

SCOMM

137:38

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

INTERIM

600 E. Railroad Avenue
Wasilla AK 99654
(907) 376-2679
Fax: (907) 373-4745
House District 15



SESSION

State Capitol, Room 432
Juneau AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-2679
Fax: (907) 465-4822
800-505-2678

REPRESENTATIVE MARK NEUMAN

HCR 25

Regulation of Correspondence Programs

Sponsor Statement

One of the most important issues facing us today is the education of all students. Accordingly, HCR 25 provides us with the opportunity to give clear direction for equitable treatment of correspondence and home-schooled students.

The Department of Education and Early Development's (DEED) 2004 regulations put funding restrictions on supplementary services to students in all statewide programs. DEED regulations eliminated many of the educational choices previously available to students and put further restrictions on the amount allowed for music, art, and P.E. A disparity exists between rules concerning how in-district and out-of-district school programs may spend funds. Interpretation of these regulations is having a negative impact on more than 8,000 home schooled and correspondence students.

HCR 25 requests that all students be treated equally and that student education allotments be unrestricted except as provided in the Constitution of the State of Alaska and Alaska Statutes.

ALASKA STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Representative Mark Neuman, Chair
Alaska State Capitol, Room 432
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-2679
Fax: (907) 465-4822
Rep_Mark_Neuman@legis.state.ak.us



Committee Members:
Representative Carl Gatto
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Bill Thomas
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Les Gara
Representative Woodie Salmon

House Special Committee on Education Schedule

Date: February 2, 2006

To: Suzi Lowell, Chief Clerk

From: Representative Mark Neuman, Chairman
Special Committee on Education

RE: House Special Committee on Education Scheduled Meetings

Tuesday, February 7, 2006, at 11:00 a.m. in Room 106

= + HCR 25 REGULATION OF CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS
Representative Neuman

= Bills previously heard or scheduled
+ teleconferenced

STATE OF ALASKA

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR

Department of Education & Early Development

Office of the Commissioner

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

February 7, 2006

The Honorable Mark Neuman, Chair
House Special Committee on Education
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Building, Room 106
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Neuman:

The Department of Education & Early Development has reviewed House Concurrent Resolution 25 (HCR 25) concerning correspondence schools. At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for your efforts to work with the administration to improve the educational opportunities for our children. It is obviously a goal we share. However, as with any policy area there are always disagreements as to how best to achieve our shared goals.

HCR 25 raises two issues: (1) whether the regulations governing statewide correspondence programs should also apply to local district correspondence programs; and (2) whether the 15% cap on non-core expenditures should be lifted.

The State Board of Education & Early Development made specific policy calls in adopting the regulations. The state board believes that local boards have authority and responsibility to operate educational programs within their school district and that they are accountable to the voters within their school district. School districts that operate statewide correspondence programs enroll students that do not reside within their boundaries and therefore, the parents of those students do not have a voice over the elected school board. The legislature specifically funded statewide correspondence program monitoring with the department's budget because of the lack of oversight.

The state board also spent considerable time and effort addressing numerous concerns of expenditures associated with students enrolled in statewide correspondence programs such as family memberships to health clubs, H2Oasis, travel to Disneyland, cruises, and ski passes. The board supports as much freedom as possible for those who choose to receive state funds through a correspondence school; however, they also have a responsibility to ensure that public dollars are spent appropriately.

After reviewing the percentage of time "brick and mortar" schools generally spend on physical education, music, and fine arts, the state board found that allowing 15 percent of the base student allocation to be spent on those activities, or \$738, is a reasonable level of funding. There is no limitation on personal funds a parent may spend to supplement those activities with private lessons whether the student is enrolled in a correspondence school or more traditional brick and

The Honorable Mark Neuman, Chair
February 7, 2006
Page 2 of 2

mortar school. Based on recommendations from the 11 statewide correspondence programs, the state board also required that a student enrolled in a statewide correspondence program take at least 50 percent of their coursework in core courses. Core courses include English, mathematics, social studies, science, technology, world languages, or courses required in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Prior to this action, there were a significant number of students enrolled in statewide correspondence programs collecting state funding and not taking any core curriculum.

The State Board of Education & Early Development believes that their policy call regarding local control is appropriate and that there is a demonstrated need to exercise some regulatory control over the expenditure of state funds by statewide correspondence schools. If legislation were passed that provides new direction for the operation of statewide correspondence programs, the regulations would be amended to implement the law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roger Sampson".

Roger Sampson
Commissioner

Testimony for HCR25
House Education Committee

Debbie Joslin
Eagle Forum Alaska
2-6-06

I am Debbie Joslin and I represent, Eagle Forum Alaska. We have over 1,000 members statewide and many of them have children in statewide correspondence programs. I have several points to make but I will keep them brief.

- 1) After doing much research, I have not been able to find any group of schools or schoolchildren anywhere that are being restricted in the manner that the DEED has restricted children in the statewide correspondence programs in Alaska. I looked at budgets and regulations governing charter schools in several other states and nowhere have I found funds being restricted to certain percentages for the arts and physical education. At first glance, it may have made sense to allow only 15% of the allotments to be used for art, music, and physical education. After all, these are elective classes and the bulk of the money should be spent on core classes such as Reading, Math, English and Science. To the untrained eye this might make sense. As a homeschool teacher with 8 ½ years of experience, I can tell you that these elective courses cost more to administer than the core subjects. Whether you are talking about a traditional brick and mortar school or a home school, the core curriculums are less expensive to administer. To teach an English class you need a textbook and workbook and paper and pencil. A library or access to one is also needed for some units in English. A Reading class takes pretty much the same. Ditto, Spelling. Math class can be done with Textbook, workbook, paper and pencil, inexpensive manipulatives, a protractor, compass and calculator. Music on the other hand takes sheet music, and the instruments themselves, and special rooms big enough to accommodate the acoustics of musical ensembles (In the case of public schools). Students cannot learn to play a musical instrument without some individualized teaching. That will be much more expensive than just hiring a teaching to teach Reading or Math to a group. Art class requires no end of expensive art supplies. Physical education in brick and mortar schools includes team sports that are very costly. The travel costs, uniforms and hockey rinks, swimming pools, football fields, etc. could not possibly be accomplished with only 15% of budget. It certainly would not if you added the cost of art, music and P.E. together.
- 2) It is my understanding that the regulations were restricted as a result of reports of allotment funding being misused. There was no need to change the regulations because of that. If it was found that certain individuals, or certain programs, were misusing funds then appropriate action could have been taken to stop the diversion of money that was intended for the education of correspondence students.

- 3) At no time have I heard any allegation that correspondence students, as a group, are doing poorly on their achievement tests. It is my understanding that, as a whole, correspondence students are at a level at least par with their brick and mortar public school counterparts. If this is true, what was DEED trying to fix by penalizing correspondence students by restricting their funding so severely that they are forced to choose one of those three subjects (art, music or PE)?
- 4) Bottom line: It was never the intent of the legislature for correspondence students to be restricted by being forced to spend only a designated portion of their allotments on certain classes. District correspondence programs are not being treated this way nor should they. These regulations do not save the state of Alaska one red cent. The allotment amount is the same with or without the restrictions. There is no upside to this equation. Alaska's correspondence students are the ones being hurt.

I wish to thank Representative Neuman for introducing this Resolution and I urge this committee to pass HCR25 today.

Thank you for your time.

Alaska State Legislature

Session Address:

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: (907) 465-2679
1-800-505-2678
Fax: (907) 465-4822

**Interim Address:**

600 E. Railroad Avenue
Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: (907) 376-2679
Fax: (907) 376-4745

Representative.Mark.Neuman@legis.state.ak.us

Representative Mark A. Neuman

District 15

May 24, 2005

Commissioner Roger Sampson
Department of Education and Early Development
801 W 10th St., Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801-1894

Dear Commissioner Sampson:

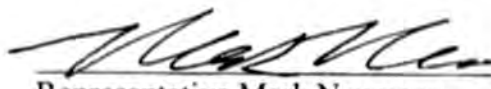
We understand that the Legislature's intent with regard to educational materials and allotment allocations may not be clear to you or to the Board of Education. To clarify our position we provide you with the following guidance:

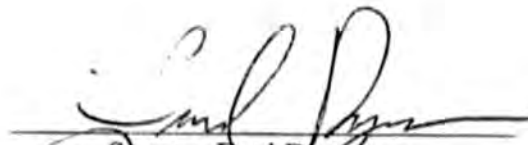
It is the intent of the Legislature that:

1. Approval of textbooks, allotment allocations and curriculum materials and credit for classes be applied fairly, consistently, and uniformly for all correspondence schools and brick and mortar schools regardless of where students reside.
2. Parents be able to use all educational materials that align with the sponsoring district's guidelines and testing regime and that students received credit for successful completion of the class. The State Department of Education and the State Board of Education will not censor district-provided or parent-provided educational material.

We hope that this clarification is useful to you as you continue to consider the various choices parents in Alaska have to educate their children.

Sincerely,


Representative Mark Neumann


Senator Fred Dyson

cc: State Board of Education

And the following signers:







ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25

HISTORY IN THE HOUSE

2005

4/11

Read first time and referred to:

Edu HES

____ RPT CS() ____ New Title
____ DP ____ DNP ____ NR ____ AM
____ FN ____ OFN / Prev: ____ FN ____ OFN

____ RPT CS() ____ New Title
____ DP ____ DNP ____ NR ____ AM
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____ RPT CS() ____ New Title
____ DP ____ DNP ____ NR ____ AM
____ FN ____ OFN / Prev: ____ FN ____ OFN

Read second time

[] CS() Adopted [] New Title
[] Amended

Considered on Final Passage

[] Passed Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____
[] EFD same or Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____

[] _____

Reconsideration

Reconsideration not taken up

[] Passed/Rec Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____
[] EFD same or Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____

[] _____

**Engrossed, signed by the Speaker
Transmitted to the Senate**

Chief Clerk of the House

HISTORY IN THE SENATE

20

Read first time and referred to:

____ RPT SCS() ____ New Title
____ DP ____ DNP ____ NR ____ AM
____ FN ____ OFN / Prev: ____ FN ____ OFN
To: _____

____ RPT SCS() ____ New Title
____ DP ____ DNP ____ NR ____ AM
____ FN ____ OFN / Prev: ____ FN ____ OFN
To: _____

____ RPT SCS() ____ New Title
____ DP ____ DNP ____ NR ____ AM
____ FN ____ OFN / Prev: ____ FN ____ OFN
To: _____

Read second time

[] SCS() Adopted [] New Title
[] Amended

Considered on Final Passage

[] Passed Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____
[] EFD same or Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____

[] _____

Reconsideration

Reconsideration not taken up

[] Passed/Rec Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____
[] EFD same or Y ____ N ____ E ____ A ____

[] _____

**Engrossed, signed by the President
Returned to the House**

Secretary of the Senate

HCR

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: HCR 25
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____

Title Regulation of correspondence programs

Dept. Affected: EED

RDU Teaching & Learning Support

Component Student & School Achievement

Sponsor Rep. Neuman and Harris

Requester _____

Component No. 2796

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

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

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

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

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal: ☐

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The Department of Education & Early Development has determined that a zero fiscal note is warranted for HCR 25. If the requirements of the resolution were enacted by the legislature no additional funding would be required.

Prepared by: Barbara Thompson
 Division: Teaching & Learning Support
 Approved by: Roger Sampson, Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Education and Early Development

Phone 465-8727
 Date/Time 1/31/06 3:00 PM
 Date 01/31/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Michael and Diana [drman@gci.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 5:09 PM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman; Sen. Fred Dyson; Carol Habeger
Subject: Governor's Call-in Day
Attachments: "AVG certification"

December 8, 2005

Dear Governor Murkowski,

This message is a follow-up to a call that I made earlier this morning regarding homeschooling. I spoke with Shannon Fields, Secretary to the Special Assistant for Education, and she assured me that she would pass my comments on to you.

I am a homeschool parent who has been teaching my three children at home in Juneau for the past five years through the state wide correspondence program sponsored by the Galena School District, also known as the I.D.E.A. program.

Please repeal the regulations aimed at statewide correspondence programs that were passed in 2004 and 2005 that placed a cap on the amount of allotment that can be used for art, music, and physical education for our children. These regulations are too restrictive!

We can do an excellent job of educating our kids in core subjects, but they need artists, musicians, and coaches to guide their talents in these extra curricular activities. Many lessons that we enroll our children in are group lessons, so they not only have the experience of receiving training in art or music, or swimming, they also experience learning in a group with their peers. This is vital to the success of our programs, to ensure that our kids become well rounded, well educated citizens.

Our kids' participation in art, music, and physical education benefit our community as well as themselves. Look outside your door at the Art in the Capitol project. Many of our homeschooled children have had the honor of displaying their artwork for you and others who work or visit the state capitol. Our homeschooled kids are well represented as current and previous winners of the Library Bookmark Contest, the Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators Contest, and the Elementary Art Exhibit at Bartlett Regional Hospital. They also bring honor to our community when they participate in state wide swim meets and other athletic events.

Funds spent on art, music, and physical education are well spent. Please do not limit what our kids can achieve by limiting the use of our allotment monies in these areas.

Thank you for supporting us in our efforts to educate our children. We appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Diana Rossmiller
8844 N. Douglas Hwy.
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 463-3761
drman@gci.net

1/28/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Dan and Monica [dan_monica@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 11:28 AM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman; affiliatedhomeschoolers@yahoo.com
Subject: Thank you for supporting Homeschooling!

Governor Murkowski,

I spoke with Shannon of Daneeta Wood's office this morning about my concerns on some homeschooling issues. I am a dedicated homeschooling mom of 1 school age and 1 preschool aged child. The first two years I homeschooled independently. The last two years I have homeschooled through a statewide correspondence program. I have enjoyed the freedoms as well as the challenges that come along with both choices. I am concerned about losing our freedoms. If one is to choose to use a faith based curriculum, they should not be penalized. I understand that the state will not and should not purchase these materials. But, by using faith based materials does not degrade the child's education. That is what should be the issue. It is also quite challenging to provide a balanced PE, art and music education with funding restrictions. Please keep in mind, we homeschoolers as a group have our children's education as a top priority. Homeschool is a lifestyle that we live and breathe. Please think carefully about any restrictions on our freedoms.

Thank you for your time.

Monica Robinson
1816 Carr Ave.
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Susanne Badilla [dbadilla@gci.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 11:45 PM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman; Sen. Fred Dyson; Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch; Rep_Beth_Kertula@legis.state.ak.us; Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: Another Homeschool voice for choice

Dear Governor Murkowski,

We are writing as another voice for choice in homeschooling. I have been homeschooling my children for the better part of 12 years and have found it is the best choice for our family for many reasons. One of the reasons I chose homeschooling is so that my children could pursue the arts in more depth.

We recently had the pleasure of attending the open house you held in Juneau. My daughter was one of the violin players in the Aurora String Ensemble. One of the reasons she has come so far in her study of the violin is because she is homeschooled.

The regulations that the school board adopted this year has hurt our family by limiting the amount we can spend on music, art and P.E. Now, we can no longer afford to give our daughter art lessons, limiting the talent she has. We cannot even pay for a year of music lessons, much less provide her with physical education opportunities through her school program, which is something every child should have access to.

For the years that I homeschooled my older son and daughter, who is now in college, we had a choice on how to spend our allotment. IT WORKED! For example, the allotment paid for my daughters gymnastics training, among other pursuits. Because of this training she is able to work as a gymnastics coach which will help pay her way though college. If we had not had a choice in how to spend her allotment, she would not have gotten this training and the opportunity it opened up would be lost.

I believe parents are the best judges of the kind of education each child thrives under. Among many other benefits, both to the child and their community, the arts and athletics components enable a student to develop life long interests, healthy lifestyles and opportunities to learn leadership skills.

The Board of Education overstepped their bounds and hurt education in taking away choices from parents by limiting the allotment.

Alaska is such a great state. We have been pioneers, independent thinkers, and many of our homeschooled students have gone on to do remarkable things.

Please stand with us for true Alaskan parental rights and choices in homeschooling. Please support the repeal of Dept. of Education regulation 4 AAC 33.421 (k) and (L) and a reinstatement of educational choices by parents.

Also, please support legislative action to encourage the homeschooling choices necessary to many families. What we had just a couple of years ago was working. Let us not get bogged down in bureaucratic meddling but continue the legacy of Alaskan independence in educating our children to become great citizens!

Respectfully,
 Susanne Badilla
 1067 Arctic Circle
 Juneau, AK 99801
 970-789-5751
 1/28/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: scott l [leightribe@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 6:24 AM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Sen. Ralph Seekins; Rep. Mike Kelly; Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Thank you for supporting homeschooling

Dear Governor Murkowski,

I am the father of five young children. My wife and I have chosen to home school our children. I would encourage you to continue to support and fund state-wide home schooling programs.

My wife and I are both college graduates and are professionals in our fields. We also feel strongly about our ability and obligation to teach our children. This past year we were restricted in our choices for educational opportunities for our children. Currently, home schooling is funded at a level less than that for a public school. That is understandable, what is not understandable is the statewide limitation on how the allocation of funds can be used. We currently choose to augment our approved core curriculum with some privately purchased curriculum. But we face limitations in using our remaining funds to pay for other classes such as art, music and athletics.

We are raising very educated and well rounded children who will be an asset to our state and communities in the future. In order to be fully capable of accomplishing that, I ask that the 2004 restrictive regulations be repealed and allow each school district to determine how much funding is useable for "elective classes".

Sincerely,

Scott Leigh, P.E.
A Fairbanks voter

From: Stacy S [sswingle@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 10:09 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Homeschool allotment funds

Hello,

I am writing to suggest that you re-examine the regulations for distributing the funds for homeschool allotment programs. Three of my four children are enrolled in the Idea program and we very much appreciate the use of the allotments for educational materials and programs. However, we've found that the younger children can reuse many materials that we have purchased for the oldest child. Thus, we do not have to use our allotment to purchase much of the curriculum for the younger children. We would find it very helpful if we could use a larger portion of our allotment for more of the "extra" enrichment activities. Art, music, and physical education programs are very important to us, and right now we are limited to spending just \$686 for each child. My oldest son's weekly art class costs \$88/month. The allotment covers just 7 months worth of art classes and allows no room for either music or physical education. I believe that homeschool families should have the option of utilizing a larger portion of our allotment funds to provide our children with more of the art, music, drama, and PE activities that are so vital to provide a well rounded education. Thank you very much.

Stacy Swingle
Fairbanks, AK

2/16/2005

From: Terri Springer
48402 Daisy Avenue
Soldotna, AK 99669
(907) 262-6519
bspringer@ideafamilies.org

To: Representative Mark Neuman,
House Education Committee Chairman
<http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/house/24/NEU.htm>

February 19, 2005

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in an effort to urge both you and your committee members to work together toward lifting the newly imposed State regulations that unfairly cap both Fine Arts and Physical Education spending in home-based programs to \$686.00 per student, per academic school year. As a homeschooling parent/teacher with the Galena School District's IDEA program I would like to illustrate how our family has generally spent our allotment money in years prior to 2005-6.

Core curriculum texts and/or workbooks for both teacher and student for Arithmetic, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts at the elementary level have run our family no more than \$200.00 per student/ school year. We then supplement core curriculum with library books, resource room materials, and household items that are not charged directly from family allotments. This had allowed us to afford one half-hour music lesson per week to meet State standards in Music, art supplies for home-based art instruction to meet State standards for Art, and participation in seasonal team sports through our local Boys & Girls Club to meet State standards for Physical Education.

The cost of music lessons @ \$15.00-\$18.00 per half-hour lesson for 36 weeks is \$540.00-\$648.00 per student, per academic school year. (Please notice that this amount alone is very near the current State limit for spending in the areas of Fine Arts and Physical Education.)

The cost of membership; \$20.00 for the first child, and \$10.00 for the second child and three seasons of sports participation; \$50.00 per sport is \$160.00-\$170.00 per child, per academic year. (Please notice that to include these programs we are now well over current State funding limits.)

The cost of art supplies varies greatly with the chosen lessons. Based on past funding I had hoped to sign my children up for art lessons at the Kenai Fine Arts building where instruction in drawing, painting, sculpting, print-making, ceramics, and the like is given. At an estimated cost of \$20.00-\$30.00 per month the cost of art instruction and/or supplies would be \$180.00-\$270.00 per student, per academic school year.

At the high end of things, this adds up to approximately \$1,300 per student, per academic school year in order to continue to include our choices for Fine Arts and Physical Education in a complete academic plan. This amount would still allow us funds left over for admission to museums and science learning centers, the cost of special interest software in such things as a foreign language and keyboarding, and/or for special workshops offered throughout the year in core subject areas. All of the above educational programs continue to be funded through traditional school based programs across the state of Alaska at much higher cost yet are now being restricted in home based programs.

As you can now see, current State spending caps have severely limited my ability to carry out the ILP's that I would like to continue to facilitate for my children and that the State of Alaska mandates. For me to be a homeschooling parent/teacher our family has sacrificed a second income. (I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and am an Alaskan state certified teacher.) It is well worth the sacrifice, however, if in the end we have successfully met the goals of both the Alaska Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and of our family to provide the best education possible for our children with limited funds.

I would like to close with a sincere personal expression of thanks to you and to all of your committee members for your time and dedicated service directed towards the preparation of the current generation of children that will soon grow up to take our places in the various roles that we now labor in.

With High Regard,

Terri Springer & Family

American Stroke
Association
A Division of American
Heart Association

American Heart
Association

Learn and Live..

Pacific/Mountain Affiliate
1057 W. Fireweed Lane, Ste 100
Anchorage, AK 99503
Tel 907.263.2015
Fax 907.263.2045
Toll Free 1.888.276.0858
americanheart.org

February 6, 2006

Representative Mark Neuman
Chairman, House Education Special Committee
State Capitol, Room 432
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chairman Neuman:

I am writing you on behalf of the American Heart Association and in support of House Concurrent Resolution 25. Childhood obesity rates have risen at an alarming pace and thus obesity prevention is a health policy priority of the American Heart Association. Thus, the AHA supports equal opportunity for all Alaska home school students to receive quality physical education.

Specifically, the American Heart Association urges policymakers to establish minimum physical education standards as recommended by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education. This recommendation calls for daily physical education where:

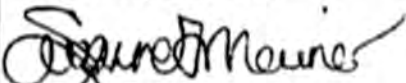
- students in grades K-8 receive 150 minutes of physical education each week
- students in grades 9-12 receive 225 minutes of physical education each week

Additionally, such physical education would provide:

- adequate teacher to student ratio
- curriculum that is sequential and consistent with standards
- curriculum that focuses on development of motor skills and health-related physical fitness -- promoting activities students can enjoy for a lifetime
- established safety standards
- instruction for students who have special health care needs
- students being active for at least 50% of class time
- physical education teachers who are credentialed -- schools should offer their teachers opportunity for professional development
- physical education that is *enjoyable*

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Alaska as well as the United States, and obesity is a major modifiable risk factor. It is for this reason that the American Heart Association urges the Alaska Legislature to ensure no Alaskan student is restricted from receiving quality physical education or the opportunity to form the lifelong habit of regular physical activity.

Respectfully submitted,


Suzanne F. Meunier
Director of Advocacy

Please remember the American Heart Association in your will.

AA-

From: William Diggins [erbcdiggins@yahoo.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 05, 2006 2:32 PM
To: Rep. Bill Thomas
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: HCR25

I am writing to ask you to support HCR25 for the benefit of the many homeschooled children in the state of Alaska. The diversity of families and children themselves requires the ability to use many different methods and tools to teach the children in the best way possible. HCR25 would go a long way to enable the best learning possible for those families and children.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Michele Diggins
PO Box 1637
Haines, AK 99827
907-766-3012
erbcdiggins@yahoo.com

2/6/2006

From: Scott Deal [hd4evr@gci.net]
Sent: Monday, February 06, 2006 9:35 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: thanks

Dear Sir,

Thank you for all you are doing to protect the state's correspondence programs from unfair treatment by the DEED. These programs should not be put under stricter standards than any other type of schooling. We, as homeschooling parents, work very hard to ensure our students a quality education and work closely with our contact teachers. The latest regulations have put more restrictions and stress on both of us than necessary. The standards for our type of schooling should parallel those of any other type of schooling.

Also, the money that we receive should not be unfairly restricted. Anything we use money for already has to be approved by our programs so they should be responsible for the proper disbursement of funds.

Once again, thank you for being there for us.

Mary Deal
North Pole

2/6/2006

From: Axmaker Family [axmakers@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2006 8:58 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Cc: HCR25@affiliatedhomeschooling.org
Subject: HCR 25

Dear Rep. Newman,

I have been a homeschooling parent for eighteen years and will continue to be so for another six at least. The freedom that we enjoy as homeschoolers is greatly due to the funding that we receive from statewide organizations such as IDEA and Raven. In the recent past, we have had our funding restricted in that it can only be used in certain percentages for the arts. My children are now 18, 15 and almost thirteen and have played the piano for six years. This was only possible because of the funding that IDEA was able to provide. It has cost up to \$500 a month in the past to educate the children in this way. It is currently costing us \$300 a month and with the restrictions that we have on our allotments, we have had to limit their education. Since we purchase most of their curriculum materials out of pocket, as they are Bible based, we are unable to use these funds to enhance the experience of our children the way that we have done for a number of years in the past.

My children have all become advanced musicians and high achievers as a result of the freedom to spend our allotments within the guidelines of the state constitution. My eighteen year old has won state competition for the piano and is currently in his junior year of college. My fifteen year old has participated at the state level for the piano and is currently in his second semester of his freshman year of college. My seventh grader is traveling to Portland in March for an all-Northwest convention for voice and has played piano since she was six. This is all possible because of the opportunities that Statewide programs afford us. Recently, however, we have had to rethink our strategy and this has caused an inability to offer all that is needed because the allotments cannot be used freely.

For the welfare of the majority it is imperative that we have the freedom to use our allotments as needed for the education of our children under the guidelines of the state constitution. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. We need HCR 25 to pass so that our children can pursue their goals.

Sincerely,
Christie Axmaker
Homeschooling mother

2/7/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: deniseyturley@mailworks.org
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2006 5:58 PM
To: LIO Juneau
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; HCR

We are home schooling parents. We believe that home schooled children's funding should have the same range of uses as public schooled children's funding. We believe homeschooling represents an incredible commitment from a child's parents as they turn down the public "free baby sitting program" and instead give their children a proper education. Anyone who puts this effort and dedication into a child's education should be given all possible support and range of freedom in their chosen program. I therefore support HCR 25.

Please forward these comments on to my legislators.

John and Denise Turley

--

deniseyturley@mailworks.org

--

<http://www.fastmail.fm> - And now for something completely different...

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: crystal hoffman [akhoffman@gci.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2006 9:00 AM
To: Sen. Bettye Davis
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Support of HCR25

Dear Senator Davis:

I respectfully request that you support HCR 25. I have been homeschooling our children for 3 years. I experienced the year without allotment restrictions and now two years with allotment restrictions. Our curriculum and extracurricular activities were by far greater geared toward my children's personal learning needs when the allotment was not driving my children's learning plans.

Please support HCR 25.

Crystal Hoffman

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Susan Heinrichs [sue226_heinrichs@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2006 10:23 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: HCR 25
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red

Dear Representative Neuman-

Please support HCR 25. Homeschoolers need flexibility in planning and budgeting to meet their children's educational needs. Allowing homeschoolers to prioritize their allotment spending makes for more efficient use of the money. As long as homeschoolers are required to meet academic achievement standards, they are being held accountable for spending their allotments wisely to provide the education their child needs. How they do it needs to remain a personal choice, since that is the essence of homeschooling.

As an aside, I would like to refer you to a statistic from Stanford University. Twenty-five percent of homeschoolers applying to Stanford get accepted there, while only 12.5% of non-homeschooled applicants get accepted. Their parents must be doing something right with their allotments!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sue Heinrichs

Yahoo! Autos. Looking for a sweet ride? Get pricing, reviews, & more on new and used cars.

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Vicky Daniels [vickybd@alaska.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2006 11:25 PM
To: Sen. Tom Wagoner
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; HCR25@affiliatedhomeschoolers.org
Subject: Please Support HCR 25!
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Red

Dear Senator Wagoner,

I am a home school mother of three and am very concerned how the laws are changing in this great state to limit our freedom to educate our children in the best way possible. The laws passed in 2004 have limited the way we can use our funds to educate our children. Each child is an individual and needs a plan to fit their needs. I urge you to please support HCR 25 as it is a plea to repeal the 2004 regulations that have hurt our home school program. I currently home school with IDEA which is a wonderful program, however I know that many home schoolers will drop state programs such as IDEA if the regulations keep limiting our freedoms. In the long run, that would hurt the State of Alaska. **Please support HCR 25!**

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Vicky Daniels

Mom to Abi 17, Caleb, 15, Joanna, 10.

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Monica Gere [monica@geredonovan.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2006 11:20 AM
To: HCR25@affiliatedhomeschoolers.org
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; Sen. Con Bunde; Rep. Mike Hawker
Subject: *****SPAM***** Please Support HCR 25!

One size does not fit all - PLEASE support HCR 25! A child's individual learning plan needs to drive allotment uses.

Thank you!

Monica Gere
7901 Schuss Circle
Anchorage, AK 99507

2/3/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Paul Verhagen [paulverhagen@prodigy.net] on behalf of paulverhagen@gci.net
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2006 11:50 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: HCR 25

Dear Representative Neuman,

Thank you for your support of HCR 25. I have been home schooling my children since 1983. Six of my nine children are now graduated from high school. Four of these have attended or are attending college. Two have graduated from college. Home schooling works! I have been active in the Alaska Correspondence Study programs since 1983 and have worked with IDEA, CYBERLYNX, Raven and Alyeska. They are good programs and give home schooling families greater educational opportunities than they might have, home schooling on their own.

Please support HCR 25 and home schooling opportunities for citizens in the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Merrily Verhagen

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: The Butikofer Family [butikofer_family@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 10:52 PM
To: Sen. John Cowdery; :Rep_Kevin_Meyer@legis.state.ak.us
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; HCR25@affiliatedhomeschoolers.org
Subject: *****SPAM***** Support HCR25

Dear sirs,

I would like to encourage your support of HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25 sponsored by Rep. Mark Neuman. As a home-schooling family, we appreciate your consideration of this resolution which would equalize the opportunities to teach our children through a correspondence program despite our residency. By permitting us to teach our children under less restrictive mandates, you allow us to tailor each child's curriculum to their individual needs and learning styles thus attaining maximum utilization of the funding provided. I thank for your time, and would appreciate your support of the aforementioned resolution.

Sincerely,
Jill E. Butikofer
Anchorage, AK

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Ed and Joetta Colquette [kettle@aptalaska.net]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 2:57 PM
To: Rep. Woodie Salmon
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; HCR25@affiliatedhomeschoolers.org
Subject: HCR 25

Dear Representative Salmon,

Freedom to be educated is one of the most fundamental rights that we have as Americans, as well as the environment that we choose to learn in. I have two children, a son, fourteen, and a daughter, seven. They have high ideals, visions and goals for what they want to do in life and how they want to achieve them. They, as we all are, are uniquely different in their skills, makeup, learning styles, interests, aptitudes, and talents. My son is talented in music(voice), my daughter is talented in art and writing. They, as well as all of the children of Alaska, deserve the opportunity to be able to choose the programs, supplies, classes, activities and resources that apply to their interests and furtherment of their education without government restrictions on allotments or curriculum that is used, whether faith based or secular. Please support HCR 25 and give each Alaskan child the opportunity for the future that they dream of!

Sincerely,
Joetta Colquette
P.O. Box 727
Tok, AK 99780

2/3/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: The Javier Family [thealaskajaviers@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 1:39 PM
To: Sen. Gretchen Guess
Cc: HCR25; Frank Javier; Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Please support HCR 25 - Thank You

Dear Rep. Anderson,

Thank you for the job you do in Juneau. We are writing to ask that you please support HCR 25 - the repeal of unwarranted and excess regulations on homeschoolers who choose to partner with public schools.

One size does not fit all!

If you have any questions, please get back to us at this address.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Frank and Marcella Javier
6425 East 16th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

What are the most popular cars? Find out at [Yahoo! Autos](#)

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Lisa Layman [laymans_99@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 9:21 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Cc: HCR25@affiliatedhomeschoolers.org
Subject: HCR25

Dear Representative Neuman:

As a homeschooling family, we greatly appreciate your introduction and support of this resolution to ensure our education choices remain available. We have also shared our thoughts with our neighbor and Representative, Bob Lynn. Please let us know if we can assist you with its passage.

Best regards,

Lisa and Kelly Layman

Do You Yahoo!?

Tired of spam? Yahoo! Mail has the best spam protection around <http://mail.yahoo.com>

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: The Wright Family [fwright@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 6:19 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: HCR 25

Please support HCR 25! We need equality in our homeschool programs. Thank you for working for the people of Alaska. Gaye Wright

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Greg & Vivienne [gvlasz@mosquitonet.com]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2006 9:47 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: HCR25

Dear Sir,

I am writing in regards to the HCR25 bill. I have been homeschooling for 13 years now the the changes that took place last year really hurt our family. We will have 5-6 children being home schooled next year and would like to see this bill passed. Please support it. Thank you Vivienne Laszloffy

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Mark Grotelueschen [m.grotelueschen@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Monday, December 12, 2005 11:14 AM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us
Subject: Homeschool funding

Dear Governor Murkowski,

I am writing to encourage you to ensure that your future budgets properly incorporate support for PE, Art, and Music programs throughout the state, especially for children in home-school and correspondence school programs. This funding is essential for the full development of thousands of Alaskan children, including my own.

I also want to voice my concern about the Attorney General's suggestion that families who use some religious curriculum be subjected to additional testing and reduced funding. Such a double-standard is unjust, unfair, and smacks of religious discrimination. All curriculums are based on one or more philosophies and/or worldviews—whether that be materialism, secular humanism, agnosticism, or theism. The State of Alaska must not force parents to educate their children with material based upon a worldview with which they disagree. And the State of Alaska must not discriminate against families who believe that a theistic, religious worldview is an integral part of any educational curriculum. Families like mine, which incorporate religious material into our curriculum, don't necessarily teach our children to read, write, or do math and science differently. But we believe that the books our children read should offer an accurate reflection of the role of faith and religion in world history, American history, and in individual lives. We find that nearly all curriculums that pretend to be "religion neutral" are in fact dismissive of the extent of role of religion and faith in history, society, and in individual life. Please do not allow education policies that discriminate against men and women of faith.

Respectfully,

///SIGNED///

Major MARK E. GROTELUESCHEN, USAF, PhD

1/16/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: scott l [leightribe@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 6:24 AM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Sen. Ralph Seekins; Rep. Mike Kelly; Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Thank you for supporting homeschooling

Dear Governor Murkowski,

I am the father of five young children. My wife and I have chosen to home school our children. I would encourage you to continue to support and fund state-wide home schooling programs.

My wife and I are both college graduates and are professionals in our fields. We also feel strongly about our ability and obligation to teach our children. This past year we were restricted in our choices for educational opportunities for our children. Currently, home schooling is funded at a level less than that for a public school. That is understandable, what is not understandable is the statewide limitation on how the allocation of funds can be used. We currently choose to augment our approved core curriculum with some privately purchased curriculum. But we face limitations in using our remaining funds to pay for other classes such as art, music and athletics.

We are raising very educated and well rounded children who will be an asset to our state and communities in the future. In order to be fully capable of accomplishing that, I ask that the 2004 restrictive regulations be repealed and allow each school district to determine how much funding is useable for "elective classes".

Sincerely,

Scott Leigh, P.E.
A Fairbanks voter

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Richard & Lillian Person [rlperson@gci.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 4:58 PM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us; Andrea Berg
Subject: Homeschool

Dear Governor Murkowski:

Please accept my appreciation for being willing to hear from those of us that are interested in Homeschooling as an educational option for our children. We have been involved in homeschooling for almost 8 years after having been involved in a private school setting where my sons went from K-3th and K-6th grade.

I have a personal concern with the fact that my faith-based curriculum is not being equally considered with other vendors in meeting the state educational criteria. In fact, some of the popular faith-based publishers have been in business as long or longer than many of the others. They have a high standard of endeavoring to teach our students with some of the best material that I have found over the years. Our curriculum may support creation vs. evolution or the rights of a unborn child over other options, but that does not mean it is insufficient in meeting state guidelines in course criteria.

As a matter of fact, I feel that the Dept. of Ed has discriminated against my right for my child to receive "credit" for our choice of material when it meets other guidelines. I am not asking for any kind of financial reimbursement or ties to my curriculum but only recognition that it provides similar education foundations for my student. In addition to this, my children have the testing to support my statements. With my oldest son having received a UAA Scholarship based on his SAT score of 1400+ (out of a possible of 1600), I believe this should support my statements and concerns.

The whole idea of homeschool vs. mainstream is almost always more beneficial because the child's education can be customized for their specific needs, strengths, weaknesses and areas of interest. I'm not exactly up to date on the cost of educating a homeschooler, but if you figure that most charter school students receive \$1800-3500/year for their educational allotments. This still considerably less than the cost of \$7000/year, which was the last figure I knew of for public schools. Not only this, but the **tremendous** business support to our local economy with the charter schooled/homeschooled students has no doubt a financial benefit for our state and mostly for the small business owners.

Please know that I am very thankful for the fact that Alaska is so open to choices for our students. As a tax payer and small business owner, we can appreciate how our students have reaped the benefits over the years. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge their benefit directly relating to the financial support of our state and government. Still, we have made many sacrifices for my husband and I to be more directly involved in their education, i.e. bus/transportation, facility/dwelling location and insurance, and many other areas.

May I request that you reconsider 2 specific areas:

1. Faith-based curriculum being considered acceptable for students to receive funding, status and/or credit.
2. Willingness to consider a different percentage/ratio of funds to be used for music, phys ed or fine arts expenditures. (For example, we prefer to buy our own faith-based materials, but that leaves most of our funds available which can be used to continue the student's enhancements in other areas as mentioned.)

Thank you for your consideration,

Lillian Person
907-688-3678 hm
907-688-4678 wk/fax

Dear Governor Murkowski,

As a homeschooling family we feel privileged to be living in Alaska where homeschooling is highly regarded and families have the freedom to choose what is best for their children. We appreciate that our state government has created an environment that allows the option for quality homeschooling. Please continue your support of homeschool families by not introducing legislation that limits or hinders our ability to provide quality education to our children through homeschooling.

Any legislation that requires independent homeschoolers to take standardized tests forces a specific approach to teaching that does not work for many homeschool families. There is plenty of evidence that homeschool families provide an education that is at least as good as or better than what is available elsewhere. Many methods exist to evaluate a student's progress and the effectiveness of an education. Standardized tests are only one, and not the best for homeschool families.

Standardized testing does more to evaluate teachers and schools than to provide an evaluation of what a student has learned or actually knows. In a homeschool one-on-one educational environment, both teacher and student are able to excel and push beyond "the average". Teachers in public schools have a difficult time trying to "make everyone happy" - their ability to teach and inspire and challenge students is hampered by so many things! What a privilege and advantage that home schooled children have. To see children inspired and challenged to be more than just average. Ultimately, the universities and businesses judge the quality and effectiveness of a child's education. Most universities and businesses have recognized that home schooled children have higher than average academic skills, have better study habits and work harder.

The freedom to home school our children in a safe environment, including moral and ethical education based on individual religious beliefs should be protected and not attacked.

All the regulations which the school board adopted this year, limiting the funds the state-wide programs can spend on music, dance, art and PE should be repealed.
Especially 4 AAC 33.421 (k) and (L) repealed.

I also understand that the State Attorney General plans to reduce the funding offered to Christian homeschoolers and require them to take additional testing in the state-wide programs. Christian homeschoolers should have the same funding, and freedoms as the people of the AG's faith, whatever that might be. The foundation of our country and even the need for school for everyone was led by Christians. We should not destroy this freedom that great leaders of our country fought for. Please continue to stand up and protect the rights and freedoms of families and their choice to homeschool their children.

Sincerely,
Andrew and Marilyn Loney

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Michael and Diana [drman@gci.net]
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005 5:09 PM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman; Sen. Fred Dyson; Carol Habeger
Subject: Governor's Call-in Day
Attachments: "AVG certification"

December 8, 2005

Dear Governor Murkowski,

This message is a follow-up to a call that I made earlier this morning regarding homeschooling. I spoke with Shannon Fields, Secretary to the Special Assistant for Education, and she assured me that she would pass my comments on to you.

I am a homeschool parent who has been teaching my three children at home in Juneau for the past five years through the state wide correspondence program sponsored by the Galena School District, also known as the I.D.E.A. program.

Please repeal the regulations aimed at statewide correspondence programs that were passed in 2004 and 2005 that placed a cap on the amount of allotment that can be used for art, music, and physical education for our children. These regulations are too restrictive!

We can do an excellent job of educating our kids in core subjects, but they need artists, musicians, and coaches to guide their talents in these extra curricular activities. Many lessons that we enroll our children in are group lessons, so they not only have the experience of receiving training in art or music, or swimming, they also experience learning in a group with their peers. This is vital to the success of our programs, to ensure that our kids become well rounded, well educated citizens.

Our kids' participation in art, music, and physical education benefit our community as well as themselves. Look outside your door at the Art in the Capitol project. Many of our homeschooled children have had the honor of displaying their artwork for you and others who work or visit the state capitol. Our homeschooled kids are well represented as current and previous winners of the Library Bookmark Contest, the Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators Contest, and the Elementary Art Exhibit at Bartlett Regional Hospital. They also bring honor to our community when they participate in state wide swim meets and other athletic events.

Funds spent on art, music, and physical education are well spent. Please do not limit what our kids can achieve by limiting the use of our allotment monies in these areas.

Thank you for supporting us in our efforts to educate our children. We appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Diana Rossmiller
8844 N. Douglas Hwy.
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 463-3761
drman@gci.net

12/16/2005

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Maria [cabinkeeper@ak.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 2:34 PM
Cc: emailAffiliatedHomeschoolers@yahoo.comto; Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Education

Dear Governor Murkowski,

I'm writing in regard to the staff budget that is due December 15, 2005.

After reading some state correspondence, I'm concerned about funding for home schooled children. I would appeal to you to restore funding to families in state-wide programs. I would also appeal to you to repeal or revise the restrictive regulations of 2004.

The bottom line is the well-rounded education of the children of our state and to offer each one the best possible education we can so that they will be equipped to contribute to our cities, state, country and world as productive citizens - as doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, CEO's, scientists or governors. A well rounded child is one that has been nurtured and loved as well as taught from books.

I'm concerned about the state stepping into homes to tell parents if they choose curriculum that teaches their beliefs - (morals, values) to their children, if those beliefs happen to be religious, they will not be funded. What are people without beliefs? All people have beliefs.

Recently I was in our public library where two girls about 8 and 12 years old had stacks of books on witchcraft. I asked them if that was their favorite topic and they excitedly told me it was. They said they were inspired by the Harry Potter books they'd read in school to get into witchcraft. They said they are now trying to learn to cast spells on people. I've read three of the Potter books so understood why the witchcraft would entice the girls. Witchcraft is a religion. I've not heard of any public schools banning Harry Potter from the classrooms or of any bans on discussing it. Far from that, I've spoken with school librarians that wanted to make sure there were plenty of copies of the books in their libraries so all the children could read them.

We've had a few loud voices preaching separation of church and state. I suggest that restricting what home school parents can teach with the threat of budget cuts is the state stepping over the line, trying to control religious teaching.

Thank you so much for your time.

Sincerely,
Maria Crites

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Susanne Badilla [dbadilla@gci.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 11:45 PM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman; Sen. Fred Dyson; Rep. Bruce Weyhrauch; Rep_Beth_Kertuia@legis.state.ak.us; Sen. Kim Elton
Subject: Another Homeschool voice for choice

Dear Governor Murkowski,

We are writing as another voice for choice in homeschooling. I have been homeschooling my children for the better part of 12 years and have found it is the best choice for our family for many reasons. One of the reasons I chose homeschooling is so that my children could pursue the arts in more depth.

We recently had the pleasure of attending the open house you held in Juneau. My daughter was one of the violin players in the Aurora String Ensemble. One of the reasons she has come so far in her study of the violin is because she is homeschooled.

The regulations that the school board adopted this year has hurt our family by limiting the amount we can spend on music, art and P.E. Now, we can no longer afford to give our daughter art lessons, limiting the talent she has. We cannot even pay for a year of music lessons, much less provide her with physical education opportunities through her school program, which is something every child should have access to.

For the years that I homeschooled my older son and daughter, who is now in college, we had a choice on how to spend our allotment. IT WORKED! For example, the allotment paid for my daughters gymnastics training, among other pursuits. Because of this training she is able to work as a gymnastics coach which will help pay her way through college. If we had not had a choice in how to spend her allotment, she would not have gotten this training and the opportunity it opened up would be lost.

I believe parents are the best judges of the kind of education each child thrives under. Among many other benefits, both to the child and their community, the arts and athletics components enable a student to develop life long interests, healthy lifestyles and opportunities to learn leadership skills.

The Board of Education overstepped their bounds and hurt education in taking away choices from parents by limiting the allotment.

Alaska is such a great state. We have been pioneers, independent thinkers, and many of our homeschooled students have gone on to do remarkable things.

Please stand with us for true Alaskan parental rights and choices in homeschooling. Please support the repeal of Dept. of Education regulation 4 AAC 33.421 (k) and (L) and a reinstatement of educational choices by parents.

Also, please support legislative action to encourage the homeschooling choices necessary to many families. What we had just a couple of years ago was working. Let us not get bogged down in bureaucratic meddling but continue the legacy of Alaskan independence in educating our children to become great citizens!

Respectfully,
Susanne Badilla
1067 Arctic Circle
Juneau, AK 99801
970-789-5751
12/16/2005

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: John & Lori Clum [jclum@gci.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 2:14 PM
To: "Senator_Fred_Dyson"@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. John Harris
Subject: Thanks from a homeschool family

Dear Senator Dyson, Representative Neuman, and Representative Harris:

I wish to personally thank each of you for your steadfast and unwavering support for the homeschool community in our state. Earlier today, I sent a note to both Governor Murkowski and Commissioner Sampson. I am attaching the substance of that note here for your information.

Thank you again for your support gentlemen, we truly appreciate it,
John Clum and family

.....

Dear Governor Murkowski:

I am writing to express my appreciation for your support of homeschoolers, and particularly for considering the needs of homeschooling families throughout our great state. My wife and I homeschool four children, and are affiliated with a state-wide homeschool program. Many families who choose to homeschool rely on faith or values-based curricula. Typically, these materials do not contradict, but rather are closely aligned with state education regulations. This is affirmed by the well documented, nationwide success of homeschoolers at geography and spelling competitions. Further, many other subjects, though they may mention or refer to religious topics, are inherently secular. This is highlighted in subjects such as mathematics, spelling and reading where the ultimate goal is skills development. The restrictions that new regulations place on homeschooling families reduces funding support, thereby increasing out of pocket costs, yet increases testing requirements. Sir, I ask that you speak with the Commissioner of Education and consider repealing regulations that place harsh restrictions and unnecessary financial burdens on families who pursue homeschooling.

Thank you again for supporting homeschooling families across Alaska.

Respectfully,
John Clum
Eagle River

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: tannis Kearns [tannbing@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 4:44 PM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Roger_Sampson@deed.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman; Sen. Fred Dyson
Subject: Homeschool Issues

Dear Governor and Other Representatives:

I am writing this email in response to the many changes that have happened this year and are proposed to happen in the homeschooling arena.

I am myself am a "homeschooler." This is my second year, and I have 6 year old, 3 year old, and 1 year old. While homeschooling has meant lots of additional sacrifices on my part, both financially, emotionally, and physically, I feel it is well worth it to see such well educated and adjusted children.

My concerns are many: It seems that our main concern ought to be for the children. Testing proves that they (the majority of homeschooled children, regardless of religion), are doing well, if not better than the public schooler. But it seems the state wants to encroach more and more on our freedoms, and our fear is that under these "regulations" that children will ultimately suffer.

I want the regulations passed this last year to be repealed. Specially 4 AAC 33.421 (k) and (L), but I feel all could use a repeal. I am also concerned about the DEED's intention to enforce mandatory testing for the Independent Homeschoolers. While I am using a state program now, because of the encroaching regulations, I feel more and more drawn to be an independent.

Independent homeschoolers do it all on their own, they receive no money from the state, and yet many of the still pay taxes that public schools benefit from. It is not right to demand testing from them, while they do not benefit at all from the organization demanding the testing.

It seems also the the State Attorney General has on his agenda plans to create a "religious ghetto" for Christian homeschoolers. Proposing that Christian homeschoolers would receive less funding, and be required to take additional testing, from the state wide programs. I can understand that religious materials cannot be reimbursed, but at what point did Christianity become such a negative asset? Additional testing seems a little like discrimination, does it not? If "Christian" homeschoolers enrolled in state programs are doing fine on the tests already mandated, why do we need to test further? RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION should not play a role in FUNDING, or EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

Thank you for listening to me and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tannis Kearns

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: D&A Smith [dougs@gci.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 7:56 AM
To: dennis_dewitt@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Rep. Mark Neuman; Sen. Fred Dyson
Subject: home schooling restrictions in state programs

Hello Denny

Angela Smith here, writing you to join others in our concern over the threat of more regulation proposed on home schoolers. (Are we really doing that poorly that we must be cracked down upon? Or might envy and hostility be cropping their ugly heads?)

You know that homeschooling is working well for our children in Alaska. The correspondent programs for individualized education (that we support with our taxes), help us provide necessary instruction that is expensive on this individual basis. Sometimes we get a break being billed a family fee, but most often we have to pay per child for all instruction in music, art and physical education activities. We need LESS restriction on the amount of allotted money we spend on these classes. (We are not even asking for *more* money.)

Wide and varied choices are available for great instruction in core classes. We also need LESS regulation on our choice of materials for core classes.

Probably some have abused the system, using the money not on their kids. More policing of funds is necessary, but not more restriction for all.

We need to resist calls for more regulation of independent homeschoolers! The results across the nation show that kids educating with families at home works well. It did for many of our ancestors for thousands of years. We parents are dedicated to giving them what they need the most. Please continue to encourage the state to support us in this endeavor!

Regards for all your hard work and blessings on all your tough decisions,

Angela Smith

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Taryn Luskleet [tarynsellsmarykay@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 1:56 AM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Roger_Sampson@eed.state.ak.us; Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Funding Limitations on Schools

Dear Mr. Governor,

Thank you for taking the time to read this. My name is Taryn Luskleet, I am a citizen of North Pole, AK, and I have children in both public school-district homeschool and private Christian school. I understand there is a budget due Dec. 15 and I want to address educational funding limitations. Regulations that restrict state-wide program funds for PE, Art and Music limit educational opportunities. Not all children are built alike. If you cut funds for what is considered extras, the children who are particularly gifted in these areas only will not have a chance to discover or show their potential. PE is especially important in our culture because of the super high child obesity rates. Music can help children understand math concepts because music is based on math (rythms, complicated harmonies that must keep time to the rythms, etc.). Art is essential to help our children learn healthy avenues of self-expression when they can't make their point with words. There are so many more reasons to keep these programs fully intact.

About the Attorney General's memorandum to Senator Fred Dyson regarding use of privately purchased religious-based materials: In presenting his report, he suggested additional testing and reduced funding for school districts when families use religious curriculum and want increased autonomy. It's "freedom OF religion", not freedom FROM religion when referring to the separation of church and state. Why punish families for including religion in their children's education? Why scrutinize them with additional testing? It should be the *quality of the education and the curriculum* that the state is concerned with. Our nation's youth have plummeted as a generalized whole since the removal of Christian teachings and even the teaching of general good morals from our schools.

As someone representing me, please hear my voice. No new limitations on funding for PE, Art, and Music. I am for the availability of religious educational materials for families without reduction in funding or additional testing. I am also for the inclusion of God and Christian morals in our public schools. Please allow funding for families that choose to send their children to private schools. Maybe you could eliminate the taxes we pay for public schools so we can more easily afford the school of our choice. If the quality of education at the public school in my district was better, and if the teachers held the children to higher moral standards, I would utilize the system. There is rampant bullying without consequence, early exposure to sexual subjects by peers (I'm talking 3rd grade here) and those two issues coupled with the fact that my daughter's teacher assigned no homework and did not challenge my child academically led me to remove her from the school. I enrolled her in a private school out of my own pocket but I still have to pay taxes for the public schools. Please initiate a legal change to the system to remedy this for all in this situation. As for finding money in the budget to allow for this, perhaps the teachers of Alaska should be content with their huge pay and hefty benefits. If so much money quit going to further pay increases and additional benefits there would be more money for the children. That's what education is supposed to focus on anyhow, right? No new pay or benefit increases for teachers. Let them strike all they want. Don't budge a dollar. Alaskan teachers' wages rank very high in our nation. They have nothing to complain about compared to the children. Thank you.

Sincerely,
 Taryn Luskleet
 3191 4-D Ct.
 North Pole, AK 99705
 1/16/2006

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Lalena Leigh [leighfamily@gci.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2005 10:32 PM
To: Governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Sen. Ralph Seekins; Rep. Mike Kelly
Subject: Thank you for supporting home schooling

Dear Governor Murkowski,

I would like to encourage you to continue to support and value the home school community in Alaska. Three years ago, after three years of public school, our family decided to use a state wide home school program and we were very pleased with the talented way they assisted us in meeting the learning needs of our five children. We are very concerned with the new restrictions of 2004. We have chosen to use faith based curriculum in some subject areas, and have no issues paying for them ourselves.

What does concern us is the punitive attitude towards involved parent's decisions in education as reflected in the Attorney General's memo suggesting additional testing and reduced funding for families using religious curriculum and desiring autonomy. My children meet the state testing requirements and since home schooling have soared far beyond their peers. We are raising well educated citizens who will be of great value to the next generation of Alaskans. We ask you to revise the restrictive regulations and allow our capable school district to determine how to best use resources for our family. These restrictions blocked our ability to use resources needed to educate our children. We choose to purchase our own faith based curriculum and should be allowed to use our allotment on other subjects without unnecessary restrictions.

We greatly value the education of our children and have sacrificially invested in their future and the future of Alaska. We ask your support of this dedicated community of parents and children.

Sincerely

Lalena Leigh

From: Dulce Ben-East [quietlake@matnet.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 27, 2005 6:42 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Homeschool activities spending cap

Dear Representative Neuman;

I have homeschooled my two daughters through the IDEA program for 9 years and am finding that the spending cap on activities has created a hardship for our family, and makes it difficult to properly educate my children. The beauty of homeschooling is that we have the ability to enhance the core subjects with arts and physical education, so important to a well-rounded education. My daughter is a gymnast - rather expensive, and I usually pay at least half of the cost - but she also takes piano and art lessons. This year I had to pull her out of art, limit piano, and pay most of the gymnastics myself. There is no way I can use her entire allotment for curriculum materials for core subjects, and I have excellent curriculum materials for language arts, literature, math, social studies/geography, science, and foreign language. So some of her allotment will remain unused.

I think that a better way to do this would be to consult with the teachers at the program and, once the curriculum is purchased and approved, we would be free to use the rest of the allotment for the period on activities.

thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Dulce Ben-East; Palmer, AK

From: sarah [sarahj57@mtaonline.net]
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2005 12:42 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: IDEA

Dear Mark,

Currently , my three sons are enrolled in the I.D.E.A. home school program. We have a \$686.00 cap on our allotment for Art, Music and Physical Education. My sons are all enrolled in a Tykwondo class to meet P.E. requirements that, for my eldest son, is 90 hours . This P.E. class has used all our funding allotment. Now, having recently completed the first half of the year, I do not have enough remaining monies to complete the year and as you can see there are no funds remaining for pursuing the arts or other valuable educational opportunities. I do have 800.00 left in my total allotment that I am unable to use. Due to the capitation of monies allowed for these actives, my children are not receiving the well rounded education they have in the past . Sincerely, Sarah Jackson

✓
Rep. Mark Neuman

From: bydlonbunch@yahoo.com
Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2005 3:55 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: State regs regarding homeschooling

Email For: Representative Mark Neuman
From: bydlonbunch@yahoo.com
Name: Andrew Bydlon
Street: 3295 South Lakeview Loop
City: Big Lake
Zip Code: 99652

Subject: State regs regarding homeschooling

Hi Mark,

We have been with the I.D.E.A. program for 9 years. We have appreciated being able to educate our children in a personalized way. The \$686 cap on Music/PE/Art, however, has diminished the quality of that education. Our children have had to choose between these options, rather than being able to get a well-rounded education. The changes to the allotment mean that the funds only cover the childrens\' PE, but leaves no funds available for either Music or Art. Since our family believes in using the Arts as an avenue to address core subjects, this has negatively affected our homeschooling. There are no longer funds available to attend live concerts, enroll in art classes, or take music lessons. The funds also have not been sufficient to cover their PE, and we have had to pay out of pocket, leaving even less for these experiences.

Thank you for all you are doing to help in this area.

Please Add My Email Address to your email distribution list. Thank You.

Sent response 2/28

Rep. Mark Neuman

From: Steve Floyd [alaskafloyds@gci.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 27, 2005 4:37 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Homeschool (I.D.E.A.) spending caps

Dear Representative Neuman,

I am the father of five small children, two of whom are currently enrolled in the I.D.E.A. program, and it has come to my attention that I should email you as to the situation we face as homeschoolers. Since we must fit every expenditure into the I.D.E.A. limitations, from books to workbooks to music lessons to physical education programs, we find it challenging, with the new \$686.00 cap to provide the entire spectrum of education for our kids that we were providing just months before. Now we must pay for some of the Tae Kwon Do and guitar lessons out of our own pocket, whereas kids in the public schools are able to get music education AND physical education in school without the added out-of-pocket costs. Would you consider lifting that cap?

The results of homeschooling speak for themselves, and we will continue to homeschool regardless of the cost, but it would certainly be a little less difficult on our budget if that cap were not in place.

Steve Floyd
921 Cowles, Fbks, AK
(907) 458-0495
(208) 977-0650 (fax)
www.turbotranslator.com

Sent response 2/28

From: rsroys [rsroys@nushtel.net]
Sent: Saturday, February 26, 2005 9:50 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Spending cap for correspondence programs

Dear Representative Neuman,

My name is Shelly Roy. My husband Ron and I are the parents of five great kids three of whom we home educate through Galena City schools statewide program IDEA.

I appreciate your concern about the spending cap that has been put upon PE, Music and Art. I also am concerned. \$686 does seem like a lot of money, however when you consider all the supplies I must purchase for art classes (and the shipping cost of those supplies), the lessons in PE (including any team sports I wish for my children to participate in), and music lessons, that money does not go very far.

This year I have been very careful about the use of art supplies (paint, crayons, paper, tape, glue, sequins, sewing supplies, clay, etc.) and have still had a difficult time staying within my \$100 per student budget. I have a daughter who wants to learn wood burning for art and I have had to delay ordering her course until next year because of this cap on spending.

My oldest daughter is involved in piano lessons and would love to take voice lessons also, however she must wait until next year because of the spending cap.

Dillingham, the city in which we live, does not have many opportunities for PE activities and I constantly scramble for ideas to keep my children active and keep their bodies healthy, fit and moving. Our community is considering building a swimming pool. With this spending cap in place, I doubt that my children will be involved in swimming to fulfill their PE requirements because the cost of swimming passes for them will exceed the cap.

I consider myself a careful consumer and have yet to come close to spending my children's allotted money per year. I am educating my children for far less money per student than the public school in my community does and I feel that this spending cap is hampering my ability to give my children the best education I can.

Thank you again for your careful and thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Shelly Roy

rsroys@nushtel.net

Responded 2/28

From: Melanie Heusser [mheusser@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Saturday, February 19, 2005 5:05 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: homeschooling

We would like to share how the new regulation's for homeschool spending has affected our family this year.

We have been with the IDEA program for 6 years. We purchase our own curriculum and have used the IDEA funds primarily for music instruction and P.E. My children each play two instruments and are in advanced and intermediate youth orchestra. The \$686.00 cap on spending for music, art, and P.E. is not even enough to pay for one year's worth of lessons on one instrument per child. We now have to pay for other lessons and any P.E./art activities out of pocket. We are left with a large amount of our IDEA allotment to try to use up on other things. We sincerely believe that this money would best be used on lessons and learning activities not "things". Hopefully these new regulations will be seen as insufficient and that although abuses have occurred in the program, most of us use our money carefully and wisely. Thank you for you time,
Melanie Heusser

From: Christina Partridge [ctepalaska@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2005 10:47 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: homeschooling

Dear Representative Neuman,

I wanted to tell you my opinion on homeschooling. I am a Mom of three boys, ages 6, 3, and 1. I have been homeschooling since my first was born and have been enrolled with I.D.E.A. since this past fall when my first reached Kindergarten age.

I would like to comment on the cap for music, P.E., and art. Even though at first glance this cap does seem reasonable to does impose some immense restrictions. What if you need to buy an instrument for your child? Though some instruments are cheap, a recorder for example, a good violin or piano are not. If you were to buy a violin that would mean that you would have to wait for the following year to pay for lessons, which are always very expensive. You would also have to forgo any sports lessons or art lessons and stick to hiking and finger painting. Though hiking and finger painting are wonderful endeavors, many homeschooling families specifically use sport lessons and art lessons as part of the social component of homeschooling. Which brings us to the problem that even if you don't have to buy any music equipment (a violin, etc.) lessons are very expensive. Simply because a family wishes to spend more than the cap for music, P.E., and art does not mean that the other subjects are being ignored. Perhaps the family already has all the math supplies that they need saved from an older child (especially common in large home school families). Perhaps this year English will only need paper and pen since they will be reading all the classics found in the library and writing reports.

I.D.E.A. requires a very thorough paper trail. I must tell them what I am doing, how I am doing it, what materials I am using, and send them samples of my child's work. More regulations are NOT needed.

Sincerely,
Christina Partridge

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From: Tom & Shirley Hein [thein@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2005 7:58 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Cc: thein@ideafamilies.org
Subject: The cap of \$686 on music, art and P.E.

Dear Mr. Neuman,

My name is Shirley Hein and I have been homeschooling three children here in Wasilla for nine years. IDEA has been an excellent program of accountability for me to work with. Last year I worked with many other parents to keep the monies allotted to each child free from regulation, but a cap was put on the monies used in the area of art, music and P.E. When the cap restricted spending in those subjects, I was very disappointed. All three of my children are very strong in music, my son in piano and my two daughters in violin. In order for them to participate in the lessons, small orchestra experiences, and the folk band that two of them are presently in, I was way over the cap very quickly. I do not want the state to pay for all of our musical choices, but it does bother me to have money sitting in my IDEA account that is no longer useable for the arts and PE. If I were to move my children into the Correspondence School, the Mat Su Borough Alternative for the Home Schooler, I would have no such restriction. Why is that? I pay taxes, IDEA is a cutting edge program for home schoolers which has existed for several years and so why the discrimination? I would appreciate all you can do to help remove this unfair cap. Thank you, Shirley Hein

From: Chuck and Lisa Sutton [clsutton@mtaonline.net]
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2005 9:58 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: homeschooling

Dear Mark:

My name is Lisa Sutton. I live in the Mat-Su Borough, and I homeschool my 3 children. The IDEA program is extremely valuable to me for various reasons, but I become increasingly frustrated at our growing limitations. The biggest frustration to me right now is the limitations on funds for P.E. My younger two children do not even have P.E. included on their ILPs because I don't feel that I should have to pay out of pocket for P.E. activities (such as swimming) just because they're not "instructed" classes. Luckily for me, P.E. is not *required* for them. My high school student, however, is *required* to accumulate 1.5 credits of P.E., so I have no choice but to include P.E. on his ILP, and I am having to pay for his 90 hours of workouts at the club, just because they are not instructed classes. This is insane to me that I have to pay for something that is a requirement for graduation. I don't see public schooled students paying out of pocket for their P.E. requirements, and we pay our taxes the same as their parents do. In my opinion, under these circumstances, P.E. for IDEA students should be treated as an elective, not as a requirement. Thank you for letting me vent.

Lisa Sutton

Valley homeschooling mom



From: The Mielkes [dmielke@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 02, 2005 12:42 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: homeschool funding

Dear Representative Neuman

We appreciate your support of alternative forms of education, particularly homeschooling. We are a homeschooling family with two children in the 6th and 8th grades. We were very disappointed with the recent ruling that restricted lesson allotments for homeschoolers within statewide programs. Because the restrictions limit to \$686 the amount of money we can spend on lessons, our children were forced to drop their physical education program so they could continue with their music lessons. With ample funds available, we feel it is wrong for them to be forced to make difficult choices or be denied part of their education.

We feel it is unfair that this cap applies only to statewide programs when all public funded homeschoolers are required to meet state standards.

We support you in any effort you make to remove these unfair restrictions, and restore the choice of how homeschoolers apply their allotments.

Sincerely,
Dan and Laurie Mielke

FyE.
✓

From: Jeff & Donna Offord [jofford@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2005 8:50 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: home-schooling cap

Dear representative Neuman,

I am a home schooling mother of four. My oldest will graduate this year and my youngest is in first grade so I still have many years ahead. I generally pay for my own core curriculum because that is what we like and were using it when we joined IDEA. Up until this year, my main use of my allotments were for PE, art and music. I don't want to complain b/c I realize if I weren't with IDEA, I would be getting nothing to help in this area but...now I must choose b/t music or gym or whether my daughter can learn another instrument. The only way we could fund their music lessons with our income would be for me to go to work which is not worth the sacrifice to my family. If there is anything you can do to help us, I would appreciate it. It's great having a representative who understands home schoolers in the legislature.

Thank you for listening,
Donna Offord

1/26/2005

FgF

Rex Shattuck

From: carrie lofgreen [sclofgreen@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2005 2:40 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: allotment concern

Hello,

My name is Carrie Lofgreen I don't feel that we are given the same opportunities as the public school and correspondence gets. As a homeschool mom of five boys I have sacrificed my time and income. To school my children. I brought them home in 5th grade as I have a dyslexic child that the schools kept telling me they could help and they never did he got severely depressed. Since he has been at home he has made allot of progress.

All of my children are in music and that alone takes most of their \$686.00 on lessons, books and supplies they would love to do karate but their isn't enough left over. Its simply not enough, neither is it fair for that Idea gets a cap and public school doesn't we pay our taxes just like everyone else.

Thank you
from a concerned parent
Carrie Lofgreen

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Date: Tue, January 25, 2005 8:54 am

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

Priority: **Normal**

To Whom it May Concern:

We would like to express our desire to have a level playing field for all education. Whether it is in a class room or a home school setting. We would like the cap of \$686 placed on activity funds to be lifted. We currently home school and paid over \$900, out of our personal funds, for our child's education. About 75% of this was for Physical education, music and art. The remaining 25% was on core curriculum such as writing and math. I know that if my child were in a public school setting she would have received more hours of instruction in these areas, more materials to use and at no additional cost to us. Where to educate our child is a personal choice. When to pay our taxes is not a choice, it is mandatory. Therefore I encourage you to think about allowing homeschool families the same benefits as children in public school receive.

Thank you,
Traci Sundberg

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

Priority: **Normal**

Dear Mr. Neuman,

I, too, am upset over the amount I am allowed to spend on my child's art/physical education/music lessons. I have only one middle school child in the IDEA program and her gymnastics lessons, alone, cost me over \$700 a year, most of which has to come out of my own pocket since I spend part of my allotment on "other" lessons, too. We have managed, in the past 5 years, to balance the amounts spent ourselves to give our children a well-rounded education and now we're being restricted. Please help us to regain control over the monies allotted to us for our children's education.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Mapes

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Dear Rep. Neuman,

I am a homeschooling mother of 2 boys in Palmer. I writing to you to express my concerns over the changes in our ability to use our IDEA allotments for Phys. Ed. and Art. I would very much appreciate any attempts you can make to correct the recent changes.

I was able to take my boys to the Alaska Club for classes in Rock Climbing and basketball, golf etc. These are things that I believe are still covered under Public School funding.

I'm sure you can appreciate that our choices are more limited in PE and Art as we don't have the pooled resources that the public schools do. We need our allotments to be spent where each child needs them. I understand that the goal of restricting us is to send our kids to public education.

I am letting you know that goal will not be met, even if all of our funding is taken away.

We recieve very little, per student. As long as a curriculum item is being met and the core studies curriculum is in hand, we should be allowed (with the IDEA reps. approval) to use our allotments as we see the need.

Please consider our kids needs.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Marianne E. Tiedeman

2121 N. Midtown Dr.

Palmer, AK 99645

901-745-9010

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

Priority: **Normal**

Dear Representative Neuman,

I am a homeschooling mom to 3 kids and I am very concerned about the cap that has been placed on activity funds. Recently I found out that 86% of our land tax money goes to fund education. I am very much aware of the money that goes to the public schools for each individual student, which is substantially higher. Of course there is a much higher overhead to educate a student in the public schools but there is plenty of overhead for educating a homeschool student as well.

Most homeschool kids come from a one income family. Most homeschooling families are creative and can stretch their budgets. For homeschooling families with more than one child they will pass down curriculum to the other students and save money to use elsewhere for lessons and activities. Homeschooling families use resources from the library, friends and look for bargains at thrift stores and garage sales to supplement their child's education.

With this new cap, parents are actually having to spend their own money for lessons because they cannot use it from the allotment and like for me I have a huge portion that I haven't used up and am trying to figure what to spend it on, we sure don't need anything right now. But I might end up using our allotment for some things next year just to use it up and then next year it will be even more of an allotment to try to spend. It doesn't make sense to me. And not how the allotment use was intended for

In the Mat-su right now the schools are overcrowded and new schools need to be built. Not soon. Now. Imagine if all these homeschooled kids were to be enrolled in school next year. There really would be a building crisis.

Children in school get gym and music classes. The overhead for a gym, upkeep, instructors, equipment and instruments is huge. Homeschooled kids should be able to take a gymnastics class or piano class with their allotment. This benefits the child enormously and is so much less than what music or gym instruction would be in the public school. The cap is forcing parents not to be able to have them in certain classes because they cannot afford it. It is discriminating towards homeschoolers and it is only hurting homeschooled children.

I am writing this on behalf of homeschoolers because I truly think this cap is unfair. I happen to be in a situation where our family can afford lessons and to homeschool without an allotment if we had to. I feel my children should be entitled to the allotment just like any other child in our state. We pay taxes just like everyone else. There are many that I know that simply can't afford not to have an allotment and for the lessons that go beyond that. It is very sad and unfair.

Please consider changing the cap.

Sincerely,
Heather Hongslo

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Date: Mon, January 24, 2005 10:53 am

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

Priority: **Normal**

Dear Mr. Neuman,

We homeschool 4 of our children. Three of our children are currently taking piano lessons, and they are doing quite well. I desire my students to continue taking piano until they can play very well. The \$686.00 barely covers the piano lessons for the year, leaving no funds allowed for PE, or Art. So this creates a problem, we have funds left over, but we can not use the funds to fully benefit my children.

I have one daughter who is very interested in art and she does very well. I would like to give her art lessons. I would also like to be able to use the money for PE activities.

The cap on the allotment does not make sense!!

As long as we have to do all of the paperwork for individual learning plans(ILPs), and have to speak to assigned teachers, WE should be able to actually DO an ILP based on our students needs and desires.

Please, please do everything that you can to reverse this!!

Our children will benefit from the outcome!

Sincerely,
Angela Allred

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Subject: IDEA

[View Full Header](#)From: "Mickey & Anna Ouzts" <lgyrc@mtaonline.net> [Add](#)[View Printable Version](#)

Date: Mon, January 24, 2005 2:25 pm

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

Priority: Normal

Dear Representative Mark Neuman:

I know you feel strongly about home school rights in this state. I am a parent with IDEA, for the third year now. I am very happy to tell our story and how we are affected by the cap on allotment spending. This year has been very frustrating as an at home educator for the following reasons!

First of all, we must buy our own Christian Curriculum out of our own resources, which I don't have much of a problem with, knowing that God has been taken out of the schools, and that IDEA is a state school. Therefore, that leaves our allotment monies to do the things for my kids that will make them useful, stronger, and viable adults when they graduate.

Secondly, now that they have put a cap of \$686.00 on music, art & PE combined, I had to choose only one of the three. Both of my kids are playing musical instruments and love learning music. So, there goes the whole allotment cap on lessons. Fortunately, their instruments were paid for by IDEA within the last 2 years, otherwise, I wouldn't have money for rentals or the purchase of a bass or violin! What this means to our home school program, is that in order to do any physical or artistic activities, I MUST pay for them out of our own limited funds!

Thirdly, we first chose IDEA to home school our daughter because she was so behind in Math and she was scared of all the attention a pretty girl gets in school. My daughter's experience in the public school was not a good one. In first grade, she was asked to join in on an orgi going on after school. She was afraid to go to school after that! She has been in 8 different schools in 10 years as we tried every approach to learning we could find for her. We chose Aquarian Charter school where her teacher taught about her third eye and meditation and the church of Scientology! Then we tried one year of homeschooling on our own, then back to public school for 4th & 5th grades. Then we moved out of state for a year. Each Math curriculum was different at every school, so we needed some stability for her life. Having one Math program and music in her life has given her so much confidence! She loves to play her violin at concerts, which used to scare her to death. Our daughter is now working with a therapeutic riding stable, where she helps children with disabilities ride horses. She loves those kids and is giving back to society with this opportunity!!! Her grades are great, and she needs to stay physically active. With the spending cap, we can't afford to even pay for the swimming she loved last year, take a pottery class, or join a gym to work out.

Something about all of this control over our spending is just wrong! We chose home school to teach our kids service for others, and they can work closely with us at the Christian camp, where our family serves as the directors. Our income is very limited, so this is the MAIN reason we chose IDEA. On our own, we can't do the things for our kids that they need to have a well rounded education without IDEA.

We later chose to home school our son for his well being. He endured humiliation and lost all of the self esteem we as parents work so hard to instill in our kids. Here is what happened to my son. Meadow Lakes Elementary in both the 4th grade classes, failed every boy. They demanded that every home work paper be turned in on time, or it received an automatic D or F. This made my son feel so stupid, since he is dyslexic and can't keep up with the pace of an over crowded school room, with teachers who wouldn't pay any attention to the boys! Their names were written on the board for being behind, they could not go to recess, and had to stay inside for lunch until they could catch up. We watched him stay up every night until 10 doing homework, thinking he was dumb! The work he did get done in time was A and B work, but the punishment

for not getting it done on time made him a D and F student. We were outraged, even though we wanted him to stay in public school to make friends and have a physical outlet for the energy of a 10 year old boy! So, we started him in IDEA.

He has become once again, the A student that he always was! Now, he loves to play the bass, has his identity back and is an energetic wonderful, imaginative 12 year old! That is the difference, and the reason we want to stay with IDEA.

Please hear our cry, we need to be able to spend allotments in whatever way we as educators of our children see fit, in order to give our kids a well rounded education. The public school system is overcrowded, so having more kids in home school only makes sense. Just please don't demand to control how we use the small funds we are given to determine how we can or cannot educate our kids at home.

I know this was long, but without the back ground of our schooling experinece, just one more whining Mom & Dad wouldn't make much sense. Thank you for understanding our cry for help!

Sincerely,

Mickey & Anna Ouzts

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Subject: IDEA CAP PE Music Art

From: "L Syvertson" <lsyvertson@ideafamilies.org> [Add](#)

Date: Mon, January 24, 2005 12:15 pm

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

Priority: Normal

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Dear Representative Neuman;

We have 5 Children; two have graduated from Wasilla High School and we home school 2nd, 4th and 6th grades with our remaining 3 children. We are a Galena School District / IDEA Family living in Wasilla. Basically we are attending public school (public monies) but we are not afforded the same benefits that even the Mat Su Correspondence School is allowed. We feel the cap put on us is unfair. Our children are fulltime home school with all core subjects taught at home. The \$686 cap does not even adequately cover the physical education costs not to include music or art. The people that are abusing the system (private school and public monies for lessons etc or whatever the abuse) should be dealt with, not singling out true home school families with unfair regulations.

Please respond,

Les and Debra Syvertson

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✓
January 24, 2005

Dear Representative Mark Neuman,

I would like to address two of the recent changes by the Dept. of Education and Early Development: MEMBERSHIPS and PRIVATE OR GROUP LESSONS, and the equally foolish cap on spending educational funding allowances. By first appearance, horse riding lessons or horse related activities may seem to the inexperienced as a "frivolous" activity. Let me assure you that this is a vital part of our educational experience.

My three (entirely home schooled) boys are all enrolled yearly in 4-H Horse Project as well as Veterinary Science and other projects as well. All three keep award winning record books (I would love for you to see these!), care for their horses, learn from their horses, teach their horses, and are inspired by their diverse relationship with these animals.

By keeping detailed records they learn accountability, mathematics, writing, photography, gain computer skills, and organization. By riding they are learning balance, physical fitness, partnership, consideration, foresight, map reading, compass reading, preparation skills, and a desire to learn more about their animals to improve their performance.

These experiences do not end in our backyard. Our 17 year old started college early to continue his education in medicine. This interest came entirely from his experiences with horses and animals. All three of our boys have won multiple awards in public for their demonstrations and speeches as well as for their general knowledge and leadership skills.

Time in the saddle is like time at the desk and in the gym at the same time. When I know my boys are with their horses instead of in front of the TV, the video games, or out causing mischief, I know that I have fulfilled my role as a responsible parent and teacher.

Please take consideration of these important virtues as you represent us.

Thank you,

Leslie Seddon
Palmer, Alaska
(907) 745-7281

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Subject: Homeschool

From: "Jessica" <hdawkins@ideafamilies.org> [Add](#)

Date: Mon, January 24, 2005 10:44 am

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

Priority: Normal

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Hi,

I am Karen Dawkins and I homeschool my daughter with IDEA and I think it is one of the most caring, supportive homeschool program out there. I have been homeschooling for 3 years and have seen positive results from it and will not ever go back to a public school situation. I too have substituted and worked in the public school system in North Pole and have seen what goes on in the public schools and chose to homeschool.

I believe it is unfair for people in the Mat-Su to be able to get more money from being in the correspondence school altogether ; and for activities such as art, music and physical education. I am not so against limiting how much is spent as long as you do it across the board for all correspondence or homeschool situations. IDEA is an excellent program and I don't feel like their program should suffer enrollment due to unfair laws.

All I ask is that you help let the legislature reconsider this to be appropriate and fair to all homeschools and correspondence. We pay the same taxes everyone else does.

Thank you for your time,

Karen Dawkins

karen.dawkins@gci.net

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Subject: (no subject)

[View Full Header](#)From: "The Smith's" <mmsmith@ideafamilies.org> [Add](#)[View Printable Version](#)

Date: Sun, January 23, 2005 11:24 pm

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

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Priority: Normal

Dear representative Mark Neuman,

This is Mike and Marie Smith. We are voicing our concern about the equality of our schools. We believe that the majority of the tax payers are unaware that the money they pay in toward education every year is not being paid out equally to all children in school because property taxes right now do not help home schooled children. I think we need to make a greater effort to allow all children the same opportunities regardless of the school they are in. Thank you for your time.

Mike and Marie Smith

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From: Terri Springer
48402 Daisy Avenue
Soldotna, AK 99669
(907) 262-6519
bspringer@ideafamilies.org

To: Representative Mark Neuman,
House Education Committee Chairman
<http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/house/24/NEU.htm>

February 19, 2005

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in an effort to urge both you and your committee members to work together toward lifting the newly imposed State regulations that unfairly cap both Fine Arts and Physical Education spending in home-based programs to \$686.00 per student, per academic school year. As a homeschooling parent/teacher with the Galena School District's IDEA program I would like to illustrate how our family has generally spent our allotment money in years prior to 2005-6.

Core curriculum texts and/or workbooks for both teacher and student for Arithmetic, Science, Social Studies, and Language Arts at the elementary level have run our family no more than \$200.00 per student/ school year. We then supplement core curriculum with library books, resource room materials, and household items that are not charged directly from family allotments. This had allowed us to afford one half-hour music lesson per week to meet State standards in Music, art supplies for home-based art instruction to meet State standards for Art, and participation in seasonal team sports through our local Boys & Girls Club to meet State standards for Physical Education.

The cost of music lessons @ \$15.00-\$18.00 per half-hour lesson for 36 weeks is \$540.00-\$648.00 per student, per academic school year. (Please notice that this amount alone is very near the current State limit for spending in the areas of Fine Arts and Physical Education.)

The cost of membership; \$20.00 for the first child, and \$10.00 for the second child and three seasons of sports participation; \$50.00 per sport is \$160.00-\$170.00 per child, per academic year. (Please notice that to include these programs we are now well over current State funding limits.)

The cost of art supplies varies greatly with the chosen lessons. Based on past funding I had hoped to sign my children up for art lessons at the Kenai Fine Arts building where instruction in drawing, painting, sculpting, print-making, ceramics, and the like is given. At an estimated cost of \$20.00-\$30.00 per month the cost of art instruction and/or supplies would be \$180.00-\$270.00 per student, per academic school year.

At the high end of things, this adds up to approximately \$1,300 per student, per academic school year in order to continue to include our choices for Fine Arts and Physical Education in a complete academic plan. This amount would still allow us funds left over for admission to museums and science learning centers, the cost of special interest software in such things as a foreign language and keyboarding, and/or for special workshops offered throughout the year in core subject areas. All of the above educational programs continue to be funded through traditional school based programs across the state of Alaska at much higher cost yet are now being restricted in home based programs.

As you can now see, current State spending caps have severely limited my ability to carry out the ILP's that I would like to continue to facilitate for my children and that the State of Alaska mandates. For me to be a homeschooling parent/teacher our family has sacrificed a second income. (I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and am an Alaskan state certified teacher.) It is well worth the sacrifice, however, if in the end we have successfully met the goals of both the Alaska Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and of our family to provide the best education possible for our children with limited funds.

I would like to close with a sincere personal expression of thanks to you and to all of your committee members for your time and dedicated service directed towards the preparation of the current generation of children that will soon grow up to take our places in the various roles that we now labor in.

With High Regard,

Terri Springer & Family

From: From Someone Really Dull [werdull@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Friday, February 18, 2005 7:43 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Homeschool spending cap

Dear Representative Neuman,

Good Morning, my name is Renee Dull. I want to provide you with some comment regarding the \$686.00 cap on the homeschool allotments. Before our children were born, my husband and I had made the decision to homeschool our children. We have 4 children we homeschool each year. I am so greatly encouraged that you have decided to move forward in investigating the spending cap for P.E., Music and Art that was placed on our homeschool allotments. This cap has greatly affected our ability to educate our children in these three areas. We have been limited to choosing one area rather than having the freedom to educate in all three areas. We are blessed that the State of Alaska offers some funding to this endeavor, however our freedom has been limited and the money that we once had access to for the above mentioned subjects will now roll back into the great unknown.

Some individuals believe that the allotments we receive should only be spent on curriculum. With the limitations placed on what curriculum we can choose we are not able to use the allotments in this area. One of the reasons we have chosen to homeschool our children is to develop strong moral character. This is an area in our school system that is neglected. This being one of our biggest concerns and through research of the different curriculums that are approved and funded by the State allotments ...we could not find an adequate or satisfactory curriculum that included the moral values we want to instill in our children. Which means we had to seek curriculum that was not funded by the State allotments. We pay for our own curriculum to educate our children in the basic subjects of Math, Language, Science, History, Health, and Foreign Language. Therefore in the past our allotments were available to supplement these subjects and for lessons in P.E., Music, Art or other electives (home economics, auto or wood work, etc..).

The \$686.00 cap on P.E., Music and Art is an unreasonable cap in trying to educate our children. Unfortunately I am not gifted in all areas and "bookwork" is not the only source of education...especially in the above listed areas. Just to have piano lessons alone for a year costs \$540.00 per child. (\$60.00 a month for 9 months.....our school year goes for 12 months depending on the subject) To have tennis lessons the cost is \$603. for 9 months. (\$67.00 a month) These two examples add up to \$1,143.00. Our allotments could cover this but with the cap what we have to work with falls far short. I will add that each child is different and has different interests...but all should have an equally well rounded education in these areas. We cannot afford to pay for the lessons so the child goes without. Having to watch the rest of the allotted money for education go unused when there is a need is even sadder. Since we already have to pay for curriculum, and now the lessons this means the child loses in the end. He or she will not have the same opportunities afforded to them that they once had.

I hope your findings regarding this cap will encourage you to work to have it lifted. Homeschool families pay their taxes and have taken on the larger task of educating their children. It would be easier to leave the job to someone else, however not only do we want what is best for our children, but we want what is best for our neighborhoods, our communities and our country. Thank you so much for your time, effort and consideration in this matter.

Please feel free to call me should you have any questions or concerns, I'd be happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Renee Dull

9088 Miner Court
Juneau, Ak 99801
907-789-0044

2/18/2005



From: Brian and Janell Heagy [bheagy@gci.net]

Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2005 2:02 PM

To: Rep. Mark Neuman

Dear Rep Neuman,

As an Idea homeschool family, I would urge you to help us get the restriction of \$686.00 for music and PE lessons removed. As a homeschool family, we have chosen buy our own curriculum (Christian based). As a result, we have "extra" money that we would have otherwise used to buy curriculum in our allotment at Idea. With this new restriction, we are unable to use that money on PE and music.

Our girls would like to take piano lessons. We would like to use that extra money that we have not spent on those lessons. Lesson costs are prohibitive without the use of that money.

Why shouldn't we be able to use that money at our discretion. Especially since we are funding our own curriculum??? I feel we should.

Please help us use the money we are allotted to its full extent. We are responsible for planning and executing every aspect of our children's education. Would you help us use our allotted money to make those choices as we see fit????

Thank you.

Brian Heagy

From: luanns@juno.com
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2005 11:58 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Spending Restrictions in the areas of PE, Music, and Art

Representative Neuman,

My name is Luann Schetky from Juneau, and I am a home school mom whose children are enrolled in the IDEA program. I wanted to take a few moments to tell you how this spending cap affects our family.

We choose to use Christian curriculum to teach our children. Therefore, except for a few items, none of our allotment can be spent on curriculum and we accept that. We were drawn to the IDEA program because, in years past, we could use that allotment on swimming lessons, music lessons, dance lessons, etc., that were too much for us to afford after purchasing all the curriculum. As home schoolers, we don't have access to a music teacher or a PE teacher or a gym or an art teacher. The allotment gave us a way to round out our children's education.

With the imposition of this cap, it has forced us to make some cuts. Since the amount of the cap isn't even enough to pay for a school year of music lessons for our children, (one plays drums, one plays banjo, and one plays violin), we can't afford to continue these things without making drastic changes to our limited budget. The teachers want you to commit to a school year of lessons but you can't afford a school year of lessons. Therefore, you have taught these children the basics of their instruments but they are unable to continue any further.

We have never abused the system and have always just been interested in providing the best education possible for our children. When you compare our allotment to what is spent in the public schools, per student, for a music teacher, an art teacher, a PE teacher, the gym facility, the music room, the art room, and all the supplies and equipment necessary to run these programs, I am sure you will find the allotment to be much less. Therefore, I think we should be allowed to spend as much of our allotment as we deem necessary in these areas.

IDEA has always had excellent monitoring tools in place to make sure that the money is not spent improperly. We have always had to have approval before any of the money could be spent. Please, again allow us the ability to give our children a well-rounded education which includes the fine arts and physical education, rather than just academics alone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Luann D. Schetky

[REDACTED]

From: mlsiegel [mlsiegel@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2005 11:12 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: home schooling education issue

From: mlsiegel
Date: 02/17/05 10:59:39
To: Representative mark_neuman@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: \$686 cap

Dear Rep. Neuman,

Hello. I am writing to talk to you about the \$686 cap which I have experienced this year in IDEA. It does affect how I educate my children. I simply cannot use up my allotment on more books, because we could never get through them. My two daughters go to piano but are unable to take art or a scheduled PE course due to this cap. My older daughter attends a private Christian school, and I would like to see this cap lifted in order to expose my younger two to all the enrichment that others in Alaska receive. This cap causes families to consider other options for educating their children, whether it be a different home schooling program or a private or public school. We need to change this cap, so that all children can have the same benefits of a well-rounded education. I might not stay with IDEA if this doesn't change.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for serving the people of Alaska. May God bless you with wisdom to do the best job possible!

Sincerely,
Lisa Siegel



From: Scott Deal [hd4evr@gci.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 10:15 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: homeschooling

Dear Mr. Neuman,
We are thrilled that you asked for feedback from homeschool parents. I hope that you get much of it.

First of all, I need to say that the homeschool programs that we are a part of are excellent programs. The teachers that we work with are concerned about our students and do whatever they can to help us out. The accountability on our part is a good thing as well. Parents that are doing a good job do not mind being accountable.

However, many of us feel that the State Board of Education and the Department of Education do not look on these programs in a favorable way. It seems that they are always trying to find ways to discourage homeschool parents or the programs themselves. I believe that they would be happy if these programs were not in existence and seek to have more and more control. They do not understand the nature of the people with whom they are dealing.

I have homeschooled my daughter for the whole of her education. She is now in eighth grade and is doing well. She follows a set curriculum chosen by me and okayed by her correspondence teacher. The lessons that have been limited by restriction of funds are a necessary part of her education. We have a very small house so do not have room for PE activities. This makes lessons very important to us. This allows her to get the physical activity she needs during the long Alaskan winters. She is also very musical and takes piano lessons. I do not have this ability and do not have access to a music teacher once a week. In order to give her a well rounded education, PE, music, and art are necessary. We should have the right to use our funds as we see best for our students. The new restrictions have done just that-restricted our students.

I feel that homeschoolers have caused higher scores for school districts and have given society kids that are confident in their abilities. They are not to be resented but are to be appreciated.

The bottom line is that the powers that be will not control our students. There are reasons that our students are not in public schools. If we felt they were doing a good job our students would be in their schools. This pioneer program works well and should be allowed to continue without all the restrictions. Thanks you for caring about our students.

Sincerely,
Mary Deal
North Pole, Alaska

From: Stacy S [sswingle@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2005 10:09 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Homeschool allotment funds

Hello,

I am writing to suggest that you re-examine the regulations for distributing the funds for homeschool allotment programs. Three of my four children are enrolled in the Idea program and we very much appreciate the use of the allotments for educational materials and programs. However, we've found that the younger children can reuse many materials that we have purchased for the oldest child. Thus, we do not have to use our allotment to purchase much of the curriculum for the younger children. We would find it very helpful if we could use a larger portion of our allotment for more of the "extra" enrichment activities. Art, music, and physical education programs are very important to us, and right now we are limited to spending just \$686 for each child. My oldest son's weekly art class costs \$88/month. The allotment covers just 7 months worth of art classes and allows no room for either music or physical education. I believe that homeschool families should have the option of utilizing a larger portion of our allotment funds to provide our children with more of the art, music, drama, and PE activities that are so vital to provide a well rounded education. Thank you very much.

Stacy Swingle
Fairbanks, AK

2/16/2005

[REDACTED]

From: Sandy Whitehead and family [windyone@corecom.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2005 11:15 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: allotment cap for homeschoolers

Hello, my name is Sandy Whitehead. I am a homeschool mom of five children. I have been homeschooling for eight years. It is my opinion that the allotment cap for music, PE and art is unfair to homeschoolers. We are not being given the same opportunities as the public school system. Yet my taxes go to support this public school system. Under these new regulations, I find myself having to decide if my children will not do PE or not do music this year. It is simply impossible to do both under these new guidelines. My three oldest were all actively involved in music but now that is not the case. All those years of lessons now brought to a halt by this. In Juneau the cost of a school year's worth of guitar or piano lessons for one child is greater than the cap amount of \$686. Probably many families had to eliminate music for this very reason. We had to choose PE as an emphasis. With all this talk of a nation of obese children I find I cannot afford PE for my students. It is a shame. Also, my oldest is in high school and quite good at art. Well that is not even worth registering as a high school class since I cannot purchase the necessary oil paints and canvases she would need to get in 90 hours worth of time. Like others I will be left with much money in my allotment that I cannot use at the end of the year. But, I will have had to spend much out of pocket for extra expenses in music, PE, and art. I do not see how this is serving to better educate my children. I do use a good chunk of my allotment to buy my curriculum, but like many others there are some religious curriculums that I simply prefer to secular. These I willing buy out of pocket, specifically my math and language. I will not scrimp on those core subjects for my students. Yet, in the past, the allotment money I did not use for my religious math and language I could then use for PE, music and art. How sad that this is not the case anymore. To have a well rounded education I must pay for my math, language, music, art and PE out of pocket. Just the math and language is over \$600 a year. We must sacrifice music, art and PE as a matter of economics in our household. We cannot afford it while \$2000 sits unused in my homeschooling allotment account. How is it benefiting homeschooling children to leave chunks of their allotment money unused each year at the expense of the quality of their education? Please reconsider this allotment cap. It is hurting those of us who are truly committed to homeschooling our children. Our hands are tied by this new legislation. There needs to be equality in school spending between homeschoolers and the public education. My taxes pay for this education, yet my kids do not receive it.

Thank you, Sandy Whitehead

From: Ken and Judy Thomas [bigbow98@mosquitonet.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2005 7:17 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Lesson spending cap

Dear Sir,

I thank you for the interest you have taken in the plight of people using homeschooling programs like IDEA. My name is Judy Thomas, and we have homeschooled with IDEA for almost seven years now. No words can articulate the depth of gratitude I feel for the help, accountability, and quality of education we have been able to have through this program. Therefore, I was terribly disappointed when they took lessons away from us. The \$686.00 cap on spending for lessons was a big blow. This year we had to choose between music lessons and an activity for PE. I was trying to think of a way to switch, perhaps every other year do the opposite lesson. I feel that would leave gaps, though, and had not decided what to do. So as of September 2004, we have not had any music lessons. I felt that our long winters could be handled better with a physical activity. I wish I could afford music lessons as well. I had thought about enrolling my children in a public school music program, but they take so much of your allotment to do that. Actually, the way it was explained to me seemed unethical and greedy on the part of the school.

If there is anything I can do to help reverse this decision, please let me know. Perhaps there is a way to work with other schools in the area. I do not know the solution, but I am willing to be a part of it. My childrens' future will be influenced by this. I appreciate programs like IDEA, and hope to be able to use them for many years to come.

Thank you!

Judith R Thomas



From: Nancy Hannan [pnhannan@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2005 9:30 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Cap on spending for IDEA families

Dear Representative Neuman,

I am a homeschooling mom living in Homer with five elementary-aged children in the IDEA program. We have tremendously enjoyed being part of this program and it has enabled us to continue making the choice to homeschool in spite of the financial limitations that we often feel from the expense of living here in Alaska. This last year, however, some of those benefits were curtailed because of the new regulations that went into effect which limited the amount we can spend per child on art, P.E., and music. These restrictions have made it a great deal more difficult to meet the educational goals that we have in these areas for our children. I have found myself in the position of having to make a choice between art, music, or P.E. though I firmly believe that all three of these areas should be part of every child's education. For example, my 9-year old son has just begun learning to play the trombone, which he is really enjoying, but as a result of this initiative we didn't have the funds needed to give him the art or P.E. instruction that we would have otherwise provided. This is really too bad since he is the most athletic of my four boys and he thrives when he is in a physically stimulating environment.

I would appreciate any effort you could lend toward rectifying this situation on the behalf of homeschoolers like ourselves who want to provide a well-rounded education for our children.

Thank you for your interest in this issue.

Sincerely,
Nancy Hannan



From: The Spaic Family [nspaic@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2005 10:34 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: New Regulations affecting home schooling

Dear Representative Neuman,

I am writing to voice my concern over the new regulations for homeschoolers which have created a \$686.00 cap per student for art, music, and physical education. We have 6 children in the IDEA program. This year we have cut back the afore mentioned activities and still have spent approximately \$700.00 out of our own funds to cover these curricular areas. Because much of our core subject materials are easily handed down (just as our hand-me-down clothes last through more than one child), a good part of our budget can be turned toward gym, music, and art. These disciplines are a crucial part of our education. Our children gain independence, social circles, and simple enjoyment in learning when we are able to offer these non-core subjects. It has been a hard reality to watch the regulations affect this part of our curriculum.

We are asking that you do all you can to reverse the regulations. IDEA has been an unbelievable support to our family and we do not wish to look elsewhere for our schooling. We cannot understand why IDEA, being a state-wide program, does not have the same regulations as a local district.

Thank you for taking the time address our concerns.
Sincerely yours,

Therese and Nedeljko Spaic

[REDACTED]

From: Tabitha Hooker [dhooker@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2005 6:37 PM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: An IDEA Family

Dear Rep. Mark Neuman:

Just a quick e-mail to voice our concern about the discrimination against state-wide correspondence schools that is shown in the recently passed regulations. Since these regs apply only to state-wide programs, and not district ones, one has to wonder why. The cap in extra-curricular spending is a frustration to our effort to homeschool our children on an equitable basis with the public schools. While they may have to pay activity fees, they also get 6 1/2 hours of free childcare in a building we have all paid for. For those of us who opt out of public education, we don't feel getting field trips, sports, art and other "extras" paid for is unfair.

Thank-you for your time and effort in the behalf of homeschoolers.

Douglas & Deborah Hooker
dhooker@ideafamilies.org
Palmer, AK

[REDACTED]

From: Cameron and Leslie Seddon [cseddon@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2005 10:08 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: Repeal the Limits!

Dear Mark Neuman,

A couple of weeks ago I sent you a letter about our spending limits within our educational funding allowance. I made sure that it was politically correct and reader friendly. I stated reasons why the cap should be lifted based on the educational value of what is being coined as 'extra-curricular' by people in the community that are perhaps not educated in the field of education!

Education is suppose to be about OPENING the mind and expanding the horizon. This cannot be done with the limits that have been placed on us. I have been told that these restrictions have been placed on us for our own good. What good? We belong to the IDEA program. IDEA should stand for: Ideal and Diversified Education with Accountability. Not only do we have to account for every dime we spend *before* we spend it, but it is mandatory that our students take the same required state testing as the public school system takes. If our students are passing in language skills and mathematics, explain how placing limits within our meager allowance is for our own good.

Another point that I would like to make in reference to the limits is about money spent in public verses the minute allowance we receive as home school entities. We realize that we made a personal choice to give up the needed income of a second job within our household when we chose to home school the children in our family. This made our funding allowance that much more precious. Besides losing half of our income potential and a career loss for a parent, here are some other considerations:

1. We deal in-home with ADD students. No nurses at lunch time are retained at tax-payers expense to administer and monitor drugs.
2. We have no indoor sport facilities, tracks, courts, fields, pools, etc. that are an important part of mental and physical health that are paid for and maintained at the expense of the tax payers.
3. Our home is our school. No tax payer pays for the added traffic this creates year around; the wear and tear, the utilities, furniture, record keeping, or maintenance and cleaning. Add these expenses to our loss of income for a little bonus.
4. Despite our reduction in income that places MANY families in the low income bracket, we do not receive compensation or free meals for our students at the expense of the tax payers.
5. We purchase and maintain our equipment (home-ec, shop, engine mech., etc.), at our own expense even though the ones in the public classroom are being paid for at tax payer expense.
6. We pay for ALL of our educational and extra-curricular travel expenses. We do not retain and maintain a fleet of buses and drivers at the expense of the tax payers.
7. **WE ARE THE TAX PAYERS!** We do not appreciate the intrusion into our activities

that ultimately are paid for at the expense of our students. Our property taxes do NOT take into consideration that our personal income has been cut in two or that we are NOT utilizing public facilities (unless we are paying them extra for them),

You may have noticed a tinge of irritation in this letter that was absent from the letter I sent you previously. This is a residual affect from a conversation I held with a couple of people recently in our community. It started with a completely inaccurate statement against home schooling and plummeted down hill from there. When your opponents have no pertinent facts and are ignorant of educational methods, you find your arguments to be as effective as boxing with a ghost. The fact that these same people managed to put the caps on my students only fuels my fire to see this ignorant act repealed.

If the public is so concerned about the accountability of funding, they are truly barking up the wrong tree when they look at the realistic track record of the home schoolers in the IDEA program. If they are concerned about the educational success of our students, again, they need to take a look at our track record. Actions and achievements speak louder than words (or should I say "speculations"?).

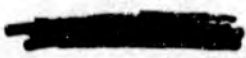
Yes, I do believe that there has been an abuse of public funding. I do concede that something needed to be done and certain organizations needed to be addressed on this issue. However, the broad scale slam against all state organizations was wrong. The responsible and accountable organizations are the ones that took the punishment while the actual offenders are still out there enjoying a merry continuance of abuse. By now there must be proof that this ruling has not been a benefit to anyone.

Please continue your efforts on our behalf to have the spending limits within our educational allowance removed. This was an act of ignorance that is not in the best interest of our educational community. I applaud you for stepping up and speaking out against this inappropriate solution to an unrelated problem. Please keep up the good work!

Leslie Seddon and Family

FREE Valentine's Day Emoticons for your email! [Click Here!](#)





From: Ilene Paulsen [bpaulsen@mtaonline.net]

Sent: Friday, February 11, 2005 9:55 AM

To: Rep. Mark Neuman

Dear Mark, Sending you a short note concerning homeschooling. IDEA is important to us as a good way to educate our children. Homeschool parents teach their children knowing what is the best for them. Let the parents help make the decisions where the money goes for schooling their children.
Sincerely, Ilene Paulsen

Rex Shattuck

From: Tim & Kelly Caraway [kellytim@gsi.net]
Sent: Friday, February 11, 2005 11:01 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: homeschool cap

Representative Mark Neuman:

My husband, Tim Caraway, has met you at the Big Lake Chamber. We are glad to hear that you are taking up the issue of the new correspondence school regulations.

The one that irks me the most is the spending cap for pe and art activities. The attitude behind this seems to be one in which state bureaucrats know better how to educate children than do parents. Parents who homeschool are taking on tremendous personal responsibility for the education of their children. If they choose to go through a correspondence program and, therefore, submit to testing and other oversight in exchange for funds, this is proof to the state that these are highly conscientious parents.

Part of the reason a parent homeschools is to have the freedom to choose their child's curriculum. This choice may involve a religious curriculum, which is not covered by state funds, or perhaps buying used curriculum or reusing previously purchased curriculum, an assortment of resources from the internet or the parent's own resources (many former teachers homeschool their children). For these parents, the allotment they receive from the correspondence program would best serve the educational needs of the child by paying for physical activities and art projects. To place a cap on the percentage of funds received that can be allowed for specific activities hinders the freedom of choice these parents are exercising in choosing to homeschool their children, and there is no good educational reason for it.

Some parents spend the majority of their allotment on curriculum. Some parents spend the majority of their allotment on "extra-curricular" activities. Some parents alternate from year-to-year, in relation to the ages and needs of their children. A basic reason a parent chooses to homeschool their children is in order to personally provide a good education for their children. Please show that you trust the judgment of conscientious parents to educate their own children, and do not bow to the notion that only state bureaucrats and the education establishment know how best to educate children.

Kelly Caraway
Meadow Lakes area
892-7068

From: David and Lisa Brown [dlbrown@ideafamilies.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 19, 2005 8:04 AM
To: Rep. Mark Neuman
Subject: 686 Cap

Dear Mr. Neuman,

This letter is in regard to the \$686 lesson cap placed on the educational spending for the funding afforded the homeschool community. While I am grateful for this amount of funding at all, I would also request that you work toward not making this funding restrictive. We need to be able to spend the allotment as necessary, as long as it fits into the educational program.

As a certified teacher, now home schooling four different grade levels, I can manage the daily aspects of my children's education. However, it is so very essential that I be able to hire outside assistance in areas that I am not expert at, or can not re-create in a home environment. This ensures that my children all receive a total and well-rounded education. The present limitations mean that I must limit the outside assistance to one thing per child, and in most cases, the \$686 does not even cover the entire years instruction in that one area. Therefore, if I have a student in music lessons of some sort, the present limitation prohibits me from also involving him in sports lessons or art lessons, etc. These are all areas that I appreciate someone else's expertise with.

Public school children are not required to limit their educational choices to only one extra-curricular subject. A child in chorus or band does not have to choose between that and an art class or a P.E. Class. The present limitations cause most home school children to be in the situation of making that choice. While you might be able to fund extra things out of pocket for one child, you are not able to do so for multiple children. This is, in effect, discrimination against home schooled children.

I appreciate any and all efforts you make in helping to change this un-fair policy. Your efforts will help to ensure that many children receive a much more well rounded education.

Sincerely,
Lisa Brown

May 10, 2004

To: State Board of Education and Early Development
State of Alaska Legislators, Representatives, Assembly persons, and all who are
concerned

Thank you!!! A big thank you for the past years of approving and supporting home schooling efforts. I can only pray and hope that you continue to support all phrases of this program for our children.

As a home schooling mom, my children are blessed with a one on one learning experience. They are developing at their own pace and actually enjoying what they learn.

Along with that BIG **THANK YOU**, I am throwing in a **BIG PLEAD**.

Help us to keep growing in our physical education, cultural, music, art, technical, and scientific endeavors. The wording in the proposed regulations [4 AAC 33. 422] will throw a definite blow to our children's growth. Please revise these articles so all home schoolers whether in district or out of district are treated equally and to the benefit of our children.

Thank you once again for your time and energy. But mostly for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Wisthoff
twisthoff@ideafamilies.org

May 10, 2004

To: State Board of Education
State of Alaska Legislators, Representatives,
Assembly Persons, and all concerned

Hello, my name is Tommy Wisthoff. I am 13 years old and have been home schooled for 4 years. I currently am enrolled by I.D.E.A.

As a prelude to my last report due, I am writing this letter to address laws, regulations, and especially the proposed regulations concerning home schooling.

Being a kid, it's hard for me to understand how our system works. Laws in all fields of our government are not being enforced.

Please reconsider changing the proposed regulations for home schoolers. Please enforce the regulations that are already in place.

My mom and dad picked the I.D.E.A. program because it makes people accountable not only academically but for the rules that are in place.

Thank you for your time. I hope this letter makes a difference.

Sincerely,

Tommy Wisthoff
twisthoff@ideafamilies.org

May 10, 2004

To: State Board of Education and Early Development
State of Alaska Legislators, Representatives, Assembly
Persons and all concerned

I, Veronica Wisthoff a 6th grade home scholar, am writing this letter to let you know why I like home schooling.

Home schooling not only has made us closer as a family but I am able to learn at my own pace. Some subjects my mom keeps going back , she calls it repetition, repetition, repetition. Or she says, don't worry practice makes perfect.

I was very happy to get my Benchmark tests back – I got above average in all areas!! It's fun to see my progress.

Please do not change the home schooling regulations. I love being an IDEA home scholar.

Thank you,

Veronica Wisthoff
twisthoff@ideafamilies.org

Subject: State Correspondence Regulations - letter from student regarding group lessons

Date: Mon, 10 May 2004 21:23:50 -0800

From: "Van Diest Family" <van@mtaonline.net>

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

HC 01 Box 6107-X

Palmer, AK 99645

May 10, 2004

To Governor Murkowski, Lt. Governor Murkowski, Secretary of Education Mr. Markovich, members of the Board of Education, Mat- Su senators and representatives:

I have been an IDEA student for three years. Before this I was an independent home school student. IDEA money has made it possible for me to take ballet for my PE classes and piano and choir for my music classes. I have also taken art classes and biology lab classes with IDEA funds. All of these have been group lessons offered at a discount rate to groups of students. The new regulations 4AAC.33.422.c 1 and 2 would make it impossible for me to study art, take choir, ballet, and science labs.

Without the music activities for home school students I would be continually criticized by my sister for my lack of singing abilities. Without the swimming punch card, ballet classes, and summer ballet workshops, I would be over weight and totally out of shape like one of my sisters who refuses to take a formal PE class. The activities make learning more fun. Taking a group science lab helped save money because the teacher provided the microscopes and lab equipment. The group lab forced me to dissect specimens that I ordinarily would refuse to touch but because of peer pressure I wrote each of the labs up and performed the work required of me.

Each family in all of my group lessons didn't use all their IDEA money for expensive science supplies, and private lessons. They saved money by having the tutoring done in a group lesson.

I hope you reconsider these new regulations. Without the neat activities I see no reason why we should stay in IDEA or any public school program. My mom will continue to home school me as before but we won't be able to afford all the educational activities that IDEA has been able to provide.

Sincerely yours,

Tisha Van Diest

6th grader with IDEA