

**HB**

**174**

**HFIN**

**FILE**



# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 3  
 Bill Version: CSHB 174(STA)  
 (H) Publish Date: 4/25/03

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected Education & Early Development  
 Title An Act relating to the state centralized BRU Alyeska Central School  
correspondence study program and the duties of schools... Component Alyeska Central School  
 Sponsor House Rules Committee  
 Requester Governor Component No. 2106

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Personal Services	2,809.3	(2,809.3)				
Travel	55.0	(55.0)				
Contractual	538.3	(538.3)				
Supplies	918.4	(918.4)				
Equipment	18.0	(18.0)				
Land & Structures	0.0					
Grants & Claims	0.0					
Miscellaneous	0.0					
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>4,339.0</b>	<b>(4,339.0)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1007 Inter Agency/Program Receipts	3,839.0	(3,839.0)				
1156 Receipt services	500.0	(500.0)				
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,339.0</b>	<b>(4,339.0)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time	21	-21				
Part-time	26	-26				
Temporary	1	-1				

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

CS HB174(STA) will eliminate Alyeska Central School the statewide correspondence program operated by the state beginning with the 2004-2005 school year. This bill will repeal summer school funding for Alyeska Central School beginning with the 2003 -2004 school year.

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, School Finance Manager  
 Division Education and Early Development  
 Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Agency Education and Early Development

Phone 465-8679  
 Date/Time 4/23/03 4:47 PM  
 Date 4/23/2003

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2  
Bill Version: HB 174  
(H) Publish Date: 3/10/03

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Education & Early Development  
Title: An Act relating to the state centralized BRU: K-12 Support  
correspondence study program and to the duties of school... Component: Foundation Program  
Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Requester: \_\_\_\_\_ Component No.: 141

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	(1,170.3)					
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>(1,170.3)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	(1,170.3)					
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type-Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(1,170.3)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This amendment eliminates summer school counts for the Alyeska Centralized Correspondence program. The above numbers are based on the FY03 counts.

FY03 Summer School ADM 364.84  
Correspondence Funding Level 80%  
Adjusted ADM 291.88  
Based Student Allocation \$4,010  
Summer School Funding \$1,170,349

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, School Finance Manager  
Division: Education and Early Development  
Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency: Education and Early Development

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time: 3/5/03 8:57 AM  
Date: 3/5/2003

*What is this*

*Adopted*

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: CSHB 174(STA)

1 Page 2, following line 2:

2 Insert a new bill section to read:

3 -Sec. 3. AS 14.08.111(1) is amended to read:

4 (1) provide, during the school term of each year, an educational

5 program for each school age child who is enrolled in or a resident of the district;"

6

7 Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

8

9 Page 3, line 9:

10 Delete "5 and 6"

11 Insert "6 and 7"

12

13 Page 3, line 10:

14 Delete "sec. 8"

15 Insert "sec. 9"

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# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

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FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101


State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

April 30, 2003

**SUBJECT:** Centralized correspondence study CSHB 174(STA)

**TO:** Representative Bill Williams  
Attn: Randy

**FROM:** Michael F. Ford   
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

**Section 1.** Establishes the purpose of the bill.

**Section 2.** Amends the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development.

**Section 3.** Amends the duties of school boards to include students enrolled in the district as well as resident students.

**Section 4.** Requires certain school boards to provide information on correspondence schools.

**Section 5.** Adds a provision to provide funding for education programs that occur primarily outside a school facility.

**Section 6.** Repeals a provision of law relating to counting summer correspondence school students.

**Section 7.** Repeals a reference to correspondence teachers in the Department of Education and Early Development.

**Section 8.** Effective date for sections 5 and 6.

**Section 9.** Effective date for all sections but 5 and 6.

MFF:med  
03-459.med

Alyeska Central School Student Enrollment Counts as of 3/4/03

ACS Students by district as of 3/4/03	Total	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	Regular (all grades)	Tuition (all grades)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1082</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>441</b>
Alaska Gateway Schools	3	0	3	1	2
Aleutians East Borough Schools	1	0	1	0	1
Anchorage Schools	459	64	395	324	135
Annette Islands Schools	3	1	2	2	1
Bering Strait Schools	9	1	8	6	3
Bristol Bay Borough Schools	2	0	2	0	2
Chatham Schools	9	1	8	7	2
Copper River Schools	22	5	17	8	14
Craig City Schools	1	0	1	1	0
Delta/Greely Schools	2	0	2	1	1
Denali Borough Schools	1	0	1	1	0
Dillingham City Schools	3	0	3	3	0
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools	62	15	47	45	17
Galena City Schools	5	0	5	2	3
Haines Borough Schools	10	0	10	4	6
Hoonah City Schools	1	0	1	1	0
Iditarod Area Schools	3	0	3	1	2
Juneau Borough Schools	148	21	127	65	83
Kake City Schools	1	1	0	1	0
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools	65	9	56	35	30
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools	14	3	11	10	4
Kodiak Island Borough Schools	20	14	6	17	3
Kuspuk School District	1	0	1	0	1
Lake & Peninsula Borough Schools	6	2	4	3	3
Lower Kuskokwim Schools	23	5	18	11	12
Lower Yukon Schools	2	0	2	1	1
Mat-Su Borough Schools	59	11	48	39	20
Mt. Edgecumbe High School	17	0	17	0	17
Nenana City Schools	1	1	0	1	0
Nome City Schools	6	2	4	5	1
North Slope Borough Schools	51	3	48	5	46
Northwest Arctic Borough Schools	8	1	7	6	2
Pelican City Schools	1	0	1	1	0
Petersburg City Schools	10	3	7	10	0
Pribilof Schools	2	0	2	2	0
Sitka Borough Schools	20	2	18	2	18
Skagway City Schools	1	0	1	0	1
Southeast Island Schools	5	2	3	5	0
Southwest Region Schools	10	4	6	5	5
Valdez City Schools	4	0	4	3	1
Wrangell Public Schools	4	1	3	2	2
Yukon Flats Schools	4	3	1	4	0
Yukon/Koyukuk Schools	2	0	2	0	2
Yuplit Schools	1	1	0	1	0

Regular enrollment represents students funded by the foundation formula. Tuition enrollment represents students enrolled in courses paid for by parents or districts.

**Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development**  
**Public School Funding Program**  
**Prepared 3/13/02**

School District	State Contribution	Cost Per Student	FY02ADM	Cor.ADM	#ACS St.
Anchorage	\$199,751,175	\$4,101.85	48,697.83	549.00	459
Fairbanks NSB	\$65,099,549	\$4,325.10	15,051.58	202.93	62
Juneau	\$20,873,019	\$3,825.06	5,456.90	50.60	148
Kenai	\$42,718.263	\$4,530.57	9,428.90	370.48	65
Lower Kuskokwim	\$35,262.741	\$9,669.69	3,646.73	00.00	23
Mat-Su	\$65,370,660	\$5,133.72	12,733.59	422.65	59
Sitka	\$6,709,606	\$4,390.069	1,528.36	81.05	20
North Slope	\$8,945,709	\$4,426.86	2,020.78	00.00	51
Northwest Arctic	\$19,505,893	\$9,070.82	2,150.40	13.95	8
ACS	\$4,701.228	\$3,220.80	00.00	1,465.47	1,465.47

THE  
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### ACS Closure is not a cost savings!

\$4,010 Per Student		641 Students		\$ 2,056,328		
Correspondence		Brick & Mortar		Foundation \$	Increase	%
Stay	80%	Switch	100%			
95%	\$ 1,953,512	5%	\$ 128,521	\$ 2,082,032	\$ 25,704	1%
90%	\$ 1,850,695	10%	\$ 257,041	\$ 2,107,736	\$ 51,408	3%
85%	\$ 1,747,879	15%	\$ 385,562	\$ 2,133,440	\$ 77,112	4%
80%	\$ 1,645,062	20%	\$ 514,082	\$ 2,159,145	\$ 102,817	5%
75%	\$ 1,542,246	25%	\$ 642,603	\$ 2,184,849	\$ 128,521	6%
70%	\$ 1,439,430	30%	\$ 771,123	\$ 2,210,553	\$ 154,225	8%
65%	\$ 1,336,613	35%	\$ 899,644	\$ 2,236,257	\$ 179,929	9%
60%	\$ 1,233,797	40%	\$ 1,028,164	\$ 2,261,961	\$ 205,633	10%
55%	\$ 1,130,980	45%	\$ 1,156,685	\$ 2,287,665	\$ 231,337	11%
50%	\$ 1,028,164	50%	\$ 1,285,205	\$ 2,313,370	\$ 257,042	13%
45%	\$ 925,348	55%	\$ 1,413,726	\$ 2,339,074	\$ 282,746	14%
40%	\$ 822,531	60%	\$ 1,542,246	\$ 2,364,778	\$ 308,450	15%
35%	\$ 719,715	65%	\$ 1,670,767	\$ 2,390,482	\$ 334,154	16%
30%	\$ 616,898	70%	\$ 1,799,287	\$ 2,416,188	\$ 359,858	18%
25%	\$ 514,082	75%	\$ 1,927,808	\$ 2,441,890	\$ 385,562	19%
20%	\$ 411,266	80%	\$ 2,056,328	\$ 2,467,594	\$ 411,266	20%
15%	\$ 308,449	85%	\$ 2,184,849	\$ 2,493,299	\$ 436,971	21%
10%	\$ 205,633	90%	\$ 2,313,369	\$ 2,519,003	\$ 462,675	23%
5%	\$ 102,816	95%	\$ 2,441,890	\$ 2,544,707	\$ 488,379	24%
0%	\$ -	100%	\$ 2,570,410	\$ 2,570,411	\$ 514,083	25%

**Current ACS Foundation Funding**

[Empty Box]

**Potential Foundation Funding Increase**

#### Cost Differential 1.504

Barrow	\$ 6,031.04
ACS	\$ 3,208.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,823.04</b>

**Additional Foundation Funding needed for students returning to local districts with cost differential such as Barrow.**

#### Local Contribution 23%

JSD	\$ 4,932.30
ACS	\$ 3,208.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,724.30</b>

**Additional Local Funding needed for students returning to local districts with a local contribution such as June: u...**

A of A

**HB-174 and SB-107** are companion bills offered by the Governor's office whose initial fiscal notes purported to "save" \$5.5M through closing Alyeska Central School (District).

### **1. FISCAL NOTE REDUCED BY GOVERNOR FROM \$5.1M TO \$1.2M**

A recent letter from the Governor's budget office (copy attached as a Word.doc) indicates this has been amended to \$1.2M, although the fiscal notes attached still (on the web, at least) cite \$5.5M.

The reason for this reduction is as follows (quote from attached letter from Governor):

"The closure of Alyeska Central School will result in savings of \$1.2 million to the state. The school's other \$4.3 million in funding will be distributed around the state to other programs in which the students enroll."

This savings is not realized through closure of the school itself, but only closure of the summer school. ACS is the ONLY such summer program offered for Alaskan students to avoid repeating classes in the regular school year, and has been used by all school districts of the state. The school employs teachers from around the state, most on summer vacation, to teach the students. It is, however, distinct from the regular school, and to cease this service (and save \$1.2M) does not require school or district closure.

### **2. "DUPLICATION OF SERVICES" NONEXISTANT**

Alyeska Central School (ACS) is now smaller in enrollment than at least one other distance education program. The following quote is from the attached letter from the Governor:

"Some 8,000 students are currently enrolled in correspondence programs around the state. Of these 8,000 students, approximately 640 are enrolled at Alyeska as full-time students. Another 400 students enroll in a few classes at ACS, but attend school elsewhere."

Note first that districts from around the state have SELECTED Alyeska for 400 of their students. Apparently in these districts, many of whom have their own "duplicative" programs, ACS is the "school of choice."

There exists at least one program which is larger than ACS. The following quote is from the attached letter from the Governor:

"By eliminating Alyeska, other district correspondence programs will step forward to fill this role. These programs have proven their success and popularity. The Galena Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) program alone serves 3,700 students."

The cited "IDEA" program is the largest such program and exemplifies services offered by most other districts. It is advertised on the web (<http://www.ideafamilies.org/>) as follows, and is quite different, rather than "duplicative" (compare page attached as a Word.doc):

- **Choice of curricular materials**

**IDEA:** "You may use any material you deem appropriate for your children"

**ACS:** Materials are provided by ACS:

- **Allotments**

**IDEA:** "Allotments are provided for each student, added together into a family allotment. These can be used for academics including the traditional core subject areas of math, social studies, science, and language arts as well as for lessons in areas such as art, sports, and music. The allotment amount is \$1400 for grades K-3, \$1600 for grades 4-8, and \$1800 for grades 9-12. If you enroll older children, you may also enroll 4-year-old preschoolers, receiving an allotment of \$200 for them.

**ACS:** Does not allot funds to parents, nor allocate funds for art supplies, bicycles, music lessons, etc. ACS does not operate a pre-school program nor receive funds for such. All materials for all courses are provided by the school as either expendable items or require return.

- **Equipment**

**IDEA:** "We provide you with a Windows computer and a multi-function office machine (printer/fax/copier/scanner) as needed. A refundable \$100 cash deposit is required for the office machine. The computers can be received in exchange for a \$200 cash deposit or you may lease them from us with a yearly allotment deduction."

**ACS:** Computers are "loaners."

### **Curriculum**

**IDEA:** "IDEA sponsors a Curriculum Fair each spring in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Soldotna, and Juneau. Vendors come from all over the country to share their products at booths and their knowledge in workshops. IDEA families attend free."

**ACS:** Curriculum is provided directly. Students and parents do not select their own books and materials.

- **Progress Assessment**

**IDEA:** "As the parent/teacher, you need to report your students' progress to us twice a year. This is done through Progress Reports for grades K-8 and High School Evaluation forms provided on this website. We will be glad to offer suggestions and assistance in grading if you wish."

**ACS:** Progress is monitored and evaluated (graded) at least monthly by certificated teachers of the appropriate grade level or content area. Parents and/or students do not provide grades to the teacher.

- **Monthly Contact**

**IDEA:** "In accordance with state regulations, your contact teacher must document communication with you on a monthly basis. This can be as simple as a short phone call, an exchange of e-mails, visiting when you drop by the office, or even bumping into you in the store."

**ACS:** ACS teachers contact each student at least monthly via lessons submitted, letters, e-mail, phone, fax, etc. Bumping into students at the store doesn't count as submission of required work.

### **ACCREDITATION:**

None of the Alaskan schools on line are accredited except Alyeska which is fully accredited as a K-12 school. The military services and institutions of higher learning do not accept home-school curriculum and grades assigned by parents, but do recognize curricula and grades from accredited schools, including Alyeska Central School.

### **SUMMARY:**

- The only savings now included in the fiscal note (see Governor's letter) is \$1.2M through closure of ACS "SUMMER SCHOOL." Closure of Summer School is a consideration *independent* of closure of the regular school.
- The only apparent duplication of services is in name. While programs such as IDEA appeal to thousands of Alaskans because of the independence from traditional regimens through provision of allotments, ACS is still the choice for over 1,000 students, parents, and school counselors. This is so because it is a "traditional" distance education program, fully accredited, and similar to the methodology employed by the University of Alaska and many other similar institutions. ACS district is currently, I believe, number 20 out of 54 in the state in student enrollment. There is NO other district in Alaska that provides "duplication" of ACS.
- The quality level of ACS seems not at all in question, as demonstrated by its regular high standing in all the various state-wide assessments.

If the ACS Summer School is considered an "unaffordable education luxury," then so be it. Since a study has never been conducted, it is arguable whether any true savings have been realized from success in summer school versus having students repeat a year in school or finish High School with a certificate of attendance vice a diploma. In any event, however, the "baby" doesn't need to be "thrown out with the wash."

It is unfortunate that the previous administration provided closure of ACS as an option to the new Governor to presumably save funding. As a strong supporter of the Governor for many years I have never seen a comparable "red herring" slipped into his hand by his own staff or appointees. The Knowles Administration appointees authored this embarrassment for the

Governor. I have my own personal opinions why this was done to him, but of course they are not germane to the issue.

I appreciate your attention, and hope you will assist the Governor in the long term by continued support of ACS.

Sincerely,

John J. ("Jack") Cadigan  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

Also:

- Local business owner
- Alaska resident since 1965
- Retired teacher of Physics, Mathematics, Physical Science, Computer Science at Alyeska Central School



FRANK H. MURKOWSKI  
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STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

March 5, 2003

The Honorable Pete Kott  
Speaker of the House  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 208  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Speaker Kott:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill eliminating the Alyeska Central School program (ACS), the state's correspondence program.

Alyeska was once the state's only correspondence program offering education services to students statewide. The school began operations in 1939 offering programs to students living in remote areas with no local schools. However, there are 12 school districts currently offering statewide correspondence services to Alaska's school age residents.

The district-operated statewide correspondence programs offer a variety of education delivery methods. Educational delivery models include US postal, Internet and family developed programs supported by district staff.

Eliminating the ACS program will eliminate the duplicative services currently being provided by school districts enrolling and serving correspondence students statewide. The Department of Education and Early Development will help ACS students and families identify the appropriate educational services and assist them in moving to other programs to ensure no child is left behind.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

Frank H. Murkowski  
Governor

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# STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Education & Early Development

Office of the Commissioner

FRANK EL MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR

Goldbelt Place  
801 West Tenth Street, Suite 200  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894  
(907) 465-2800  
(907) 465-4156 Fax

March 6, 2003

Dear ACS students and families,

We regret to inform you of the proposed permanent closure of Alyeska Central School effective June 30, 2003. This proposal is being pursued as part of a statewide move to reduce government spending and to eliminate duplicate services. We want to assure you and your family that we will make every attempt to make this change with as little impact as possible on your schooling.

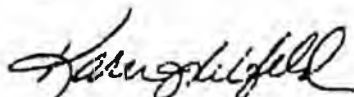
Alyeska has been in existence since 1939 as an effective alternative correspondence study program for students, first in the Territory of Alaska and, upon statehood in 1959, in the State of Alaska. In the past six years about a dozen additional correspondence study programs have been created by school districts in Alaska. Each of these programs enrolls students statewide. In fact, Alyeska Central School enrollments have decreased in recent years as some students have selected services through these other programs. There are about 8,000 students enrolled in other district operated statewide correspondence programs.

There are several options available for Alyeska students in our state. The local school district in which you reside may offer a correspondence program, a charter school or other alternative school. Our Alyeska staff will work with you over the next four months to find a suitable program, should you need assistance. In addition, Alyeska staff members will do all they can to help students complete their current coursework and graduating seniors earn their diplomas by June 30, 2003.

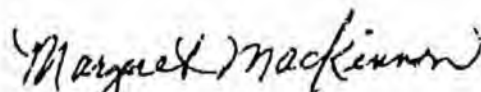
The closure of Alyeska is currently a proposal that will require legislative action to repeal the responsibility of the Department of Education & Early Development to operate a correspondence program [AS 14.07.020 (9)]. There will be public hearings on the bill as it moves through the legislature. You can follow the bill through your local Legislative Information Office.

We encourage you to work to complete your current courses by the middle of June. Continue to send in your work on a regular basis and contact your teacher or counselor if you have questions or need any help in completing your work. Thank you for the opportunity to support your education through Alyeska Central School.

Sincerely,



Karen Rehfeld  
Acting Commissioner



Margaret MacKinnon, Acting Director  
Alyeska Central School

Today, the line has turned, information minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf said. "We are destroying them." He read a statement from Saddam telling Iraq's fighters to rush at the Americans and "exhaust (them) and increase the depth of their wounds."

Al-Sahhaf said the Americans were in the suburbs and in a message on television urged residents to inform Iraqi troops about any U.S. movements. Maintain "calm, good organization ... to confront the enemy effectively, conquer it, and force it to retreat accursed and defeated," he said.

By Saturday night, city streets were crawling with all kinds of armed men - government troops, militiamen, loyalists from Saddam's Baath party. Members of the Fedayeen, a militia led by Saddam's son Odai, appeared in their distinctive black uniforms in the city center for the first time since the war began.

Armed with Kalashnikovs, mortars and heavy machine guns, soldiers of the elite Republican Guard Corps dug fresh trenches and fortified old ones. Some took over

Please see **WAR**, Page A7



**Statue of limitations:** A U.S. Army vehicle from the 4th Republican Guard's Medina Division headquarters so airstrikes and abandoned by Iraqi forces.

## Correspondence school's planned closing concerns School Board

By **ERIC FRY**

JUNEAU EMPIRE © 2003

The proposed closing of the state-run correspondence school could help the Juneau School District's budget but would hurt some local students who need personalized attention or help to graduate, according to administrators and School Board members.

The School Board said Tuesday it will send a letter to legislators expressing concern about the proposed closing of Alyeska Central School.

Alyeska enrolls about 640 full-time students and 440 tuition-paying students who take selected courses. Its summer school enrolled 3,450 students last year.

The Alyeska closure is among a number of Murkowski administration measures to reduce the state education budget. Closing Alyeska would save the state \$1.2 million, the cost of its summer school, state officials have said.

The state wouldn't necessarily save money by closing the regular program because the state still would fund the education of those students if they enrolled in an Alaska school district or a district-based home-school program.



**BRIAN WALLACE / JUNEAU EMPIRE**

**Home learning:** Laurie Clough instructs her son Forrest during a home school lesson at their North Douglas home Saturday.

Eighty Juneau children attend Alyeska full time, said Juneau schools Superintendent Peggy Cowan. If Alyeska closed, some of those students might enroll in the Juneau School District, either in its regular schools or in its two home-school programs, thus increasing the district's state fund-

ing.

At a meeting last week, School Board member Paul Gulyas discounted the idea that many Alyeska students would transfer into regular schools. The students have chosen an alternative program and will seek another such

Please see **HOME SCHOOL**, Page A8

# Home school: Students would have to pay for correspondence courses from outside Alaska

Continued from Page A1

program if Alyeska closes, he said.

Cowan also pointed out some local downsides to Alyeska's closure.

Last summer Juneau School District students took 275 courses in the Alyeska summer school, which is funded by the state. The school district's summer school focuses on remedial courses, and it would be hard for it to match the diversity of Alyeska's courses, administrators said. The Juneau summer school charges a fee but offers some scholarships.

A lot of Juneau students who take summer courses at Alyeska want to work ahead, not take remedial courses, said Carol Sewill, who runs the Juneau School District's correspondence program.

If Alyeska closed, those students would have to pay for correspondence courses from outside of Alaska if they still wanted them. No other Alaska distance-education programs sell such courses, Sewill said.

"We would have a very hard time duplicating the 275 courses," said School Board member Mary Becker. "This would be a very great loss to our students."

The Alyeska summer courses are valuable to high school seniors who are short a few credits to graduate, Sewill said. Without a substitute program, they would have to re-enroll in high school in the fall, putting off college.

Also, 83 Juneau children, some enrolled in the school district, are paying tuition to take selected courses at Alyeska during the regular school year. Some of those are middle school students taking advanced courses such as algebra and geometry, Cowan said.

Sewill said Alyeska's tuition-paying students can buy courses from out of state for a comparable fee, but Juneau children won't have the close access to Alyeska's certified teachers, who work here. Nor will the outside courses be

I just never thought I'd see another '1986' here with the state being hit so hard. I'm having trouble understanding the necessity for cutting state government to the level they are.

**DEBBIE CHALMERS**

President, Alyeska teachers union

geared to Alaska, she said.

Laurie Clough of Juneau enrolls two sons, 13 and 15, in the public schools part time, and they also take some courses for a fee at Alyeska. Clough, a former public school teacher, said Juneau's schools are good but in some ways were a bad fit for her sons.

"I wanted them to excel in school, and I could see they weren't doing it," she said.

The Murkowski administration has argued that Alyeska's services are duplicated elsewhere. But Clough said the statewide distance-education programs run by Alaska school districts won't accept part-time students. And she's concerned Outside programs won't provide a quick turnaround in reviewing lessons.

Also of concern locally is the loss of jobs. Alyeska employs 20 teachers and 18 support staff, all in Juneau, the school has said. Another 10 positions, all but one in Juneau, are unfilled.

Debbie Chalmers, president of the Alyeska teachers union, said her family had to leave Juneau and eventually Alaska when low oil prices in 1986 triggered layoffs of untenured teachers. She returned in 1990.

"I just never thought I'd see another '1986' here with the state being hit so hard," Chalmers said. "I'm having trouble understanding the necessity for cutting state government to the level they are."

The Juneau market for home sales is "soft," she said. "You put 10 or 15 more homes on the market - I think that's going to have an appreciable impact."

Because a statewide correspondence school is mandated by Alaska law, it will take another law to undo the requirement.

The House Health Education and Social Services Committee was split in its review of House Bill 174 to close Alyeska. The bill has been scheduled for a hearing, among other bills, in the State Affairs Committee, chaired by Juneau Republican Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch, at 8 a.m. Tuesday.

A similar measure, Senate Bill 107, was passed out of the Senate Health Education and Social Services Committee on Thursday and will go to that body's Finance Committee.

Closing Alyeska is a tough policy call, Rep. John Coghill, a North Pole Republican who supports the closure, said at a House Health Education and Social Services Committee hearing late last month.

The state is working to get school districts connected to their students, and the districts have been stepping up with their own home-school programs, he said.

"The policy call we are asking here is do we give the school districts now the responsibility for providing correspondence school," he told the committee.

• Eric Fry can be reached at [efry@juneauempire.com](mailto:efry@juneauempire.com).

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# **Alyeska Central School Costs and Funding**

**Statement by Rick Currier,**

**Alyeska Central School Teacher and member, Alyeska Central School Education Association**

Alyeska Central School receives the majority of its funding from the Department of Education and Early Development foundation funding. Other income comes from selling courses on a tuition basis at \$250.00 per semester course and some federal grant funding under the Migrant Education program. Foundation funding and tuition course receipts, not appropriated funds fund faculty and staff salaries, educational supplies, the warehouse lease, and course-printing equipment costs. In addition, ACS is "taxed" for certain services received from the Department and other state agencies including:

\$52,000.00 per year for the Commissioner's office  
\$15,000.00 per year for the State Board of Education  
\$18,300.00 per year for ESS costs including Human Resources, and accounting  
\$19,000.00 per year for miscellaneous services from other departments  
Including legal services from the Department of Law, risk management, mail room operation, and the library connection  
\$11,000.00 per year for IT support  
**\$115,300.00 annual total**

The above costs are paid with receipts from foundation funding and tuition courses. If ACS is closed, other divisions in the Department will have to bear these costs.

Alyeska Central School has two major leases. One is the warehouse at \$128,000.00 per year. The Department of Administration contributes \$19,000.00 per year toward this lease. Alyeska's annual cost share for the warehouse lease is \$109,000.00 per year. The other lease is \$95,000.00 for printer/copier machines to reproduce course lesson plans. Both leases are funded with ACS's proceeds from foundation funding and tuition courses. The warehouse lease expires in 2009. Although the lease has a release clause if the Legislature doesn't fund ACS, the State doesn't typically cancel active leases in order to maintain the good will and confidence of lenders and leasers.

In my previous testimony, I stated that closing Alyeska Central School will cost the State money, rather than save money. I have included several enclosures that breakdown the differences in FTE the State will pay if various percentages of our currently enrolled students enter classrooms in Anchorage, which receives no rural cost differential funding, rather than enroll in another distance education program. Please note the statements that you have heard from several parents and students indicating that they do not feel other distance learning programs can meet their needs. Thus, if 25 per cent of our 641 foundation-funded students enroll in local brick and mortar schools at 100 per cent FTE, the State will pay an additional \$128,521.00 or 6 per cent more per year.

2054

If 40 per cent seek brick and mortar enrollment, it will cost the State \$205, 000.00 more per year. If 70 per cent enroll in local classrooms, the State will pay an additional \$359,000.00 per year. Note that these figures are for Anchorage or schools that have no rural cost differentials. If rural cost differentials are added, the costs increase substantially. For example, our five Barrow students will cost the State an additional \$2823.04 each per year each or \$14, 115.00 per year in rural cost differential plus the difference between 0.8 and 100 per cent FTE of \$3946.00 for an increase of \$18,061.00. That's just for five students. We have students in every school district in the state. Note that if 95 per cent or more of our students enter brick and mortar classrooms next year, the result will be a 25 percent foundation funding increase.

- Encl: (1) ACS Closure is not a Cost Saving chart  
(2) Potential Foundation Funding Increases due to ACS Closure graphic  
(3) Alyeska Central School Student Enrollment Counts as of 03/04/03

3 of 4

Wolcott Family

April 5, 2003

Page 1 of 4

To: Governor, Lt. Governor, Senators & Representatives

Reference: SB174/HB107 Proposed Closure of ACS

We are continuing to update and collect additional information for your review. There is no duplication; this is not a cost saving measure. Our children are our future. Don't cut our children's quality education.

Please DO NOT CLOSE Alyeska Central School.

**Note: Sitka & S.E. Island correspondence courses will not be operating state wide programs next year. This is straight from the Department of Education's office. Out of the 11 options this department keeps mentioning, reality is, we actually only have 9. None of them compare to Alyeska Central School. One example to follow this cover sheet.**

**Those of you that are fighting for us THANK YOU!!! Those of you that are not take a look at the facts and reconsider your position for the welfare of our children.**

Choice is the driving force in education and is the heart and soul of all recent movements and philosophies in American education from the federal to the state and local levels.

Every statewide correspondence or charter "at home" program in Alaska has differences. Different students and families have different needs that require different approaches. This is the fundamental justification for choice in education. In no way is one better than another—just different.

Comparisons and Features of two different and viable choices available to Alaskans.

**ACS Traditional & Structured**

**IDEA Home School Support**

Teachers certified in content area and grade level review books and other materials and make selections that will best meet both the Alaska Standards and the needs of students.	Parents choose all materials from vendor lists or in person at curriculum fairs put on by vendors.
Teachers certified in content area write courses and daily lesson plans designed to meet the Alaska State Standards.	Parents are provided lists of course objectives and state standards to help them design and write their own learning plans. The LP must be submitted and approved by IDEA.
Certified teachers create tests and other assignments required for assessment.	Parents create tests and assessments based on school provided guidelines.
Teachers certified in content area evaluate assessments and assign grades. All work is returned to the student by the course teacher with comments, corrections and suggestions.	Parents grade their own student's assessments. Parents choose sample(s) of student's work and submit these to the school.
Certified teachers determine and assign course grade based on their assessment of all required assignments.	Parents submit course grades with comments and explanations of how grade was determined. A teacher assigns a final grade after considering parent recommendations.
Fully accredited by NWASC since 1979. Transcripts readily accepted by other high schools, the military, colleges and NCAA scholarships.	Provisional Accreditation in place. Full Accreditation awaiting completion of self study.
Internet courses available but internet access not required for paper based courses.	Must have Internet access and an active e-mail account that must be checked on a regular basis.
ACS students must have a homeschool teacher of record. While the homeschool teacher is usually the parent, it is not a requirement.	One parent must be at home during school hours. Enrolled students cannot be schooled by friends, neighbors or anyone other than a parent.
Students enroll in a specific class taught by a specific content certified teacher. Each course teacher is available by phone, email, fax, or on-line within the web based course sites to provide specific course content help to both the student and homeschool teacher.	Certified teachers are available from a list specified by grade level or general content area such as K-8, K-12, 9-12 or math specialist, but not by grade level/course content, such as 8 <sup>th</sup> grade science. They will provide consultation and educational advice to the parent.
Required by law to offer educational services to all Alaskans.	Required only to offer educational services to district residents. May serve students statewide at districts discretion.



## FACTS ABOUT ACS

- While many students are enrolled in correspondence schools statewide, a large number of those students were not previously enrolled in any public school, including ACS. ACS regular enrollment has declined some due to parents and students having more choices, as well as changes in the way students have been counted, but ACS still enrolls a significant number of students statewide. For FY03, there were 35 school districts in Alaska that enrolled fewer students than ACS.
- Since the passage of the Alaska home school law in 1997, there are now nearly 8000 students per year being served by a dozen "at home" district-based programs. It must be concluded that these new programs are serving a new and different group of families with different needs and philosophies.
- Alaskan parents are well informed and intelligent. Parents enroll their children in programs of their own choice after investigating the options available.
- ACS has not ceased to "serve its purpose" or it would have died of natural causes during the past five years.
- ACS is unique. It is a fully accredited program offering a full range of educational services as well as Alaskan Certified Teacher developed standards based curriculum.
- ACS is the only statutorily mandated program in the state and cannot arbitrarily cease to offer statewide services. School districts offer statewide programs at their own pleasure.
- ACS operates 12 months of the year and offers flexibility for family and student schedules.
- ACS enrolls many students on a tuition basis, not through foundation funding, to accommodate educational needs that may not be met by local schools.
- ACS is a founding member of the Alaska Online Consortium and offers 18 of the 29 online courses now available to school districts through the consortium.
- ACS is the first distance program to offer AP (advanced college placement) courses to college bound students.
- ACS has the infrastructure in place to offer distance education options to students in rural schools to support the goals of NCLB federal legislation.

Please do not limit the educational choice available to Alaskan families. The state of Alaska needs all of the choice and flexibility it can muster to meet the challenges of "NO Child Left Behind" as well as the ever increasing demands and expectations placed on students to become well educated and valuable members of society.

The state of Alaska cannot require any district to service students out of their district. If the intent is to replace ACS with one of the choices offered by districts, how will parents and students be guaranteed that these choices will be available next year or the year after?

Please do not eliminate or dismantle a valuable and unique choice when there is no measurable impact on state spending.

If this legislation is really a policy issue, then the policy must be to eliminate choice.

**It has been stated:**

**Alyeska is a duplication of services.**

Please let us know the name(s) of such choice(s). NONE of them compare. Isn't it true it could cost the state a lot more money if ACS closed: ACS \$3800.00 per child - all going child's education, IDEA \$4100.00 per child only \$1700.00 going to family for education, Boarding School \$15,000.00.

**It has been stated:**

**The state will save money by closing Alyeska Central School.**

Rent \$\$ Issue (ownership - Permanent Dividend Fund) - Isn't it true that the education department will just take over the office space Alyeska currently has if Alyeska was to be closed? Isn't it true this space can only be occupied by a state agency? Where is the state going to get the additional money to cover Alyeska's part (\$115,300.00) for the fees for sections of the Department that are non revenue producing?

**It has been stated:**

**Alyeska students should return to their own districts.**

Isn't it true the district schools are over crowded and under budgeted? How is adding the Alyeska students to their district (where possible) going to help?

**It has been stated:**

**Districts to provide same services as ACS.**

What if it is not advantageous to the district to provide a similar program statewide? Can't they cease providing the program at anytime?

**It has been stated:**

**Still providing ACS Curriculum.**

Wouldn't this take qualified staff to keep up to date? It takes experienced people to write for students at a distance.

**It has been stated:**

**Governor Murkowski and administration are committed to quality education.**

SHOW US!!!! Don't close Alyeska Central School.

*Mieke K. Malmberg*  
*California SBN# 209992*

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*pilebay@yahoo.com*  
*mkm@quinnemanuel.com*

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL and FIRST CLASS MAIL

Rep. Bill Williams  
State Capital  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 174 & SB 107 – Please DO NOT pass this legislation closing Alyeska Central School

Dear Rep. Williams:

Reference is made to the above legislation that, if passed, will require the closure of Alyeska Central School thereby a) taking away the centralized correspondence study program in the State of Alaska and b) leaving the responsibilities of administering a correspondence study to each individual district, a responsibility each district may choose to accept or not.

I. INTRODUCTION

I first heard about this proposed legislation last week from my 15 year old brother who is currently enrolled in Alyeska Central School ("ACS"). He wrote to me stating, "this idea [that ACS could be closed] is terrible. It [ACS] is a family tradition and we have to keep it going. Please write a letter to the legislature. WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE." After researching and thinking about the proposal I agree with him: closing ACS is a terrible idea. First, a centralized correspondence study is the optimal model to deliver high quality educational services to remote students. Additionally, the closure of the centralized program will result in complete chaos and undependability as well as a lower quality of educational services delivered at a cumulatively higher cost. Finally, closing ACS fails to fulfill legislative intent because ACS' services are not 'duplicative' of other district programs and its comparatively large enrollment shows that it is valued and utilized by the State's residents.

## II. ARGUMENT

### A. Personal Experience Shows that a Centralized Correspondence Study Is Optimal for High Quality Education

Alyeska Central School (formerly known as Centralized Correspondence Study) has played an integral role in my life. Raised in a family of six children on a remote homestead located on the west side of Kodiak Island, I was enrolled in ACS from first grade through the ninth grade. Following the ninth grade I moved to the town of Kodiak and attended Kodiak H.S. where I graduated in 1992, finishing in the top 5% of my class. Since then I've earned a B.S. in Biochemistry and Cell Biology and a B.A. in History from the University of California, San Diego, graduated in the top 25% of my class from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law and passed the rigorous California Bar Examination on my first attempt. I am now a third year associate at a top-tier law firm in Los Angeles practicing primarily patent litigation.

Having attended both ACS and regular public school in the State of Alaska, I can attest to the high quality of education that ACS delivers. ACS is intellectually challenging, well organized and well managed. In fact, I firmly believe that ACS did a better job of preparing me for a highly ranked college and professional program than other options available in the State of Alaska. The commitment of the teachers is strong (some of my elementary and junior high school teachers are still at ACS) and the lesson plans are constantly being updated to keep up with the latest developments in education. Examples of how good the education is that ACS delivers abound, including the fact that it took me three more years of Spanish at Kodiak H.S. to reach the end of the first year of material that I had learned already at ACS to the fact that four out of five of my younger siblings (who were also educated through ACS) either hold college degrees or are currently enrolled in major universities (my younger brother is a high school student enrolled in ACS).

In fact, although the Kodiak School District has always offered an alternative correspondence program, my mother investigated that program and specifically chose to go through ACS believing that the quality of the lesson plans, the constant updating of the material and the fact that there are individual teachers trained and accredited at each grade level make it far superior to the program run out of Kodiak where there are only one or two teachers to assist

all students at all grade levels. Judging from my success as an ACS student, I would have to agree.

B. Requiring Each District to Administer Its Own Correspondence Program Invites Chaos, a Lower Quality of Education at a Cumulatively Higher Cost and Complete Undependability

Removing the centralized correspondence program from the State of Alaska will be disastrous. In a state where a high number of rural students make correspondence study an absolute necessity, decentralizing this program and turning it over to the whims of each individual district can only invite chaos, a lower quality of education at a cumulatively higher cost and undependable administration. Following are several reasons that the closure of Alyeska Central School is an unsavory option:

- There will no longer be teachers trained at every grade level, thereby decreasing the quality of education. It is doubtful that individual districts will have the necessary resources to employ correspondence teachers that are certified in each grade level, relying instead on one or more teachers each undoubtedly trained in only one level, to administer (or be prepared to administer) each and every grade level at all times. This will decrease the quality of education and individual assistance being delivered to rural students and their families.
- The quality of lesson plans will suffer and local programs will no longer be able to rely on ACS to develop timely curricula. With only a few teachers in each of the districts that choose to offer correspondence study, who will be responsible for developing new lesson plans and keeping abreast of current developments in education? Certainly a few teachers administering a program for multiple students across several grade levels will not have the time nor the expertise to develop and continuously update lesson plans that are timely and challenging for every single grade level for which they are responsible. In the past these local correspondence programs have been able to depend on ACS for current lesson plans and curricula; if ACS is closed this option will no longer be available.
- If in fact the school districts decide to assign the correspondence responsibility to a teacher already teaching in that district, this will also be disastrous. A teacher already dealing with the day to day rigors of being in a classroom will have no commitment to a correspondence program which, in order to run smoothly and well, would require creativity, self-motivation, constant diligence, upkeep and supervision.

- Decentralizing the pool of resources will make it impossible for local programs with fluctuating enrollment to offer current materials and library services for each and every student each and every year. Distributing funding over several correspondence programs will ultimately cause it to be at a cumulatively higher cost and lower quality. With the current centralized correspondence model, one pool of funding can purchase books and supplies, pay teacher salaries and administer student activities and a library for a large pool of students in each grade level each and every year. By destabilizing this program it means that each district that decides to offer a correspondence program (currently, 12 districts)<sup>1</sup> must cover all of these expenses on its own. With the fluctuation of rural enrollment this means that while in one year there may be a student in each grade level, the next year there may be no students in a given grade level or several in another grade level. Given this constant fluctuation of correspondence enrollment within a district, it will be expensive and impossible to offer current books and materials for each and every student each and every year.
- Differences in district allocations of funding will cause a disparity in the quality of correspondence education delivered by each district. Different districts will allocate funding differently depending on enrollment and other factors. By decentralizing the correspondence program students and their families will lose the dependable high quality education they have come to expect and deserve from correspondence study.
- A failure to designate specific funding for correspondence study will provide no safeguards whatsoever, allowing districts to use funding on other pet projects. If correspondence does not have specific funding districts may be encouraged to start correspondence programs in order to be eligible for additional funding from the State and then allocate those funds elsewhere. Without safeguards, districts are more likely to take care of those students with direct access to their facilities than they are to take care of those rural students who are essentially 'out of sight, out of mind.'
- De-centralizing correspondence study will cause home-schooling to lose prestige and credibility. As someone who has been educated by correspondence study and questioned about it throughout my life, I am quick to remind people that Alaska's correspondence program is centralized, organized and controlled. The fact that there are accredited teachers at every grade level and that it is a public school funded by the State with a long history of offering high quality education lends to it a certain amount of respect and prestige. Decentralizing correspondence study will cause home-schooling to lose the prestige and credibility that the centralized program has fought so hard to attain. Consequently those who are educated through correspondence study will suffer.

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<sup>1</sup> See Governor's Transmittal Letter re: HB 174, dated 3/5/03 (hereinafter "Governor's Letter").

Although people will be able to choose a correspondence program in which to enroll, closing ACS will make correspondence study an undependable option and possibly increase dropout rates. Districts that may offer an alternative program at first may decide in a few years that it is no longer feasible to run their own program due to the expense and changes in enrollment. Additionally, with changes in funding each year spread out over only a few students, the effects will be felt more harshly by those enrolled in a district than they are felt now by the entire student body of ACS. Because of the high likelihood that district programs will close down after only a few years of operation, or that districts may decide to begin programs later on or not at all, there will be no continuity in correspondence study. Without constant research (which is difficult in any rural situation) and marketing on the part of the districts (another unaccounted for investment of time and money), remote families will not know where to go for their educational needs and will constantly need to be re-evaluating their choices and their alternatives.

In a state where an appalling 6.2% of students in grades 7-12 drop out, the State of Alaska should be doing everything in its power to provide reliable and consistent educational choices to its residents.<sup>2</sup> This drop out rate (which does not even account for those students in grades 1-6) will only increase with the ease in which rural students will be able to disappear into the abyss, with correspondence programs opening and closing around the State. In a State where many individuals do not necessarily see the value of education, where seamanship and outdoor skills are more highly valued than a college degree, it is highly unlikely that most families will embrace the constant diligence and responsibility needed to ensure that their children are receiving high quality education through correspondence study. Such diligence and responsibility will be an absolute necessity if the centralized program is removed as a stable and viable option.

C. Closing ACS Fails to Fulfill Legislative Intent Because ACS' Services Are Not Duplicative of Other District Programs and a Comparatively Large Enrollment Shows that ACS Is Valued and Utilized by Many Alaskans

Although the legislation is aimed at cutting the costs of 'duplicative services' provided by district programs,<sup>3</sup> there is a fundamental problem with this approach: ACS is not providing services 'duplicative' of other district correspondence programs. In order to be 'duplicative,' the service must be exactly the same.<sup>4</sup> This is not the case. ACS is providing teachers trained and

<sup>2</sup> See Dropout Rates in 2000-2001 found at <http://www.educ.state.ak.us/stats/dropoutrates/2000-2001dropoutratesbyethnicity.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See Governor's Letter ("Eliminating the ACS program will eliminate the duplicative services currently being provided by school districts enrolling and serving correspondence students statewide.").

<sup>4</sup> See Webster's College Dictionary, defining 'duplicative' as an *adj.* of 'duplicate' - "a copy exactly like the

accredited at every grade level. ACS is providing constantly updated educational materials and lesson plans (which are often used by the district programs). ACS is providing superior library services and student activities to rural students. District programs, on the other hand, provide only a few teachers to administer the program for all students, often depend on ACS for their updated educational materials and do not provide the same extensive library services and student activities that ACS is able to provide to its students. While districts may choose to shunt some of their funding to a local correspondence program, it is unfair to remove ACS as an educational choice when its services are certainly not 'duplicative' of local programs.

Additionally, public information available on Alaska's schools fails to show why the centralized correspondence program, an important and fundamental service being provided to the State's residents, is being unfairly targeted by this legislation. According to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Office of Data Management, 34 out of the 54 school districts in the State (not counting ACS, which is considered a district for this purpose) boast *lower* enrollment than ACS as of October 1, 2002.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, many of these school districts fall short of ACS' current enrollment by *several hundred students*. Clearly residents in the State of Alaska see the value of the centralized correspondence program and are continuing to utilize it despite the fact other options may be available to them.<sup>6</sup>

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original; anything corresponding in all respects to something else."

<sup>5</sup> See Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Office of Data Management, statistics on school enrollment as of October 1, 2001 and October 1, 2003 found at <http://www.educ.state.ak.us/stats/schoolenrollment/2003schoolenrollment.pdf> and <http://www.educ.state.ak.us/stats/schoolenrollment/2003schoolenrollment.pdf>. The 2003 documents shows that 724 students were enrolled in ACS as of October 1, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> See *id.* The fact that enrollment at ACS fell in the last year does not provide proper justification to close the school. While certainly the enrollment at ACS fell between 2001 and 2002, so did the enrollment in 32 other districts in the State (2 districts remained the same and 20 districts showed an increase in enrollment). None of these other districts face the possibility of being closed down.

**Subject:** [Fwd: ACS Differences]

**Date:** Mon, 07 Apr 2003 14:23:18 -0800

**From:** Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative\_Bruce\_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>

**Organization:** Alaska State Legislature

**To:** Ginny Austerman <Ginny\_Austerman@legis.state.ak.us>

bill file

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**Subject:** ACS Differences

**Date:** Mon, 7 Apr 2003 11:27:18 -0500

**From:** "Gary Michou" <gcgrmichou@msn.com>

**To:** <Representative\_Bruce\_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us>

<?xml:namespace prefix="v" /> <?xml:namespace prefix="o" />  
Dear Rep. Weyhrauch,

I have looked over the eleven schools that were given as an alternate to Alyeska Central School. Out of the eleven, only the Mat-Su Borough came close to Alyeska. The only problem is that, their Correspondence Study School is only open to Mat-Su students. They do operate a cyber school but we do not want to be on line for four to five hours a day!

As I went through the other schools, it became apparent that there are really only two schools. Let me explain this position starting with Alyeska.

Alyeska is a teacher based correspondence course. Certified teachers choose the curriculum that best meets the needs of Alaska and Alaskan standards. These same teachers write the lesson plans and make up the tests that are used to evaluate what the student has learned. All tests and end of unit work is sent in to be graded and evaluated. They then assign the student a letter grade. In the Alyeska case, the teachers are doing the teaching of the students, with the parents supervising, supporting, and guiding the student. If problems arise, the family can contact the teacher for help.

The other correspondence school type is the Galena City School or the IDEA program. In this correspondence school setup, the parents choose the curriculum their child will use. They choose the books, make up lesson plans, make up the tests their child will take and they also have the option of evaluating and grading their own child. The families have an academic advisor who may or may not be able to help them if a problem arises. Materials are purchased through vendors. Paper work must be filled out and sent in showing your lesson plans, purchases, any changes that need to be made during the year to lesson plans sent in, in writing, and approved. In this school case, the roll of teaching is reversed. The parents teach and the school acts as the advisor to guide and support the parent teacher. Some families love this approach. I personally do not like because I could not evaluate my son objectively. I know that this approach can cause friction between the student and the parent if the student doesn't feel that the parent has evaluated him or her fairly.

Which brings us to Copper River School, Craig City School, Delta Greely School, Nenana City School, Chugach School and the Yukon Koyukuk School. They are all set up and based on the Galena City School pattern. It is interesting to note that these schools including Galena use Alyeska as one of their vendors.

The Denali Borough School is charter only and I found no correspondence school listed for them. I have not found anything for the Iditarod Area School.

In conclusion, families now have two school style options. If Alyeska closes, there will only be one choice not two. I like the teacher based schooling, it works the best for my son and I. Thank

[Fwd: ACS Differences]

you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Cynthia Michou  
Robert Michou  
[gcarmichou@msn.com](mailto:gcarmichou@msn.com)  
Eagle River AK  
984-2702

APR 07 2003

**Subject: House Bill 174****Date:** Mon, 07 Apr 2003 09:07:51 -0800**From:** boys3andagirl <boys3andagirl@alaska.net>

**To:** <Representative\_Bruce\_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us>,  
 <Representative\_Jim\_Holm@legis.state.ak.us>,  
 <Representative\_Nancy\_Dahlstrom@legis.state.ak.us>,  
 <Representative\_Bob\_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us>,  
 <Representative\_Paul\_Seaton@legis.state.ak.us>,  
 <Representative\_Ethan\_Berkowitz@legis.state.ak.us>,  
 <Representative\_Max\_Gruenberg@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Representatives of the House State Affairs:

My name is Jathan E. Day, and I am a student through Alyeska Central School, a correspondence school. I am writing in regard to House Bill 174, which would ultimately shut down Alyeska Central School according to Frank Murkowski's budget plan, in order to eliminate duplicate services and to save on government spending. I would like to make a strong objection to this proposal.

For the past month or so, I have been writing these letters to the committees of which this bill has passed through, and quite frankly, I am not satisfied with the way this bill has been handled. It seems to me that some of you representatives think that we won't be greatly affected by any change that you make to a system, and that is where you are absolutely incorrect. We elected you into office with the promise that you would work to better Alaska, *not* to change it in some drastic way that causes problems and disagreements among the people. You are supposed to *work for us*, not the other way around.

I am sick and tired of writing these letters to committees who are not listening to us. It seems that I am not being aggressive enough with my politicians. Do not confuse our seriousness with simple government participation; we are *dead serious*. We don't really appreciate it when our supposed leaders are taking money and hope from places that are good and healthy to us. I am prepared to defend this case like a mother bear would her cubs. I do not want to see the death of such a wonderful and experienced place like ACS. I stand today with countless others who are in support for keeping ACS open. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT "NO" AS AN ANSWER!!!

I would like to once more go over the many qualities of Alyeska Central School, and why it is more than obvious that it should stay open.

#### **HISTORY of ACS:**

Alyeska Central School has been a constant and unconditional source of education since 1939. This means not only that the school has been providing these fantastic services for nearly 64 years, but it also means that this school is one of the most experienced schools in the entire state of Alaska. ACS had provided educational services to people who were living in the isolated areas of the state, but in these past years, they have evolved to benefit not only those who are in isolation, but those in communities, as well. ACS works for just about anyone in the state of Alaska.

#### **SERVICES that ACS OFFERS:**

Let me make one thing explicitly clear, ladies and gentlemen. Alyeska Central School is not a duplicate service. Whoever came up with this idea needs to have his or her head rearranged. There are so many services that ACS provides that many of these other correspondence schools in Alaska do not. There is simply no competition when it comes to ACS.

ACS has a large staff of fine teachers who write many of the courses that the school provides. This

means that they are able to complete pretty large amounts of work *and* grade lessons/units, as well. The courses are well-planned, and the instructions make it very simple to carry out the day's work. If there is any amount of confusion, one can contact their course's corresponding teacher at the *toll free number*.

To make up for the courses that ACS does not have, they have volunteered other correspondence schools from places such as Nebraska and North Dakota, who do teach them. In addition, the teachers at ACS even teach some of the out-of-state courses as well! There is pretty much nothing that this school cannot offer to students!

ACS offers a wide range of both core subjects and electives. They range from the very basic (for those who are slow learners, or need extra reinforcement) to the very complex (for those who are college-bound, or those who have a strong base in any one subject). ACS offers a myriad, and I put an emphasis on "myriad", of electives to choose from. There would be no possible way for a student to take every single elective; there are just so many. They offer language courses, job skill courses, you name it, they more than likely have it.

ACS also has a Parent Advisory Council, which does a lot of activities and helps other families with homeschooling, as well. ACS has so much to offer for a student! They really are an original correspondence school. When I think of correspondence schools, I think of ACS first, and I know that there are countless others who agree with me.

#### **ACS UNDERSTANDING:**

One of the most remarkable things about ACS is the staff. The teachers are some of the most open and understanding that I have ever been graced to know. I would like to mention a few, because they deserve the credit for such an outstanding job!

Gayle Goedde, an English teacher, has been the absolute best English teacher I've ever had. She has allowed me to open up myself and discover the various aspects of my humanness. She has also allowed the freedom to delve into my dark side, and to bring the negativity from the inside out. This is very important to me as a person, because I know there are many other teachers who would not let me be so open.

Alexander Dolitsky, a social studies teacher, has been my social studies teacher through all my years of high school. I want to take another course with him, but I can't do that if you politicians get the upper hand, now can I? He is probably the most knowledgeable individual I know. He has taught me how to see the beauty in cultures and in our own country's history, and it has certainly paid off.

Carolyn Stegner, an art teacher, has been my foundation in this fight to save ACS. She is the one who inspired me to fight for this excellent cause. She is also another one of those teachers who have let me be open and honest about life, and I have shown that in my own art. Like I said earlier, this is not just my fight, this is a fight for anyone who gives even a tiny care.

These teachers are *not* something that you can just throw away. I, as a student, am not just something you can throw away, either. This department takes a very serious and personal interest in every single student, no matter how lousy their work is. This is how much ACS means to me, ladies and gentlemen.

There is also one thing about ACS that sets itself apart from other schools (period). ACS does not have a school schedule, but rather a year round schedule. This is wonderful for students who just can't get their work in on time. This is also wonderful for people like me, who are late with work because of personal problems. If you must know, I have been through several depressions. These depressions have lasted anywhere from a week to a couple of months. As a result, I am a year behind in school. ACS did not, however, throw me out the door. They kept me on because they want me to succeed, and I wish nothing but the same to them as well. I am relieved to know that ACS let me work through school dictated by how I was feeling. I did not have some strict schedule to adhere to, or some extension fee that I would have to no doubt pay. They understood me, and then let me get back to work. Many other students like myself and families need this kind of understanding. This is why many of us stick around.

**YOUR STUPID "MONEY PROBLEMS":**

According to the government of Alaska, Alaska has a budget gap that needs to be filled. Frank Murkowski is wrong for cutting the many programs in Alaska that everyone enjoys. He is only rubbing us the wrong way. There are always other ways that you could fill the gap. One of you representatives had a really excellent idea, ladies and gentlemen. We really should tax cruise passengers \$100.00 a head. That would bring in so much revenue, it's not funny. I implore you to go that route and any other similar idea rather than cut ACS. That fact that it brings in \$5-million-some-odd a year does not mean it is wasting government money. It means that they are an excellent school, and deserve to be credited as a original, experienced, and well-supported correspondence school, because *they are*.

I want to have faith in my decision makers. Quite frankly, however, you are not making some good decisions lately. I want you to please keep ACS open. If you are the intelligent, responsible representatives that I think you are, then you will find some other way that will not hurt us.

ACS is my home. I have never been more proud of a school than I have been of ACS. Together, we really are a family, and we are not going to let somebody trample on us just like that. We are going to fight this until you are so annoyed that you will finally see the right thing to do. This is our home, and it's high time we defended it.

**I am going to get some e-mails of support to show you the level of commitment that is involved here, ladies and gentlemen. I want you to see how very desperate we are to keep our school open. DON'T, I repeat, DON'T CLOSE OUR SCHOOL!!!**

Thank you for hearing me out, and I hope that some sense will kick in.

Jathan E. Day

**Subject: Concern respecting Truth in Education Story**

**Date: Wed, 05 Mar 2003 12:26:58 -0500**

**From: "J Allan MacKinnon" <jallan2760@email.com>**

**To: representative\_bruce\_veyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us,  
representative\_beth\_kerttula@legis.state.ak.us, senator\_kim\_elton@legis.state.ak.us**

Dear Friends:

Thank you all for your ear and representing the Juneau population. At first this communication is coming from Allan MacKinnon as an individual and is not from Margaret. On the face of it --it would appear that it is self serving since my wife is Acting Director of Alyeska Central School.

However, when material is put forward as fact; I am disturbed at misrepresentation and from my perspective it must be the TRUTH.

The release that you received and is out there from the Dept of Ed and the Governor's Office respecting the closing of Alyeska Central School is a very real concern.

1. Cost Savings

It saves the State nothing; all the funds are Foundation Formula money which would still be there and spent by others;

2. Real Impact. Loss of 50 jobs in the EED and Juneau.

3. Duplicate Services; the previous commissioner and board of education allowed districts to begin serving pupils Outside their boundaries several years ago. These districts borrowed tried and true expertise from Alyeska to produce their programs. They duplicated the State mandated distance delivery of courses; not the other way around.

4. The various district offered programs for correspondence or not of the same calibre as the ACS offerings. ACS has custom written Alaska based courses. ACS has actual teachers correcting the work of students and monitoring progress to completion and success. Many of the other correspondence (home schooling) options Allow parents to correct the work with little or no monitoring of quality or outcome by accredited staff.

5. The Staff at ACS was blind-sided by the Administration when they could find no places to cut in the Education Dept. Most programs are foundation funded, federal funded or required by law!

6. The Staff at ACS is terribly disrupted; do they begin to close down; look for other jobs or what?

7. The program has been around since 1939 and modified in statute some years ago to be the Statewide alternative available to all students no matter where they reside in the state. Should it be closed down--all students in the State can not be served by local districts, should not be and would be "left behind."

8. With the latest Federal mandates concerning excellence in education and monitoring of outcomes--this flies in the face of all the requirements of "No Child Left Behind."

9. Alyeska Central School has been cited as the "crown jewel" in the department's offerings with an excellence in teaching staff, writing of curriculum, creation of a web based school and recognition of its graduates.

10. The ACS Summer School, which is in high demand, is one of those items which, in some cases, is paid for by the recipient--not foundation funds. However, it is the only summer school offering of the quality to satisfy thousands of parents and students seeking to complete their education requirements.

11. This is the second disruption for staff at ACS. The previous director and commissioner had given notice of massive layoffs in January which very much affected morale at the institution. This is a second disruption of a much more public and grave nature.

Thank you for your initial comments in the media folks. This is a serious situation and would really impact the Education offerings of the State as we seek to graduate more youth no matter where they live.

Again, Margaret is not a party to this communication. She does not know that I am writing you. Please use these comments in your deliberations any way you wish. However, please do not use my name due to the nature of everyone's well being.

Thanks for your support of education and youth in the State of Alaska.

Respectfully and with kind regards,

Allan

J. Allan MacKinnon

life long Alaskan

--

Sign-up for your own FREE Personalized E-mail at Mail.com

<http://www.mail.com/?sr=signup>

Meet Singles

<http://corp.mail.com/lavalife>

**Subject:** [Fwd: HB174-Proposed Closure of Correspondence]

**Date:** Thu, 03 Apr 2003 11:45:24 -0900

**From:** Bruce Weyhrauch <Representative\_Bruce\_Weyhrauch@Legis.state.ak.us>

**Organization:** Alaska State Legislature

**To:** Ginny Austerman <Ginny\_Austerman@legis.state.ak.us>

bill file please

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**Subject:** HB174-Proposed Closure of Correspondence

**Date:** Thu, 3 Apr 2003 11:18:40 -0800

**From:** "Malmberg, Tatiana" <TMalmberg@wii.com>

**To:** "representative\_bruce\_veyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us" <representative\_bruce\_veyhrauch@legis.s  
"representative\_jim\_holm@legis.state.ak.us" <representative\_jim\_holm@legis.state.ak.us>,  
"representative\_nancy\_dahlstrom@legis.state.ak.us" <representative\_nancy\_dahlstrom@legis.st  
"representative\_bob\_lynn@legis.state.ak.us" <representative\_bob\_lynn@legis.state.ak.us>,  
"representative\_paul\_seaton@legis.state.ak.us" <representative\_paul\_seaton@legis.state.ak.us>,  
"representative\_ethan\_berkowitz@legis.state.ak.us" <representative\_ethan\_berkowitz@legis.sta  
"representative\_max\_gruenberg@legis.state.ak.us" <representative\_max\_gruenberg@legis.state

Dear House Committee on State Affairs:

It has come to my attention that the State of Alaska is seriously considering closing down the State's centralized correspondence program (Alyeska Central School) in order to remove the costs of what has been cited as "duplicative services" provided by district programs. I understand that this House Bill was recently referred to your committee.

As a former ACS student I am vehemently opposed to this legislation. I grew up on a remote homestead on Kodiak Island and was enrolled in ACS from the first grade through the ninth grade. I am now a college graduate and employed as a Senior Business Analyst in Portland, Oregon for one of the largest wood products companies in the world.

I know first hand the quality of education that ACS delivers and find it hard to believe that the State of Alaska is actually considering removing ACS as an option. ACS' services are far superior and certainly not "duplicative" of those services delivered by district correspondence programs. This is because ACS services have teachers accredited at every single grade level instead of the district programs which tend to have only a few teachers to administer curricula across several students and multiple grade levels. Additionally, ACS updates and develops their educational materials so that they are continuously delivering high quality educational services to their rural students. In fact, if I remember correctly, the district programs often utilize materials and lesson plans developed by ACS in their own programs.

Leaving correspondence to the district level is a horrific idea and will only result in chaos and a lower quality of education because there will be fewer teachers and less of a commitment to the districts rural students. Additionally it will be impossible to continuously update and develop new material with a smaller staff that is not trained and accredited at every grade for which they are responsible.

Please prevent this legislation from becoming law, thereby removing a

dependable and high quality educational choice  
that currently exists for the State's rural residents.

Sincerely,

Tatiana Malmberg

Senior Analyst  
Weyerhaeuser Company  
Portland, OR  
(503) 412-2043  
Fax: (503) 273-5602

HB 174



# Alaska State Legislature

**TESTIMONY AGAINST HB174: Closure of Alyeska Central School  
House State Affairs Committee Hearing 4/8/03**

Please en  
committe

**ACS can provide high school programs for teacher aides, who need to become highly qualified under NCLB, which other correspondence programs cannot provide. DO NOT close Alyeska Central School. Only ACS has a faculty of teachers, who are already "highly qualified under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Show our children that their future is a worthy investment and quality counts, School. ACS provides a quality program with accountability for students and parents, which other programs in the state could not match.**

**ACS provides for special needs students in a way that other correspondence schools can not do. In 1997 my daughter, who had just completed her sophomore year in our district's gifted and talented program, was in a near-fatal 4-wheeler accident, resulting in a severe traumatic brain injury that had damaged EVERY lobe of her brain. She suffered complete amnesia, with no memory of herself, her family, or the content of all the advanced coursework she had already completed at school. She spent three months in Providence Hospital in Anchorage where we began her arduous journey to regain HER life as she had known it. An advanced math student before was then learning addition and subtraction all over again. We had to take every subject and her music, learning them all over from the beginning and proceeding through them, step-by-step. ACS helped us do that providing her with the coursework for two basic science classes. She had scored in the 99%ile in both math and science prior to the accident! The quality hands-on materials they sent and quality lessons allowed her to regain her ability to return to Delta Junction High School, earning her diploma in 1999 and to go on to New York University as a Freshman the next Fall. This same young lady was honored by your Twentieth Alaska State Legislature as the grand prize winner of the Alaska Association of Bilingual Education Essay Contest! Without the quality materials and excellent staff support from ACS, this success story may not have had as happy an ending. Save a program that has been an Alaska success story for over 60 years! Please vote NO on HB174! Show our children that their future is a worthy investment. DO NOT close Alyeska Central School.**

Signed:

**Jackie Nelson, President, Delta-Greely Education Support Personnel Assoc. DGESPA  
Mother of 3  
HC 60 Box 4180, Delta Junction, AK 99737  
(907) 895-4217 <jackie@wildak.net>**

Alyeska CG

**Subject:** RE: HB 174, Correspondence Study

**Date:** Mon, 10 Mar 2003 22:50:26 -0900

**From:** Doris Robbins <d Robbins@gci.net>

**To:** Representative\_Carl\_Gatto@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_Paul\_Seaton@legis.state.ak.us,  
Representative\_John\_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us,  
Representative\_Peggy\_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us,  
Representative\_Les\_Gara@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_Kelly\_Wolf@legis.state.ak.us,  
Representative\_Mary\_Kapsner@legis.state.ak.us,  
Representative\_Beth\_Kerttula <Representative\_Beth\_Kerttula@legis.state.ak.us>,  
Senator\_Kim\_Elton <Senator\_Kim\_Elton@legis.state.ak.us>,  
Senator\_Bruce\_Weyhrauch <Representative\_Bruce\_Weyhrauch@legis.state.ak.us>

Representatives,

Did you know that Alyeska Central Correspondence is the only Alaska public school that meets the "Leave no child behind" standards? The school serves more than 1,000 students across the State from offices in the Goldbelt Building in Juneau. No extra rooms for students or desks, it is very economical. Reviewing the "Report Card for schools" on the State EED web site, it is the only correspondence program in Alaska that I could find which is accredited. Having used the school one year for my own children, I know first hand of the excellent work they do.

Also, study materials for correspondence are different than regular face-to-face lesson materials. Since it means running a separate program for correspondence students, I don't see how extra programs can be run from individual schools across the State and be economical or quality programs.

Alyeska reaches students by mail, telephone, and internet. They also have several on line classes for high school students. Teachers regularly communicate with students and parents and are available for help with homework. After learning about the plans for closing the school, I emailed some of the teachers last Sunday, expecting an answer no earlier than Monday. To my surprise, some of them were at work on Sunday and I received both a call and an email response.

Before this school is dismantled without knowing the facts, just to make an arbitrary cut in expenses, make sure you check it out. You may find that it is the best bargain around, and a role model for all of our schools. You don't have too far to go if you wanted to investigate it first hand.

Thank you for your consideration,

Doris Robbins  
PO Box 21011  
Juneau, AK 99802  
(907) 364-3267

MAR 19 2003

Wolcott Family  
5639 Fenwick Circle  
Anchorage, Alaska 99516  
907-346-2962 hm  
907-346-3962 fx

To: Senator Davis, Senator Dyson, Senator Green, Senator Guess, Senator Wilken, Representative Coghill, Representative Cissna, Representative Gara, Representative Gatto, Representative Heinze, Representative Kapsner, Representative Seaton, Representative Wilson, Representative Wolf, Representative Rokeberg.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify yesterday (March 18, 2003). I have been listening to testimonies from different perspectives since testimonies began. What I got out of yesterday's meeting was that you are in need of more financial information and requested copies of our testimonies. In my research the attached is the most informative information I have seen. Currently, we are working on the comparisons of other programs to ACS, upon completion we will forward on to you. We are still waiting for several schools to call us back. We began this mission March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 (10 working days). What will our children do with this return phone call time frame? Please SAVE Alyeska Central School (ASC) Home School Program.

**My testimony:**

My name is Kym Wolcott. We are an Alaskan family born & raised. Currently we have two children enrolled in ACS, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Our experience with our local schools was a night mare. We were told on several occasions that they did not have time for our children due to the overcrowding and lack of staff (budget cuts). Upon repeated messages such as this, we started researching other options for our children's education. We found ACS to be the best resource for our family. Our family business takes us to many areas in Alaska. ACS allows our family the opportunity to be together and at the same time contribute to their education to the highest quality. At the time they were in the local school system they were receiving middle to low grades. Now due to ACS's quality education program they are receiving top notch grades.

On Saturday at the Anchorage Town Hall Meeting the Anchorage School District representatives were crying over lack of funding and additional budget cuts. Sending our children to Anchorage School District is not going to save the state money. Seems to us you would just be shifting the problem, not solving the problem.

The children actually enjoy learning now. These children are our future for Alaska. Please don't undermine this already effective educational opportunity. Let there be no child left behind. Please do not get rid of the ACS family.

1 of 4

1 OF 3

**To: The Hess Committee**

**Reference: Request for Copy of Testimony and Questions sent to other 11 options mentioned in previous meetings.**

Hi my name is Ryan Wolcott.

I am a 12 year old 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Alyeska Central School along with my brother.

Our family business takes us to different places in Alaska.

ACS provides flexibility.

Prior to the possible closure of ACS my plan was to finish 7<sup>th</sup> grade in April and move right on to the next grade, completing the 8<sup>th</sup> grade by the end of summer or shortly they're after.

We contacted the Alaska Department of Education for the other 11 options mentioned in the other meetings.

March 20<sup>th</sup> we started making an email full of questions. Instantly upon emailing the 11, 6 were returned undeliverable. We had to call & get the correct email addresses. Then we tried again. As of today we have only received 3 responses.

1 answered our questions.

2 would not answer our questions and referred us to their web site.

This is very scary to think about. If we don't have support now what support will we have if ACS is no longer here for us?

No other program compares from my view.

Please save ACS!!!!

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

2 of 3

\* AS OF 3/30/03 no response  
Kym Wolcot obviously they will not answer

From: Kym Wolcot [simplythebest@alaska.com]  
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2003 5:54 PM  
To: 'Steven D. Musser'

2nd Attempt

Subject: RE: Information needed to choose a new school program for our children dueto ASC possible closure.  
Please review our questions below. I don't want to waste your time or ours if this is not the program for us. This will help us in our search and narrow our choices. Upon narrowing our choices we will set up an appointment for further information &/or visits.

Thank you for your efforts,  
Kym Wolcott

(907) 336-2378  
5639 Fenwick Circle  
Anchorage, Alaska 99516  
simplythebest@alaska.com

IDEA Program Response

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

From: Steven D. Musser [mailto:stevedm@ideafamilies.org]  
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2003 5:23 PM  
To: Kym Wolcot  
Subject: Re: Information needed to choose a new school program for our children dueto ASC possible closure.

Good Afternoon Kym,

My name is Steven D. Musser. I am the Director of the IDEA program and my office is located in Anchorage at 5600 "B" street. The building is on the corner of Potter & "C" Street and the local phone number is 562-4332.

With the expected closing of the Alyeska program I can understand your concern and I commend you in your search for a program to continue the education of your children. IDEA is a homeschool support program where we recognize the parent as the primary educator of their child. This past year our enrollment was at 3600 and we are here to stay. We are accredited through the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

At the present time we are in the process of designing a program that would allow students from Alyeska to be part of IDEA. We do not see any challenges with this and I would highly recommend that you come over to our office for a visit. I am always available to meet with parents and I would be happy to show and talk with about our program and what we could do to help.

Steve

Kym Wolcot wrote:

As you are probably aware it is very possible that AlyeskaCentralSchool program will be closing as of June 30, 2003. Our children are currently finishing up the school year and would like to continue on with their education. If our school should close we are looking for a possible new program in the immediate future. Please let us know the following information at your earliest convenience.

What are your????Do you have:?????  
Enrollment Requirements?

Teachers for every student per subject?

Direct/Immediate phone support for children and parents? Call back time?

Do you have Daily Road Map/Lesson Plans?

!!  
LIST OF QUESTIONS !!

As you are probably aware it is very possible that Alyeska Central School program will be closing as of June 30, 2003. Our children are currently finishing up the school year and would like to continue on with their education. If our school should close we are looking for a possible new program in the immediate future. Please let us know the following information at your earliest convenience.

What are your????? Do you have???????

Enrollment Requirements?

Teachers for every student per subject?

Direct/Immediate phone support for children and parents? Call back time?

How are your daily lessons structured? Do you have Daily Road Map/Lesson Plans?

Library and Librarian?

Full Accreditation?

What type or vendor do you use for your curriculum?

What grades do you serve?

Dual enrollment?

Advanced courses available? Accredited?

Summer School Program? Accredited?

Parent Advisor Council?

Specialized Alaskan Courses?

Newsletter?

Online courses only?

Other Foreign languages – other than Spanish and French?

Services provided to special needs?

Webb site?

Gradebook access for parents and students?

Immediate teacher access via email?

Library access?

Links to additional educational Webb Sites?

State and Parent cost per student?

Extra curriculum activities?

Can you handle a surplus of applications?

Total teachers?

Total staff?

Are you in jeopardy of being closed in the near future?

Why should we choose your program over the others available?

Your help is greatly appreciated; this is a very big decision. We appreciate your immediate response.

Thanking you in advance,

Kym Wolcott

(907) 336-2379

5639 Fenwick Circle

Anchorage, Alaska 99516

simplythebest@alaska.com

3 of 3

In closing, I ask that you please carefully consider the proposed legislation and do your part in preventing it from becoming law. If you would like to discuss anything with me personally, please feel free to contact me at the information above or at the offices of Quinn Emanuel Urquhart Oliver & Hedges, LLP, (213) 443-3183 (direct line).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mieke K. Malmberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mieke" and last name "Malmberg" clearly distinguishable.

Mieke K. Malmberg, Esq.

cc: Grace R. Malmberg, home teacher

Paula A. Williams  
P.O. Box 770190  
Eagle River, AK 99577

POSTAGE PAID

March 27, 2003

To: The Honorable John Harris  
The Honorable Kevin Meyer  
The Honorable Mike Hawker  
The Honorable Bill Stoltze  
The Honorable Eric Croft

~~The Honorable Bill Williams~~  
The Honorable Richard Foster  
The Honorable Mike Chenault  
The Honorable Jim Whitaker

Let's close Harvard, or how about Princeton or West Point? They've been around for over 100 years. Since these institutions have been around for so long in the words of some they must be "obsolete, outdated, and a duplication of services". Alyeska Central School (ACS), the only state mandated homeschool program has been an institution in Alaska since 1939. ACS has graduated thousand of bush, rural, and more recently "city" kids. During the past 64 years ACS HAS changed with the times and needs of its students.

In the "old days" teachers visited students at their home, whether that required flying into the bush, taking a boat, or driving. Now, the students are serviced by e-mail, telephone, and thankfully, for those of us who live in the bush and have no "web" access, by "snail mail". ACS spearheaded a consortium of Alaska schools to offer on-line courses, and have 18 courses available on-line at this time, with more being developed.

ACS has taught students who have gone on to compete in the Olympics, received full scholarships to schools like Stanford, Harvard, Reid, and CA Polytech. This legacy of excellence continues at ACS in part because of the families who chose the high standards and reliability that ACS offers, and the staff and teachers who deliver this excellent educational opportunity.

Closing ACS will NOT save the state money. In fact, it will COST more money if ACS's 1,100 students lose their school of choice. Simplistically, each school in Alaska is given money from the state and federal government, the "Foundation Formula" for each student. Alyeska, along with all other correspondence programs, receive only 80% of those funds, compared to 100% funding for "brick & mortar" schools. When all of ACS students, some of them we have to assume will go to brick & mortar schools, leave ACS, those funds go with them. The money will still be spent, in some cases more money, still have to allocated for, but in this political shell game, not in one entity, ACS.

The Federal "No Child Left Behind" program, which requires that all teachers in about 12 core subjects have to be certified AND highly qualified in subject and content area in the developmental ages they are teaching goes into effect by 2005-2006 school year. At this point, in all correspondence schools, only ACS can meet those requirements. What will it cost our children and the people of the state when the other correspondence schools are threatened by closure by not being able to qualify?

What else will the state and these students lose with this closure? An extensive library, built up over the years where students without resources, or those who

have the need, can request books, newspaper articles, and web site information, will be shut down.

Alaska will lose the only state mandated correspondence program, which up until the threat of House Bill 174 and Senate Bill 107, has assured ALL Alaskan families there will always be a correspondence for those who need it, or chose it. One item on the long list of reasons many families chose ACS is this mandate. There have been many correspondence programs developed over the past few years, and we support their right to exist, they have grown out of the needs of different families needs and desires for teaching their students. But, if these other programs are not profitable, or for any other reason they see fit, they can choose to close at any time. (These programs will also lose the resource of purchasing ACS courses for their students.) ACS, and its state mandate assures the unique population of Alaska a quality education.

Alaska, our present and future students, will lose the only correspondence program where the teachers have written and developed the courses. ACS's courses are written for the Alaska home student. Most correspondence courses offer courses written and developed for classroom study, and definitely not with the quality, depth and consistency ACS teachers have built into their program. Because many of ACS's teachers have worked with correspondence students for so many years they have the expertise, understanding, and guidance to give families who need this support. These services and depth of understanding are especially appreciated by families who are new to correspondence schooling. Why would we ask another homeschool program to develop programs "like Alyeska's" when we already have the best?

According to the state's web site, Alaska will lose the only accredited correspondence program in the state. This accreditation is another on the list of many family's reasons for choosing ACS, and is a very valuable asset when these students apply for the college of their choice. Close ACS and you will create an unequal educational opportunities to those of us who live in the bush and do not have the choice of an accredited "brick & mortar" school.

Alaska and ALL its high school students will lose the only state run summer school program. This program was developed, not out of the exclusive need of ACS students, but out of the servicing of all Alaska students. This summer program is available to all Alaska students who, for one reason or another, need to make-up, or gain credits to be able to graduate. Last year 3,450 students from across the state took advantage of this program. Losing this program means many, many students will spend another semester at high school to make up a credit or two to graduate. At what cost to the state? At what cost to the student? Calculate the cost to a student and to the state, when the student, not having this option, chooses instead to just drop out.

Many ACS families have tried other programs in state, and out. Some families choose, for the individual needs of their children, to have their students in different correspondence programs. ACS families choose this school because it meets the needs of their students like no other school can.

My personal story is this. For the past 10 years my family of 6 have lived in a log cabin 40 miles away from the nearest road, store, school, or power supply; our nearest neighbor is 20 miles away. When my husband retired after 20 years in the Army we moved here to raise our children and run a small Alaskan family lodge, which our children play an active role in. After 2 years of trying other homeschools we found

Alyeska, and have been with them ever since. We have graduated our oldest, our daughter; our 3 boys, all in high school, because they have great aspirations for college, do not believe that at this time any of the current homeschool choices can give them the accreditation they need. So, they feel their only option is Nenana Student Living Center or Mt. Edgecomb. The cost for our family in not only losing our 3 children prematurely, but also losing their active participation in running our family business. The cost to the state is the difference -- per child- of Alyeska's formula of \$3,800 per child and Nenana or Mt. Edgecomb's \$15,000. **I ask again, WHY, if this is not a money saving move for Alaska -- WHY is Alyeska Central School being taken away from our children?**

Respectfully,

  
Paula A. Williams

Paula A. Williams  
P.O. Box 770190  
Eagle River, AK 99577  
**(907)748-4141**  
March 28, 2003

To: The Honorable John Harris  
The Honorable Kevin Meyer  
The Honorable Mike Hawker  
The Honorable Bill Stoltze  
The Honorable Eric Croft  
The Honorable Lyda Green  
The Honorable Bettye Davis  
The Honorable Con Bunde  
The Honorable Ben Stevens  
The Honorable Donny Olsen

The Honorable Bill Williams  
The Honorable Richard Foster  
The Honorable Mike Chenault  
The Honorable Jim Whitaker  
The Honorable Fred Dyson  
The Honorable Gary Wilken  
The Honorable Gretchen Guess  
The Honorable Robin Taylor  
The Honorable Lyman Hoffman

Action: House Hess Committee passed Bill 174 on to Finance Committee

Reaction:

I am frustrated and offended. I have listened to over 5 hours of testimony from parents, educators, and students across the state who oppose HB 174/SB107. Many of these people have spent countless hours writing letters, testifying, sitting in on house meetings, and making phone calls to "gather the troops". Some of us have never had the experience – or so strong a reason – to join a fight like this. A fight that I am beginning to believe was lost from the start.

We have given argument after argument against this bill; from excellence of the school to the fact that there are NO accredited correspondence choices other than Alyeska Central School (ACS), to the fact that this is NOT a money saving move for the state. The ONLY money saving part of this bill is closure of the summer school. So close the summer school and save 1.2 million; but, you DO NOT HAVE TO CLOSE ACS as a whole to do that. Realize, though, that for 3,450 students across the state last year ACS's summer school was their ONLY option. You are not just saving 1.2 million; you are closing the door to needy students around the state who need this option to graduate. You are also shutting out opportunities for students looking to accelerate their education. (In these instances, because they graduate early, these students are just using their allocated Foundation Formula funding in the summer and not "costing" the state extra money.)

I cannot believe that contentious, thinking people would pass HB174/SB107! I wonder if you had children who needed to take summer school, or who used ACS's year-round program how you would vote.

It has been said by Eddie James from DOE "This is not just about the money, it is a policy decision." If it is NOT about the money – then get it out of the Budget and take some time to look at this issue! How can you in all good conscience close a state mandated school with such history, excellence, and support in a few months – leaving all of its students floundering? Instead we hear comments like "If they are so interested in accreditation let them go to their local school district", this from another DOE representative. WHAT?

Why, if accreditation is NOT important for our students is it so important for the "brick&mortar" schools across the state AND so important that the rest of the country base their standards of excellence on it?

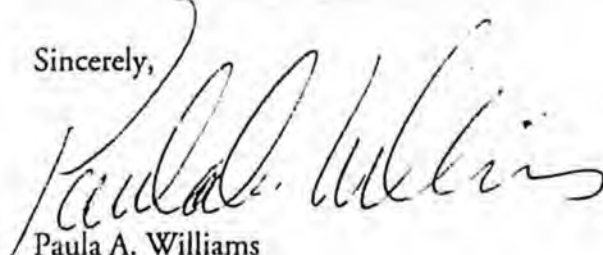
ACS was started before most of us were born; to service the needs of people like my family who live in the bush. We have no local schools. To receive accreditation that according to the rest of the United States my children REQUIRE for college, they will have to go to boarding schools – leaving our home – and our family run business. The need is still here, we are still here, we STILL need ACS.

And for all of our hearfelt arguments we get questions from committee members like "what do the teachers do between your phone calls?" This directed to a student who had just testified of spending hours a week on the phone to ACS teachers who helped her turn her high school career around. From ACS she received a level of caring, concern, and support she had not experienced her local school. We ~~hear~~ "We'll have other correspondence schools develop programs like these." WHY?? These programs are already in place, at no "loss" of money to the state – in ACS! Why should other correspondence schools change their curriculum? Obviously, it doesn't matter if they are accredited! A number of people feel some correspondence schools around the state exist to make their local school districts money – if they don't do that – they will cease to exist. They will not enroll students who come to them in the middle of the school year for courses – without cost, nor will they enroll part-time students. These are not lucrative deals for them, and since they have no mandate, they have no need to service these students. Teaching and educating our students should not be about making money. Just as HB174/SB107 is NOT about saving the state money.

We are all constituents. So are the 1,100 young people in this school; as the summer school students are, as their parents are, as are thousands of students and families who want to choose ACS next year and the year after and the year after that. I don't know how or when this bill was started – or should I say mandated – or by whom. I suggest ACS is a pawn in a political game. I am disgusted that people we chose to "represent" us are doing exactly the opposite.

Pass this bill and not only are you sending a loud and clear message to your constituents – "We don't care what the facts say or what you want us to do, we will do what we want", you are also choosing to follow a political agenda which will weaken our state's education system, hurt many young people and families AND work strongly in contrary to the federal ideal – No Child Left Behind!

Sincerely,



Paula A. Williams

P.O. Box 210672  
Auke Bay, AK 99821  
March 31, 2003

The Honorable Bill Williams  
House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 515  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Williams,

My family is very distressed about the proposed closing of Alyeska Central School (House Bill 174) as it is our children's only educational option. We live on Shelter Island. Although our home is within the limits of the City and Borough of Juneau, we have no access to regular public school. We have schooled our children successfully for 5 years with the guidance of Alyeska Central School.

Alyeska Central School (ACS) is not a duplication of services by any other correspondence program offered in the state of Alaska. If any programs are redundant, they are the new (within the last 5 years) correspondence programs that have sprung up around the state. They offer no accreditation and less experience in the field.

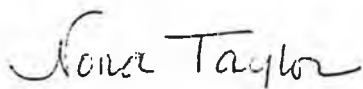
ACS is a unique educational resource and the best one offered to students in remote locations when no other school is available. No other program offers my children what ACS does. ACS offers Accreditation, Certified Teachers, and Curriculum written by Alaskan teachers for Alaskan students. It provides Lesson Plans, Teacher Support and Assessment for all its courses. The school offers an open schedule and a summer school, which allows our family to stay together and continue with our livelihood on Shelter Island. The school has a complete library that is connected to the Capital City Libraries of Juneau. This library is essential for research and providing a print rich environment for our children. Our children do not have Internet access for school use. Alyeska Central School also offers our children activities, such as the Battle of the Books and Geography Bee, which enable them to compete and engage with other children around the state and around the country. To children schooled in remote areas of Alaska this is invaluable.

The State of Alaska will not save money by closing ACS; to the contrary, more money will be required in the future to reinstate a program equal to the ability of ACS in order to ensure that no child is left behind. This school is mandated by the State of Alaska and rightly so. It exemplifies all that we in Alaska want for our children's education; outstanding curriculum, certified and caring teachers, home teacher support, student assessment and parental/home teacher involvement while understanding the needs of families living in remote areas of Alaska.

Home teaching is an awesome responsibility. It is a job I do not take lightly. My children's education by correspondence requires the dedication and the discipline of my entire family. I rely on the support and assessment by ACS to successfully school my children, and I will demand that an equal opportunity is made available to them should ACS be discontinued.

Please do not support this bill. Instead, support legislation that requires other distance education alternatives be brought to accreditation standards, and to provide support for the families using them. Give families a quality choice, by supporting ACS under the leadership of the new Administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nora Taylor". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Nora Taylor

>530 E 46th Pl  
>Anchorage AK, 99503  
>907-563-5759

>  
>03/21/03

>  
>Dear Honorable Committee Members,

>  
> On March 27th you will hold our hearts, our spirits, and our futures  
>in your hands.

>We come to you as a family who has been enrolled at Alyeska Central  
>School for three years. "When the Governor proposed closing our school as a  
>cost savings measure on March 5th, we were in our second day of testing for the  
>High School Qualifying Exit Exam, the Benchmarks, and the Terra Nova.  
>Usually this is a fun time for all of us as we enjoy challenging ourselves  
>academically, but this year was a different story. Although our parents and  
>staff members tried to keep this news from us so it wouldn't affect us, as  
>we pulled from the busing site, the word quickly spread and a cloud of doom  
>fell over us all." Although I passed my HSQEE last year (on my first try),  
>my brother Sean still had to take his Benchmarks, so the above quote is  
>from him.

> We have attended the three meetings by the House of Education  
>committee that sent their agenda for your consideration on March 27th. We went  
>downtown to our legislative office and testified and listened to the  
>countless testimony given by the students, parents, alumni, counselors, and  
>teachers, that was offered to the House of Education committee on March 11,  
>13, and the 18th. We were shocked that the proposition was passed on to  
>your committee, as there was overwhelming testimony about the academic  
>opportunities offered through ACS. One school counselor from Wrangell  
>testified that he uses programs from ACS and that they are a vital part of  
>their curriculum, he testified our school was a valuable tool for him as it  
>saved "at risk children" and one's with special needs. Rick Currier has  
>submitted a three page cost spread sheet (attached) supporting the proof  
>that ACS is saving our state money and if your committee and our  
>legislatures, or our Governor, close our school it will only be a burden on  
>the state to place our children in any other hands.

>My Grandmother (home teacher) has called nine other correspondence  
>sources and testified on March 13th, her findings: No other correspondence  
>sources can match those available at ACS. Countless testimony from others  
>supported those findings.

>ACS not only offers classes that other schools do not, but they offer  
>more classes. An example of this is: in most schools, even those who pride  
>themselves in offering many different World Language classes, do not offer  
>more than two to five different choices. ACS offers over 20 different  
>classes in 7 languages, including Spanish, Japanese, German, Norwegian,  
>Russian, French, and Latin. That is an amazing variety, which you don't see  
>very often, that I have never seen before. Students who learn these  
>languages will benefit our future state economy, because they will be able  
>to be that much more successful in whatever occupation that they choose  
>when they get older.

>So remember when you vote on this bill that you are holding not only  
>our futures in your hands, but you are also holding the future of Alaska.  
>Vote no on bill 174

>Sincerely yours,  
>Haylie Ruddell (ACS Student for 3 years)  
>Sean Ruddell (ACS Student for 2 years)  
>Victoria Martin (ACS Home Teacher for 3 years)

.. Kari Lott - I was a little upset that you would  
adjust in the middle of my 3 minutes. Would it  
have hurt anyone to wait 1-1/2 min?? after I waited  
4 hrs on the phone... I was forced to skip much so  
I hope you will read this thru for what I was  
unable to say.

\* Please make copies for the other committee members  
testimony before House Education Committee 2/13/03

MAR 19 2003

to Chairman

My name is Nancy Richard. I live in Seattle. My son attended Haysaka  
in 1994. He graduated in 1998 and immediately entered a  
school of fisheries.

Speaking from experience I can honestly say Haysaka has a  
program that goes beyond other schools that tends to be separation.  
Their wisdom in education by correspondence comes from 50 years  
of experience. . .

My son had not graduated by June 2000, I don't know what  
he would have done. Was about the students who will not  
graduate till July and August with college plans set back.

His has survived and thrived since 1957 because they have  
the unique background, skill and knowledge to adapt to each  
student's individual needs through their long-term  
experience, that in turn gives their students the necessary  
tools, education and vital skills required to enter and succeed  
in college. They write their own courses supplemented by text  
books as there are none, use all mail, written or  
correspondence and have received awards for them. They have  
the unique ability to write courses that enable some teachers to  
integrate students from several grade levels into one class.

They have several programs developed to address the needs  
of all of Haysaka's unique lifestyle as a student on a  
fishing boat, a trapper, living subsistence, rural, remote

urban, traveling or overladen.

My son was obsessed with marine life since age 6. Working with the school we developed marine life courses for him through 6th grade... one has become a permanent course. In high school they found him an out of state oceanography course.

This past summer he was accepted into the Rural Hawaii Honors Institute at UH where he completed a full semester of 3 regular courses in 6 weeks, earning 6 college credits, with a 3.80 GPA. The learning skills he gained at UH were really put to the test.

He is currently a straight A student at UH and has been allowed to take a post graduate course in marine research as a freshman because of the strong background they helped him to build.....

He is not unique. I attended the past 4 Academic Decadations and saw the brilliant, teams they built each year. In 2001, a student from a small island in southeast, won 7 medals and was later offered a full scholarship to Scotland. They also won the Super Quiz, their main event, over all 30 schools competing and took 2nd place in the large school div, competing against all the largest schools in Hawaii. In 2002 they again took 2nd place for large schools, winning and by only a few points coming close to being runner up for National competition. The team also won numerous medals. The following year won 4 gold medals and a silver. We had, and hope to have, high hopes for them for next year. Their opportunity starts in 7th grade. This kind of achievement is a direct reflection of the

school, and it's teachers. Bur-Valley has been the only Navaho school attending .

I have known parents who left HLB for Calvert or Borough programs because they were not so demanding, and rigorous.

Parents and students continue to choose HLB because of its academic excellence. I cannot emphasize this enough. They deserve to continue to have this option. You cannot say you value a good education for HLL or Navaho children and then close the door on a program like this. Many rural and remote students will literally be left behind.

Schools statewide can purchase courses from HLB to replace ones hit by budget cuts. One more valuable service to the state.

Navaho is a priceless treasure that deserves to be appreciated, respected and conscious to be maintained by State LHM. In ending I can only say

my use

how can it be that budgets are balanced  
on the backs of children and the elderly  
those no were our beginning and those  
who are our future

in, 200

how do you make children understand  
that their school is irrelevant,  
and their education is only equated

in dollars.

My God

How can they say that a school  
older than the state itself  
that is the embodiment of the old saying  
"Age is Wisdom" faces extinction

My God

What kind of future can we hope to have  
when we are so blind  
to the precious gifts we have  
and hold in our hands

We need your help Lord  
amen.

Mary Alice McKeen  
212 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
March 17, 2003

Representative Carl Gatto  
Chair, Special Committee on Education  
Re: House Bill 174      *via fax 465-2381*

Dear Representative Gatto,

I have two children currently in the Alaska schools and one who graduated last year. My daughter who graduated last year graduated from Alyeska Central Correspondence School. I think correspondence school is a valuable option for parents to have. It is different from support for parents who are home schooling their children, which I have also done. Therefore, I hope your Committee takes a hard look at House Bill 174. I think the State should not lose the correspondence option for parents and students in this State.

Thank you for your and the Committee's work.

Sincerely,

*Mary Alice McKeen*  
Mary Alice McKeen

*Please distribute to the other Committee members. Thanks.*

TO: State of Alaska  
House Education Services Committee  
ATTN: Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair

March 14, 2003

FROM: Phoebe Blackwell  
Yukon Island  
PO Box 2454  
Homer, AK 99603

**NOTE: I would like this testimony entered into public record.**

I am the mother of a 15-year-old Autistic child (Asperger's Syndrome) who is enrolled in Alyeska Central School (ACS). We recently received notice that there is a proposal to close ACS. We are frankly horrified. Our son was enrolled at the beginning of this school year in ACS and for the first time in his life is on grade level in his schooling and achieving a B+ average. This would not be possible without ACS. In addition, due to other health issues in our family we travel to and from Alaska and the only way his schooling is still accommodated is through ACS.

My husband and I have five children. Within Alaskan schools our score is 1 success, 4 failures. Our oldest daughter did fine in the Anchorage School District. The next 4 kids (all boys) have the following record: Our 25 year old ended up in SAVE, our 22 year old made it with a 3.8 gpa to his senior year then barely graduated. Our 18 year old got a GED from the Alaska Military Youth Academy. The last of the four is our 15 year old. Not a great average!

The teachers and counselors at ACS have been wonderful. This is one of the most beneficial programs in Alaska, I myself was homeschooled on Yukon Island in Kachemak Bay, Alaska some 30+ years ago. Please don't take away this viable alternative for kids who just do not do well in the regular schools of Alaska. I believe removal of this program would be a detriment to the future of Alaska.

Sincerely,

  
Phoebe Blackwell

P.S. With No Lab Fees, No Athletic Fees, NO Office Staff, No Luncheon I cannot believe putting these kids back into a district school would be cheaper than ACS.





## Willow Springs Center

A Residential Treatment Center For Children and Adolescents  
890 Edison Way  
Reno, NV 89502  
(775) 858-3303  
FAX: (775) 858-4585

August 16, 2001

ATTENTION: SERGEANT BREWER – FAX No. (907) 580-2180

Re: Christopher Czokra

This is a letter supporting the medical necessity of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Blackwell being in Reno for transition family therapy and the discharge of Mrs. Blackwell's 13-year-old son, Christopher Czokra from 8 months of residential psychiatric treatment at Willow Springs Center. Issues about discharge planning, family structure, stabilization, and coping strategies and support are crucial in Chris making a successful return to his family and community. His present Axis I psychiatric diagnoses are:

1. Impulsive control disorder
2. Pervasive developmental disorder, atypical
3. Attention Deficit Disorder, mixed.

He has done quite well in the treatment program and is on no psychotropic medication.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Larry Nussbaum".

Larry Nussbaum, M.D.  
Medical Director  
Willow Springs Center

LN/b

Hello,

I am Becky Crabtree, an alternative education teacher in Barrow.

One of my jobs in the North Slope Borough School District is to coordinate correspondence classes for students throughout the district.

We began a district affiliation with Alyeska Central School last March. Since that time, over 50 North Slope students in six remote villages in grade levels 1-12 have enrolled in one or more classes. A wide variety of classes are available to our students who do not have access to higher level language classes or other elective offerings, to those who choose to study at home, and to those who need a class at a time when some of our small schools can't schedule it. Imagine, in the tiny village of Nuiqsut, we have a student learning Basic Electronics and another taking Photography, classes that the local school district cannot offer. These students have in-depth support for their studies from ACS.

Our students NEED ACS and the accredited opportunities it provides.

The proposal to close it has driven me to search for other options for the North Slope. After looking at the alternatives I am convinced that ACS provides the best academic support, and most varied classes off-line and on-line for the students of the North Slope.

Please consider the needs of our North Slope rural students as you study this bill.

Thank you.

-Becky Crabtree

**Subject:** [Fwd: Testimony Daniel Knudson Concerning HB 174 purposed closer of ACS]

**Date:** Tue, 25 Mar 2003 14:43:07 -0900

**From:** Carl Gatto <Representative\_Carl\_Gatto@Legis.state.ak.us>

**Organization:** Alaska State Legislature

**To:** Cody Rice <Cody\_Rice@legis.state.ak.us>

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**Subject:** Testimony Daniel Knudson Concerning HB 174 purposed closer of ACS

**Date:** Tue, 25 Mar 2003 18:06:28 EST

**From:** Terrymcdt@aol.com

**To:** Representative\_Carl\_Gatto@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Representative Carl Gatto

My name is Daniel Knudson I testified via teleconference in favor of keeping Alyeska Central School open when this bill was last heard in the special committee on Education. When this bill (HB174) was last heard it was requested that I send in a written copy of my testimony. Here below is a copy of the testimony as it was meant to be read.

Thank You For Your Time  
Life Long Alaskan Daniel Knudson

My name is Daniel Knudson. I am a senior at Alyeska Central School and have been attending the program for the last three years. Before attending Alyeska Central, I went to both public and private schools. I have also taken classes from the University of Alaska. In all of my academic experience, I have never participated in such a well organized, challenging and enlightening program. Why did I chose to go to Alyeska over the public and private schools offered in my area? Because I was afraid, not of the growing violence in schools or that I would fail the curriculum, for I have always had good grades, but I was afraid that I wasn't learning anything. Sure I got good grades and yes I did well on the standardized tests, but I never felt like I was receiving the education I needed. Later, when I began to think about my future, I could not get over the doubt in my mind that when I graduated, these schools would not have prepared me for the next stage in life. Then I became a student of Alyeska Central and found stimulating classes, supportive teachers and interesting topics that challenged my intelligence. The self-reliance and self-initiative that is required to succeed at Alyeska teaches the youth of this State how to think for themselves, organize their own schedules, and to follow the facts. This will give them an advantage as the future entrepreneurs of Alaska.

Alyeska's year-round courses allow students to study at their own pace and, if for some reason they should have to stop for a time, Alyeska allows those students to continue while out of state or to stop in the middle of the semester and begin again where they left off. I was able to use this advantage last year when my father was diagnosed with cancer. We had to leave the state for several months. If I had been attending another school, I would have had to retake that semester of school, putting off my high school graduation for another year. This year round flexible schedule does not only benefit the students of ACS but also students from schools around the state. Those students that need just one more credit to graduate can take a class over the summer and finish before college starts. Students who want to participate in a class that is full or not offered at their school can receive that class through ACS.

Alyeska is a complete, effective, and accredited academic institution, which has been effectively educating the youth of Alaska since 1939. Alaska's future depends on a well educated youth and Alyeska has demonstrated for the last 64 years that it is one of the best educational programs in Alaska. And if Alyeska is allowed to continue, it will carry on its mission of help the youth of the state achieve academic excellence. And I believe Alyeska Central School will be instrumental in building an Alaska that is one of growth and prosperity.

March 25, 2003

To HESS Committee members:

Re: HB 174 – Closure of Alyeska Central School

Due to limited phone access the following testimony has been called in.

From: Sharon McEwen, Gold Creek, via Talkeetna, Alaska 99676

We live north of Talkeetna off of the railroad. We receive mail every other week. Have two daughters attending Alyeska Central School via snail mail. The school has been wonderful. We have been nine years with Alyeska. My oldest daughter began with Alyeska when she was in kindergarten and she is now in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I also have a younger daughter in the program. Like teachers, think they are wonderful.

Not sure if they (other correspondence programs) will have a mail program available. We have no e-mail or other access. Only have a radiophone that doesn't always work all that well.

Please do not close the Alyeska Central School. Thank you