was convinced she wasn't capable of learning.

When the state and federal mandated testing results came in, they showed that she was at a 2-percentile level nationwide. I still believed in the school system and felt as though all my daughters' problems could be resolved. I approached Colony Middle School with my concerns and due to her grades being average, they attempted to assure me that she was doing "fine". I insisted on additional testing and by the middle of 6th grade she was placed in the special education program at 4th grade level. She was devastated, now not only did she know she was "stupid" but so did the rest of her peers. Her social life began following her academic life down the drain. As parents, we felt this was a small price to pay to insure her academic success, as we were confident that she would finally start making progress with the extra assistance. Life at home was greatly affected; our daughter who started out being self-confident and open had become a stranger who we could barely recognize. She was sullen, overly emotional and although she worked on her studies and maintained average grades by doing homework from the time she got off the bus until she went to bed, she didn't appear to us to be making much progress.

My frustration level now matched hers. I began exploring other educational possibilities and was told about the home schooling options available. I felt amazed that I lived in a state that cared so much about their children that they were given opportunities to succeed when they would fail if forced to learn the same as all other children. As both my husband and I worked full time, I couldn't see a way to participate and felt that I would be an inadequate teacher because I only had a high school education myself. Surely the teachers who had a degree in education were much more capable of teaching my child. I postponed making a decision until my daughters annual I.E.P. at the end of the 1st semester in 7th grade.

At the meeting, my daughters "team" proudly announced to me that she had progressed to the 4th grade level. When I pointed out that she started the program at the 4th grade level, they still attempted to assure me that she was still doing well. I decided to pull her out of the public school to home school her. They attempted to dissuade me by telling me that it would be detrimental to her education. My response at that point was a question. "How can I possibly do any worse than you have, when you haven't made any progress at all with her for the last year?"

For the rest of the 7th grade, we did little more than build her confidence and work on basics. In the meantime, I did a lot of research on home schooling and discussed our options with both my husband and daughter. My daughter was able to take part in her life by picking out curriculums that she believed would be geared towards her learning style. She had started smiling again and once more was looking forward to a positive learning experience. My fears receded as well and by the end of 8th grade, she not only tested out of the special education program, she had gained 5 grade levels in one year. If this seems to be unusual, compare it to Sylvan Learning Centers who can bring a child up 1 to 3 grade levels in one summer, with the children attending 1 to 2 hours a week. My daughter isn't an exception to the rule; it can be accomplished with all children unless they have severe mental handicaps.

My daughter participated in the Alaska Benchmark exams in the 8th grade. She tested above the proficiency level in all three tests. An example would be: Reading; a proficient score is 265 and my daughter scored a 409. Not bad for a child that 1 ½ year's prior was in the special educational program and at a 4th grade level. We were able to accomplish this by using different curriculums, based upon my child's needs, not a curriculum "approved" by a school board that suits mainstream children. If she were mainstream, she would be in public school! My daughter is now in the 9th grade and loves learning. She developed a four year plan based on her career choice and will have a minimum of 29 high school credits as well as 18 college credits by the time she graduates. The cost to the state will be minimal compared to her public school counterparts.

This has all been accomplished by the very things the school board is determined to change. Cyberlynx has told us that the Alaska Department of Education has not acted in good faith. Please do not pass regulations until we know that the regulations are written in an open, constructive and inclusive fashion.

The proposed regulations listed under 4 AAC 33.421 Statewide Correspondence Study Program Requirements should be shelved in their entirety until we can be certain that they are not unfairly biased against those of us that choose to take responsibility for educating our children.

Sincerely,

Terri L Terreault

2050 Village Drive South

Wasilla, AK. 99654-3625

designer@mtaonline.net

907-373-3364

Mary Neary
4113 Dogwood Lane
Juneau, Alaska 99801

WES

February 18, 2002

Rep. Fred Dyson
State Capitol, Room 104
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Dyson,

I am a homeschooling parent in a statewide correspondence program wanting to let you know of my concerns about the proposed regulations that affect homeschooling in Alaska. I am asking you please not to approve these regulations, as they will seriously restrict my ability to educate my children effectively. These regulations add burdensome details to both staff and parents.

My children are currently enrolled in the I.D.E.A. program. We have been with I.D.E.A. for four years and have been very impressed with the level of support and availability of resources that this program has afforded us. We are very proud of our program and think that it provides a level of academic excellence that is visionary for our system. When we made the decision to homeschool we were not aware of this type of program and were planning to educate our children without the support of a correspondence program. It is very important to us individually to choose the materials and methods of education. There are many wonderful homeschooling materials available and we did not want to be restricted in our curriculum choices. This is why we chose a program like I.D.E.A. rather than a program like A.C.S. The enrollment numbers of I.D.E.A. reflect that this program offers an educational choice that is valued by many Alaskan families.

We also wanted to optimize our time in educating our children rather than filling out paperwork for a teacher or program like A.C.S. The proposed regulations cause me great concern that they will affect the way programs as I.D.E.A. will run. I am concerned that they may cause a failure of these programs to continue by placing burdensome restrictions on the resources these programs offer.

I would like to comment on specific parts of the regulations.

Requiring statewide programs to submit a yearly application [4 AAC 33.421(a)]. Charter schools apply once and then reapply every ten years. I want to allow the state correspondence schools the same requirements. Let our testing scores reflect how our school compares. We are at a par with other school district programs. This is not a high-risk school and there are other procedures already in place to monitor a school district.

Restrictions on the use of curricular materials privately purchased. [4 AAC 33.421(d), 4 AAC 33.42(e)(1) and 4 AAC 33.421(g)(2)]. I have chosen privately to purchase a few curricular materials that IDEA would not pay for because they had some reference to religious material in them. These materials provide excellent educational instruction in some areas. Specifically for my child these are a grammar program and a Latin program. The educational content of these materials can be taught and demonstrated without crossing the line of religious content. For example, a verb is a verb regardless of the context of the sentence, which contains it. I would like to have this section removed as I think it is unnecessary.

Mandating the level and type of teacher support [4 AAC 33.421(h)(5)]. Instead of mandating monthly meetings between the parent and student it would provide greater flexibility to allow the parent and teacher to contract an agreement what materials will be reviewed. Building based programs do not require monthly teacher conferences and it would be burdensome for both the parent and program staff to do this. The staff would be better utilized by providing the support that is currently offered. An assessment plan is already required and recognized. This level of detail is unnecessary.

Students missing mandated tests are not allowed to re-enroll or enroll in another program without specifying that normal absences are allowable [4AAC 33.450]. The requirements here should match those of other state run schools. An agreement to send children to standardized testing is already part of the enrollment packet. Normal excuses (Sick, out of state, vacation) should be allowed.

Contact-teacher approval for all expenditures [4 AAC 33.421(h)(5)]. This is an unnecessary burden on staff. The ordering department already monitors this and forwards anything out of the ordinary to the contact teacher. This would slow the ordering process and efficiency of the already existing system and cause unnecessary delays. Certified teachers within the program have already reviewed and approved curriculum and asking them to review all materials for each student would require a tremendous amount of time that will take away from the quality of the program.

Thank you for taking the time to review these concerns. I am confident that rewrite of these regulations can take place that will enhance our educational efforts and contain input from homeschoolers and programs like I.D.E.A. which support them. Please keep in mind that Alaska has the best homeschooling laws in the country. If parental involvement in education is a good thing then our regulations would serve better to facilitate that rather than making it more difficult. Providing the best education for our children is our primary concern.

Sincerely,

Mary Neary

c.c.: Sheila Box, Exec. Sec. To the Board
Dept. of Education and Early Development
801 West 10th St.
Juneau, AK 99801

Dr Shirley Holloway
Regulation Review
801 10th St
Juneau, AK 99801

Rep. Bill Hudson
State Capitol, Room 502

Sen. Beth Kerttula
State Capitol, Room 430

Sen. Kim Elton
State Capitol, Room 504

Rep. John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 102

W&S FYI

February 17, 2002

Alan and Ellen Rogers
P.O.Box 34401
Juneau, AK 99803

Rep. Fred Dyson
State Capitol, Room 104
Juneau, AK 99801-1184

RE: 4AAC 33.421 Statewide Correspondence Study Program Requirements

Dear Rep. Dyson:

We are very concerned with the newly proposed regulations related to the operation of the Statewide Correspondence Study Program Requirements. We as parents of a child enrolled in the CyberLynx Correspondence Program desire to have input or comment as to the outcome that directly affects our program and the way we educate our daughter.

The Department of Education would directly benefit in making a more informed decision by consulting home schooling parents who educate in the home daily. It is hard to understand the decision to rewrite regulations without a full investigation, data gathering, and input from all the parties that are involved in the process as the results are sure to be skewed. The proposed regulations should be set aside and an effort made to ascertain that all information is gathered from all parties involved, that there is no double standard present, and that there is no unfair bias against those of us who have made an educated decision to responsibly educate our own children.

The following are the areas that we have the greatest concerns and objections:

33.421 (c) *Requiring curriculum materials to be of the same quality as offered in the public school programs.* We have in the past used home designed courses for many subjects and have adjusted prepared curriculum so that they meet the needs, learning styles and interests of our children. Learning is an individual process. It is impossible to take one type of curricula and teaching style and assume that all individuals will be able to assimilate the information required. Individual Learning Programs or Individual Educational Programs are created for that purpose and home education with home designed courses are just that, an ILP/IEP. Parents are much better able to assess our children's needs than a school administrator or teacher who is not on site to see the daily process of learning and struggles. Another concern is that the Department of Education is demanding further mandates beyond those that the legislature has already passed legislation.

33.421 (d) *The staff shall not provide instruction using religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational curricula purchased privately by the student if the curricula teach particular religion as true.* We follow the regulation that mandates private purchasing of religious materials or curriculum. Our Constitution promises religious freedom and we exercise this freedom in our home. We educate our children in many things; academics, moral values, and religious beliefs. We do not require that CyberLynx purchase these religious items. We expect and have a right to teach our religious beliefs in our home, just as every other family who is in the public school system expects to teach their moral values and religious beliefs without penalty.

33.421 (e) (1) *...monitoring of the student...the monitoring must include at least monthly review of the student's work...* "Monthly review of the student's work" is not well defined. How is this to be accomplished? It seems very burdensome and costly. We are not saying that monitoring is not necessary, however, the method needs to be well thought out so we are not required to send in every bit of completed work. The added cost will need to be absorbed somewhere and will most likely will be the student's allocation. This decreases the finances with which to provide education.

(e) (2) *grades or standards met determined and assigned by a certified teacher.* Certified teachers are not the only person competent to assign grades. My highschool aged daughter in the public school system frequently is involved in peer grading of projects and assignments which is then "signed off" by their teacher. As this is an accepted procedure in the public school why is it not acceptable in our situation? We currently give grades for our daughter in all of her subjects. Our teacher advisors can also "sign off" on these grades as we assign them. The current legislative law leaves the educational process up to the parents without mandating that they be certified teachers. This allows for grading without the involvement of certified teachers.

33.421 (h) (2) *materials purchased with state funding are property of the program: non consumable material must be returned to the program when the student exits the program for any reason.* The return of all non consumable items would increase the expense of processing, mailing, storing, etc. This expense would be a financial burden that would be borne by the program and the students reducing funds available for the student's education. The items that are returned would be outdated and unusable by the administration and would be of no value to anyone. This amendment makes no sense and should be removed from the regulations.

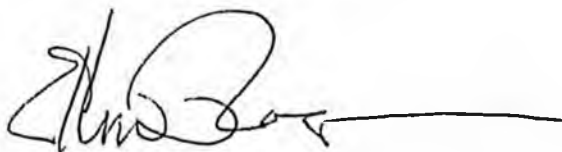
33.450 (a) *If a student fails to take a state-mandated assessment test, the student is ineligible for enrollment in the statewide correspondence programs for the following year unless the district of enrollment has excused the student from the state mandated test.* Attendance at standardized tests is already a requirement of CyberLynx and we are informed of this in the enrollment process. We object to the part of the regulation that states that a student is ineligible for enrollment for the next year if the test is missed. There are circumstances in all of our lives that are beyond our control. There are no provisions for taking the test at a later date even if the student was able and willing. If a child in the public school system fails to take the state mandated test is he/she then barred from enrollment to the public school system? Why are the statewide correspondence study system

students being penalized while the public school system students are not? At the very least, there should be a documented pattern of testing non-compliance shown. Alternate testing dates should be available if the penalty for missing testing is to be so severe.

The overtones of these proposed regulations are that the statewide correspondence program and their students are a school and students "at risk". Benchmark test, Terra Nova test and our personal achievement test scores show results that are contrary to that. According to test scores that are available to the public, the statewide correspondence program students are on a par with the public school tests. My daughters' test scores are in the 90th to 99th percentile compared to the public school students on every standardized test given.

We have one child in 10th grade and one in 4th grade. We home schooled our older daughter during her middle school years and we have home schooled our 4th grader since she entered school age and plan to continue as long it benefits her learning process. CyberLynx has provided us with a great process for educating our children. There is no need for any changes in the regulations in our view. The changes that are proposed are not in the best interest of the education of the students in this program. It seems the regulations are trying to change our program into another public school program which does not serve the needs of our students. These proposals need much further investigation and input and a process that will include the input from those involved in the system. They should not be adopted as they stand.

Sincerely,



Alan and Ellen Rogers

Dear State Board of Education;

I am a certified teacher who is currently teaching full time in my home. I am homeschooling three of our five children. We have been homeschooling for 8 years; 5 years on our own and the past three years in partnership with I.D.E.A. This program has provided resources that have greatly enriched our children's education, providing the ultimate opportunities for our children as a result of the partnering of families and state.

I.D.E.A. assists the homeschooling community through various aides and support systems. They have designed a unique program that partners w/ parents and students of homeschoolers while maintaining the high standards of the state's requirements. The program's strengths are:

1. REQUIRED Individual Learning Plans
2. FREEDOM to select and order curricular materials to meet my child's ILP's
3. CERTIFIED teacher support and other staff
4. ACCOUNTABILITY through progress reports and follow-up
5. STATE MANDATED TESTING access
6. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS to enable families to enrich their teaching opportunities
7. CURRICULUM FAIRS and extensive PO Vendor list
8. PRACTICAL/HELPFUL WORKSHOP opportunities
9. SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, COUNCILING AND GUIDANCE ie; transcripts, graduation ceremony
10. PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

THIS PROGRAM WORKS!! The scores on the state mandated tests (total averages: State = 61.9% vs. IDEA = 64.5%) are showing that what is currently in place is successful. I find myself asking the question: "Why change something that works well for ALL parties involved?"

A few short years ago, our state government granted us incredible freedom as homeschoolers to educate our children unhindered by laws and regulations that had previously been required. By doing so, you in essence, told us that you believed we are able to do our job and do it well w/o unnecessary laws and regulations. This brings me to my second question: Why has your confidence in our ability to educate our children changed now that we are partnering w/ you through state correspondence schools?

One main personal concern my husband and I have is centered on curricula choices. We have elected to pay out-of-pocket to purchase Christian curricula for the past 8 years. As I read through the proposed regulations it appears that this freedom is at risk due to restrictions that would be placed on I.D.E.A. teachers. Interfacing (on educational matters) between teacher and family would no longer be allowed if the family were using materials other than secular curricula. One reason we choose to homeschool is to have direct control over the choice of curricula and the type of education our children receive. If this freedom were removed, we would be forced to return to homeschooling our children as we have in the past, w/o partnering w/ the state through the I.D.E.A. program. Our children (as well as several hundred others) have indeed been enriched through the opportunities provided through I.D.E.A. We would be very disappointed if we were forced to leave the program due to the proposed regulations.

If your main concern is indeed the children, then please do not alter and/or impose regulations upon the presently existing I.D.E.A. partnership program! These changes would only serve to entangle and distract from the services they are presently providing.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns. I trust you will make the decisions that are truly in the best interest of the children of this great state.

Sincerely,

Julie M. Wohrle

Subject: RE: Proposed Regulation Change effecting homeschoolers

Date: Thu, 28 Feb 2002 13:18:35 -0900

From: "Terri L. Terreault" <designer@mtaonline.net>

To: "Sharron Odell" <Sharron_Odell@Legis.state.ak.us>

CC: "Lyda Green" <Senator_Lyda_Green@Legis.state.ak.us>,
"Loren Leman" <Senator_Loren_Leman@Legis.state.ak.us>,
"Wes Keller" <Wes_Keller@Legis.state.ak.us>

Sharron,

Rep. Kohring is more than welcome to use my letter if he feels it would be of any assistance in this matter. I received the new and improved changes proposed by the EED yesterday and wrote another letter to them that I have copied below. This letter may be of more assistance than my first letter would be. It's up to Rep. Kohring which one (or both) he would prefer to use. They may be used for the hearing tomorrow as well, which brings me to my next question, where is that hearing being held at? I was notified that I could attend but I'm really not sure where to go. Thank you for your time on this issue.

This is the letter being sent to the EED:

The EED Proposed Regulations for Correspondence Schools states: "The State considers all students enrolled in a public school district program as public school students. This is so whether the students attend classes in a school district building or whether they study at home." "The state regulates public schools to make certain students get the best education possible and so that all children obtain equitable treatment in public schools." They further go on to state, "Publicly funded correspondence programs are alternatives to the regular public school." Which is it? Are they public school students or are they alternative public school students? The EED's mission is to assure that "all children obtain equitable treatment in public schools." In order to accomplish this mission, they would need to regulate correspondence schools the same as a "regular" public school. If a correspondence school can lose state approval if their statewide average falls below 10 percent, then it stands to reason that the "regular public schools" should also lose state approval when they fall under the 10 percent set out by the EED. If a child fails to take a state mandated test in a "regular public school", they should lose the ability to enroll in that school district or any other school district the following year. If a "student cannot demonstrate adequate progress in reading, writing and math on state exams," a solution needs to be addressed that is fair and consistent for all students, not one that only applies to correspondence schools. Where in the EED's proposal is there any "equitable treatment?" It is obvious that the EED is attacking only correspondence programs that enroll students from outside a school district's "legally defined geographical boundaries."

The statement made by the EED that students receive more "attention and supervision" available in a regular public school is ludicrous. I would like to know where the EED is getting the facts to support that statement.

My daughter was in the public school system. By 7th grade she was getting so much "attention and supervision" that she was failing math and had been placed in special education for her writing skills and tested out at a 2 percentile level, nationwide. The certified teachers that were supervising my daughter had an average of 33 to 36 students in each class. When my daughter was placed in the special education program she was at 4th grade level. One year later, she was still at 4th grade level. Within one year of home schooling she had gained five grade levels and was removed from the special education program. She took the

Alaska Benchmark Exam and passed all three tests. Can the EED explain how being in a regular public school was affording my daughter more attention and supervision? The progress my daughter has made was based on the supervision and attention that she was receiving from her parent, not a certified teacher. I am perfectly capable of grading my daughter's work and checking over the assignments that I give her. Her curriculum is based on her needs, not the needs of the rest of the children in the "regular" public school setting. Had I not been doing my job correctly, it would have been apparent on her results from the Alaska Benchmark Exam.

There are home-schooled children that are struggling, there are also children in the "regular school setting" that are struggling as well and certified teachers are supervising them. What is the excuse from the EED as to why those children are failing to learn? My point is that all children are different, they have different learning styles that allow them to excel in different settings. Some thrive in correspondence school; some in public school and others do better in private school or charter schools. The only people that can make the decisions on where these children will learn to the best of their ability, is the very people who know them - their parents, not the EED. A certified teacher is no more capable of teaching my child than I am. My child receives a great deal more supervision and attention in our home than she did in public school. She is very well socialized; she participates in dance, singing, chess club, youth group and many other activities. She is capable of talking with people in any age group instead of only her peers like so many of her "regular" public school counterparts. I do not have any concerns with a certified teacher checking my daughter's work; that is why we turn in portfolios every year along with her grades. If she were to fail the Alaska State Benchmark or High School Qualifying Exams, then I could understand why she might need to be placed under a more restrictive supervision within our home school organization just as I would expect to see her "regular" public school counterparts placed under more supervision when they fail the exams.

The following chart shows the HSGQE Failure Rates for both public schools in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley at the 11th grade level, along with two of the home schools that will be affected by the EED's proposed regulations.

2001 HSGQE Failure Rates

| School: | Reading: | Writing: | Math: |
|----------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| Colony High School: | 60% | 66% | 52.9% |
| Wasilla High School: | 57.1% | 74% | 63.6% |
| Diamond High School: | 71% | 77.3% | 76.9% |
| East High School: | 83% | 83.2% | 77.5% |
| West High School: | 87.9% | 80.6% | 81.7% |
| Cyberlynx: | 28.6% | 68% | 75% |
| IDEA: | 39.1% | 69.4% | 67.2% |

As a parent and an educator, I am not impressed with any of these grades but at the very least, a larger portion of the children in home school are able to read which is more than I can say for their "regular" public school counterparts who are receiving "more attention and supervision."

Last but certainly not least, where is the funding coming from for all the additior staff it would take to grade and oversee all of the home-schooled students in this state? Cyberlynx currently has approximately 1746 students enrolled and they would have to see 87 students a day to fulfill the EED's proposed monthly requirement. IDEA has approximately 3104 students enrolled and they will have to see 155 students daily. These are only two of ten schools being affected by these proposed changes. When will all these schools have time to grade the student's work with the amount of children they will be seeing daily? The EED must be aware of the State's current budget difficulties,

I would think that they would take the funding into consideration when they are making decisions, unless of course they are really just trying to make it impossible for correspondence schools to operate in an attempt to assure that all children in the state are mandated to only have one option, public school.

Who is really loosing out on these proposed changes? As far as I can tell, it's the very students that the EED is purportedly trying to protect.

Terri L Terreault
2050 Village Drive South
Wasilla, AK. 99654-3625
907-373-3364



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Health, Education, and Social Services
com mittee name

Committee on CS of HB464
bill # / subject

, dated 3,4,2002 (3/7/02) dk.

I have been informed of your work on behalf of the Homeschoolers of the State that choose to enroll our children in a State Correspondence Group. Thankyou for your work. I'd like to encourage you to forward your Committee Substitute for HB464 so that we can continue to school our children and enjoy the very valuable help that we receive from the good folks at IDEA. The added scrutiny that HB464 calls for would be burdensome and costly, and would serve no purpose regarding a better education for our children. The educational needs of our children and ourselves as parent/educators as best served by the local control and accountability that your Committee Substitute allows, and indeed, that we have enjoyed for some time.

Signed: Darrell W. Kincaid
Testifier

..... Parent/Educator in the IDEA program
Representing (optional)

38710 Highercrest Court Sterling, Alaska 99672
Address

907-262-1535
Phone number

Subject: HB464

Date: Sun, 3 Mar 2002 20:30:17 -0900

From: "William A. and Carol Hill" <wachill@gci.net>

To: "Fred Dyson" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Hi - Thank you for proposing the substitute version of this bill entitled "An act relating to statewide school district correspondence study programs" which is much needed to give the proper direction to the Department of EED. We're in agreement with you and hope you're able to get it passed soon. - Bill

Subject: re: CS version of HB464

Date: Sun, 3 Mar 2002 18:18:19 -0900

From: "Brian Springer" <bspringer@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Jason_Hooley@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: "Fred Dyson" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Peggy Wilson" <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"John Coghill" <Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Gary Stevens" <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Vic Kohring" <Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Sharon Cissna" <Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Reggie Joule" <Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>

My name is Terri Springer. I am both a certified teacher in the State of Alaska and a home schooling parent with Galena School District's IDEA Program. I am in full support of CS version of HB464 and would like to encourage its timely passage. The provisions of this bill would enable myself and other parent/teachers like me to continue to educate our own children, in our own homes, with the support of other trained educators, in a wonderfully unique, efficient, and effective way. Thank You So Very Much!

homeschool

Subject: homeschool

Date: Sun, 03 Mar 2002 15:44:43 -0900

From: Tyler and Cindy Schlung <schlung@nook.net>

To: Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

Hello,

I am writing you to encourage you in your new bill to restrict legislation overregulating homeschool.

Thanks,

Cindy Schlung

Subject: HES committee

Date: Sun, 3 Mar 2002 07:55:49 -0900

From: "Fletcher family" <bletcher@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Honorable Rep. Fred Dyson

Thank you for sponsoring HB464. I have emailed the following to each of your colleagues on the House HES committee.

I understand that in your capacity on the House Health Education and Social Services Committee you will shortly be considering the CS of HB 464 limiting the ability of DEED to regulate state-wide correspondence programs.

Having recently commented at some length on DEED's 4 AAC 33.420-.490 I received from the State Board a 'Question & Answer' document that makes it clear that they really don't understand the purpose of the programs they're regulating.

The impending excessive regulations have placed Alaskan homeschools under a stifling cloud, and the time spent in addressing this really detracts from our ability to provide for our children's education. I hope you and your colleagues on the Committee will pass this bill ASAP.

Thank you for your consideration,

Barrett Fletcher

PO Box 575

Homer, AK 99603-0575

Subject: HB464 - Please support it!

Date: Sun, 3 Mar 2002 06:43:24 -0900

From: "Bill Miller" <kenai@sarcomgs.com>

To: <Jason_Hooley@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us>

HB464 - Please include this message in the packet for the committee members

Distinguished House HES Committee Members,

We wanted to take a moment to urge both of you to support HB464 as we feel that the Dept. of Education and Early Development should be limited with regards to enacting legislation that affects statewide correspondence programs. We homeschool our son and believe it is the best education that he could ever get. I work for XTO Energy, Inc., in Nikiski as District Administration Manager but my background/degree is Secondary Education. I've taught in the classroom and have seen first hand the problems with the system. With homeschooling, we've been able to overcome those and give our son a "world class education" and I'm willing to compare my son's scores with any student in the public system. We believe you'll find that the State of Alaska is getting a tremendous return on it's education dollars that are spent on home schoolers both in terms of better education and more efficient use of the dollars spent by the state on homeschooled kids. We believe if you compare all of the homeschool kids in the state to the public system, you'll find the same. Please don't allow the Dept. of Education and Early Development to burden us homeschoolers with the same bureaucratic nightmare as the public system. We urge you to support HB464.

My parents moved to Alaska back in 1966 when I was three, and I've lived and worked all across Alaska thanks to my father being an Alaska State Trooper and my own career path. I've been involved with, and seen first hand the education system from St. Marys to Savoonga, Togiak to Tununak, Anchorage to Alakanuk, Fairbanks to King Salmon, and I can tell you that nobody knows first hand about the education of their children than the local people. The parents of Alaska know their children and their local situation better than anyone in Juneau, and the last thing any of us need is the Department of Education in Juneau or Washington D.C. dictating to us how our children should be educated or how our education dollars should be spent. I remember in Fairbanks as a child when native kids were sent from their villages to Fairbanks or Anchorage to attend elementary school, and always thought it was terrible that they couldn't live and learn in their own community where their parents knew what was best for their children's education. Years ago the State figured it out and now kids go to school in their own villages as they should have been able to from the beginning. We have a diverse population in a huge state - we need to respect that. Please support HB464 and let's keep the Dept. of Education off our backs.

Sincerely,

Bill & Linda Miller
402 Eadies Way
Kenai, AK 99611

907-283-2726

Subject: 4 AAC 33.420-.490 Statewide Correspondence Programs

Date: Fri, 1 Mar 2002 21:58:41 -0800

From: "Steven Axelson" <saxelson@worldnet.att.net>

**To: <Representative_Bill_Williams@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Beth_Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Bill_Hudson@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Albert_Kookesh@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Drew_Scalzi@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Ken_Lancaster@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Mike_Chenault@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Joe_Green@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Norman_Rokeberg@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Andrew_Halcro@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Ethan_Berkowitz@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Lisa_Murkowski@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Eric_Croft@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Leslie_McGuire@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Con_Runde@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Kevin_Meyer@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Brian_Porter@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Harry_Crawford@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Eldon_Mulder@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Scott_Ogan@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Beverly_Masek@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_John_Davies@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Joe_Hayes@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Jim_Whitaker@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Hugh_Fate@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Jeannette_James@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_John_Harris@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Carl_Morgan@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Richard_Foster@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Mary_Kapsner@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Carl_Moses@legis.state.ak.us>**

Dear Representative,

We have attached our comments about the proposed legislation above. We appreciate your time. Thank you.

Steve and Nancy Axelson
Ketchikan

COMMENTS REGARDING NEW STATE REGULATIONS FOR
CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS

February 17, 2002

Steven and Nancy Axelson
P.O. Box 9029
Ketchikan, AK 99901
(907) 225-9778

I am opposed to the potential instatement of regulations 4 AAC 33.421 and 4 AAC 06.450 concerning correspondence programs. The basic function of the existing correspondence programs referred to in these new regulations has been to assist homeschooling families like mine. Many of the new regulations are just adapting the traditional regulations of brick and mortar public schools. Original legislation should be drafted to fit these correspondence programs. It should be a process that involves a cross section of people who rely on the programs, a bottom up approach. Parent/Teachers should play a major role here. Program administrators and school board members need to contribute to make sure legislation will allow for enough leeway to fit their programs unique culture.

I am aware of at least three unique correspondence-homeschool programs being used in the Ketchikan area. REACH, PACE, and IDEA. REACH, Respecting Educational Alternatives & Choices in Homeschooling – the acronym alone couldn't make clearer their mission. The foundation on which the PACE program was built "...offers parents the opportunity to make decisions on how their children are educated (and)...provides alternative choices to the regular school experience." The IDEA program's objective is to "...build and foster a community of learners which views education as not confined to the traditional four walls of a classroom, rather a free-flowing exchange of knowledge and ideas ." Under the "new" proposed top down legislation, existing programs such as these will be re-formed into the generic public schools that the legislation was originally written for.

That being said, however, it is unlikely that legislation drafters will ever undertake such an endeavor. So at the very minimum, here are the areas in the proposed "new" state regulations that must be changed.

4 AAC 33.421

*(b): The program must conform with statewide goals and performance standards as set out in:
4AAC 04.010, 4 AAC 04.200*

Regulations 4 AAC 04.010 and 4 AAC 04.200 were designed to facilitate a relationship between the community and the school and protect the students in a public school institution and do not apply correctly to a homeschool situation where a child is most often being taught directly by the parents. This legislation should not be

"borrowed" and adopted for homeschoolers because much of it does not apply and infringes on the very rights that homeschoolers are often practicing when they choose alternative education. 4 AAC 04.010 needs to be rewritten or eliminated, as it was not written with homeschool students in mind. For example, 04 AAC 04.010 (b) (2) reads as follows: "empower the public with the knowledge that the skills and subjects included in this chapter are of great importance to education so that the public can participate in local educational planning with more authority and effect." A homeschool does not need the public "empowered with the knowledge that the skills and subjects of this chapter are of great importance so that the public can participate in local educational planning with more authority and effect". Homeschooling takes the "public" out of the equation and allows parents to be more than just participants. Homeschool parents ARE the educational planners for their children. Another example: 4 AAC 04.200 (a) reads as follows: "Subsections (b) and (c) of this section identify and describe content and performance standards that reflect the highest abilities and qualities of the teaching profession." The list of performance standards in (b) and (c) referred to above is too extensive to copy here. Again, this does not apply to homeschoolers being taught by a parent who has a God-given right to be their child's teacher and does not need to qualify by anyone's criteria or performance standard.

4 AAC 33.421

(c): The program must use curriculum materials, including textbooks and other instructional aids, that have been reviewed and selected by the district school board, are of the same quality as those materials that the district offers in the district's other programs, and are in compliance with AS 14.03.090 and AS 14.18.060.

Here again the legislation is demanding public school legislation standards in my home. AS 14.03.090 reads: "...**partisan, sectarian, or denominational doctrines may not be advocated in a public school** (my home if I'm a part of a correspondence program) **during the hours the school is in session...**" My children are learning from the moment they awake in the morning until the moment they fall asleep at night. I teach my children "when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" Deuteronomy 5:7. Even with set "school hours" at home this section cannot possibly apply. This subsection must not be passed! The government cannot regulate or limit the religious beliefs, denominational doctrines, partisan or sectarian biases that we wish to represent to, teach to or advocate to our children. As homeschoolers, many of us are teaching our children at home for the very reason that we wish to impart religious biases! We cannot allow the government to intentionally or inadvertently pass legislation that could jeopardize our freedom to influence our children. We are not talking about a hired teacher in a public institution when we are looking at these correspondence programs. We are talking about parents and their children in their own homes. We must be allowed to teach our children whatever we choose, whether the materials we use are purchased by the state or by our own funds.

Each family that chooses to homeschool has their own unique list of reasons why they chose this option. Some of the objections many of us have to the public institutions

will be brought into our homes with the proposed regulations above. As parents we need to be able to maintain control and freedom in choosing the materials we use in teaching our children at home. With the passing of this legislation, the government has the power to prevent me teaching my religion to my family with materials purchased by me in my home.

4AAC 33.421 subsection (h) specifies and regulates the appropriate spending of state funds. I understand that this is necessary and reasonable. It is a completely different issue than approving unfunded materials that are to be used. I am not objecting to the regulations of state funding, but to the regulation of curriculum and course of study as stated again in subsection (g) part 1 and in subsection (d) below:

4 AAC 33.421

(g) The program must include a plan for receiving parental advice and involvement in planning, development, and evaluation of the correspondence study program, including the selection and evaluation of curriculum, teachers, and administrators; the plan must include a signed agreement between the statewide correspondence program certified teacher and the parent, or parents, of each student, the agreement

- 1) must verify that the curriculum materials and course of study are aligned to state standards and comply with AS 14.03.090 and appropriate for the student;*
- 2) must document the process used to ensure curriculum materials are aligned to state standards and in compliance with AS 14.03.090, including a certified teachers review of all curriculum materials for each student.*

4 AAC 33.421

(d) The program staff, including certified teachers, shall not provide instruction using religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational curricula purchased privately by the parent, or by the student if the curricula teach particular religious beliefs, or a particular religion as true.

In (d) above, it is unclear whether the parent teaching the child is considered part of the program staff. If this regulation was interpreted that way then it would again prohibit religious instruction in the home. This regulation needs more clarity.

The following regulations are proposed that would mandate state testing of the students enrolled in the above programs.

4 AAC 33.421

(f) The district must require enrolled students to participate in the statewide student assessment program as required by 4 AAC 06.710 – 4 AAC 06.790; the program must
(1) have staff inform parents of state testing requirements and the consequences of non-compliance under 4 AAC 33.450

4 AAC 33.450

FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE IN STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENT TESTS.

(a) If a student fails to participate in a state mandated assessment test the student will be ineligible for enrollment in the statewide correspondence program and denied enrollment in

any other statewide correspondence program, for the following year, unless the district of enrollment has excused the student from the state mandated assessment.

This legislation should not be enacted. I understand that if the State is funding a program, they are going to need some way of monitoring and evaluating the program and all participants and staff for assessment. There are adequate provisions in subsection 4 AAC 33.421 (e) to achieve this.

4 AAC 33.421

(e) To ensure the academic progress of enrolled students, the program must include an assessment plan of the same quality as an assessment plan that the district offers in the district's other programs; assessment must include:

(1) monitoring of the enrolled student by a certified teacher; the monitoring must include at least monthly review of the student's work and documentation of the certified teacher's review;

Monthly review is an excessive burden to place on the parent but quarterly review would be sufficient to ensure that academic progress was being made.

Legislation requiring homeschoolers to participate in State testing must not be enacted. Any existing mandates need to be repealed or amended to include a provision for parents to opt out of the tests if they deem this to be best for their child. Giving correspondence program administrators the power to excuse students from testing and then requiring the high percentage of participation as spelled out in AAC 33.421 (f)(3) does not give them the freedom to allow parents/students to opt out of testing. There are legitimate reasons why homeschool parents might not want to participate in the assessment testing.

1. Testing is not an accurate assessment. This is especially true for homeschoolers because they are choosing an unconventional approach to education. One of the biggest benefits of homeschooling is the freedom it gives us to create a scope and sequence (what to teach and at what grade level to teach it) suited to our own children and of our own choosing – not the state's. We are not teaching to the test, nor do we want to be forced to just to prove our performance to the critics. Testing would require homeschool parents to teach what the government decides is appropriate for our kids to learn and at what age they should learn it. This unravels the very fabric of existing correspondence programs stated missions and objectives. And it erodes the very freedom many homeschoolers are trying to exercise. Often the reason a child is in a homeschooling setting, is because the scope or sequence of the public school did not suit the parents or the child. Testing would, in practice, dictate curriculum.

State tests are created to assess the knowledge, understanding, capabilities and advancement of students being taught in an institutionalized setting. Public schools are basically similar across the state and as they are governed by state standards, testing is going to be far more accurate among those who have gone through the system that they were designed to test. Conversely, the cultural atmosphere of a homeschool setting is going to vary greatly from home to home. State tests are going to be biased against this minority background. For example: one of the questions found on the second grade IOWA test of Basic Skills assessment test in the social studies section shows a picture of a chalk board and asks where that particular item would usually be found. The choices

are home, school and two other choices. This question would obviously be biased if "school" were the correct answer. On the IOWA test of Basic Skills test for first graders the same question is asked about a globe. Many homeschoolers have these kinds of resources in their homes and these kinds of questions would not correctly assess their knowledge. This is a good example of how standardized tests are going to be biased against the alternative culture of the homeschooling population.

There is also great controversy among psychologists as to the validity of standardized testing, and whether it does assess ability and knowledge, or rather familiarity and comfort with testing procedures and materials. Not all children are even familiar with the same types of testing procedures let alone the same educational materials. Furthermore, homeschool parents are intimately acquainted with their students and know them and their strengths and weaknesses so well that they often don't feel the need to "test" their knowledge. Consequently, these students are not likely to be as familiar with the whole concept of testing as conventional students. There is a greater range of variance in testing procedures and educational materials in a homeschool setting. There are such a wide array of educational materials available now for homeschoolers that accuracy in testing would be almost impossible. My first grader, who is reading at a third grade level and doing math at a second grade level has never even filled out a bubble answer sheet and may score poorly even on these categories of the tests simply because of the confusing process.

Another problem with standardized testing is that the tests presume a standard of knowledge that homeschoolers might not agree with. For example, most public school textbooks of world history teach that the earth is millions of years old and that dinosaurs were prehistoric animals. I have personally taught my kids a young-earth (only 6 or 7 thousand years old), creation view of history. They have learned that dinosaurs and people were, in fact, on the earth at the same time. That is what we believe based on the Bible. I use this example to show that any test questions about this are going to be religiously biased against my kids. If the tests show that my kids are not educated properly because they didn't "know that people and dinosaurs were not on the earth at the same time" or that certain archaeological findings date people back 12,000 years or more then the tests did not assess their knowledge but their beliefs. This would also be similar to a child taking a standardized test in the 1400's answering the question "what shape is the earth? a) flat b) round etc. One of the reasons I homeschool is because I want to teach my children our personal beliefs which are often not the perspective being taught in the public schools. The tests are going to be biased against this freedom of belief.

2. Testing has psychological ramifications. Many homeschool parents don't want to expose their children to the psychological stress, pressure and labeling of testing. They don't want grades to become the focus of learning nor a tool to alter self-esteem. Rather, they want learning to be a natural gathering of information and skills that the child can learn to use and apply and reason with. They don't want their child to aspire to a goal that is less worthy than the bare achievement of appreciating the world we live in and mastering it...simply a love of learning. To aspire to acquire a letter grade or a high score on a test cheapens and overshadows the goals that some of us want for our children. Many of us homeschool for this very reason. Again, this is yet another instance where

the rules and regulations for public schools cannot be imposed on homeschoolers without encroaching upon the rights we seek to keep.

Government assisted homeschooling, via the existing correspondence programs, provides a wide range of opportunities that would not otherwise be available and is beneficial to many homeschoolers. Money spent on education in these unique cultural settings (homes) assures the state a continual diverse pool of future Alaskans. Changing or passing legislation that diminishes the difference between public schools and homeschools serves no logical end. Today, Alaska has the best climate for homeschoolers of any state for parents who want to teach their children without government funding or assistance. Why not set this goal for funded homeschool programs too?

Subject: CS of HB464

Date: Mon, 4 Mar 2002 17:58:47 -0800

From: "wagar family" <kwagar@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

I am Kristin Wagar, a homeschooling mom, and want to see a Committee Substitute of HB464 adopted. Our family was homeschooling prior to IDEA and have been with idea since the onset and would like to keep this fine program in place and unchanged.

Thank you,
Kris Wagar
1897 Badger Rd.
North Pole, AK 99705

Subject: DEED's Proposed Regulations

Date: Mon, 4 Mar 2002 16:12:49 -0900

From: "Susan J. Lochner" <susan@bygeorgecreations.com>

To: <Senator_Alan_Austerman@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Jerry_Ward@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Ben_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Loren_Leman@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_John_Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Randy_Phillips@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Rick_Halford@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Georgianna_Lincoln@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us>, <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

To: Public representatives and responsible adults for better education

From: The Lochner Family

We support the **CHANGES** to the DEED's Proposed Regulations that were presented by Jim Foster in Juneau on Friday, March 1, 2002. as outlined below. We find the proposed regulations harmful to our freedom of choice in education. We have found that the homeschooling model and in particular the IDEA format to benefit not only our family directly but also the community of Eagle River in which we live.

Sincerely,

George & Susan Lochner

| DEED's PROPOSED | GCSD's (or IDEA's) SUGGESTED |
|--|---|
| <p>4 AAC 33.420(a) A district that proposes to enroll out-of-district students in a state-wide correspondence study program, including a correspondence study program operated by a charter school, must first file an annual application and receive written approval from the department to operate a statewide correspondence study program.</p> <p>(b) The department will approve a district's application if the application satisfactorily demonstrates that the district's proposed statewide correspondence study program complies with the requirements in 4 AAC 33.421.</p> | <p>4 AAC 33.420(a) A district that proposes to enroll out-of-district students in a state-wide correspondence study program, a state supported home school program, or a correspondence study program operated by a charter school, must file an initial application and receive written approval from the department to operate a statewide correspondence study program.</p> <p>(b) The department will approve a district's application if the application satisfactorily demonstrates that the district's proposed state-wide correspondence study program, a state supported home school program, or a correspondence study program operated by a charter school, complies with the requirements in 4 AAC 33.421.</p> <p>(c) Once the initial application is approved, the district's program will be reviewed not</p> |

Subject: CS of HB464

Date: Mon, 4 Mar 2002 17:58:47 -0800

From: "wagar family" <kwagar@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

I am Kristin Wagar, a homeschooling mom, and want to see a Committee Substitute of HB464 adopted. Our family was homeschooling prior to IDEA and have been with idea since the onset and would like to keep this fine program in place and unchanged.

Thank you,
Kris Wagar
1897 Badger Rd.
North Pole, AK 99705

Subject: InfoExch 03.01.02

Date: Tue, 5 Mar 2002 09:08:29 -0900

From: "Star Traveler" <startraveler@gci.net>

To: <sheila_box@eed.state.ak.us>

Please scroll down to the red, I believe there is a statement by DEED on the proposed regs that is misleading in nature re: 14.30.010 and 4 AAC 33.450. The proposed regulations seem to not accomplish anything truly positive whatsoever, and I question the need for their creation at all due to the unkind nature towards home school families that seems to jump out throughout them. The questions and answers do not adequately address, at all, the left field direction these regulations go.

Q & A s About Proposed Correspondence School Regulations (this document is from DEED-Sheila Box)

The State Board of Education & Early Development on November 28, 2001, proposed amendments to 4 AAC 33.420-490, regulations the board first enacted in 1999. The November amendments further define the requirements for the operation by publicly funded school districts of correspondence programs that enroll students from outside a school district's legally defined geographical boundaries. Currently 10 of Alaska's 53 school districts offer such programs and enroll students from outside their districts.

The major features of the proposal:

- requires the school district's certified teaching staff to be involved in grading student homework and in assigning the student's grades,
- sets out required student participation rates on state-mandated assessments,
- sets out consequences for students failing to participate in state-mandated assessments,
- sets out responsibilities of parents and students in regards to participation in state-mandated assessments,
- requires local school boards to be involved in selection of curricular materials, and
- gives school districts guidance on appropriate instructional expenditures for parents.

Q: Why is the state regulating school district correspondence programs?

A: School district correspondence programs that enroll students from outside a school district boundary are a relatively new phenomenon that have relatively few rules placed on them. The state regulates public schools to make certain students get the best education possible and so that all children obtain equitable treatment in public schools.

Q: Are correspondence programs the only non-traditional alternative public school program in Alaska?

A: Correspondence programs are only one type of alternative public school program available in Alaska. Charter schools are another. Other examples of alternatives are Mt. Edgecumbe High School, a boarding school in Sitka, and Alyeska Central School, a statewide correspondence study program operated by the State of Alaska since 1939. The state regulates each program to make sure that students enrolled in the programs receive a high quality education and equitable treatment.

Q: Do these proposed regulations affect all correspondence programs?

A: These proposed regulations affect only correspondence programs operated by Alaska public school districts that enroll students from outside the enrolling school district's boundary.

Q: Does this proposal affect home schools?

A: These proposed regulations do not cover home schools that are exempt from the Compulsory School Attendance Act (AS 14.30.010(12)). Home schools under AS 14.30.010 are exempt from all the laws and regulations that affect public schools. These home schools do not receive any state education funding.

Q: Does the Department of Education & Early Development have plans to regulate home schools that operate under AS 14.30.010?

A: No. The State does not intend to regulate home schools that do not receive state education funding, that is, those that operate under AS 14.30.010.

This does not appear to be a reliable statement - if you look at your proposed reg 33.450, "*If a student fails to take a state-mandated assessment test, the student is ineligible for enrollment in a state-wide correspondence program for the following year...*" I can probably pretty much be assured that if a privately, independently home schooled child's family approaches a state correspondence for enrollment, but has not done any benchmark exams, they will be told they cannot enroll until they have which is a timely punitive denial of education to a child for no reason - this DOES affect families covered under AS 14.30.010 - state funded correspondence schools will cover themselves by refusing enrollment and I believe you know that.

Q: Are students enrolled in school district correspondence programs considered home schools?

A: The State considers all students enrolled in a public school district program as public school students. This is so whether the students attend classes in a school district building or whether they study at home.

Q: May students enrolled in correspondence study programs also enroll in other school programs?

A: Yes. A state law (AS 14.03.095) allows children enrolled in private, home and correspondence programs to enroll as part time students in a public school to enroll in one or more courses. These students are considered public school students while taking their public school classes.

Q: Do the proposed regulations apply to part time public school students?

A: The regulations would apply to the students only when they are taking public school courses. They would not apply when they are taking courses from their private, home, or non-public correspondence study program.

Q: Are school districts required to administer state mandated exams to part time public school students?

A: Yes. All public school students, including part-time students, are administered the state-mandated exams (AS14.03.075, 4AAC 06.730 and .738).

Q: Under the proposed regulations, what happens if a correspondence student does not take a state-mandated exam?

A: The student may be excused from taking the exam by the school district for good cause, as determined by the district. However, if the district does not excuse the student, the student will not be allowed to enroll in that school district s, or any other school district s, correspondence program the following year. The correspondence program is an alternative to the regular public school setting. As an alternative, correspondence programs likely do not meet the needs of every student. If a student cannot demonstrate adequate progress in reading, writing and math on state exams, then perhaps correspondence is not an appropriate alternative for the student. The student may need more attention and supervision that is available in a regular public school, or in a different kind of alternative school setting.

Q: How will parents know when their children are supposed to take a state-mandated assessment?

A: School districts under the proposed regulation will be required to inform parents and students of the dates for student assessments, and the consequences for not taking the exam.

Q: What else will school districts be required to do about assessments under the proposed regulations?

A: The proposed regulation requires school districts to maintain the confidentiality of all test questions on state-mandated exams. This is the same requirement that already has been set for regular school district programs (4 AAC 06.765). To maintain confidentiality, students will need to take state-mandated exams in secure test sites, just like other students. This means correspondence students have to go to a site that has been declared secure by the school district.

Q: How will the state know whether correspondence students are participating in state-mandated exams?

A: Under the proposed regulations, school districts will need to show that the participation rates for students

in the prior years spring administration of state-mandated exams was within 10 percent of the statewide average for all students. If a district's participation rate does not meet that standard, the district risks losing its state approval to operate a correspondence study program that enrolls students outside its boundaries.

Q: Why has the state set such a drastic penalty for non-participation in state exams?

A: Alaska's policy makers have set a goal that all public school students will meet state academic performance standards in reading, writing and math. The progress of students is measured by state exams beginning in the third grade. In addition, students, beginning in 2004, may not receive a high school diploma if they do not pass the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam. It is important for schools to know whether a student is meeting standards in earlier grades so that students get the help they need early to assure they meet standards, pass the high school exam and earn a diploma.

Q: Are there any other reasons?

A: Publicly funded correspondence programs are alternatives to the regular public school. If a correspondence program cannot demonstrate adequate academic progress of its students in the core skill areas of reading, writing and math on state exams, the effectiveness of the program cannot be judged, nor can the performance of its students.

Q: How will school districts and parents know if students are making adequate academic progress?

A: Each school district needs to develop an assessment plan for its correspondence study program. Both current and proposed regulations require that the plan needs to be of the same quality as the assessment plans for regular district programs.

Q: What is in the assessment plan?

A: The proposed regulation provides further definition for the assessment plan: monitoring of the enrolled student by a certified teacher; a monthly review of student work; documentation of a teacher's review; a record of grades or standards the student has met as determined by a certified teacher and the student's parent; a transcript that denotes the origin of curricular materials for any course other than a district developed course.

The requirement for teacher involvement only applies to the public school correspondence program component of a student's home-school education.

Q: How will the parents of correspondence students be assured of a voice in their children's education?

A: The proposed regulation requires school districts to develop a plan for receiving the advice and involvement of parents in the planning, development and evaluation of the correspondence study program.

Q: What's included in the parent plan?

A: The plan needs to include a signed agreement between the correspondence teacher and the parent of the student. The plan will verify and document that the course of study and curriculum materials are aligned with state academic standards. The plan needs to document the process used to ensure that the curriculum and materials meet state standards. The plan also needs to show that a certified teacher will review curriculum materials for each student's public school correspondence courses.

Q: How will textbooks and curriculum materials be selected for statewide correspondence study programs?

A: A regulation currently in force requires local school boards to review and select texts and materials, and they need to be of the same quality as materials selected in other school district programs. This requirement does not change with the proposed regulations. As with all parts of these regulations, the requirement applies only to a publicly funded and managed correspondence program. The regulation in force and the proposed changes place no restrictions on private courses and materials or instruction by parents or others.

that are not part of the public school correspondence program.

Q: Why do local school boards have to get involved in selecting textbooks and materials?

A: Alaska statute (AS 14.14.090(7) and AS 14.08.111(9)) requires all local school boards to be involved in the selection of texts and curriculum materials for all of their school programs. This includes public school correspondence programs.

Q: Can correspondence study students use texts, instructional aids and other materials that parents select?

A: Yes, if the materials are on the school board's approved list, or are approved by the school district through a district-established process.

Under both the current and proposed regulations, districts are required to assure that curriculum materials are reviewed and selected by the district school board, are of the same quality as those materials that the district

offers in the district's other programs. This proposed regulation does not change this requirement.

Q: What about materials not on the school board's approved list. May parents use them?

A: They may use them, but not during the hours the correspondence school is in session, nor may parents or public schools use state funds to purchase them. Parents may purchase these materials only with their own funds.

Q: What about religious materials. May parents use them?

A: Yes, parents may use religious materials without restriction when used in a non-public school correspondence program.

If used in a public school correspondence program, such material may be used provided the material is not used to advocate a religious point of view. Examples of allowable uses of religious material include as curriculum materials in literature, comparative religion, philosophy and social studies.

The Alaska Constitution (Article VII, Section I) requires all public schools be free from sectarian control. Also, a state law (AS 14.03.90) prohibits public schools from advocating partisan, sectarian or denominational doctrines during the hours a school is in session. The law also states: A teacher or school board violating this section may not receive public money.

Because of this, the proposed regulation prohibits correspondence teachers and other staff from providing instruction using religious, partisan, sectarian or denominational curricula even if purchased privately by the student's parent.

Q: May parents buy religious texts and materials with their personal money?

A: Yes. And they can instruct their children with these materials provided that the instruction is not part of the public school correspondence program, and provided that public school teachers are not involved in that instruction.

Q: May a student receive credit for a course or educational program taken outside of the public school correspondence program?

A: As in any district, parents can apply to the local district for review and acceptance of a learning experience or course taken outside of the district. A district may use criteria and a process of its own design to review and evaluate such work and award appropriate credit. The proposed regulation requires that the source of such course or academic work should be indicated on the student's transcript. This is comparable to current practice in districts when a student transfers from another school and the courses accepted for transfer are listed on the transcript with the name of the school or program identified.

Q: Can public school correspondence programs give money to parents to pay for instructional expenses for their child's education?

A: Yes. School districts generate \$3,200 for each out-of-district correspondence student. And, under current rules, they may allot all or part of that amount for parents. Under the proposed regulation, school districts need to distribute those funds from a fund account.

Q: What rules will apply to funds spent through the fund accounts?

A: The proposed regulations will require that monies from the funds be spent only for the instructional needs of the enrolled child; non-consumable materials purchased are the property of the school district and need to be

returned to the school district when the student exits the correspondence program; and religious, partisan, sectarian or denominational materials may not be purchased.

Under the proposed regulations, the correspondence school will need to provide written guidance to parents and students on what constitutes appropriate and allowable fund expenditures. All expenditures from fund accounts will need the approval of a certified teacher.

In addition, the district may not use the funds from the account to supplant funds for students enrolled in the program under an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

NOTE: The Department of Education & Early Development is recommending that the state board further amend the proposed regulation to allow approval by the district as well as or in place of approval by the certified teacher signing the agreement.

Q: Why doesn't the State require school districts to spend the whole \$3,200 on the correspondence program?

A: This subject is not addressed in the current or proposed regulations. However, the State Board of Education & Early Development is investigating this issue now. The reason the board is interested in this matter is because current state law places no requirement on districts to spend the funds generated by out-of-district students in correspondence programs on the correspondence program. Local boards are required by statute to work for the best interest of the students residing within their district boundaries. While some districts may create parent councils for correspondence programs, there is no statutory requirement for such oversight.

Further, parents of out-of-district students may have little or no influence over how state money is spent on their child's program, since parents who reside outside a school district boundaries cannot vote for the school board that sets policies for the correspondence school in which their children are enrolled. The state board may ask the Legislature to become involved in this issue. The state board may ask the Legislature to require districts to spend the funds generated by the statewide correspondence program on the correspondence program in which the child is enrolled.

Q: Does the state have any other responsibility for assuring the quality of public school district correspondence programs?

A: The Department of Education & Early Development under the proposed regulation will have the authority to monitor school districts to make sure they are meeting the provisions of the proposed regulation on correspondence programs that enroll out-of-district students.

Q: Can members of the public comment on the proposed regulation?

A: Yes. Any person may offer comments to the State Board of Education & Early Development.

Q: How can the public comment?

A: You can submit formal comments one of three ways.

1. You may make oral comments at the next meeting of the state board on April 4 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. in Juneau, State Board Room, Goldbelt Building, 801 W. Tenth St., Juneau. Or you can participate by going to your Legislative Information Office.
2. You may submit written comments no later than 4:30 p.m., on March 4, 2002. Send them to Department of Education & Early Development, Regulations Review, 801 W. Tenth St., Juneau, AK 99801-1894.
3. You may also make comments on the web no later than 4:30 p.m., March 4, 2002. You can find the online form at www.eed.state.ak.us/reqs. You can also find the proposed regulation at the same online address.

If you need further assistance on making your comments, contact Sheila Box(907) 465-2801, or e-mail

Subject: Correspondence Schools

Date: Tue, 5 Mar 2002 00:18:18 GMT

From: Wohrle <gwohrle@juno.com>

To: Representative_Gretchen_Guess@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Lesil_McGuire@legis.state.ak.us, Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us,
Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us, Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us

Attached is a letter regarding the proposed regulations on Correspondence Schools.
Thank you for taking the time to read about my concerns.

Julie Wohrle
Eagle River

I (you) can do all things through CHRIST who stengthens me (you again!).
Philippians 4:13
Have a Great day in the Lord!!!
Jules.....

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| Letter to the legislature.doc | Name: Letter to the legislature.doc
Type: WINWORD File (application/msword)
Encoding: base64
Description: Letter to the legislature.doc
Download Status: Not downloaded with message |
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Dear State Board of Education;

I am a certified teacher who is currently teaching full time in my home. I am homeschooling three of our five children. We have been homeschooling for 8 years; 5 years on our own and the past three years in partnership with I.D.E.A. This program has provided resources that have greatly enriched our children's education, providing the ultimate opportunities for our children as a result of the partnering of families and state.

I.D.E.A. assists the homeschooling community through various aides and support systems. They have designed a unique program that partners w/ parents and students of homeschoolers while maintaining the high standards of the state's requirements. The program's strengths are:

1. REQUIRED Individual Learning Plans
2. FREEDOM to select and order curricular materials to meet my child's ILP's
3. CERTIFIED teacher support and other staff
4. ACCOUNTABILITY through progress reports and follow-up
5. STATE MANDATED TESTING access
6. FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS to enable families to enrich their teaching opportunities
7. CURRICULUM FAIRS and extensive PO Vendor list
8. PRACTICAL/HELPFUL WORKSHOP opportunities
9. SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, COUNCILING AND GUIDANCE ie; transcripts, graduation ceremony
10. PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

THIS PROGRAM WORKS!! The scores on the state mandated tests (total averages: State = 61.9% vs. IDEA = 64.5%) are showing that what is currently in place is successful. I find myself asking the question: **"Why change something that works well for ALL parties involved?"**

A few short years ago, our state government granted us incredible freedom as homeschoolers to educate our children unhindered by laws and regulations that had previously been required. By doing so, you in essence, told us that you believed we are able to do our job and do it well w/o unnecessary laws and regulations. This brings me to my second question: **Why has your confidence in our ability to educate our children changed now that we are partnering w/ you through state correspondence schools?**

One main personal concern my husband and I have is centered on curricula choices. We have elected to pay out-of-pocket to purchase Christian curricula for the past 8 years. As I read through the proposed regulations it appears that this freedom is at risk due to restrictions that would be placed on I.D.E.A. teachers. Interfacing (on educational matters) between teacher and family would no longer be allowed if the family were using materials other than secular curricula. One reason we choose to homeschool is to have direct control over the choice of curricula and the type of education our children receive. If this freedom were removed, we would be forced to return to homeschooling our children as we have in the past, w/o partnering w/ the state through the I.D.E.A. program. Our children (as well as several hundred others) have indeed been enriched through the opportunities provided through I.D.E.A. We would be very disappointed if we were forced to leave the program due to the proposed regulations.

If your main concern is indeed the children, then please do not alter and/or impose regulations upon the presently existing I.D.E.A. partnership program! These changes would only serve to entangle and distract from the services they are presently providing.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns. I trust you will make the decisions that are truly in the best interest of the children of this great state.

Sincerely,

Julie M. Wohrle

Subject: Proposed DEED reg changes

Date: Tue, 5 Mar 2002 13:41:35 -0800

From: "Hackworth, Mark A POA02" <Mark.A.Hackworth@poa02.usace.army.mil>

To: "'Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us'" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

We've homeschooled for 20 years with 5 children and are currently in IDEA under the Galena School system. We have 1 in grad school in Boston, MA, 1 at UAA Anch, and 3 still being schooled in the home. Both of our older children were successful products of homeschooling in spite of our lack of experience. In this competitive world we desire to use the very, very best material that is available in our homeschool program. 20+ years experience has lead us to a combination of nonsecular published material (from HBJ and Scott Foresman that IDEA pays for) and secular published material (from Abeka that we pay for). The proposed DEED regulation changes for correspondence schools (4 AAC 33.420-.490) would not permit us to be enrolled in IDEA with this type of blended material. This issue and others within the proposed changes seem to be an attempt to hold correspondence/homeschools to higher standards than our public school counterparts. If the changes go through as proposed our only option will be one followed by many: drop out of the IDEA program. Please don't change something that has worked so well for us. We've seen the proof in our own children that the system already really does work.

Respectfully yours,

Mark Hackworth

Sharon Hackworth

Corey Hackworth (22 yo)

Zachary Hackworth (19 yo)

Brynna Hackworth (13 yo - 7th grader)

Jesse Hackworth (10 yo - 5th grader)

Makenna Hackworth (8 yo - 2nd grader)

Subject: Committe Substitute for House Bill 464

Date: Tue, 05 Mar 2002 13:39:39 -0900

From: Kathryn Freeburg <Katfree3d@gci.net>

To: Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Mr. Dyson,

I am writing to ask you to please adopt the committe substitute for House Bill 464. As a homeschool parent with a student in the IDEA program, I would greatly appreciate a timely passage of this committe substitute. Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,
Kathryn Freeburg

- Subject: Re: DEED's Proposed Regulations

Date: Tue, 5 Mar 2002 19:48:01 -0900

From: "Pawfam" <pawfam@alaska.net>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Georgianna_Lincoln@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Rick_Halford@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Randy_Phillips@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_John_Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Loren_Leman@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Ben_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Jerry_Ward@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Alán_Austerman@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Susan J. Lochner" <susan@bygeorgecreations.com>

CC: "Shirley Holloway" <shirley_holloway@eed.state.ak.us>

thank you for your message, I have received several emails with the format of the side by side presented by IDEA. Although you say you are in support of the recommendation made by Jim Foster, I have just a couple of questions for you instead of just the side by side.

in 4AAC33.421 (a) you are suggesting to add the: or a correspondence study program operated by a charter school. Right now the definition for charter school is different than a correspondence school and the funding is different I believe, how would you reconcile this?

in 4AAC33.421 (c) you suggest that districts should establish procedures for the review and selection of materials..... districts are already charged with the responsibility of review of materials not give it away to another procedure, PTA has spent many hours testifying in districts across the state in support of or against a particular piece of proposed curricula. What is the process for you as a parent enrolled in a state wide program with no one school board to appeal to? How do you determine what the budget is and if each student counts as \$3200 how do you know what is being done with the remaining dollars? The legislature has asked all districts to spend not less than 70% of their dollars on instruction. I would not ask for less from any school system, correspondence or brick and mortar.

in 4AAC 33.421 (e) you suggest that quarterly plans are ok

what would you suggest is the best length of time that a students work can go without being reviewed. Quarterly seems to me to be a long time to go to find out that the learning plan is not being followed? And if the parent is not following the plan agreed upon I would like to know what the intervention plans are. If a student is checked only twice in one semester and then decides to return to the local school district the second semester, who has failed this student if they are not up to speed?

in 4AAC33.421 (f) the suggestion is to delete the required assessment percentage of participation of 10%.

I personally have a problem discounting any children in the assessment process. The state of Alaska is serious about raising the bar for all children in the state not just those that are convenient to see and touch. Military children, low socio economic children, immigrant children need to be serviced and counted and assessed and I would not discount correspondence students with a different expectation of participation. In several different places people have suggested ways to leave out children who might do badly on the tests and therefore reflect badly on the schools designation, this makes me angry.

Again I thank you for sending me the side by side and the instructions from your field representative, Sally Javier, we can clearly see that you are organized and receive the same information. It is good campaign work. The discussion will be good and we can only hope to make the decision best for the children. It may require homeschooling parents to do more because some are misusing the system but we are attempting to shore up those holes and develop accountability for all who educate and take the responsibility for educating children.

Paula Pawlowski

----- Original Message -----

From: Susan J. Lochner

To: Senator Alan Austerman@legis.state.ak.us ; Senator Jerry Ward@legis.state.ak.us ;

Senator Ben Stevens@legis.state.ak.us ; Senator Loren Leman@legis.state.ak.us ;
Senator Johnny Ellis@legis.state.ak.us ; Senator John Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us ;
Senator Bettye Davis@legis.state.ak.us ; Senator Randy Phillips@legis.state.ak.us ;
Senator Rick Halford@legis.state.ak.us ; Senator Georgianna Lincoln@legis.state.ak.us ;
Representative Pete Kott@legis.state.ak.us ; Representative Fred Dyson@legis.state.ak.us
Sent: Monday, March 04, 2002 4:12 PM
Subject: DEED's Proposed Regulations

To: Public representatives and responsible adults for better education

From: The Lochner Family

We support the CHANGES to the DEED's Proposed Regulations that were presented by Jim Foster in Juneau on Friday, March 1, 2002. as outlined below. We find the proposed regulations harmful to our freedom of choice in education. We have found that the homeschooling model and in particular the IDEA format to benefit not only our family directly but also the community of Eagle River in which we live.

Sincerely,

George & Susan Lochner

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| | |
|---|---|
| <p>4 AAC 33.421(a) A statewide correspondence study program offered by a district must meet the requirements of this section before its application will be approved by the department.</p> | <p>4 AAC 33.421(a) A state-wide correspondence study program, a state supported home school program, or a correspondence study program operated by a charter school, offered by a district must meet the requirements of this section before its initial application will be approved by the department.</p> |
| <p>4 AAC 33.421(b) The program must conform with statewide goals and performance standards, as set out in 4 AAC 04.010 – 4 AAC 04.200</p> | <p>4 AAC 33.421(b) The program must conform with statewide goals and performance standards, as set out in 4 AAC 04.010 – 4 AAC 04.200</p> |
| <p>4 AAC 33.421(c) The program must use curriculum materials, including textbooks and other instructional aids, that have been reviewed and selected by the district school board, are of the same quality as those materials that the district offers in the district's other programs, and are in compliance with AS 14.03.090 and AS 14.18.060.</p> | <p>4 AAC 33.421(c) The district school board must establish procedures for the review and selection of all textbooks and instructional materials that are used within the statewide correspondence program or a state supported home school program to meet the standards. These materials must be of the same quality as those materials that the district offers in the district's other programs, and are in compliance with state law.</p> |
| <p>4 AAC 33.421(d) <i>The program staff, including certified teachers, shall not provide instruction using religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational curricula purchased privately by the parent, guardian of the student, or by the student if the curricula teach particular religious beliefs, or a particular religion, as true.</i></p> | <p>Delete this section because this is already covered in law.</p> |
| <p>4 AAC 33.421(e) To ensure the academic progress of enrolled students, the program must include an assessment plan of the same quality as an assessment plan that the district offers in the district's other</p> | <p>4 AAC 33.421(e) To ensure the academic progress of enrolled students, the program must include an assessment plan of the same quality as an assessment plan that the district offers in the district's other</p> |

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| <p>programs; <i>assessment must include:</i></p> <p><i>(1) monitoring of the enrolled student by a certified teacher; the monitoring must include at least monthly review of the student's work and documentation of the certified teacher's review;</i></p> <p><i>(2) grades, or standards met, determined and assigned by a certified teacher, after review and consideration of any recommendations submitted by the student and parents.;</i></p> <p><i>(3) a transcript that denotes curricula material origin for any course other than a district developed course.</i></p> | <p>programs; this assessment plan will include:</p> <p>(1) assistance and approval by the district's certified contact teacher in the development of an Individual Learning Plan for each student;</p> <p>(2) at least quarterly contact by the district's certified contact teacher reviewing the parent/ student progress with the Individual Learning Plan. The district certified contact teacher will maintain a record of the contact;</p> <p>(3) the district certified contact teacher will review and approve all grades submitted by the parent for all courses delineated in the student's Individual Learning Plan;</p> <p>(4) the district certified contact teacher will review the required student progress reports submitted by the parent;</p> <p>(5) Delete (3) of DEED's Proposed Regulations</p> |
| <p>4 AAC 33.421(f) The district must require enrolled students to participate in the statewide student assessment program as required by 4 AAC 06.710 - 4 AAC</p> | <p>4 AAC 33.421(f) The district must require enrolled students to participate in the statewide student assessment program as required by 4 AAC 06.710 - 4 AAC</p> |

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| <p>06.790; <i>the program must</i></p> <p><i>(1) have staff inform parents of state testing requirements and the consequences of non-compliance under 4 AAC 33.450; and</i></p> <p>(2) provide a secure testing facility pursuant to 4 AAC 06.765 to administer all state mandated assessment tests; or enter into agreements with local school districts and those site-based schools to allow statewide correspondence program students to participate in state required testing;</p> <p><i>(3) have available to the department, data documenting student participation rates in state required assessments within 10% points of the state average for the prior year's spring test administration.</i></p> | <p>06.790</p> <p>(1) that parents must sign an affidavit indicating that they understand the state testing requirements and that they will abide by them.</p> <p>(2) provide a secure testing facility pursuant to 4 AAC 06.765 to administer all state mandated assessment tests; or enter into agreements with local school districts and those site-based schools to allow statewide correspondence program students to participate in state required testing;</p> <p>(3) Delete</p> |
| <p>4 AAC 33.421(g) The program must include a plan for receiving parental advice and involvement in planning, development, and evaluation of the correspondence study program, including the</p> <p>selection and evaluation of curriculum, teachers, and administrators; <i>the plan must include a signed agreement between the statewide correspondence program certified teacher and the parent, or parents, of each student; the agreement</i></p> <p><i>(1) must verify that the curriculum materials and course of study are aligned to state standards and comply with AS 14.03.090, and appropriate for the student;</i></p> <p><i>(2) must document the process used to ensure curriculum materials are aligned to state standards and in compliance with AS 14.03.090, including a certified teacher review of all curriculum materials for each student.</i></p> | <p>4 AAC 33.421(g) The program must include a plan for receiving parental advice and involvement in planning, development, and evaluation of the state-wide correspondence study program, a state supported home school program, or a correspondence study program operated by a charter school, including the selection and evaluation of curriculum, teachers, and administrators; the plan must include a signed agreement between the statewide correspondence program the district certified contact teacher and the parent, or parents, of each student; the agreement must include the planned course of study and a plan for evaluating student progress, as agreed upon by the parent and the district certified contact teacher.</p> |

4 AAC 33.421(h) A statewide correspondence program may provide a fund account to parents for the purpose of meeting instructional expenses for the child enrolled in the program; the following requirements apply to the fund account:

(1) expenditures from statewide correspondence fund accounts must be for the student's instructional needs only;

(2) materials purchased with state funding are property of the program; non consumable materials must be returned to the program when the student exits the program for any reason;

(3) religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational materials may not be purchased with account funds;

(4) the program must provide written guidance, consistent with this chapter, on what constitutes appropriate and allowable expenditures of the fund accounts;

(5) all expenditures from the fund account must be approved by the certified teacher signing the student's plan; and

(6) the fund account may not be used either by the district or the parent to

supplant district funds or obligations for IEP services.

4 AAC 33.421(h) A state-wide correspondence study program, a state supported home school program, or a correspondence study program operated by a charter school, may provide a fund account to parents for the purpose of meeting instructional expenses for their students enrolled in the program; the following requirements apply to the fund account:

(1) expenditures from statewide correspondence fund accounts must be for student instructional needs; as referenced on the learning plan agreed upon by the parent and the district certified contact teacher;

(2) materials purchased with state funding are property of the program; non consumable materials must be returned to the program when the student exits the program for any reason;

(3) religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational materials may not be purchased with account funds;

(4) the program must provide written guidance, consistent with this chapter, on what constitutes appropriate and allowable expenditures of the fund accounts;

(5) each district must develop a process by which approval for expenditures from the fund account is given.

(6) Drop; already law.

4 AAC 33.450. FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE IN STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENT TESTS. (a) *If a student fails to participate in a state mandated assessment test the student will be ineligible for enrollment in the statewide correspondence program and denied enrollment in any other statewide correspondence program, for the following year, unless the district of*

Delete this section or treat correspondence or state supported home school students the same as you do all other public school students attending traditional schools.

enrollment has excused the student from the state mandated assessment.

Your PAC –

| Fname | L Name | Email |
|-------------------|----------------|--|
| Pam | Raygor | wdezarn@ideafamilies.org |
| Diana | Gamez | adgamez@ptialaska.net |
| Marie | Wyman | dmwyman@ideafamilies.org |
| Denise | Meehan | tmeehan@ideafamilies.org |
| Pam | Johnson | johnson@ideafamilies.or |
| Gena | Graves | rbgraves@gci.net |
| Susan | Kiggins | mkiggins@ideafamilies.or |
| Alternates | | |
| Peggie | Watson | pegnwayn@acsalaska.net |

Your Field Rep – Sally Javier - Sally@ideafamilies.org
Your Director – Steve Musser - Stevedm@ideafamilies.org
Executive Assistant - Carol Simpson - Carols@ideafamilies.org
Assistant Superintendent - Jim Foster - Jimfc@galenanet.net

Write to –

- The State Board of Education -submit an email on the website (scroll to bottom of this page) <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/rees/>
- Write individually to the State Board of Education Members by email http://www.eed.state.ak.us/state_board/MEMLIST.HTML
- Submit an email to your Legislator - <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/Legdist/22/legdist22.htm>
- Send comments to your legislator by faxing or calling in a POM (Public Opinion Message) of 50 words or less. Form - <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/info/docs/pomform.pdf>

Thank you all for all you do!

Sincerely,
Sally Javier
IDEA Field Rep. - Region A

Subject: HB 464

Date: Wed, 06 Mar 2002 20:57:57 -0900

From: FAMILY TOLLEFSRUJ <zodama@ptialaska.net>

Organization: Treehouse Productions

To: Homer_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Greetings,

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HRS Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002. THANK YOU!! My testimony is as follows:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are home school parents involved in the I.D.E.A. program which, as you may know, is a Statewide educational correspondence program based out of Galena. We are also the proud parents of a 10 year old daughter who, last year, scored in the 98th percentile overall in the National 4th grade benchmark exams as well as professional educators. We are writing today to ask you to adopt the CS (Committee Substitute) of HB464 and encourage the timely passage of this bill.

Respectfully,

DeWaine and Jane Tollefsrud
PO Box 3307
2465 Mount Augustine Drive
Homer, AK 99603
(907) 235-7262

Also attached is a letter addressed to the Dept. of Education and Early Development that outlines our major concerns about the original language of HB 464. The letter begins below:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are home school parents involved in the I.D.E.A. program which is a Statewide educational correspondence program based out of Galena. We are writing to you today to express our concerns about proposed regulations that would affect home schooling in Alaska. We are asking that you do not approve these regulations as written as they would greatly restrict our ability to educate our child.

As parents of a 10 year old daughter who, last year, scored in the 98th percentile overall in the National 4th grade benchmark exams and as professional educators we appreciate the intent of the new proposed regulations but strongly disagree with its verbiage. We have concerns about the reasons why our program is being held to different standards than other educational programs.

IDEA needs to submit an annual application. Charter School need only apply every ten years.

New regulations would require "[Assessment] by certified teacher once a month". This would be comparable to requiring monthly conferences with teachers in public school.

New regulations would also require; "A transcript that denotes curricula material origin...". This is already being done for course work that requires texts but would unduly limit

individually designed curricula. As professional educators this is distressing to us. In no other program is this reviewed. Instead, how about "How does curricula material align with the standards"?

"...certified teacher review of all curriculum material for each student.."Why does a certified teacher need to review all curriculum materials? As above.

"...data documenting student participation rates in the state required assessments within 10% points of the state average..." We are the only program in the state with this regulation.

The proposed new regulations are written as if our children's education is "at risk." It most assuredly is not! The State benchmark assessments show us to be comparable with other districts.

We recognize that the intent of these new regulation may have been to clarify already existing programs but if we all agree that parental involvement in the education of our children is a good thing then regulations should be made to facilitate that involvement rather than hinder it. Holding Statewide correspondence courses, such as I.D.E.A. to a higher standard than other programs is not only burdensome to the parent but is absolutely inappropriate.

Please do not approve the regulations as originally proposed. We urge you to consider instead the revised language as presented in the CS of HB 464.

Respectfully,

DeWaine and Jane Tollefsrud
PO Box 3307
2465 Mount Augustine Drive
Homer, AK 99603
(907) 235-7262

CS for HB 464

Subject: CS for HB 464

Date: Wed, 6 Mar 2002 22:52:11 -0800

From: "sterling & kaari bouma" <sbouma@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Homer_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Sirs,

I am asking you to adopt the Committee Substitute for HB 464 and to pass the legislation quickly.

We have so many problems with the proposed changes to the regulations for Home School and Charter School and Statowide Correspondence School that we **urge** you to pass instead the CS for HB 464. The regulation changes will go through as is, with no vote, unless you take up our cause.

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

Sterling and Kaari Bouma
4712 Rochelle Road
Homer, Alaska 99603
907-235-1988
IDEA--Interlor Distance Education of Alaska

HB464

Subject: HB464**Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 01:27:06 EST****From: Kathaber@aol.com****To: Homer_LIO@legis.state.ak.us**

Dear Representatives:

Please consider favorably your support for HB464. My son is thriving in IDEA and feel that this bill will be effective in enhancing its, and my son's, successes.

We are so impressed with the support from the caring, committed staff at IDEA. Whenever I have any questions my contact teacher gets takes my call or gets back to me immediately. This individual attention is precisely why we chose this type of instruction for our son. He is exceeding by one entire grade children his same age in public school.

IDEA does an outstanding job of curricula presentation, teacher/parent workshops on everything from science to literature to writing to whatever we request and general materials availability. Because we are in such close contact via the internet, more info regarding state and national art contests, geography competitions, spelling bees, writing assignments and science fairs reach us in time to participate, learn, benefit from and often win. Having a computer to access the internet opens a whole world of current information rich with sound, facts, photos and videos of any subject under the sun.

Please vote for HB464.

Thank you,
Kathryn Haber

Subject: RE: DEED's Proposed Regulations

Date: Tue, 5 Mar 2002 22:06:28 -0900

From: "rues" <rues@gci.net>

To: "Susan J. Lochner" <susan@bygeorgecreations.com>,
<Senator_Alان_Auerman@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Jerry_Ward@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Ben_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Loren_Leman@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_John_Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Randy_Phillips@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Senator_Rick_Halford@legis.state.ak.us>, <Senator_Georgianna_Lincoln@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear George and Susan,

Thanks for taking the time to comment on the proposed correspondence school regs. I will carefully consider your comments and suggestions.

Some provisions may need clearer language (there seems to have been some misunderstanding of the intent of some of the provisions) and there is on-going discussion about some provisions such as how often it is reasonable for homeschooling parents and students to check in with the certified teachers.

Thanks again for your comments and for taking such an active role in your children's education.

Sincerely,

Sally

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan J. Lochner [mailto:susan@bygeorgecreations.com]

Sent: Monday, March 04, 2002 4:13 PM

To: Senator_Alان_Auerman@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Jerry_Ward@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Ben_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us;
Senator_Loren_Leman@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Johnny_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_John_Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us;
Senator_Bettye_Davis@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Randy_Phillips@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Rick_Halford@legis.state.ak.us;
Senator_Georgianna_Lincoln@legis.state.ak.us; Representative_Pete_Kott@legis.state.ak.us;
Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

Subject: DEED's Proposed Regulations

To: Public representatives and responsible adults for better education

From: The Lochner Family

We support the **CHANGES** to the DEED's Proposed Regulations that were presented by Jim Foster in Juneau on Friday, March 1, 2002. as outlined below. We find the proposed regulations harmful to our freedom of choice in education. We have found that the homeschooling model and in particular the IDEA format to benefit not only our family directly but also the community of Eagle River in which we live.

Sincerely,

George & Susan Lochner

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| DEED's PROPOSED | GCSN's (or IDEA's) SUGGESTED |
|-----------------|------------------------------|

Subject: Fw: HB 464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 10:20:56 -0900

From: "Tom & Grace Huhndorf" <thuhndorf@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>

----- Original Message -----

From: Tom & Grace Huhndorf

To: Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Cc: Cordova_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2002 10:18 AM

Subject: HB 464

Andrea Grace Huhndorf
POBOX 211826
7520 E. 34th Street
Anchorage, AK. 99521
907-333-3047

I am currently home schooling; I am enrolled with IDEA.

Hello, I am writing to document my support of HB 464. I agree with Carol Simpson in Homer.

AGH

Subject: HB 464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 10:50:10 -0900

From: "sells-steinmetz" <msteinmetz@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

My name is Martina Steinmetz, I live in Bird Creek, Alaska (HCR 52 BOX 8618/907-653-1999) and am currently homeschooling my two boys, 7 and 8 years old.

I am writing to you in support of the Committee Substitute of HB 464.

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

Best regards, Martina Steinmetz

Subject: HB464

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 20:25:30 GMT

From: "Alan McCollough" <kittycat@kittycatonline.com>

To: Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

To: Representative Fred Dyson

March 7th, 2002

Please pass HB464!

As a parent of a daughter who my wife and I school via IDEA's coorespondence program, I am asking you to pass HB464 so that Rachel, our daughter, can continue to thrive. Without the passage of HB464, Rachel will be subjected to the very thing we are trying to avoid, unwelcome government intrusion into her schooling.

IDEA has been a fantastic program for our Rachel, and I personally believe that without HB464, meddlers in the public education arean will fight tooth and nail to see that programs such as IDEA are targeted for "special treatment" in the form of unreasonable scrutiny, stifiling regulations, and general harassment at the hands of bueraucrats.

Thank you, Fred, for your consideration.

Alan McCollough
4233 Apollo Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99504
tel: 907-337-7608



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the HHESS
 committee name
 committee on HB464, dated 3-7-02
 bill/subject

Jeff & Donna Offord
 PO Box 8772:4
 Wasilla, AK 99687
 907-376-0256

Dear House HES Committee:

I am writing to ask that you please adopt the CS(Committee Substitute) of HB 464. I am part of the IDEA program and have found them very helpful in my homeschooling. They have lots of opportunities for learning and are so helpful as we teach our children. I appreciate this program very much and think it has helped many homeschooling families to be able to expand their curriculum and activities.

Sincerely,

Donna Offord

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

Re: HB 464

Subject: Re: HB 464

Date: Wed, 6 Mar 2002 20:26:22 -0800

From: "Gerald & Lana Gooding" <glgooding@pci.net>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Our son is a homeschool student enrolled through IDEA. We urge adoption of the CS of HB464.

Gerald & Lana Gooding
Eagle River, Alaska

Subject: HB464**Date:** Wed, 6 Mar 2002 19:47:00 -0900**From:** "Tim and Chris Scott" <fishin4men@gci.net>**To:** "Fred Dyson" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Gary Stevens" <Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us>,
"John Coghill" <Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Peggy Wilson" <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Reggie Joule" <Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>,
"Vic Kohring" <Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us>,
<Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us>

Greetings to all of you,

First of all I need to apologize for not making the LOI teleconference in Anchorage on Thursday, March 7 but I have one child at the Benchmark testing site, one at piano lessons and the other at voice lessons. As you can see, I am the mother of 3 children, 2 of which I home school in partnership with IDEA. The other is a sophomore at Chugiak H.S. where she just received her letter for academic honors. She had previously been an independent home schooler.

I wrote on Monday supporting HB464. After reading the changes proposed by Representative Dyson, I would like to state that I am in full support of the committee substitute of HB464. I appreciate the support that the legislators are giving to the strong home schooling contingency of Alaska. The sole concern that my husband and I have is that our children can have the best education that we, as parents, can provide for them. The partnership that is made possible through the Galena School District is really the best of all worlds. It is a win, win, win situation. A win for the state, a win for the school district, a win for the parents and especially a win for the children. Thank you again for assisting us in making their education a priority.

Sincerely,
Christina Scott
696-2956
fishin4men@gci.net



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
 committee name
 committee on HB 464, dated 3/7/02
 bill/subject

Subject: Consideration of HB464
Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 09:00:42 -0900
From: Dawne Yaskus <yaskus@mtaonline.net>
To: MatSu_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

To the House HES Committee Members:

My name is Dawne Yaskus and I am in the I.D.E.A. program. The continuation and longevity of the program as it stands is of great concern to me. The I.D.E.A. program has proven to be a stable, secure and highly beneficial means of educating my children. With the Department of EED's proposed changes, great limitations and constraints would be placed on the education of my child that WOULD NOT benefit either my child or the I.D.E.A. program. I ask that you consider and adopt the Committee Substitute for HB464 in a timely manner to ensure that the regulatory abilities of the Department of EED be limited and for the successful continuation of the I.D.E.A. program.

Thank you for your time,

Dawne Yaskus
 P.O. Box 521799
 Big Lake, AK 99652

(907) 892.1426

Signed: _____
 Testifier

 Representing (Optional)

 Address

 Phone No.



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
 committee name
 committee on HB 464, dated 3/7/02
 bill/subject

Committee Substitute of HB464

Subject: Committee Substitute of HB464
Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 10:57:27 -0900
From: "Stephanic Olson" <sbritton@idcafamilies.org>
To: MatSu_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB464, dated March 7, 2002.

House HES Committee Members,

I am sending this e-mail regarding the Committee Substitute of HB464. As a parent of an I.D.E.A. student I strongly support this bill and request a timely passage of the Committee Substitute of HB464.

Thank you for your time and consideration concerning correspondence programs and HB464.

Stephanie Olson
 P.O. Box 940061
 Houston, AK
 (907) 892-2015
 I.D.E.A.

Signed: _____
 Testifier

 Representing (Optional)

 Address

 Phone No.

March 7, 2002

HES Committee Members

Please enter into the record testimony to the house HES Committee on HB464 to be taken March 7, 2002. Testimony from Richard and Sheila Sparks.

Please adopt the CS of HB 464.

Name: Richard and Sheila Sparks
Address: Solo Creek, White River, Alaska
And
3050 Caskill, Wasilla, Alaska
Phone: 907 357-4281
Program: IDEA (Interior Distance Education of Alaska)

I do believe it would be extremely detrimental to my son Forest's studies and interest in school if he were not able to enjoy his curriculum. We don't use many items with religious content but I feel it should be my right to do so if we purchase the items ourselves. One of the reasons we choose to home school Forest, other than the fact that we live away from any schools, is the ability to purchase our own curriculum. When we read bedtime stories they are often bible stories. Would this mean we couldn't read religious stories to our son? I consider any restriction on the schooling process. We feel this proposed regulation would be against our constitutional rights.

We don't have a problem with teacher interaction but who would pay for the contact. We are often at our home in the Wrangell Mountains. To get to our home we charter a plane, which usually runs about 450. or more. Who would pay to get a teacher into our home? There is not any road access. We could not possibly afford to pay this on our limited income.

I think the teacher already approves allotment expenditures since we have to put subjects and methods/use of materials on the Individual Learning Plan.

Regarding the State mandated tests, what if a child has been ill and hasn't been able to take the test. Why should a child be punished by losing their ability to be home schooled? If a child were sickly they would miss even more school in public school and fall even further behind.

Having a participation rate for testing is foolish. If a certain rate of enrollment is required and the enrollment rate is lower than all of those who still chose to home school would be penalized.

Sincerely

Richard and Sheila Sparks

Subject: Adopt Committee Substitute of HB464

Date: Wed, 6 Mar 2002 21:03:06 -0900

From: "The Wyman Family" <bmwyman@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Mr. Dyson,

We are a home schooling family enrolled in the IDEA program with GCSD.

I am writing to respectfully request that you please adopt the Committee Substitute of HB464. I would further request a timely passage of this bill.

This is an important issue that many people care about.

I respectfully request that you inform your committee of my message.

Most sincerely,

Guadalupe M. Wyman

Subject: hb464

Date: Wed, 06 Mar 2002 22:23:48 -0900

From: david dorland <dorlandfamily@gci.net>

To: Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Rep. Dyson,

I am a concerned homeschool parent with IDEA. Please adopt CS HB464. We need your help to continue educating our children the best way we know how.

Sincerely,
Janet Dorland

Subject: House Bill 464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 06:51:39 -0900

From: "Richard Hand" <rhand@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: <Jason_Hooley@legis.state.ak.us>

Representative Dyson

It has come to my attention that you are attempting to adopt a Committee Substitute proposal for HB464. If this is true, please accept my wholehearted support for your efforts.

I recently attended a briefing concerning EDU initiatives to place additional constraints on public funded home schooling programs, and I am not pleased. My family participates in the IDEA program, and I believe in its current form it is the best educational vehicle available in America.

I am a LtCol in the USAF flying F-15s. This line of work has caused the family to move 10 times in the last 16 years making education of the children a challenge. We adopted home schooling in 1987 and have never looked elsewhere. Alaska's public support for out of district educational programs greatly enhances this choice of schooling, and in the process, producing world-class students and future adult citizens.

Am I qualified to comment on the merits of the Alaskan Educational system? I will let you decide. I do pay taxes and vote. I do have children in the IDEA program. I am a product of some private and public education in the K-12 grades, and I have a degree in Aerospace Engineering along with three additional Masters Degrees. With this background, and having lived on 5 different continents and 18 different states, I emphatically promote the IDEA program in its current form without additional constraints.

I have specifically avoided the urge to tout my children's accomplishments - most made possible by the IDEA program and funding (the boastful parent rarely comes across in a good light). Please accept my word that they are significant. I welcome the opportunity to assist you with your efforts and can be reached during the day at (907) 552-2704.

Thank You,
Richard Hand
Palmer, AK



State Of Alaska
Legislative Affairs Agency
Kenai LIO
145 Main St Lp, Ste 217
Kenai, AK 99611
907-283-2030

Date: 3-7-02

Please accept the enclosed original(s) of written testimony for the House HESS teleconference hearing that was scheduled on 3-7-02.

A copy of this testimony was transmitted to your committee via fax on 3-7-02 1:20 PM

4:55 pm
4:40 pm

Thank You,

W. Byrnes



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I am in favor of HB 464 and would like to see it passed without further delay.
I am a homeschool parent and feel this bill benefits all Alaskan homeschoolers.

Thank you

Signed: Oma R. Murdoch
Testifier

IDEA Parent
Representing (optional)

37464 Riverbend Dr Soldotna, AK 99669
Address

907-262-1947
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I am completely in support of the Committee Substitute for HB 464 and request that this legislation is passed quickly.

Signed: Janice Habermann
Testifier

Self
Representing (optional)

36790 Steadman Street Soldotna, AK 99669
Address

(907) 262-3704
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

Thank you for taking the time to consider the importance of the passage of this bill HB464. It is vitally important for this to pass in order to maintain the integrity and the high standards that homeschoolers have imposed upon themselves.

Signed: Tami Johnson
Testifier

IDEA Parent
Representing (optional)

51835 Pioneer St Kenai, AK 99611
Address

907-776-5597
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I have been homeschooling my two children for the past 4 years and have found it to be the single most rewarding thing that I do. As a parent who started out sending my children to traditional school I was frustrated with the fact that my son was very bright but needed to be challenged and my daughter needed extra help and there just wasn't enough time in the school day to take her aside and help her. Because IDEA allows me to choose all of the curriculum that my children need I have been able to formulate an education specifically targeted to each of their strengths and weaknesses. If the committee substitute of HB 464 does not pass the Alaska State Department of Education is going to institute changes in how homeschooling is done in all State funded homeschool programs. I will not be able to use many of the curricular materials that I have long found to be successful for my children because some of them are religious in nature. I strongly believe in the right to educate my own children and if HB 464 does not pass and the department of education chooses to pass their new rulings then I will be forced to pull my children from participation in any state funded homeschool program and educate them independently. Further more, I am getting really tired of having to defend the IDEA's homeschool policies every couple of years. The state department of education has come up with something new to try and gain greater control of state wide homeschool programs every two to three years for as long as I can remember. I believe HB 464 will effectively put a stop to parents having to constantly worry each year if they will have to change the way that they do things again. In closing I would like to say that the IDEA program has helped my children and I tremendously with everything from curriculum choices to giving the kids walking stick bugs for pets. My children are figure skaters and the IDEA staff are always interested in what new accomplishments they have achieved and where they will be competing next. The teachers are always available to meet with parents and are open and supportive as well as insightful. I do not see how making more restrictions on a highly successful program can help them or be beneficial in any way. IDEA is already a fantastic program and it's policies are there for the good of the children and their education, not the money.

Signed: Cathy Shearer
Testifier

IDEA Parent
Representing (optional)

P.O. Box 1 Sterling, AK 99672
Address

(907) 262-7040
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the _____ House HESS
committee name

Committee on _____ HB 464 _____, dated _____ March 7, 2002 _____
bill # / subject

Dear Committee members:

I urge you to adopt the Committee Substitute on HB 464 and incorporate it as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

Signed: _____ Marjie Dempster
Testifier

_____ Self
Representing (optional)

_____ 37930 Highcrest Ln Sterling, AK 99672
Address

_____ (907) 262-7079
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
committee name

Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I am writing to ask that you adopt the HB 464 and that in be done in a timely manner. I am an I.D.E.A. parent and have been for 3 years. I have watched this program grow from 150 sutdents, to 3,500 students. The effort that is put into making this program succeed is outstanding. This wonderful program is the product of years of parent/teacher/administration input. It works the way it is - it doesn't need to be fixed or changed. Thank you for considering HB 464. Without its adoption I feel that we will be unduly restricted and discriminated against in our attempts to educate our children.

Signed: Catherine W. Bishop
Testifier

Representing (optional)

P.O. Box 2986 Seward, AK 99664
Address

(907) 224-2394
Phone number



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee Members
committee name

Committee on HB 464, March 7, 2002
bill # / subject

I ask that you consider and adopt the Committee Substitute of HB 464.

I encourage the timely passage of this bill.

Thank your for your consideration.

Signed: Marsha Ware *Marsha Ware*
Testifier

IDEA
Representing (optional)

P.O. Box 7059 NIKISIKI, AK 99635
Address

(907) 776-8981
Phone number

THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
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ORIGINAL
COPIES



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Health, Education, and Social Services
committee name

Committee on CS of HB464, dated 3,4,2002 (3/7/02) AS.
bill # / subject

I have been informed of your work on behalf of the Homeschoolers of the State that choose to enroll our children in a State Correspondence Group. Thankyou for your work. I'd like to encourage you to forward your Committee Substitute for HB464 so that we can continue to school our children and enjoy the very valuable help that we receive from the good folks at IDEA. The added scrutiny that HB464 calls for would be burdensome and costly, and would serve no purpose regarding a better education for our children. The educational needs of our children and ourselves as parent/educators as best served by the local control and accountability that your Committee Substitute allows, and indeed, that we have enjoyed for some time.

Signed: Darrell W. Kincaid
Testifier

Parent/Educator in the IDEA program
Representing (optional)

38710 Highcrest Court Sterling, Alaska 99672
Address

907-262-1535
Phone number

PLEASE ENTER MY TESTIMONY INTO THE RECORD TO THE HESS
COMMITTEE IN THE REGARD TO THE HB 464 TELECONFERENCE ON MARCH
7, 2202.

Please recognize the difference between in-district correspondence programs and statewide correspondence programs. District programs work closely with the local school board for curriculum adoption, testing policies etc. and have students who reside in the district, support the local businesses and pay the local taxes. Statewide programs, on the other hand, have scattered students which do not support the local economy, actually funnel money away from the local community and do not have representation on local school boards. This is not what we teach our children about democracy; this is not what we should practice in our state schools.

SIGNED (Russell J. Persson) Russell J. Persson
ADDRESS: Box 459 Tok AK 99780 883-2591



State of Alaska
Legislature

PLEASE ENTER MY TESTIMONY INTO THE RECORD TO THE

HHES

(COMMITTEE NAME)

COMMITTEE IN REGARD TO THE

HB 464

(BILL/SUBJECT)

ON 3/7/02

(DATE)

I support the Committee Substitute for HB464.
The wording of this substitute accurately
represents what I feel is fair and necessary
legislation for statewide school district correspondence
study programs.

SIGNED

Jeanette Pedginski

(PLEASE PRINT)

PO Box 486, Tok AK 99780 883-4343

(ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER)



State of Alaska
Legislature

PLEASE ENTER MY TESTIMONY INTO THE RECORD TO THE

HIES

(COMMITTEE NAME)

COMMITTEE IN REGARD TO THE

HB 464

(BILL/SUBJECT)

ON 3/7/02

(DATE)

*I support the committee substitute
for house bill # 464.*

SIGNED

Ruth Sonnenberg

(PLEASE PRINT)

P.O. Box 70, Tok, AK 907.883.5400

(ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER)

March 6, 2002

Alaska State House of Representatives
Chairman, House Education and Social Services Committee
State Capitol Room 104
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Representative Dyson:

I have worked as an Otolaryngologist at the Alaska Native Medical Center for the last eight years. Prior to the implementation of Denali KidCare in March of 1999, we had great difficulty delivering treatment to disadvantaged Native Alaskan children in a consistent fashion. It was typical to see a child with a clear indication for surgery during one of our outreach clinics in rural Alaska but not have the opportunity to perform the surgery due to the family's inability to afford a trip into Anchorage. Denali KidCare changed that dramatically. We have had much better success in delivering treatment to these children.

My specialty is unique in that relatively simple procedures such as the placement of ear tubes, repair of eardrum perforations, and the removal of recurrently infected tonsils can have a substantial effect on the health and development of a child. It is heartbreaking to see a child with entrenched speech and language developmental delay from a hearing loss that could have been corrected with a five minute operation. From a public health standpoint, the costs to society dealing with a delayed child are many multiples higher than that cost of a simple corrective procedure performed at the appropriate time.

The changes in eligibility mandated by HB 367 would not only lose health care coverage for currently eligible Alaskan children but would also result in the loss of federal matching funds that the state currently receives. In fact, for every dollar spent on Denali KidCare, 71 cents comes from the federal government. For children eligible for Native Health Services, the argument to maintain current eligibility standards is even more compelling as those services are paid 100% by federal funds. It would seem to me that HB 367 would actually result not only in a loss of dollars for health care specifically but for the overall state economy in general.

I cannot think of another program or initiative that has been as successful as Denali KidCare in realizing its goal: to improve the health status of Alaskan children from all walks of life. I would encourage you and your colleagues to continue your support for this vital program.

Sincerely yours,



John Kokesh, MD
Chief, Department of Otolaryngology
Alaska Native Medical Center

RE: HB 464 "An Act relating to statewide school district correspondence study programs

TO: HES Committee members

MEMO: Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002, as follows:

Please vote yes on the Committee Substitute version of HB 464 pertaining to statewide school district correspondence study programs such as IDEA, Cyberlynx, etc. I am a homeschooling mother and a certified teacher who believes in educational **CHOICE**. Please defend our educational freedoms by supporting HB 464.

Margaret Seeley
#142, 3875 Geist Rd., Ste. E
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Attention: House HES Committee

**From: Judith R Thomas
1910 Jupiter Dr
North Pole AK 99705
907-490-9089**

March 7, 2002

I am writing to encourage you to adopt the committee substitute of HB 464. I appreciate your efforts to keep the choices associated with homeschooling in the hands of the parents. I am with IDEA and have found it to be well organized and very helpful, without need of further regulations. Please do all you can to see the timely passage of this bill.

Judith R. Thomas
Judith R. Thomas

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

Testimony for CS HB464

March 7, 2002

To: House HES Committee Members:

Rep. Fred Dyson, Chair,
Rep. Peggy Wilson, Vice-Chair,
Rep. John Coghill,
Rep. Gary Stevens,
Rep. Vic Kohring,
Rep. Sharon Cissna,
Rep. Reggie Joule,

My name is Debraly Gamache; I am a homeschooling mother of three children. I represent IDEA and I would like my testimony entered into the record for the House HES committee on HB464, March 7, 2002. I urge each one of you on this committee to adopt the committee substitute for HB464 and pass the legislation quickly.

This is extremely important for those of us who have devoted ourselves to give our children the best education possible. The Dept. of EED is going well beyond the clear intent of the legislature towards homeschoolers and programs like IDEA and as a result our freedom to choose is in jeopardy. Please support our efforts and adopt CS HB464 and pass it quickly.

Respectfully,
Debraly Gamache
P.O. Box 348
Barrow, Alaska 99723
(907) 852-3257

Debraly Gamache

1530 Crescent Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508
6 March 2002

Anchorage Legislative Information Office
716 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99501

To whom it may concern:

Please, enter into the record my sentiments to the House HES Committee on HB464, dated 7 March 2002. I am in favor of HB464 and am in agreement with the comments and statements of Carol Simpson of Homer. My address is listed above and my phone number is (907) 563-9068.

Thank you for your time and for making note of my support of HB464.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Wilson

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------|----------------|------------|---|
| Post-it® Fax Note | 7671 | Date | 3-7-02 | # of pages | 1 |
| To | Anch. Legislative I.O. | From | Cynthia Wilson | | |
| Co./Dept. | | Co. | | | |
| Phone # | 269 0111 | Phone # | 563 9068 | | |
| Fax # | 269 0229 | Fax # | 563 9028 | | |

MARCH 7, 2002

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

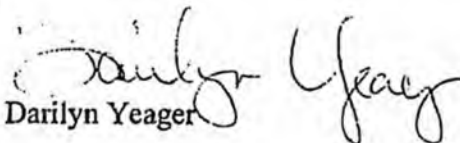
From: Darilyn Yeager
7121 E 34th Ave
Anchorage, AK 99504
907-562-8268
Represent self

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

I am sending this to let you know that I am in favor of HB 464. I agree with Carol Simpson of Homer. This is our 13th year of homeschooling . Programs like IDEA, help give our children a broader education. We feel our children are getting a better education at home, then they would in the public school, due to one on one teaching. Our oldest is going to graduate this May, and she was in the first class to take the Exit Exam. She passed all three tests the first time.

Thank you for your time to read this.

Sincerely,


Darilyn Yeager

NANCY A. WOLD
12547 CRESTED BUTTE DRIVE
EAGLE RIVER, AK 99577-7655
PHONE: 696-8794

March 7, 2002

Anchorage Legislative Information Office

716 W 4th Avenue, Suite 200

Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

Fax: (907) 269-0229

Dear LIO Staff:

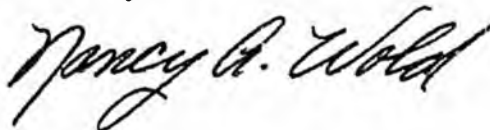
Hello! My name is Nancy Wold from Eagle River, Alaska. I am writing on behalf of myself, as a homeschool teacher working with IDEA (Interior Distance Education of Alaska).

I am in favor of HB464. I also agree with Carol Simpson who is speaking on our behalf in Homer.

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB464, dated March 7, 2002.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Nancy Wold

Subject: [Fwd: HB464]

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 08:47:26 -0900

From: Anchorage LIO <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

To: Barbara Norrell <Barbara_Norrell@legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: HB464

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 07:54:59 -0900

From: The Schwichts <schwicht@alaska.net>

Organization: IDEA

To: Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Debra & Stephen Schwicht
11820 Humble Court
Anchorage, AK 99515
(907) 522-9988

We agree with Carol Simpson of Homer, and we urge you to pass HB464, to help preserve the supportive atmosphere homeschool students have so greatly benefited from in the state of Alaska.

We are the parents of six children, four of whom are currently being homeschooled. We homeschool through IDEA and have been very pleased with the teacher/staff support and service IDEA has provided us. Greatly aided by the IDEA program, we have been able to provide an excellent, personalized education tailored to the needs of each of our children for the last 3+ years. Our daughter, who graduated through IDEA is now a successful university student. Our other students/children have had numerous successful educational experiences which we could relate, but you'd get tired of reading them. They are becoming well educated and IDEA, its program and staff, is and has been an invaluable resource for us. In short, it works! Please do all in your power to preserve it as is.

The State Board of Education's push to take much greater control of homeschooling seems to be motivated more by politics than by a concern for what's best for the students involved. The BOE seems to have forgotten the wisdom of the age old, "If it ain't broke don't fix it." If anything, they should be trying to strengthen the homeschooling movement in Alaska because it is proving successful for so many students!

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Debra & Steve Schwicht
Emmalee, Jeffrey, Daniel, & Sarah Schwicht

| |
|---|
| Anchorage LIO <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>
(907) 269-0111 |
|---|

Subject: Re: HB 464

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 08:05:15 -0900

From: Anchorage LIO <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

To: Larrisa <larrisa@gci.net>, Barbara Norrell <Barbara_Norrell@legis.state.ak.us>

Hi Larrisa:

We will pass this on to the committee.

Thank you.

Barbara
Anchorage LIO

Larrisa wrote:

> ...From: Larrisa Cummings, 2932 Kingfisher, Anchorage AK 99502, 248-7830
>
> This email represents myself in the interests of quality, and equitable
> homeschooling.
>
> Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee
> on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.
>
> I support the committee substitute for HB 464. Education is both
> collective and individual, and nothing should interfere with our
> ability both as private citizen and as an education community to
> be select methods and curriculum that works for our children.
> If we as parents are willing to make the effort to homeschool our
> children, we need to have more options, more flexibility, and
> creativity. Part of why I homeschool is so that I and my children
> aren't LOCKED in a box, but rather are able to plan and act
> according to what works for each of my children. We have been
> very successful thus far. My oldest scored in the 98 percentile
> in her last standardized (CATS??) tests! My youngest scored at or
> above average. The test scores don't mean as much to me as they do
> to some folks....but are nice reassurance that we aren't totally missing
> the boat! Please consider all the input regarding the adopting of this
> CS for HB 464, especially from the folks in the trenches (the parents,
> and the homeschool community)!!
>
> Thank you, Larrisa Cummings

| |
|---|
| Anchorage LIO <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>
(907) 269-0111 |
|---|

Subject: [Fwd: HB 464]

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 08:50:36 -0900

From: Anchorage LIO <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

To: Barbara Norrell <Barbara_Norrell@legis.state.ak.us>

B

Can you please let these folks know that you've received their email.

Thanks.

L

Subject: HB 464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 08:38:50 -0900

From: "Dan & Linda Wiese" <dwiese@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear LIO:

We are Dan & Linda Wiese, 17506 Baronoff Ave, Eagle River, Alaska; phone number 907-696-8771. We have two boys who are students in the IDEA program. Please enter into the record our testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002, that would like for you to adopt and quickly pass bill HB 464.

Dan and Linda Wiese

| |
|--|
| Anchorage LIO < Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us >
(907) 269-0111 |
|--|

FROM: TANYA THOMPSON
POB 91735
ANCHORAGE, AK 99509
907 243 7596
FANCYMOOSE@GCI.NET

TO: REGION A LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICES
716 WEST 4TH AVENUE SUITE 200
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501
FAX 907 269-0229

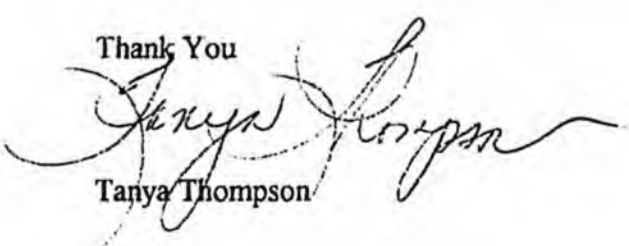
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please enter into the record, my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated 7 March 2002.

I am in favor of HB 464 and could not be there today, due to testing for my 9th grade child. I have been home schooling all my children since 1979 and firmly believe that we as parents have the right to choose the type of education, curriculum and type of home schooling program we want for our children. It is a proven statistic that home schooled children are more mature, score higher academically and function in society and hold jobs longer than an average public schooled child. My youngest son attended West High School this year (10th grade) after refusing to continue with home school. He had refused since 8th grade to participate in home school and his father let him lay around for 8th and 9th grade watching TV and sleeping. When he enrolled him in West, he had no transcripts at all, as he had done nothing. West put him in 10th grade and the child holds a 3.0---and does very little work. An average public schooled child could not miss 2 years of school and shoot into the 10th grade and pick right up. I have personally seen what happens when they are out of school for Spring and Christmas break.

I am very much in favor of HB464 and want that on record.

Thank You


Tanya Thompson

Request: Please work to change the Department of Education's proposed regulations on correspondence schools and support Representative James's bill for a preemptive change to these **school ending regulations**.

First I would like for legislators and correspondence school participants to key in on the most important changes to the regulations in AAC 33.420 -- 33.490. These most important changes are those that will make it **difficult or impossible for correspondence schools to continue to operate** or for families to choose to attend them depending on their private purchases. These regulations fall into 4 categories:

List of regulations that will force students out of correspondence schools, or close the school down:

1. Regulations that **significantly increase the teacher cost** for each student and regulations that increase the **overhead** of the school significantly.
2. Regulations that will **prevent the teacher from assisting** in educational areas that the correspondence family has chosen to privately purchase religious materials for.
3. Regulations that will **dramatically change the structure** by a wholesale replacement of the authority and judgement of the parents with that of the certified teacher, who currently assists the parents.
4. Regulations that will remove students from the program for not taking assessment exams, and those that **close down the school** if assessment attendance does not register within 10% of the state participation average.

A cursory reading of the regulations may show them to be less than disastrous. A more complete review will reveal that **many of the regulations fall into one of these 4 categories**. While some of the regulations do, in fact, represent the current structure of the correspondence schools, most of the regulations appear to be either **discriminatory** to correspondence school students, **disruptive** to the home school, or **excessively restrictive** interpretations of State laws regarding purchasing and course content.

Suggested law:

Representative James is currently sponsoring a bill that will continue a cooperation with correspondence schools, treating them no differently than other students.

I have reviewed the regulations proposed by the Department of Education regarding Chapter 33 about Special Schools. The particular area for the proposed changes includes State-wide correspondence schools, including those run by charter school programs. Aside from the findings above, here are my findings:

1. The proposed regulations enact **significant changes to the existing law**.
2. The proposed regulations will **reduce the individual student account by approximately 75%**.
3. The proposed regulations will **divert teacher and monetary resources away from students who need it most** (in traditional public schools) and is therefore not in the 'best interest of the State.'

It appears that the regulations proposed by the Department of Education are not an enactment of the will of the legislature embodied in the law that allowed for the formation of the correspondence school option, but rather a significant change to it. The Department of Education is implementing regulations that will replicate the less successful school vision that exists in traditional schools, which will lead to a reduced effectiveness and *simplicity of the successful correspondence / home school*. Finally, *these regulations will be costly*, effectively wiping out the account that allows parents barely able to afford to home educate the ability to continue to do so. Please also read the in-depth review that I have provided for you via e-mail.

Thank you,

Glen M. Biegel

5951 Barry Ave
Anchorage, AK 99507

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES committee on HB 464.
Dated March 7, 2002
Donna Claus
P.O. Box 109
Chitina, AK 99566 (907) 258-0636

To: The Honorable members of House HES.
Thank you for taking the time to consider this bill in a timely fashion.

I agree with Carol Simpson and others supporting Committee substitute HB464.

We live 180 miles by plane from the nearest school within the Wrangell/St. Elias National Park. We must home school. But, we would choose this option even if we lived in town. We are enrolled in I.D.E.A. a statewide home school program. With their help we are producing 3 great citizens of the future.

Our children have won numerous awards here in Alaska and nationally. They have been featured in film & print documentaries. They have traveled all over the world for extended times. We will be in Antarctica for 2 months beginning in November of this year with our own airplane. We will simply explore the continent on our own.

Our home is a hive of activity, 52 countries & all states have been represented at our dinner table. It is not uncommon to have 5 languages in use in our home at a time.

We live a very different lifestyle and appreciate the freedom that the legislature originally intended for those of us that choose to teach our own children at home. I.D.E.A. works so well don't put unnecessary binders on it & other homeschool programs. We are equal to public schools & don't need extra regulation.

We live a very different lifestyle and appreciate the freedom that the legislature originally intended for those of us that choose to teach our own children at home. I.D.E.A. works so well, don't put unnecessary binders on it and other home schooling programs. We are equal to public schools, we don't need extra regulation.

Donna Claus

Subject: HB 464

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 13:48:23 -0800

From: Anna Maus <timmaus@gci.net>

To: Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

ANNA MAUS
P.O. Box 670725
20640 Chapel Drive
Chugiak, AK 99567-0725

re: IDEA Representation for HB 464

PLEASE ENTER INTO THE RECORD my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464,
dated March 7, 2002.

I am in support of HB 464.

Sincerely,
Anna Maus

Subject: HB 464

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 13:55:11 -0800

From: Anna Maus <timmaus@gci.net>

To: Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

LILLIAN M. PERSON

24120 Ramblers Rd.

Chugiak, AK 99567

(907) 688-3678

RE: IDEA Representation for HB 464

PLEASE ENTER INTO THE RECORD my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

I am in support of HB 464.

Thank you for your willingness to accept my e-mail. Please forward as necessary to those involved.

Sincerely,
Lillian M. Person

Subject: HB464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 10:53:41 -0900

From: "David Stockwell" <davedebs@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

To whom it may concern:

I want it to go on record that I agree with Carol Simpson who is representing IDEA in Homer, and that I strongly support the HB464.

Thankyou for this attention.

Debbie Stockwell
2351 Foxhall Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99504

907-332-2227

Subject: HB464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 10:53:46 -0900

From: "albanil family" <jalbanil@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

I began homeschooling after four years of substandard public school. I tried for years to work with the system but my children were growing up and feeling incapable of excellence. I began homeschooling one son and it was so successful that I now homeschool both sons. They now feel capable of so much and we have time to master all the concepts and still have family time. I use I.D.E.A. and have for four years after a brief and unhappy time with Alyeska.

IDEA has been wonderful for my sons. I can accommodate their very different learning styles and participate in the "Battle of the Books", "Geography Bee", "Book-It", and "Math Counts". IDEA offers seminars, activity days, field trips and other educationally enriching activities much like the other schools in Alaska. My children excel in this correspondence program. We belong to a Science co-op, a Spanish study group, fencing group, boy scouts, youth group, and volunteer as a family in the community. We would not be happy or as active in a public school. I support your actions to protect my correspondence school from needless regulation and pointless changes. The representatives of my homeschool DO speak for me and I support HB464. I agree with the testimony of Carol Simpson and am thankful for my school, IDEA. Thank you for your consideration.

I am Cindy Albanil. My telephone number is 243-4924. I live at 9224 Kavik St., Anchorage, AK 99502.

Subject: HB464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 11:25:42 -0900

From: "Garrett & Melanie Heusser" <mheusser@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

Melanie Heusser

7805 Kiana Cr. Anchorage, AK 99507 907-522-7345

Representing myself as a homeschooling member of I.D.E.A.

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002.

I am in favor of HB464. I agree with Carol Simpson in Homer.

Please help us reserve the right to school our children with freedom.

Melanie Heusser

Subject: HB464

Date: Thu, 07 Mar 2002 23:58:51 +0000

From: alaskaisfrozen@att.net

To: Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Nancy Frost
14030 Specking Ave.
(907)349-5028

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House
H&S Committee on HB464, dated March 7, 2002.
I am in favor and support HB464.

Respectfully,
Nancy Frost

Subject: HB464

Date: Fri, 08 Mar 2002 00:07:27 +0000

From: alaskaisfrozen@att.net

To: Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

Buck Frost
14030 Specking Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99515
(907) 349-5028

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House
HES Committee on HB464, dated March7,2002.
I am is favor of HB464.

Sincerely,
Buck Frost

Please enter into the record my testimon...ommittee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002."

Subject: Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002."

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 11:13:38 -0900

From: "Susan Teel" <susan@beluga.com>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002."

My name is Susan Teel
PO Box 671996
Chugiak, AK 99567
907-688-7800

I represent myself.

I agree with Carol Simpson of Homer and
SUPPORT HB464

Thank-you,

Susan Teel

~~~~~  
Susan Teel  
[www.teelfamily.com](http://www.teelfamily.com)  
[susan@beluga.com](mailto:susan@beluga.com)  
~~~~~

Subject: Testimony for HB464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 13:33:23 -0900

From: "Susan Kiggins" <mkiggins@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Susan Kiggins, I can be reached at 1910 Cleveland Ave. Anchorage, AK 99517 or 907-562-3538. I am a Homeschooler with IDEA. Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB464, dated March 7, 2002. As a Homeschooler for my 5 children I am in favor of HB464. I also agree with Carol Simpson in Homer.

Subject: HB 464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 13:22:56 -0900

From: "Alaska Quade's" <jcquade@gci.net>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

Hello, my name is Carla Quade. My address is 20212 Paul Revere Circle, Eagle River, AK 99577. My phone number is 907-622-9504. I am with IDEA program.

"Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002."

I am in favor of HB 464

I agree with Carol Simpson in Homer

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Carla Quade

Outgoing mail is certified Virus Free.

Checked by AVG anti-virus system (<http://www.grisoft.com>).

Version: 6.0.286 / Virus Database: 152 - Release Date: 10/9/2001

Subject: HB 464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 10:18:36 -0900

From: "Tom & Grace Huhndorf" <thuhndorf@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: <Cordova_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

Andrea Grace Huhndorf
POBOX 211826
7520 E. 34th Street
Anchorage, AK 99521
907-333-3047

I am currently home schooling; I am enrolled with IDEA.

Hello, I am writing to document my support of HB 464. I agree with Carol Simpson in Homer.

AGH

Main Identity

From: "Sally" <sally@ideafamilies.org>
To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2002 4:52 PM
Subject: HB464 - March 7, 2002

"Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002

*Marcella "Sally" Javier
6425 East 16th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99504
907-333-2255*

I am truly sorry that I could not make it today. I have been helping with Benchmark testing of IDEA students.

I support HB464.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my voice.

*Sincerely,
Marcella "Sally" Javier*

Main Identity

From: "Sally" <sally@deafamilies.org>
To: <Anchorage_LJO@legis.state.ak.us>
Sent: Thursday, March 07, 2002 4:52 PM
Subject: HB464 - March 7, 2002

"Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002

*Marcella "Sally" Javier
6425 East 16th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99504
907-333-2255*

I am truly sorry that I could not make it today. I have been helping with Benchmark testing of IDEA students.

I support HB464.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my voice.

*Sincerely,
Marcella "Sally" Javier*

Subject: HB464 - March 7, 2002

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 16:52:07 -0900

From: "Sally" <sally@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Anchorage_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

"Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464, dated March 7, 2002

*Marcella "Sally" Javier
6425 East 16th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99504
907-333-2255*

I am truly sorry that I could not make it today. I have been helping with Benchmark testing of IDEA students.

I support HB464.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my voice.

*Sincerely,
Marcella "Sally" Javier*

Laura Wilmot
P.O.Box 771002
Eagle River, Ak. 99577

Re: IDEA Representation for HB 464

Please enter into record my testimony to the House HES Committee on HB 464,
dated March 7, 2002.

I am in support of HB 464

Thank you for your willingness to accept my e-mail. Please forward as necessary
to those involved.

Sincerely,
Laura Wilmot

Subject: [Fwd: Galena School Districe/IDEA]

Date: Wed, 13 Mar 2002 09:07:24 -0900

From: Matsu LIO <MatSu_LIO@Legis.state.ak.us>

Organization: Alaska State Legislature

To: Representative Fred Dyson <Representative_Fred_Dyson@Legis.state.ak.us>,
Representative Peggy Wilson <Representative_Peggy_Wilson@Legis.state.ak.us>,
Representative Vic Kohring <Representative_Vic_Kohring@Legis.state.ak.us>,
Senator Lyda Green <Senator_Lyda_Green@Legis.state.ak.us>,
Senator Loren Leman <Senator_Loren_Leman@Legis.state.ak.us>,
Senator Robin Taylor <Senator_Robin_Taylor@Legis.state.ak.us>,
Representative Lesil McGuire <Representative_Lesil_McGuire@Legis.state.ak.us>

Subject: Galena School Districe/IDEA

Date: Wed, 13 Mar 2002 05:16:27 -0900

From: "Tiedeman I" <tiedeman4@gci.net>

To: <MatSu_LIO@legis.state.ak.us>

To whom it may concern;

Please do not pass the proposed regulations regarding GSD and IDEA. Myself and many other enrolled Home Teachers, will feel we have no other choice than to disenroll and go it alone if forced to use only one curriculum. It has become obvious, especially as homeschoolers, that not all curriculums work well with all kids, or with all Home Teachers for that matter.

These proposals would have only negative impacts including but not limited to: loss of revenues for the program to the State and School District, loss of jobs. Loss of supervision, Certified Teacher assistance for the Home Teacher and loss of mandated testing for those enrolled in a State program. But, last and most definitely NOT LEAST, the children would lose out the most. They would not be getting the quality, supervised, controlled and tested education that they are getting now. The GSD/IDEA kids are testing VERY well.

We need your help. I understand the concerns of those who wrote these proposed regulations, but they clearly don't understand homeschoolers. They seem to assume that we'd just accept the new regs. and go on with the program, but those kind of regs. were why a great proportion of us left other programs or signed up with IDEA rather than go it alone in the first place.

Please vote against these regulations. They are, to put it plainly, UNNEEDED.

GSD/IDEA is a great program. If there are areas they need to improve on to fit State mandates, I'm sure they can do that without ruining the program we homeschoolers are so happy with now.

We will all lose. Please don't let that happen.

I thank you for your valuable time,

Mrs. Marianne Tiedeman
rtiedeman@ideafamilies.org

Subject: Homeschool Regulations

Date: Sat, 9 Mar 2002 11:51:20 -0900

From: Jared Wandell <wandell@ak.net>

To: "'Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us'" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Fred Dyson,

I have been investigating some other Department of Education & Early Development regulations that would effect our family. Next year my husband will be joining the Air Force and we will be moving from Alaska. We plan on keeping our Alaska residency and house so we can return to Alaska after we do our required time in service. Under the new proposed regulations our older two children could continue to be enrolled in State wide correspondence school but our younger children would not qualify. As a State of Alaska resident all of our children should qualify for state wide correspondence programs. I feel that this is not fair for families who are serving for the armed services. I do not know if this matter will be addressed in HB 464, but feel strongly that it will hurt our family and other families serving in the armed forces.

Regulations Adopted by the Board and Awaiting Filing"

in the first document "4AAC 09.015, Student Counts for Foundation Formula" at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/regs/4aac09revisedregs.pdf> section 4AAC 09.015 #2k.

Sincerely,

Janine Wandell

Subject: HB 464

Date: Mon, 11 Mar 2002 08:07:30 -0900

From: "Sue and Doug Badilla" <dbadilla@ideafamilies.org>

To: <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Representative Dyson,

I am a homeschooling parent with the IDEA correspondence program and I am writing in support of the committee substitute for this bill. I feel very strongly that homeschooling families

- 1) should not be over regulated
- 2) should be able to choose the curriculum
- 3) should be given an allotment of funds to help us educate our children.

These are the most important issues to our family. Thank you for your time on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Sue Badilla
1067 Arctic Circle
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: HB 464

Date: Thu, 7 Mar 2002 14:32:02 -0900

From: Jared Wandell <wandell@ak.net>

To: "Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Sir,

Please adopt the CS (Committee Substitute) of HB464 and the timely passage of this bill.

Attached letter written to the Department of Education & Early Development.

Thank you,

Janine Wandell

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <u>Homeschool letter.doc</u> | Name: Homeschool letter.doc
Type: WINWORD File (application/msword)
Encoding: x-uuencode |
|------------------------------|---|

Subject: support of CS HB 464

Date: Fri, 08 Mar 2002 12:24:20 -0900

From: "Tammy Moser" <yoginni@hotmail.com>

To: Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

I am writing to voice my support of committee substitute HB 464.

Sincerely, Tammy Moser

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STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
DIVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

PETERSBURG LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

PHONE: 772-3741

FAX: 772-3779

FAX TRANSMISSION

TO: (H) HESS

FAX: 465-4587

DATE: March 15, 2002

MESSAGE: Please enter into the record + put on
members desks for HB 464 today


Dear House HES. Committee Members:

Thank you for hearing the testimony of the public concerning CS HB 464. I have been a homeschooling parent of three for the last nine years. We are very happy with the I.D.E.A. program and would hate to see the DEED change things so much that we would lose the opportunities afforded to us by the Galena City School District. If these regulations are passed without the protection of this Bill, we will be forced to withdraw from the program and continue on our own as we have always done before the I.D.E.A. program became our advocate.

If the education of our children is the primary concern, which DEED assures us it is, then we need to look at the facts. The facts of the case in our family are that my oldest son is working on having his doctorate by the age of 24, my second son is 11 and is doing high school work and my third grade daughter is doing the work of a fifth grader. This acceleration could not happen in the conventional school system where just maintaining the status quo is the primary goal. With our tailor-made classes, we are able to take full advantage of the flexibility that the homeschool offers without worrying about any non-educational interruptions that occur during every class period in the public school system.

With the moneys that we are able to access through the wise distribution of education funds from the state, we have been able to excel in music and art, as well as participate in the State Spelling Bee in Anchorage, geography bees, and reading programs. We also have access to a resource room with a trained staff that is willing to aid us in our goal to home educate our children. Many hours of preparation go into what we do in our families and the funding has been a great blessing to those of us who will continue to homeschool in the face of opposition. Please consider the education of our children as a primary concern when passing this bill out of Committee with a favorable response.

Thank you very much.


Sincerely,
Christie Axmaker

March 14, 2002

HHESS Committee:

RE: Proposed changes to regulations concerning state wide homeschooling programs.

Our family has been involved in homeschooling our children for the past ten years. Our first experience was with the predecessor of the Alyeska Central School when one of our daughters was in Kindergarten. While we appreciated the efforts of the staff, we found the paperwork and record keeping requirements of the program excessive. It was up to us to adapt the materials to insert our Christian material into the curriculum. It was way more work than we were interested in and we 'dropped out' prior to finishing the year. Subsequently we continued homeschooling on our own with all of our children, using Christian based curriculum which did not need adapting. There were no reporting requirements. We got the hang of homeschooling and decided to use it through high school.

In 1998 we enrolled in the IDEA program to supplement our homeschooling program. The following features of the IDEA program attracted our attention:

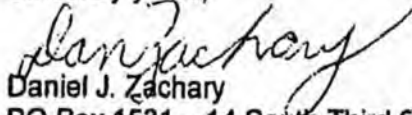
- Minimum reporting requirements
- Flexibility to choose or write our own curriculum (mix and match).
- Ability to use Christian curriculum (at our own expense), but still receive credit for completing the work.
- The IDEA staff was available as a resource to discuss teaching issues.
- Ability to include the more expensive extra-curricular activities that public school students benefit from with no additional cost to us. (Music instruction, Physical Education instruction, art instruction).

One of the requirements of being involved in the IDEA program was that we agree to have our children take the standardized achievement testing to verify that they are within normal limits in their academic instruction. I believe that our test scores have demonstrated that with or without a program like IDEA, homeschooling works and DEED is getting it's moneys worth when they support homeschooling options.

The greatest asset to programs like IDEA is the individuality and flexibility that is permitted. If you attempt to put homeschooling into a public school 'box' by controlling and limiting options it will fail. Homeschooling works because we can mix and match a program to fit the student. If our student is in 4th grade in math, but 7th grade in history and 5th grade in language, we can assemble a curriculum to do that. Public school does not give us that option. It's all 4th grade or nothing.

Please use great care when writing regulations that attempt to make homeschooling look like a traditional public school. I see these proposed regulations as taking great strides in this direction and if they are adopted it is most likely that we will withdraw from working under a state program and return to homeschooling independently as we have done in the past.

Sincerely yours,


Daniel J. Zachary
PO Box 1531 - 14 South Third Street
Petersburg, AK 99833

March 14, 2002

Page 1.

To: the HEES Committee
Re:
From: Sharylee Zachary, Petersburg, AK

"Hello, again!"

I gave testimony at the March 7 meeting and submitted a comment letter that same day.

I will not go over what I already said, but I do have a few more thoughts.

When someone is working with, say, cancer, the goal is to 'get rid of it and bring the person back to health'! No two cancers are the same, yet they have similar characteristics. Several avenues of medical treatment are pursued to attain 'the goal', - i.e. surgery, chemotherapy, radiation ... sometimes a combination of procedures is needed to attain the goal. Everyone understands this principle.

The goal of education in Alaska is to be sure that all children in Alaska are availed of the opportunity to get the best education in academics, as well as character building, so they become self-supporting, honorable and upstanding citizens with proper work ethics, loyalty to country, and reaching out to help their fellow citizens; - that they are part of the strength of our Nation, and not part of it's downfall. No two students are the same. Learning styles vary. Family situations vary. The building - based schools have been set up to accommodate a large number of children with teachers, supplies, programs, etc. to reach 'the goal'. Certain procedures and rules do need to be applied in order to work with so many children in a controlled and effective way. But this is only one, limited method of schooling and there are many methods, i.e. homeschooling, that can be used to reach the goal of education.

Homeschooling is an entirely different, yet just as effective way, of educating our children. It looks, feels, and functions differently because it can be designed according to the child and the family. During the schooling years, children will be at different levels in different areas. Yet, when they graduate, the - same goal is met.

Because of programs like IDEA, Cyberlinks, & Pace our family has been able to educate our children with resources we have never had available to us before.

You might ask, "Then why did you not put your children in the public school system?"

While we agree with a lot of things being taught in the school system, we see areas that are being taught that we feel are very dangerous for children to be exposed to. I won't go into them here, but those areas tear down the 'character building' that we are trying to do in our children. If we send our children into the public school system, we are sending them into an area that will lead them to make extremely unwise choices in their lives. We teach our children to treat all people with respect and kindness, but that does not mean that they need to believe that 'what' people are doing is o.k.

Now, it seems to me that the DEED is wanting to prevent us from having funds to educate our children because we do not want to function as a 'building-based' school, and we do not agree with all that is taught. Also, they do not want us to be allowed to use curriculum that teaches 'character building' principles that are based on Biblical principles that our country was founded on.

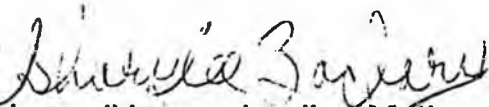
We do not want our children put in 'harm's way' by certain ideas taught as o.k. and 'the norm'. Over 10,000 children in Alaska will be penalized from funding because the DEED does not understand that homeschooling is different from 'building based' and because we do not agree with with certain things that are being taught in the public arena.

Our family and thousands of others in the system believe firmly enough in what we are trying to accomplish in our children's lives that we will forgo the funding and carry on with less resources by leaving the program if we have to.

We want to be excellent examples to our children of Americans standing up for what they believe, in spite of the consequences that may come from it ... because what we believe is more important to our Nation in the long run, than a comfortably and easier way of doing things (which may look good in the beginning, - but may have unsavory consequences when everything is said and done!

Thank you for reading my comments!

Respectfully,



Sharylee Zachary (Homeschooling Mother of Three)
P.O. Box 1531, Petersburg, AK 99833 dzachary@pobox.com

March 6, 2002

Re: HB 464

Representatives Jeannette James, and Fred Dyson
State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska

I would like to give you a copy of the attached letter to the Dept. of Education and Early Development regarding their proposed regulations for statewide correspondence programs (4AAC 33.421 450) because I feel there may be some things overlooked that may be addressed by additions in your bill if you were willing to amend, or add something into it.

I did bold, on page 3 of my letter, something that I feel may change state law regarding the freedom of all parents to home school. I feel it may be implementing punitive circumstances for all home school families, whether they are associated to a correspondence program or not (33.450), if they are independently home schooling but opt to not do a benchmark, denying them also any entry into a state funded correspondence program for the current year they apply, and the following year from the first year they attempt to apply, which goes against the wishes of the legislature in the freedom home schooling families currently enjoy.

I would like to hear from you specifically on how we can help further the success of HB 464, and anything you feel we can do to help this bill successfully move towards passage.

Thank you so much for its introduction. I feel it is a very good thing you to have had the insight to have moved forward with this.

Sincerely,



Joan Dangel
Box 34711
Juneau, AK 99803-4711
790-7265 startraveler@aci.net

I would appreciate it if Ms. James & Mr. Dyson were allowed to read this personally as it may in some way aid the content of HB464.
Thank you much.
Joan

Commissioner Shirley Holloway
801 West Tenth Street, Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801-1894

March 4, 2002

Re: 4 AAC 33.421 Statewide Correspondence
Study Program Requirements

Dear Commissioner Holloway,

I am a proactive and involved parent of an autistic child with sensory integration and expressive language disorders home schooling my son successfully, using the CyberLynx program to help with sound educational advice and resources to do so. I am homeschooling my son by myself, without any public district involvement, as was my wish due to their negative input, lack of working with my son, and after 3.5 years with them (2 preschools and 2 kindergartens they had him), reporting to me my son was totally incapable of learning enough to move past a preschool level. After being put on a 'complaint campaign' the public school system usually ensues with children with unusual differences, and being told he could not learn. I had to take my child out because I wanted him to make it to college, and I could see he was capable and felt in my heart he could learn. And, he could. I had asked all contacts with the child to work with him, they would not - and no - IEPs do not cause services to occur, they often exist as a paper tiger to obtain mis-distributed funding only. I went to the public school each day myself to work with my son after the 1.5 years of the kindergarten part they had with him, requesting they work with him, but they would not. I went into a panic state inside, because I felt he needed an education - it was my love to make him a success in this world that caused me to get proactive in his life in this area. And that it is clear to many, many parents in this state, IDEA's provisions are not enforceable when it comes down to all the attorneys and disability law office involvement, as we currently see a number of families going through the same process I did, pulling their autistic children out of the schools in Juneau, just to find their children absolutely 'could' do it, had someone just stopped to sit at the table and work with them personally. As certified as they claim their educators to be - they are mis-certifying children as unable when it is untruthful in many cases right here in Juneau. I have obtained success unimaginable ~~prior to~~ ^{during} their involvement.

I am concerned over the proposed regulations regarding correspondence programs due to the high success I have achieved with my son, as the correspondence program stands as it exists now. The proposed regulations immediately sharply appear too broad to know specifically what some of them are actually doing. To be accurately informed, I had requested from the Department (DEED) an accurate, honest, narrative explicitly stating exactly what and how each proposed regulation changed things, and did not receive one.

The regulations appear in many areas to come across as strongly bias to home schooling - when some children are receiving absolutely wonderful strides forward, they would not have otherwise experienced had they left it up to an incapable public system. By being bias to this worthy avenue of home schooling, it is ignorant of an avenue that is the only avenue that will or can work for some children in the world.

I am not a drifter type of home school parent, and most parents home schooling, I have found, are doing so because they want their children's education to be of a higher quality. Where classroom teacher campaigns are geared that the answer is in raising their salary, I disagree sharply. It is that they need to enforce lowering the teacher/student ratio to discontinue ruling it for each generation of children to 16, from the enormous amount of children a district is leaving a teacher alone to educate, as Cheney, Washington recently did with marked success.

Each year, my son is subjected to work much harder than anything ever handed to him in a public system. He does Saxon Phonics, a very difficult reading program and Saxon Mathematics. He was asked to pass an inquiry for level of academic understanding for entry into first grade after I home schooled him in CyberLynx a kindergarten year using Calvert's complete home school curriculum. He passed that home school curriculum, and did it in one school year. Please remember, that although it was his third attempt at kindergarten, it was his 1st year with me, and he passed his requirements in a timely period (one regular school year time), but could not pass two prior kindergartens under the public system's care. He is required to keep up with state standards.

When we began first grade, it was a very, very difficult program (Saxon), but my son will finish his first grade year in April, before the public system is even finished. I don't know if you have ever read the Saxon Phonics manual, but they are extensive and very, very difficult. Saxon only has phonics programs for K-3. Our advisor was a 5th-grade teacher, she said that some of the Saxon 1st grade program was so difficult it was stuff she was teaching to 5th graders. Set aside the difficulty level that I am not totally in agreement with for such a young

child with sensory processing issues, the program has wonderful structure to it with assessments each week, spelling tests each Friday, so many development worksheets it is up in the hundreds – but they are extremely well-prepared in their presentation. When other parents of autistic children leaving the district ask to see the Saxon things, they are just in awe of what my son can do. His progress and improvements have been significant (especially as he experiences 'actual' and hard-earned successes instead of constant flunking). Side-by-side with a research program (we found through Evening Magazine news show) he is on for a unique nutrient for central nervous system disorders discovered that is coming out of three universities in Canada, my son has come a long way. My son has earned his progress by very, very hard work.

I feel the author of the proposed home school regulations mistakenly feels home schooling is a 'lazy' lifestyle taking funds away from public schools. I am trying to make it clear to you that home schooling is not a lazy home life business. It is something that many parents take extremely serious and work very hard at. I have the education from 9-12. Then, we continue on the day with P.E. classes at the gymnastics program in Juneau, the Racquet Ball Club, or Juneau City Borough. Then, we have private speech and sensory processing therapies to attend. The day is full and there is gas money, food money, class money to worry about – as a single parent it is very difficult and I gave up everything to do this because I wanted him to make it in this world – to make it to college. If I had just given up and left it up to the public system and believed them he was incapable, it would have altered the course his life forever. The sacrifices are difficult and filled with hardships of their own to give up everything to educate a child. I ask that there be more mercy towards those taking responsibility for their children's education due to this, and the fact that we were not asked to help form these regulations so they appear to be a negative encroachment, or a negative, maliciously planned 'surprise' for home school families.

I have specific objections to the following provisions:

33.421(c) Requiring curriculum material to be of the same quality as offered in the public schools programs because there is apparent unforeseen inappropriate limitations this could be covering. For example, physical education services in Alaska are limited due to a majority of it being 'rural.' We take what we can, what comes up. If in some situations there are extreme limitations for art, physical education, music, etc., this could be a venue for forcing families to take what is dictated (like Alyeska), rather than the only variety there is available in small communities. Additionally, this provision does remove flexibility from home schoolers if something very good is found, like we do find wonderful things now. One significant advantage of home schooling is our ability to fit the education to the individual needs of our children. I believe serious parents are better able than the school administrators to make this determination for children. It appears the regulation is written to force home schoolers to use only state sponsored and approved curriculum. This is very objectionable to me.

Under 33.421(d) No instruction using religious; partisan, sectarian; or denominational curricula purchased privately by the parent, ...if the curricula teach particular religious beliefs, or a particular religion as true: I have personal concerns for this reason – I used the Calvert full curriculum program for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten for a full year. (Calvert out of Baltimore, Maryland), having NO knowledge at all it had anything to do with religion whatsoever until your agency did an onsite review of CyberLynx and stated they wanted to enforce Calvert's being discontinued. I, as a parent, do not choose to teach with religious curriculum. The Calvert program was so good, a fully transcribed, educational plan – and I never found even one reference in any of its education based parts to religion ever. I did see in an optional paragraph at the beginning of the lessons towards the start where a number of things were listed as possible contemplative discussions for an opening discussion to the school day, such as discuss the purpose of school, a salute to the flag, or even a review of yesterday's work or talk about something important to the child, etc. One of those items listed, and it is only listed at the very beginning of the book, was, if you want, you could say a prayer and they tell you what they do say for a prayer at the actual Calvert Academy. I feel it is a terrible mistaken disservice to the correspondence programs of this state to want to outlaw a course with extremely high educational benefit, for one small reference to a 'religious option', without putting religion itself in its curriculum such as Calvert does not do. Calvert does not put religious content into their program anywhere – and I feel it shows a little too much negative intent to have targeted Calvert like your team did. It is a wonderful, full, curriculum program. It just shocked me to see your agencies willingness to go after anything and everything. That program sends you everything for your \$300.00. It sends the pencils, the paint, the tape and glue, the rulers, the math books, the reading books – anything you could imagine, it sent everything and not even one religious book came in those highly educational natured boxes; not even one. I think the reviewers bias is so significant here – that to throw this curriculum out showed there was something wrong to me. Although we are

not a religion-based home schooling family. I feel 33.421(d) is an attempt to deliberately attempt to remove religious students from the correspondence programs.

33.421(e)(2) grades, or standards met determined and assigned by a certified teacher. After our experience with the public system, all the 'certification' it was claimed to have, this proposed reg can cause some resentment that we are stuck with an unstable, ineffective system, because you have allowed it to police itself by being the only one allowed to assign a grade. I know a certified teacher is not the only one competent for this task. Also, taking away all grading rights of parents makes Alaska one of the strictest in the nation when it was, before this proposed reg, one of the most user friendly for home schooling families in the entire union - and probably was so due to the large size of our state and remote locations of families administrative costs are very high. I feel the correspondence programs should be allowed to set this requirement up or not based on the student's in their districts apparent needs as they come up, such as staying behind for too long. You are in fact creating an added administrative burden for the correspondence school, but not putting a fiscal note with the section - is this to make things harder on the correspondence programs?

33.421(h)(2) material purchased with state funding are property of the program; non consumable material must be returned to the program when the students exit the program for any reason. This provision is ineffective totally. With Saxon Publishing rights alone, they say right in their manual they will not allow you to 'share' their materials - that it is intended for just your family's use. With my child's unique learning style, I also need to keep the manuals, dictionaries, and space and human body encyclopedias at least one year longer as encyclopedias for memory issues. Given to the correspondence program, they will sit useless upon a shelf with rules of law governing its inability to be given to anyone else. Also, our computers are purchased with part of our own money, part is purchased with school money - they are non-consumable. How are you going to account for that in this reg? Also, you are turning parents and the correspondence program into expensive mailing, sorting, inventorying, storage and redistribution agencies. They will have to purchase a warehouse to put all the things - how will we ship desks? Where will we get the money? How will we ship large calendar displays and software, which outdates quickly? The software will sit upon a shelf unusable by anyone else. This takes money from the needs of the children, to make a new and greater financial need you are not providing the money for. This specifically complicates things and seems like someone's over zealous imagination got carried away. A successful program stays that way by keeping it simple for children and families.

33.450 If a student fails to take a state-mandated assessment test, the student is ineligible for enrollment in the statewide correspondence programs for the following year unless the district of enrollment has excused the student from the state mandated test. This seems to punish all home schooling families in the state and once again, the author's sincerity is questioned as it is unclear why it is written so austere towards home schooling families. **This appears to be punitive towards families attached to a correspondence program or not. If a family has been home schooling all along, and decides they could benefit from enrolling in a correspondence program, they are turned down the requesting year, and the next year, if in their private home schooling experience they did not do benchmark examinations. Well, our legislatures kindness towards home schooling families did not have this in mind, that they be punished in any way for exercising this right. This seems to violate existing state laws and should be stricken from the proposed regs: It does not provide for alternate testing dates whatsoever and seems to punish 'children' for nothing, for absolutely nothing.** I further object to the district where the tests are being taken having any say in the student's educational future. The correspondence program district should have sole oversight of the students along with the parents. At the very least, there should be a pattern of non-compliance for the correspondence program to feel concern - for example, refusing to take the test two years in a row. Alternate testing dates are a must if enrollment or re-enrollment is to be denied for failing to take a test.

My son is 8 years old and has progressed remarkably. My motivations for home schooling are so that my child will get an education as to where in the public system he was not getting an education at all. I plan to continue home schooling as long as I can and the Alaska Correspondence Program has provided an excellent forum for educating a child the district said 'could not be.' These changes proposed seem to prefer residential public school programs unfairly and are biased against the correspondence programs. No changes are needed in my view. The proposed changes seem to meet some education administrator's ideas of what meets his or her needs, but do little or nothing to help children and parents - none of these provisions should be adopted without a full, open, accessible, fair process. They go far beyond what is required by law.

Sincerely,

Joan Dangel

Cc: Rep.'s Jeannette James & Fred Dyson

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COMMENTS REGARDING NEW STATE REGULATIONS FOR
CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS

February 17, 2002

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I am opposed to the potential instatement of regulations 4 AAC 33.421 and 4 AAC 06.450 concerning correspondence programs. The basic function of the existing correspondence programs referred to in these new regulations has been to assist homeschooling families like mine. Many of the new regulations are just adapting the traditional regulations of brick and mortar public schools. Original legislation should be drafted to fit these correspondence programs. It should be a process that involves a cross section of people who rely on the programs, a bottom up approach. Parent/Teachers should play a major role here. Program administrators and school board members need to contribute to make sure legislation will allow for enough leeway to fit their programs unique culture.

I am aware of at least three unique correspondence-homeschool programs being used in the Ketchikan area. REACH, PACE, and IDEA. REACH, Respecting Educational Alternatives & Choices in Homeschooling – the acronym alone couldn't make clearer their mission. The foundation on which the PACE program was built "...offers parents the opportunity to make decisions on how their children are educated (and)...provides alternative choices to the regular school experience." The IDEA program's objective is to "...build and foster a community of learners which views education as not confined to the traditional four walls of a classroom, rather a free-flowing exchange of knowledge and ideas ." Under the "new" proposed top down legislation, existing programs such as these will be re-formed into the generic public schools that the legislation was originally written for.

That being said, however, it is unlikely that legislation drafters will ever undertake such an endeavor. So at the very minimum, here are the areas in the proposed "new" state regulations that must be changed.

4 AAC 33.421

*(b): The program must conform with statewide goals and performance standards as set out in:
4AAC 04.010, 4 AAC 04.200*

Regulations 4 AAC 04.010 and 4 AAC 04.200 were designed to facilitate a relationship between the community and the school and protect the students in a public school institution and do not apply correctly to a homeschool situation where a child is most often being taught directly by the parents. This legislation should not be

“borrowed” and adopted for homeschoolers because much of it does not apply and infringes on the very rights that homeschoolers are often practicing when they choose alternative education. 4 AAC 04.010 needs to be rewritten or eliminated, as it was not written with homeschool students in mind. For example, 04 AAC 04.010 (b) (2) reads as follows: “empower the public with the knowledge that the skills and subjects included in this chapter are of great importance to education so that the public can participate in local educational planning with more authority and effect.” A homeschool does not need the public “empowered with the knowledge that the skills and subjects of this chapter are of great importance so that the public can participate in local educational planning with more authority and effect”. Homeschooling takes the “public” out of the equation and allows parents to be more than just participants. Homeschool parents ARE the educational planners for their children. Another example: 4 AAC 04.200 (a) reads as follows: “Subsections (b) and (c) of this section identify and describe content and performance standards that reflect the highest abilities and qualities of the teaching profession.” The list of performance standards in (b) and (c) referred to above is too extensive to copy here. Again, this does not apply to homeschoolers being taught by a parent who has a God-given right to be their child’s teacher and does not need to qualify by anyone’s criteria or performance standard.

4 AAC 33.421

(c): The program must use curriculum materials, including textbooks and other instructional aids, that have been reviewed and selected by the district school board, are of the same quality as those materials that the district offers in the district’s other programs, and are in compliance with AS 14.03.090 and AS 14.18.060.

Here again the legislation is demanding public school legislation standards in my home. AS 14.03.090 reads: “...**partisan, sectarian, or denominational doctrines may not be advocated in a public school** (my home if I’m a part of a correspondence program) **during the hours the school is in session...**” My children are learning from the moment they awake in the morning until the moment they fall asleep at night. I teach my children “when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” Deuteronomy 6:7. Even with set “school hours” at home this section cannot possibly apply. This subsection must not be passed! The government cannot regulate or limit the religious beliefs, denominational doctrines, partisan or sectarian biases that we wish to represent to, teach to or advocate to our children. As homeschoolers, many of us are teaching our children at home for the very reason that we wish to impart religious biases! We cannot allow the government to intentionally or inadvertently pass legislation that could jeopardize our freedom to influence our children. We are not talking about a hired teacher in a public institution when we are looking at these correspondence programs. We are talking about parents and their children in their own homes. We must be allowed to teach our children whatever we choose, whether the materials we use are purchased by the state or by our own funds.

Each family that chooses to homeschool has their own unique list of reasons why they chose this option. Some of the objections many of us have to the public institutions

will be brought into our homes with the proposed regulations above. As parents we need to be able to maintain control and freedom in choosing the materials we use in teaching our children at home. With the passing of this legislation, the government has the power to prevent me teaching my religion to my family with materials purchased by me in my home.

4AAC 33.421 subsection (h) specifies and regulates the appropriate spending of state funds. I understand that this is necessary and reasonable. It is a completely different issue than approving unfunded materials that are to be used. I am not objecting to the regulations of state funding, but to the regulation of curriculum and course of study as stated again in subsection (g) part 1 and in subsection (d) below:

4 AAC 33.421

(g) The program must include a plan for receiving parental advice and involvement in planning, development, and evaluation of the correspondence study program, including the selection and evaluation of curriculum, teachers, and administrators; the plan must include a signed agreement between the statewide correspondence program certified teacher and the parent, or parents, of each student, the agreement

- 1) must verify that the curriculum materials and course of study are aligned to state standards and c comply with AS 14.03.090 and appropriate for the student;*
- 2) must document the process used to ensure curriculum materials are aligned to state standards and in compliance with AS 14.03.090, including a certified teachers review of all curriculum materials for each student.*

4 AAC 33.421

(d) The program staff, including certified teachers, shall not provide instruction using religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational curricula purchased privately by the parent, or by the student if the curricula teach particular religious beliefs, or a particular religion as true.

In (d) above, it is unclear whether the parent teaching the child is considered part of the program staff. If this regulation was interpreted that way then it would again prohibit religious instruction in the home. This regulation needs more clarity.

The following regulations are proposed that would mandate state testing of the students enrolled in the above programs.

4 AAC 33.421

(f) The district must require enrolled students to participate in the statewide student assessment program as required by 4 AAC 06.710 – 4 AAC 06.790; the program must
(1) have staff inform parents of state testing requirements and the consequences of non-compliance under 4 AAC 33.450

4 AAC 33.450

FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE IN STATE MANDATED ASSESSMENT TESTS.

(a) If a student fails to participate in a state mandated assessment test the student will be ineligible for enrollment in the statewide correspondence program and denied enrollment in

any other statewide correspondence program, for the following year, unless the district of enrollment has excused the student from the state mandated assessment.

This legislation should not be enacted. I understand that if the State is funding a program, they are going to need some way of monitoring and evaluating the program and all participants and staff for assessment. There are adequate provisions in subsection 4 AAC 33.421 (e) to achieve this.

4 AAC 33.421

(e) To ensure the academic progress of enrolled students, the program must include an assessment plan of the same quality as an assessment plan that the district offers in the district's other programs; assessment must include:

- (1) monitoring of the enrolled student by a certified teacher; the monitoring must include at least monthly review of the student's work and documentation of the certified teacher's review;*

Monthly review is an excessive burden to place on the parent but quarterly review would be sufficient to ensure that academic progress was being made.

Legislation requiring homeschoolers to participate in State testing must not be enacted. Any existing mandates need to be repealed or amended to include a provision for parents to opt out of the tests if they deem this to be best for their child. Giving correspondence program administrators the power to excuse students from testing and then requiring the high percentage of participation as spelled out in AAC 33.421 (f)(3) does not give them the freedom to allow parents/students to opt out of testing. There are legitimate reasons why homeschool parents might not want to participate in the assessment testing.

1. Testing is not an accurate assessment. This is especially true for homeschoolers because they are choosing an unconventional approach to education. One of the biggest benefits of homeschooling is the freedom it gives us to create a scope and sequence (what to teach and at what grade level to teach it) suited to our own children and of our own choosing – not the state's. We are not teaching to the test, nor do we want to be forced to just to prove our performance to the critics. Testing would require homeschool parents to teach what the government decides is appropriate for our kids to learn and at what age they should learn it. This unravels the very fabric of existing correspondence programs stated missions and objectives. And it erodes the very freedom many homeschoolers are trying to exercise. Often the reason a child is in a homeschooling setting, is because the scope or sequence of the public school did not suit the parents or the child. Testing would, in practice, dictate curriculum.

State tests are created to assess the knowledge, understanding, capabilities and advancement of students being taught in an institutionalized setting. Public schools are basically similar across the state and as they are governed by state standards, testing is going to be far more accurate among those who have gone through the system that they were designed to test. Conversely, the cultural atmosphere of a homeschool setting is going to vary greatly from home to home. State tests are going to be biased against this minority background. For example: one of the questions found on the second grade IOWA test of Basic Skills assessment test in the social studies section shows a picture of a chalk board and asks where that particular item would usually be found. The choices

are home, school and two other choices. This question would obviously be biased if "school" were the correct answer. On the IOWA test of Basic Skills test for first graders the same question is asked about a globe. Many homeschoolers have these kinds of resources in their homes and these kinds of questions would not correctly assess their knowledge. This is a good example of how standardized tests are going to be biased against the alternative culture of the homeschooling population.

There is also great controversy among psychologists as to the validity of standardized testing, and whether it does assess ability and knowledge, or rather familiarity and comfort with testing procedures and materials. Not all children are even familiar with the same types of testing procedures let alone the same educational materials. Furthermore, homeschool parents are intimately acquainted with their students and know them and their strengths and weaknesses so well that they often don't feel the need to "test" their knowledge. Consequently, these students are not likely to be as familiar with the whole concept of testing as conventional students. There is a greater range of variance in testing procedures and educational materials in a homeschool setting. There are such a wide array of educational materials available now for homeschoolers that accuracy in testing would be almost impossible. My first grader, who is reading at a third grade level and doing math at a second grade level has never even filled out a bubble answer sheet and may score poorly even on these categories of the tests simply because of the confusing process.

Another problem with standardized testing is that the tests presume a standard of knowledge that homeschoolers might not agree with. For example, most public school textbooks of world history teach that the earth is millions of years old and that dinosaurs were prehistoric animals. I have personally taught my kids a young-earth (only 6 or 7 thousand years old), creation view of history. They have learned that dinosaurs and people were, in fact, on the earth at the same time. That is what we believe based on the Bible. I use this example to show that any test questions about this are going to be religiously biased against my kids. If the tests show that my kids are not educated properly because they didn't "know that people and dinosaurs were not on the earth at the same time" or that certain archaeological findings date people back 12,000 years or more then the tests did not assess their knowledge but their beliefs. This would also be similar to a child taking a standardized test in the 1400's answering the question "what shape is the earth? a) flat b) round etc. One of the reasons I homeschool is because I want to teach my children our personal beliefs which are often not the perspective being taught in the public schools. The tests are going to be biased against this freedom of belief.

2. Testing has psychological ramifications. Many homeschool parents don't want to expose their children to the psychological stress, pressure and labeling of testing. They don't want grades to become the focus of learning nor a tool to alter self-esteem. Rather, they want learning to be a natural gathering of information and skills that the child can learn to use and apply and reason with. They don't want their child to aspire to a goal that is less worthy than the bare achievement of appreciating the world we live in and mastering it...simply a love of learning. To aspire to acquire a letter grade or a high score on a test cheapens and overshadows the goals that some of us want for our children. Many of us homeschool for this very reason. Again, this is yet another instance where

the rules and regulations for public schools cannot be imposed on homeschoolers without encroaching upon the rights we seek to keep.

Government assisted homeschooling, via the existing correspondence programs, provides a wide range of opportunities that would not otherwise be available and is beneficial to many homeschoolers. Money spent on education in these unique cultural settings (homes) assures the state a continual diverse pool of future Alaskans. Changing or passing legislation that diminishes the difference between public schools and homeschools serves no logical end. Today, Alaska has the best climate for homeschoolers of any state for parents who want to teach their children without government funding or assistance. Why not set this goal for funded homeschool programs too?

February 24, 2002

Comments regarding:
House Bill 464 by Representative James;

Proposed changes to the State Board of Education and Early Development, 4 AAC 33.420-.490
Statewide Correspondence Programs;

Cyberlynx Correspondence School Audit;

Regarding House Bill 464 by Representative James. An Act relating to statewide school district correspondence study programs, and Memorandum Number 2002-17: Notice of proposed changes in the Regulations of the State Board of Education and Early Development to 4 AAC 33.420-490, Statewide Correspondence.

Regarding Sec. 14.07.175(a) (1), We support the approval process of 10 years. This will allow for the establishment of the school programs rather than starting over every year without a stable base and allow the predictability for long term items.

Regarding Sec. 14.07.175(a) (2), We support the school district to establish the monitoring intervals of the students. As they are involved with the students and the program, they can best determine what is needed, not a State Board of Education that is isolated from the students.

Regarding Sec. 14.07.175(a) (3) and (4), We support that the limits on use of teaching materials should not be more stringent than those placed on public schools. To cause correspondence schools and/or home schools to follow more stringent requirements, is to promote an attitude of aggression and discrimination against the correspondence and/or home schools and to favor the public schools.

Regarding Sec. 14.07.175(b), We support this definition as well as including other methods of home schooling that may be available.

With these ideas in mind it should be stated that a correspondence school/home school, should have less stringent and less restrictive regulations than a public school. How they are approved, accepted, and evaluated should be based on the quality of education they produce. Each school should be judged by itself and not as a group. They should be allowed to have the freedom to make their own choices regarding curriculum, monitoring, testing, grading, and use of funding. As correspondence and/or home schools are found in studies to produce a superior education, our opinion is that the State Board of Education should then support these schools above public schools with less stringent standards toward their operation.

Refer to:

Home Schooling: From the Extreme to the Mainstream

Release Date: 9 October 2001 by The Fraser Institute.

Home schooled children are, on average, more academically and socially advanced than public and private school students.

http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/media/media_releases/2001/20011009.html

Regarding the proposed changes to the State Board of Education and Early Development, 4 AAC 33.420-490 Statewide Correspondence Programs. We oppose these changes because the correspondence schools do not need any special regulations, because they generally provide a better education, more suited to the student. They should be encouraged with fewer regulations. These proposed changes are also in conflict with 4 AAC 04.010 (c) that states in part that

“...The content standards and goals are intentionally broad to allow a school district to tailor its curriculum to the conditions, goals, and expectations of its community. A school district board, working with the public, teachers, and students shall choose and implement effective teaching strategies so that its students will achieve high performance in a subject area...”

To implement these changes would cause this section to be declared null and void. The total of these proposed changes emphasize the adage of “Follow the Money.” They indicate that the main reason for their existence is to keep the money for each student in the public school without regard to the effect on the educational quality. The proposed regulations either do this directly, such as in 4 AAC 33.432, or indirectly by doing whatever possible to eliminate correspondence schools from operating. Also 4 AAC 33.450 puts a burden on the correspondence schools that public schools would never be able to meet and is showing direct antagonism and discrimination against correspondence schools. This shows that these regulations are wrote in disregard to the quality of a students' education, but in an effort to close down correspondence schools even if it harms the education of Alaska students.

Regarding 4 AAC 33.420, Department Approval. To compel correspondence school to apply annually for is just a way for the State Board of Education to cause extra paperwork to be done by the correspondence programs. No state public schools are required to do this. If a public school had to apply every year for operation, it would take a considerable amount of time that could be spent for the educations of students. Also, a long term education plan cannot be set up one year at a time, but should be set up to work best for each individual toward an excellent education. This shows that the proposed regulations were not designed in the interest of the education of Alaska students, but in the interest of shutting down and restricting correspondence schools so that the public schools can then get the state funds. It also shows that the State Board of educations feels that public schools cannot compete with the correspondence schools in educational quality, so they must eliminate the correspondence schools so the poor public school results have nothing to be compared with.

Regarding 4 AAC 33.421, Statewide correspondence Study Program Requirements. These should be either less stringent or the same as public schools and be set up by the local individuals working with the student, as correspondence schools generally produce a better education for the student, because of the flexibility and individuality of each program. Implementing Statewide restrictions on this would harm this flexibility and individuality. The only purpose for this section is to decrease the quality of education of correspondence schools so that the public schools they are compared to do not look so bad. As to the requirement for grading and monitoring by a certified teacher, this should be left up to the correspondence school to determine because as each program is set up for each student individually, it defeats this purpose and advantage and will result in a lower quality of education. Also as every student will be using consumable materials, it should be up to the correspondence school to determine how to judge between consumable materials and items that become school property if purchased form the students account fund. To

take this decision away from the correspondence school is really just a method to cause an additional burden on them that is not placed on the public schools, to try and shut them down.

Regarding 4 AAC 33.430, Enrollment of Out-of-District Schools. This section would give the public school the authority to exclude a parent/student from enrolling in a correspondence school of their choice. This would then cause a significant decrease in the educational opportunities of that student. It would also take away the flexibility and individuality that most correspondence schools have of tailoring the education to the needs of each student individually. The only purpose for this section is to eliminate correspondence schools so that the public schools do not have to compete with them and also have their lower standards of education revealed.

Regarding 4 AAC 33.432, Enrollment of Special Education Students. To give the district of residence the ability to control the students' education regardless of the concern and choice of the parent shows that the regulations are not concerned with the education of the special education student, but that the main concern is that the majority of the funds for that student are to go to the district of residence, regardless of the education outcome. If a parent wants their special education student to receive the individual and flexible attention that a correspondence school can provide, then they should have that choice regardless of the attitude of the district of residence, and all funding for that student should then go to the correspondence school for the purpose of supporting that student. This section really reveals the intent of these proposed regulations, that the purpose is to let the public schools get as much funding as they can without regard to the students educational quality.

Regarding 4 AAC 3.450, Failure to Participate in State Mandated Assessment Test. There should not need to be a special section for this because it should be the same as for all students. To cause special restrictions on correspondence school is an act of discrimination. The only purpose for this is to cause hardship for correspondence school programs and remove students from them to enable public schools to enhance their funding. If a student fails or misses a test in a public school are they then going to be required to attend a correspondence school the next year? Public schools would never be subjected to this because it would hurt their funding and show that they are not able to provide the same level of individual education that correspondence schools can. There can be hundreds of reasons for missing or failing an assessment test. These should be considered individually for the student that is effected. Most of the time a correspondence school can do this more effectively because of the individual attention payed to each student and their individual education program.

Regarding 4 AAC 33.460, Program Review. This section is an effort to increase the paperwork requirements of the correspondence schools. If this is not required of public schools then it should not be required of correspondence schools. To make this a 'by request' basis, would be to open up an avenue for harassment of the correspondence school to further accomplish the effect of closing it down.

These proposals all point to the fact of the department of education wanting to rid the state of correspondence schools in the state of Alaska. They are trying to do this through discrimination, harassment, excess of paperwork, and excessive regulation. This is in complete disregard for the education of the students of Alaska and the superior individualized education that correspondence schools can provide. It should also be considered that the Alaska correspondence schools such as Cyberlynx are being looked at by teachers from other states as having the lead in the future of

education with the individual programs they can set up and the superior education they can provide. These proposals would eliminate these advantages for Alaska students and say that the Alaska board of education would rather have complete control and act as a 'police state' in education, than to provide a quality education to the students of Alaska

Regarding the Department of Educations Audit of Cyberlynx:

The attitude of the auditors of confrontation and disrespect shows that these auditors were not there to conduct their job of reviewing the correspondence school, but to find reasons to eliminate it. By being confrontational and disrespectful they could hope to cause nervousness in the administration and staff, and maybe incite a reaction to use against the school. It also shows that the report of the audit was predetermined, and the only purpose for being there was to look for information to substantiate the predetermined outcome in disregard for any other information. The fact that there were no members of the audit team from a correspondence school is a serious error. This would be considered criminal in a life-safety industry and should be considered for a criminal complaint in this instance. It would be the equivalent of having an auto mechanic making flight inspections on a 747. This should have been noted by the department of education and canceled the results of such an audit. It should also have been noted by the head of the audit team and he should have removed the team from the audit process until this was corrected. This act of defiance to normal standards should declare this audit null and void as well as any subsequent action. Also the fact that the head of the audit team was from a competing school type system is to be considered a conflict of interest that automatically disqualifies him from this position and declares that any further pursuing of this audit and subsequent regulations stemming from it could be considered a criminal and/or civil act that is being pursued by the department of education in disregard to any true issues to achieve there preplanned end of eliminating correspondence schools. The head of the audit team should also have to file a response on why he did not suspend the audit until it could be done properly before any actions on these regulations, or any other results of the audit information are considered. The audit team should also have to issue an apology to Cyberlynx for the unprofessional, uncooperative, and confrontational behavior. If any regulations are to be proposed, they should be that this type of audit, in this attitude should never again be preformed. The preplanned end of this audit is also shown by the short time frame given for Cyberlynx to respond to the audit, when the time any responses back to Cyberlynx have been very slow without care to resolving the issue.

Understand that the entire issue of this audit, and the proposed regulations are to eliminate any parent choice or control, and any individualism from the Alaska school system. It would seem that the Board of Education feels that the public schools are threatened by correspondence schools because of the individual attention and higher grade of education that usually results in a correspondence school. They feel that they must then cause a degradation of the correspondence school through additional regulations and more stringent requirements so that the public schools don't look so bad. This is in disregard to the opportunities and better education that can be presented to the students thru correspondence schools.

Reginald and Joy Swedberg
P.O. Box 56359
North Pole, Alaska 99705-1359

Reginald Swedberg
Joy E Swedberg



State Of Alaska
Legislative Affairs Agency
Kenai LIO
145 Main St Lp, Ste 217
Kenai, AK 99611
907-283-2030

Date: 3/20/02

Please accept the enclosed original(s) of written testimony for
the ALBESS teleconference hearing that was
scheduled on 3/21/02.

A copy of this testimony was transmitted to your committee via
fax on 3/20/02.

Thank You,

Kenai LIO



*Filed
3/20/02*

Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the _____
(committee name)
committee on HB 464, dated 3/21/02
(bill # / subject)

*Please accept the following as
written testimony*

Signed:

Kevai LHO

Testifier

Representing (optional)

Address

Telephone

Honorable State Legislators,

3/19/02

Support for HB 464 and against new DOE proposed regulations Chapter 33

I am here to support HB 464, which protects the prospering of public correspondence programs.

My wife and I have 4 children enrolled in the Cyberlynx Correspondence program in Nenana. We have taught our kids for 6 years, three of these years without correspondence programs. These programs are now under attack by the Alaska Department of Education.

Alaska is, and has been in a unique position recently in this new idea of correspondence schooling and has captured the interest of other school districts in other states that are looking for ways to improve and renovate their programs. The whole idea of school vouchers is surpassed by this new experiment in home education that gives parents freedom and choice as they educate their children. Veteran home schoolers and newcomers alike are all attracted to school districts that are offering programs that are amicable toward their needs since parents want the best for their children.

There is however one element that has been antagonistic towards these programs and that is the regulations regarding correspondence proposed by the Alaska department of education. Our state has the opportunity to be at the cutting edge of educational alternatives. Instead of taking this opportunity to be innovative, progressive, and cooperative with parents to help them be the best educators they can be, the DOE's proposed regulations will... SHUT THE PROGRAMS DOWN! That is of course except for their own programs like Alyeska Correspondence. The DOE constantly indicates in their material that their programs are superior and home schooling is a less beneficial way of educating, even though public school educators tell us constantly that children who do better in public school are those that have parents at home involved in their learning. One can see this by reading the proposals, which include no encouraging language referring to the terms parents, families, or home schooling.

These proposed regulations undermine the main benefits for wanting to home school with public funds in the first place, and does this by making it impossible for these correspondence programs to operate without local school district control. In essence the DOE is stating that since local correspondence programs have to endure endless red tape, then everyone else has to also. It seems to me that less bureaucracy and more educating was supposed to be the main idea. Our experience is that our correspondence program has required quite a bit of documentation in order to prove that requested public funds are used solely for the education of the students. I feel the current requirements and state testing are sufficient to prove that children are being educated.

The DOE is making a big point as to accountability to their regulations, but I would like to know if they feel at all accountable to Parents who are working very hard to educate their children. Contrary to popular DOE belief parents do demonstrate good judgment and performance and can actually educate a child properly without imposed regulations.

Not only does the DOE state in their proposed regulations that school districts will pick out the curriculums and expect parents to send in all work to be graded by them, but it also says that since we are a public school entity, we cannot use religious, partisan, etc. material in our own homes even if we purchase the material. This I think is a very interesting topic since the DOE uses The Alaska Constitution and another state law in their wording to dictate what beliefs are taught in our home. These laws were written regarding public school facilities, not homes. The intent of these laws is to protect families, not public school systems interests.

The DOE however wants to show in their proposals that they are working hard to give parents a voice in their children's education. This is demonstrated by requiring the parent

to sign an agreement for a curriculum plan that they have no say in. In other words be involved in our plan and we'll tell you what to do. We believe that home educators and the DOE can work together successfully. This will require mutual trust for the benefit of all involved.

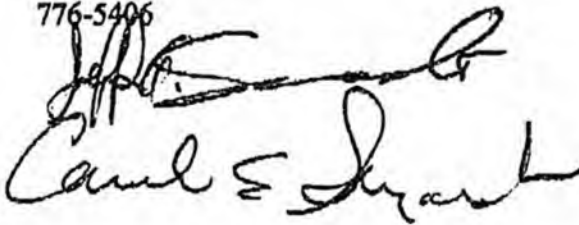
The truth is these programs are working, and further more, education funding is ultimately in existence to provide every child in this country with an education. The DOE however discriminates against home education and parental influence and believes government funding should be only for those individuals that are enrolled in their traditional methods. I believe the state needs to intervene and hold DOE accountable for these current and proposed regulations.

If DOE regulations continue their current trend towards increased micro management, tighter controls, and overbearing scrutiny over parental ability to teach their own children we will withdraw from public school programs. The DOE realizes that these regulations if accepted will phase out public school long distance education in the state.

Unfortunately, not only will our correspondence program lose out, DOE will lose funding as well. Please support HB 464 legislation...

Thank you for your time.

Jeff & Caroline Smardo
45112 East Sunrise Court
Kenai, Alaska 99611
776-5406

Handwritten signatures of Jeff and Caroline Smardo. The signature of Jeff is written above the signature of Caroline. Both signatures are in cursive and appear to be written in black ink.

Subject: HB 464 and SB 346

Date: Sat, 16 Mar 2002 10:45:29 -0900

From: "Carol Simpson" <carols@ideafamilies.org>

To: "Wes Keller" <Wes_Keller@legis.state.ak.us>,
 "Whitney Highland" <Whitney_Highland@legis.state.ak.us>,
 "Richard Schmitz" <Richard_Schmitz@legis.state.ak.us>

CC: "Representative Fred Dyson" <Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>,
 "Jim Pound" <Jim_Pound@legis.state.ak.us>,
 "Senator Loren Leman" <Senator_Loren_Leman@legis.state.ak.us>

Hello all;

You are doing a magnificent job! Whitney, you were simply fabulous about holding the line regarding AS 14.14.090(7) and the appropriateness of the inclusion of the words "establish procedures"!!! It is true that both the old and new regs say that the local board must "review and select" all materials as opposed to establish procedures for such - my feeling, as I explained to Whitney on Thursday, is that this has always gone too far...i.e. beyond the statute. It is impractical and cumbersome for a program such as ours, which allows for latitude beyond the same "school in a box" for every student in every grade.

I so appreciate Loren's clear thinking in the midst of all that to explain the three options that programs then have (after the Board *establishes procedures*) in approving the purchase and/or use of materials. I think this is very appropriate and makes perfect sense, and it is exactly what we do! He explained it in a way that made even Ed agree with the concept! I also very much appreciated how much testimony Fred gave on our behalf (by his own admission) on Thursday, adding to Richard's explanations and lobbying for this bill.

When I left the meeting (LIO) yesterday, I was thinking that maybe we could look at some slight re-phrasing of (3) in order to make it more palatable to Ed so that he does not try to obstruct it. This was due to what he was saying about going along with the original phrasing of (3), along with Loren's 3 options. However, in looking it over, I really like it just the way it is. If you guys think that we can get it passed the way it is, let's just leave it.

Jim F and I were discussing some options for adding an element related to representation on the local school board and responsibility toward the correspondence students, with the thought in mind that if we can address these concerns of the DOE and the State Board, we can alleviate much of the push toward regulation. They keep saying that they need to regulate state-wide programs because (a) we do not have a legal responsibility for those students who reside out of our district, and (b) those families do not have representation on the local board. My feeling is that if we can find an appropriate way to address these twin concerns, we can cut them off at the pass. Jim has some ideas that may have evolved since we spoke last, so I'll leave it to him to discuss it with you.

By the way, Steve, Jim, and I all looked through all of the NW Association of Schools and Colleges accreditation stuff and can see nothing about the selection of materials. See http://www.asdn.org/distance_education/ed_597_5k/ I had another thought, which I think is crucial. Remember Friday, Ed says that he called the NWASC and they thought that there *would* be a problem with this wording that backs off from the Board actually selecting the materials. One of you (who can be at these hearings - Whitney, since the Senate is first?) should call them ASAP Monday morning and ask them the same thing, explaining the wording in

these bills. Just like it was beneficial to have Whitney sitting there saying, "I have the law in my hand; it says "establish procedures!", it would be wise for someone to be able to respond if Ed says again, "Well, I called the NWASC and they had a problem with it; I am just trying to protect these programs' accreditation." It would be great if Whitney or someone could say, "Well, I called them this morning (go as high as you can on the contact) and spoke to the President (or whatever), and he said....." Not to show Ed up, but just to avoid the "I think ." and "well, I think...." kind of discussion. I think that this is VERY important. We can r out it will be better if you do it, so you can say that you spoke to them yourself.

By the way, in response to someone's question (I am not looking at my meeting notes), AS 14.08.101 (3) Powers of School Boards: "School districts must conduct all business through the school board."

Thank you once again, every one of you, for all your hard work! Please continue to keep me in the loop. See you in a few days!

Carol