

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES, 2003-2004 8672

11124 SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES

## 2003 Federal Poverty Guidelines for Alaska

Family Size	Annual Poverty Guidelines Effective April 1, 2003			
	100%	150%	185%	200%
1	\$11,210	\$16,815	\$20,739	\$22,420
2	15,140	\$22,710	\$28,009	\$30,280
3	19,070	\$28,605	\$35,280	\$38,140
4	23,000	\$34,500	\$42,550	\$46,000
5	26,930	\$40,395	\$49,821	\$53,860
6	30,860	\$46,290	\$57,091	\$61,720
7	34,790	\$52,185	\$64,362	\$69,580
8	38,720	\$58,080	\$71,632	\$77,440
Addl.	3,930	\$5,895	\$7,271	\$7,860

Family Size							
	100%	120%	133%	135%	150%	155%	160%
1	\$934	\$1,121	\$1,243	\$1,261	\$1,401	\$1,448	\$1,495
2	\$1,262	\$1,514	\$1,679	\$1,704	\$1,893	\$1,956	\$2,019
3	\$1,590	\$1,907	\$2,114	\$2,146	\$2,384	\$2,463	\$2,543
4	\$1,917	\$2,300	\$2,550	\$2,588	\$2,875	\$2,971	\$3,067
5	\$2,245	\$2,693	\$2,985	\$3,030	\$3,367	\$3,479	\$3,591
6	\$2,572	\$3,086	\$3,421	\$3,472	\$3,858	\$3,986	\$4,115
7	\$2,900	\$3,479	\$3,856	\$3,914	\$4,349	\$4,494	\$4,639
8	\$3,227	\$3,872	\$4,292	\$4,356	\$4,840	\$5,001	\$5,163
Addl.	\$328	\$393	\$436	\$443	\$492	\$508	\$524

Family Size							
	165%	170%	175%	180%	182%	184%	185%
1	\$1,541	\$1,588	\$1,635	\$1,682	\$1,700	\$1,719	\$1,728
2	\$2,082	\$2,145	\$2,208	\$2,271	\$2,296	\$2,322	\$2,334
3	\$2,622	\$2,702	\$2,782	\$2,861	\$2,892	\$2,924	\$2,940
4	\$3,163	\$3,258	\$3,355	\$3,450	\$3,488	\$3,527	\$3,546
5	\$3,703	\$3,815	\$3,928	\$4,040	\$4,084	\$4,129	\$4,152
6	\$4,243	\$4,372	\$4,501	\$4,629	\$4,681	\$4,732	\$4,758
7	\$4,784	\$4,929	\$5,074	\$5,219	\$5,277	\$5,335	\$5,364
8	\$5,324	\$5,485	\$5,647	\$5,808	\$5,873	\$5,937	\$5,969
Addl.	\$540	\$557	\$574	\$590	\$596	\$603	\$606

Family Size								
	186%	188%	190%	192%	194%	196%	198%	200%
1	\$1,738	\$1,756	\$1,775	\$1,794	\$1,812	\$1,831	\$1,850	\$1,868
2	\$2,347	\$2,372	\$2,397	\$2,422	\$2,448	\$2,473	\$2,498	\$2,523
3	\$2,956	\$2,988	\$3,020	\$3,051	\$3,083	\$3,115	\$3,147	\$3,178
4	\$3,565	\$3,604	\$3,642	\$3,680	\$3,718	\$3,757	\$3,795	\$3,833
5	\$4,175	\$4,220	\$4,264	\$4,309	\$4,354	\$4,399	\$4,444	\$4,488
6	\$4,784	\$4,835	\$4,886	\$4,938	\$4,989	\$5,041	\$5,092	\$5,143
7	\$5,393	\$5,451	\$5,509	\$5,566	\$5,624	\$5,682	\$5,740	\$5,798
8	\$6,002	\$6,067	\$6,131	\$6,195	\$6,260	\$6,324	\$6,389	\$6,453
Addl.	\$610	\$616	\$622	\$629	\$635	\$642	\$649	\$655

Amendment # 2

Dyson

- Page 4
  - Line 9 --Delete 3130, Insert 3000
  - Line 11 --Delete 3772, Insert 3500
  - Line 13 --Delete 4414, Insert 4000
  - Line 14 --Delete 5055, Insert 4400
  - Line 15 --Delete 5697, Insert 4900
  - Line 17 --Delete 6339, Insert 5400
  - Line 19 --Delete 6339, Insert 5400
  - Line 19 --Delete 642, Insert 500

- Page 4
  - Line 27 --Delete 3130, Insert 3000
  - Line 31 --Delete 3772, Insert 3500
- Page 5
  - Line 2 --Delete 4414, Insert 4000
  - Line 3 --Delete 5055, Insert 4400
  - Line 4 --Delete 5697, Insert 4900
  - Line 6 --Delete 6339, Insert 5400
  - Line 8 --Delete 6339, Insert 5400
  - Line 8 --Delete 642, Insert 500

**SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT  
First Committee of Referral**

TE: 3/6/03

FURTHER: Finance

Period of 5-Day Notice: \_\_\_\_\_  
in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED  
IN TO OFFICE: 4.07.03

Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered

SENATE BILL NO. 105

**SB 105 MEDICAID:CHILDREN/PREGNANT WOMEN/FACILITY**

Act relating to eligibility requirements for medical assistance for certain children, pregnant women, and persons in a medical or intermediate care facility; and providing for an effective date."

Committee recommends:

be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_ CS SB 105 (HES)

adopt previous \_\_\_\_\_ CS \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)

attached amendment(s)

adopt Letter of Intent by \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

further referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

**Senate Bill:**

same title

new title

**House Bill:**

same title

technical title

new: SCR # \_\_\_\_\_

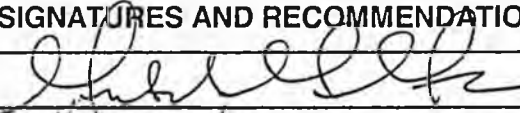
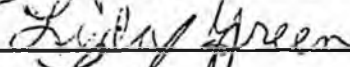
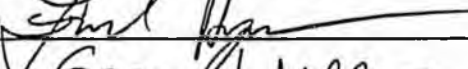
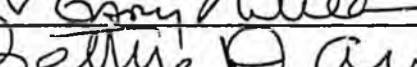

**NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):**

**PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):**

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#

Department	Date	Fiscal	Zero	FN#
HSS	3/05	<del>X</del>		1

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:		DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	Guess		✓		
	Green	✓			
	Dyson	✓			
	Wilken	✓			
	Davis		✓		
CHAIR:					

THE  
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# ALASKA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Committed To Advancing Alaska's Public Health Since 1978

## ALPHA

April 3, 2003

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Marie Lavigne and I am the Executive Director of the Alaska Public Health Association. I am honored to be here today representing close to two hundred public health professionals from across Alaska who are deeply committed to developing sound public health policy to improve the health of all Alaskans, including assuring all Alaskans have access to health care. We are concerned that SB 105 takes us in the wrong direction.

The Alaska Public Health Association applauds the success of Denali Kid Care Program in improving the health of pregnant women and children in Alaska and we urge you to continue eligibility for this program at the fullest level possible. SB 105 is an attempt to begin to reduce eligibility, first by eliminating the cost of inflation adjustments in the federal poverty level rates, and if proposed amendments are approved, reducing the eligibility further below 200% federal poverty level. With a stroke of a pen, SB 105 has a negative impact on the health of pregnant women and children in Alaska, not to mention others receiving medical assistance support. A small cost savings to the state, the impact of health outcomes of losing insurance is "penny wise, yet pound foolish..."

Public health research on the health impact of uninsured children is noteworthy:

- Uninsured children who need medical and surgical care are 4 times more likely to go without the care they need than insured children with the same health needs. And when they do get care, they are sicker and more likely to be seen in the emergency room.
- Uninsured children are 4½ times more likely to do without needed prescriptions and eye glasses, and 5 times more likely to be unable to receive needed dental care.
- Uninsured children are 1 1/2 times more likely to arrive to kindergarten without their required immunizations. They're 8 times more likely to not have had well child check up.
- Uninsured pregnant women are less likely to receive prenatal care, placing them at risk to deliver early, low-birth weight babies; and at the greatest risk for fetal/maternal death.

In the Governor's transmittal letter he states "While the cost savings associated with this bill are modest in the short-term this measure will significantly reduce future year costs." From a public health perspective, any short term savings does not compare to the greater long term costs to the health of pregnant women and children.

We urge you to consider this issue from a different perspective. SB 105 is seeking to lower the enrollment in medical assistance programs by reducing eligibility for the pregnant women and children who now qualify at the upper levels of the income eligibility – up to 200% of the poverty level. Yet the most effective approach the legislature can take is to assist employers and working families to get affordable health insurance, thereby reducing the number of pregnant women and children needing coverage by Denali Kid Care.

While there are many factors contributing to 1 in 5 Alaskans lacking health insurance coverage, one of the greatest barriers is access to affordable health insurance. A study by the Anchorage Access to Health Care Coalition released this fall indicates of the 16,000 adults in Anchorage who are uninsured – 71% are working adults, the majority in business with less than 10 employees. We need the legislature takes steps to join with businesses in addressing the issue of affordable health care insurance. In the meantime we urge you to keep the eligibility for the medical assistance programs at the full 200% of the federal poverty level to maximize the health of pregnant women and children. Thank you.

Marie J. Lavigne, Executive Director  
Alaska Public Health Association

P.O. Box 9-1825 Anchorage, AK 99509 907/332-1030 e-mail: [publichealth@alaska.net](mailto:publichealth@alaska.net) [www.alaskapublichealth.org](http://www.alaskapublichealth.org)

SB

107

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI  
GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR@GOV.STATE.AK.US



STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

P.O. Box 110001  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0001  
(907) 465-3500  
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WWW.GOV.STATE.AK.US

March 5, 2003

The Honorable Gene Therriault  
President of the Senate  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 107  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Therriault:

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

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

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

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

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank H. Murkowski".

Frank H. Murkowski  
Governor

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
Bill Version: SB 107  
(S) Publish Date: 3/6/03

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

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

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

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Personal Services	(2,928.8)					
Travel	(55.0)					
Contractual	(1,089.1)					
Supplies	(1,418.4)					
Equipment	(18.0)					
Land & Structures	0.0					
Grants & Claims	0.0					
Miscellaneous	0.0					
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>(5,509.3)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1007 Inter Agency/Program Receipts	(5,009.3)					
1156 Receipt services	(500.0)					
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(5,509.3)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: 0.0

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

**POSITIONS**

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

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

This bill will eliminate Alyeska Cenral School the statewide correspondence program operated by the state.

Students will be able to access correspondence programs from other school districts around the state. This reduction is already reflected in the Governor's proposed FY 04 budget.

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, School Finance Manager Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Division: Education and Early Development Date/Time 3/5/03 8:56 AM  
Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date 3/5/2003  
Agency: Education and Early Development

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2003 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2  
Bill Version: SB 107  
(S) Publish Date: 3/6/03

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

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

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

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

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

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

Estimate of any current year (FY2003) cost: 0.0  
Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)  
This amendment eliminates summer school counts for the Alyeska Centralized Correspondence program. The above numbers are based on the FY03 counts.

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

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans, School Finance Manager Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Division: Education and Early Development Date/Time: 3/5/03 8:57 AM  
Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 3/5/2003  
Agency: Education and Early Development

Testimony of Richard Luther  
789-0411

I wish to speak against Senate bill 107/House bill 174. In this testimony, I will make the following points:

1. Duplication of services is a non-issue.
2. Closing Alyeska may actually cost the state more money.
3. Alyeska students receive 100% of state funding in direct services, unlike other correspondence programs.
4. Alyeska can serve the state well by developing high quality, low cost programs for small schools

#### DUPLICATION OF SERVICES

Those supporting the bill have stated that Alyeska should be closed, in part, because it is a duplication of other educational programs. My answer to this claim is, "so what?" Saying that Alyeska should be closed because it duplicates other programs is like saying that the Juneau School District should be closed because the Anchorage District also provides educational programs. Alyeska serves an entirely different student population.

#### MONEY #1

Closing Alyeska will not save money. Foundation funds follow Alaskan students to whatever district provides services to that student. If two districts provide services to the student, only one district receives funding unless an arrangement exists between the two districts to share the funding. It is very possible that closing Alyeska will have the result of costing the state more money. Correspondence students generate funding at a rate lower than students who attend regular programs in Alaska's districts. **If all of the students currently enrolled with Alyeska choose to attend regular district programs, it will result in a 20% increase in cost to the state.**

#### MONEY #2

A major difference between Alyeska and other district correspondence programs, most notably IDEA, is this: 100% of the foundation money generated by students enrolled in the Alyeska program is spent on the students in the program. The funding pays for teacher support, materials, materials development, and other direct services. This is not the case for other correspondence programs. A significant percentage of the funds generated by students in these other programs is diverted to other purposes within the districts operating these programs. **Other district correspondence programs operate the programs because they make money on them. If the profit motive disappears, so will the programs.**

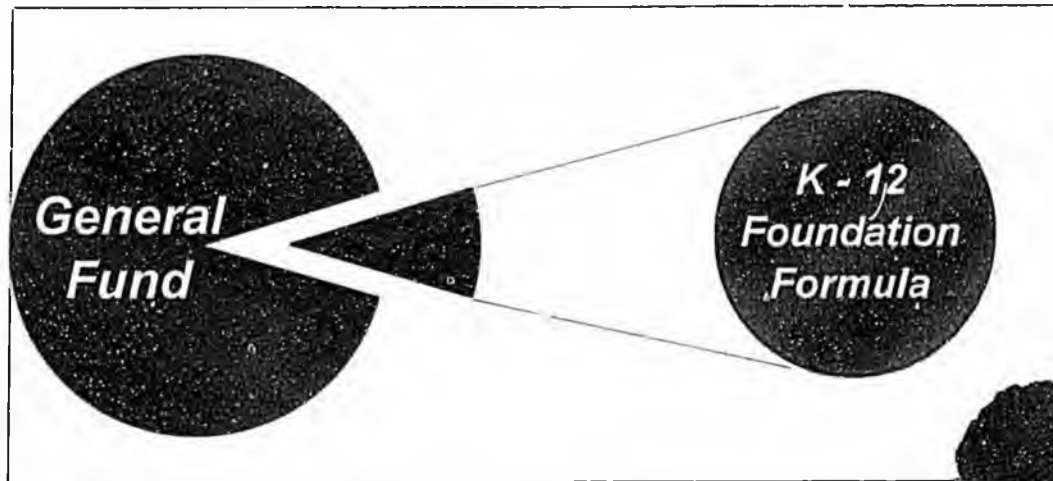
#### FUTURE

It appears that the Department of Education is not supportive of continuing Alyeska as a correspondence school. At the present time the Department is without a commissioner and in effect is functioning without strong direction. Comments made by personnel from the department at past legislative hearings indicate a lack of understanding of how Alyeska provides services to students. It also indicates a lack of understanding of

Alyeska's potential for serving students in the future, especially those in rural Alaska. A number of Alyeska teachers have been teachers in rural Alaska and understand the challenges we face in rural schools. **The Department and the state Board can direct Alyeska to develop programs which will be valuable to rural schools facing closure because of decreased enrollment.**

**Closing Alyeska does not represent sound educational policy.**

## Alyeska Central School and Alaska Education Funding



The K-12 Foundation Formula is based on

- Full Time Equivalency (FTE)  
(1 FTE = 4 or more courses per semester)
- Average Daily Membership (ADM)  
(ADM = proportion of days in attendance during October count period)
- Base student allocation, a dollar amount equal to \$4010 per FTE per ADM
- Plus additional formula factors related to school size, district size, special education, etc.

So, a full-time student in public school brings to that district this base student allocation funding:

1 FTE x 1 ADM x \$4010 = \$4010, plus any additional factors indicated above.

A student at Alyeska Central School brings 80% of the base student allocation funding, as do all correspondence students in *any* district or statewide correspondence program:

1 FTE x 1 ADM x \$4010 x 80% = \$3208.

If there are 1000 FTE students at ACS, the base student allocation foundation funding to ACS is \$3,208,000.

The State will expend *at a minimum* those same dollars, \$3,208,000, no matter where it educates those 1000 students.

Closure of ACS does not lessen the cost to the State for educating those students.

Does closing Alyeska Central School  
save Alaska money?

**NO!**

K-12 foundation dollar\$



follow Mary



no matter where she goes to  
school.



**Subject:** LCS Message for 3/27/03 and 3/28/03

**Date:** Fri, 28 Mar 2003 10:48:25 -0900

**From:** "Jackson, Lynne [AK]" <Lynne.Jackson@neaalaska.org>

**To:** "Alcantra, John [AK]" <John.Alcantra@neaalaska.org>

Jason FYI &  
Fred's packet

John Alcantra asked that I send today's LCS message on to everyone! Thanks for your continued interest in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Alaska State Legislature.

**THIS MESSAGE DOES NOT REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ACTION!**

Last night, despite over 2 ½ hours of eloquent and passionate testimony, HB 174 (Closure of Alyeska Central School – the statewide correspondence school) passed out of the House Health, Education and Social Services (HESS) committee. The vote to move the bill was 4-3. House Majority leader John Coghill (North Pole) was named to House HESS this week, and it is his job to make sure the majority Republicans move Governor Murkowski's bills through the process. Over 30 parents, students and advocates spoke via teleconference and several Alyeska teachers spoke in person. HB 174 now moves to the House Finance committee where it has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.

This is one round of the fight to save a program that has been an Alaska success story for over 60 years. There are more stops along the way for us to continue to prove to legislators that the Alyeska program is not duplicative and the closure will not save money. **KEEP UP THE ADVOCACY AS THERE IS STILL A LENGTHY PROCESS FOR THIS LEGISLATION TO GO THROUGH!**

**IF YOU LIVE IN HOMER OR SEWARD (AND EVEN IF YOU LIVE IN A DIFFERENT AREA) PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL TO REP. PAUL SEATON ([representative\\_paul\\_seaton@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:representative_paul_seaton@legis.state.ak.us)) AND THANK HIM FOR HIS COURAGE IN VOTING NOT TO PASS HB 174 OUT OF THE HESS COMMITTEE. YOU CAN ALSO CALL REP. SEATON AT 1-800-665-2689 OR GO THROUGH THE NEA-ALASKA HOTLINE AT 1-800-478-6322 AND GET A FREE TRANSFER TO HIS OFFICE.**

When this bill gets scheduled, the LCS will keep you updated and list all the House Finance members to contact. *Early contact with these members on a bill that is not yet scheduled may get lost in the shuffle.*

At member request I am again including the proposed cuts from Governor Murkowski. These numbers are also listed on several LCS messages over the past 10 days.

To communicate with the Governor about education, you and your friends may communicate your opinion of the cuts listed below by emailing a message to [gov\\_budget@gov.state.ak.us](mailto:gov_budget@gov.state.ak.us). Or, you may call (907) 465-3982 to leave a voicemail message.

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When this bill (HB 174) gets scheduled, the LCS will keep you updated and list all the House Finance members to contact. *Early contact with these members on a bill that is not yet scheduled may get lost in the shuffle.*

Thank You for reviewing this message!!

*Lynne Jackson*

*NEA-Alaska Staff - Juneau*

- Pupil Transportation: \$10.7 million**
- Reduction in Education (LOGS): \$10.0 million**
- Reduction in debt service: \$ 6.6 million**
- Elimination of tuition program: \$ 2.2 million**
- Closure of ACS (correspondence): \$ 1.2 million HB 174 – CLOSURE OF ALYESKA CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL**
- Eliminate Community Schools: \$ .5 million HB 165 – ELIMINATION OF \$500,000 FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

Here is the NEA-Alaska position on K-12 funding for this year:

**TOTAL K-12 REDUCTION: \$31.2 MILLION**

Given that the \$4010 per student in the Base Student Allocation is a 2001 number and inflation has been 2.8% and 1.9% respectively over the last two years, the BSA would need to be at least \$4200 per child. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District testified they have a need for a BSA of \$4500. Rep. Gara offered an amendment to cover inflation since 1999 making the BSA \$4303. The Anchorage School District has indicated an increase of \$170 (\$4180 BSA) must be made just to cover the impact of the Governor's proposed budget. Everyone has an increase number. No one, except the Governor, has a decrease!

NEA-ALASKA supports in increase of \$270 per student to the Base Student Allocation:

<p>\$118 "rolling of LOGS" money</p>	<p>no new</p>
<p>\$ 72 unfunded instruction costs identified two years ago by business and education leaders 14 million</p>	<p>\$</p>
<p>\$ 80 inflation for the past year million</p>	<p>\$ 17</p>
<p>Total \$270 increase per student (\$4010 to \$4280) million</p>	<p>\$ 31</p>

This increase in the Base Student Allocation is a SHORT TERM, ONE YEAR FIX to the Foundation Formula. NEA-Alaska believes the education community should take the remainder of the school year to identify pupil needs under the state standards and No Child Left Behind. This data would be the basis for a LONG TERM FIX to education funding and provide for adequate funding.

**THANK YOU FOR REVIEWING THIS MESSAGE.**

*Lynne Jackson*

*NEA-Alaska Staff - Juneau*

**Subject: LCS MESSAGE ALERT!!!! - March 28, 2003**

**Date: Fri, 28 Mar 2003 17:12:58 -0900**

**From: "Jackson, Lynne [AK]" <Lynne.Jackson@neaalaska.org>**

**To: "Alcantra, John [AK]" <John.Alcantra@neaalaska.org>**

John Alcantra asked me to send out this message alert. Thanks for your continuing interest in NEA-Alaska's Legislative Message system. Have a great weekend!

**THIS MESSAGE REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ACTION!**

**SB 107 (THE SENATE COMPANION BILL FOR HB 174 IS SCHEDULED FOR 5 P.M. ON THURSDAY, APRIL 3 IN SENATE HESS. THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMITTEE ARE:**

**FRED DYSON (EAGLE RIVER- CHAIR)**

**LYDA GREEN (PALMER)**

**GARY WILKEN (FAIRBANKS)**

**BETTYE DAVIS (ANCHORAGE)**

**GRETCHEN GUESS (ANCHORAGE)**

**Please send an e-mail or make a phone call to these Senators and let them know the issues and why Alyeska Central School should remain open.**

**Alyeska Central School (ACS) Talking Points from parents, students and faculty members:**

- Closing ACS is no cost savings to the state and could be a potential added cost if the 4,000 plus student body went to "brick and mortar" schools. According to a parent conducted survey 8 out of 10 students would go back to public schools and not another correspondence school.
- ACS provides a quality program with accountability for students and parents, which other programs in the state could not match. ACS provides for special needs students in a way that other correspondence schools can not do.
- Only ACS has a faculty of teachers, who are already "highly qualified under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).
- ACS can provide supplemental services under NCLB that other correspondence programs cannot provide.
- ACS can provide high school programs for teacher aides, who need to become highly qualified under NCLB, which other correspondence programs cannot provide
- ACS offers the best correspondence program and IS NOT DUPLICATIVE.

1 OF 3

**To: The Hess Committee**

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

Hi my name is Ryan Wolcott.

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

Our family business takes us to different places in Alaska.

ACS provides flexibility.

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

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

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

1 answered our questions.

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

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

No other program compares from my view.

Please save ACS!!!!

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LIST OF QUESTIONS !!

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

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

3 of 3

- Enrollment Requirements?
- Teachers for every student per subject?
- Direct/Immediate phone support for children and parents? Call back time?
- How are your daily lessons structured? Do you have Daily Road Map/Lesson Plans?
- Library and Librarian?
- Full Accreditation?
- What type of vendor do you use for your curriculum?
- What grades do you serve?
- Dual enrollment?
- Advanced courses available? Accredited?
- Summer School Program? Accredited?
- Parent Advisor Council?
- Specialized Alaskan Courses?
- Newsletter?
- Online courses only?
- Other Foreign languages – other than Spanish and French?
- Services provided to special needs?
- Webb site?
  - Gradebook access for parents and students?
  - Immediate teacher access via email?
  - Library access?
  - Links to additional educational Webb Sites?
- State and Parent cost per student?
- Extra curriculum activities?
- Can you handle a surplus of applications?
- Total teachers?
- Total staff?
- Are you in jeopardy of being closed in the near future?
- Why should we choose your program over the others available?
- Your help is greatly appreciated; this is a very big decision. We appreciate your immediate response.

Thanking you in advance,  
 Kym Wolcott  
 (907) 336-2379  
 5630 Fenwick Circle  
 Anchorage, Alaska 99516  
 simplythebest@alaska.com

[2 of 3]

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

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

2nd Attempt

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

Thank you for your efforts,  
Kym Wolcott

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

IDEA Program Response

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

From: Steven D. Musser [mailto:stevedm@ideafamilies.org]  
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2003 5:23 PM  
To: Kym Wolcot

Subject: Re: Information needed to choose a new school program for our children dueto ASC possible closure.

Good Afternoon Kym,

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

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

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

Steve

Kym Wolcot wrote:

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

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

Enrollment Requirements?

Teachers for every student per subject?

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

Do you have Daily Road Map/Lesson Plans?

## HB 174/SB 107 Alyeska Central School

**SPONSOR(S):** Governor

**CURRENT STATUS:** HB 174: Moved to (H) FIN  
SB 107: (S) HES Apr 03 5:00 PM

**FISCAL NOTE:** (Savings): (5,509.3) EED Alyeska Central School BRU  
(1,170.3) EDU K-12 Support BRU Foundation Program Component

**BILL HISTORY/ACTION:**

(H) EDU 3DNP: Kapsner, Gara, Seaton; 2NR: Wolf, Gatto; 1AM: Wilson

(H) HES 2DP: Coghill, Wolf; 2DNP: Seaton, Kapsner; 2NR: Gatto, Wilson

**BILL SUMMARY:** These bills prohibit the Department of Education & Early Development from offering a centralized correspondence study program. This would mean the closure of the Alyeska Central School.

**ISSUES (pros & cons):** Pros from Governor's press release & cons to counter them.

Pro: Would save the state \$1.17 million in FY04.

Con: \$5 million of Alyeska's budget comes from the foundation formula, \$500,000 comes from student tuition. Of the \$5 million, only \$1.17 would actually be saved because that is spent on summer school. The remaining \$3.83 million would be absorbed by other school districts. If students transfer to other correspondence programs, they would cost the same amount of money. If they transfer to regular school, they would cost more money (per student allocation + adjustments for district cost factor, special education and school size). Also, closure will mean many students who make up courses in order not to be held back will not have that option and so will reenroll at a greater expense.

Pro: Eliminates duplication of service.

Con: Alyeska is the only statewide correspondence program that is accredited for K-12 education. All testimony concurred that no correspondence school currently is willing to able to undertake the kind of programming offered by Alyeska.. Distance education accreditation and K-12 education accreditation are not the same. Alyeska is the only summer school program that is offered statewide.

**TALKING POINTS (if any):** Other important things to consider:

- 49 jobs will be lost. This includes 26 teaching positions (20 are filled at the moment) and 22 support staff positions (18 are filled at the moment), and one director (filled on an acting basis by a teacher). These numbers do not include the temporary teachers hired for summer school, some of which are district teachers filling in the summer gap in their employment.
- Students statewide will no longer have access to summer school. Some larger districts offer summer school to their students only (Anchorage and Juneau were the only ones I could find). The rest of the students will have to retake the courses in order to graduate. Alyeska's summer school program was also partially covered by student tuition. Approximately 3,500 students were served by Alyeska's summer school program last year.

- 1,100 students will be displaced. About 450 of these students pay tuition and are not paid for by the state. About 650 students are funded by the State. Some have no other viable alternative – especially special ed students who are attending school part time. Some students chose Alyeska because they felt that Alyeska offered a higher quality of education and more varied classes.
- Alyeska is an excellent program. They have been accredited as a K-12 education institution since 1979. They offer a full (and then some) compliment of over 250 K-12 courses, including online courses, Advanced Placement courses, foreign languages and Alaskan-based courses in English, science, social studies. The courses are written by Alaska-certified teachers to meet Alaskan standards.

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**COMMITTEE/DATE: (H) EDU 3/18/03**

Roll: All present (Gatto, Wilson, Seaton, Wolf, Coghill, Kapsner, Gara)

Action: Moved on a roll call vote 5Y 2N (Gara and Kapsner) Individual recommendations.

Seaton voted do not pass

Next Referral: HHES then Finance, then Floor

**Testimony Summary:** see above

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**COMMITTEE/DATE (H) EDU 3/27/03**

Roll: (Cissna, Seaton, Coghill, Wolf, Gatto, Wilson, Kapsner (late-arriving))

Action: Moved on a roll call vote 4Yea, 3 Nea (Kapsner, Seaton, Cissna)

Recommendations: NR: Wilson, Gatto; DP: Coghill, Wolf; DNP: Seaton, Kapsner

Cissna did not sign form out of frustration

Next Referral: House Finance

**Testimony Summary:** 34 Witnesses all in favor of retaining ACS

**Eddie Jeans** testified for the department. He is School Finance Manager for the department. He spoke on behalf of HB 174 which would dismantle the ACS (state-operated correspondence program). Jeans said that \$5.5 million is what is reflected in the current BRU for ACS. \$500,000 is from fees. \$1.2 million is from federal grants. A second fiscal note indicates that the bill would save the State \$1.1 million for the cost of the summer school program. **Jeans said that the ACS students will enroll elsewhere and this will cost the SOA of \$3.6 million.** Jeans said that ACS typically provides services to unserved people. He said that 84% live in larger urban areas. He said that 11 other correspondence courses currently exist. He said that 9,655 students are currently served by correspondence programs and that this number is up 2,000 since 1999. He said that there are currently 1,085 students at ACS and that this number has decreased since 1999. He said that 3 other districts have applied for accreditation. Galena was an example of a program that was presently applying for accreditation. Craig and Delta-Greeley also have programs, he noted.

**Jeans** said that \$3.8 million was funded through the foundation formula (IA receipts from foundation formula) and \$2.6 million was funded from regular school programs(?). Federal \$\$ that paid for part of the ACS budget included federal Title 1 money.

Rep. Seaton asked whether federal funds would follow students, too? This was answered in the affirmative.

**John Scott** testified. He was against the bill and the closure of ACS. He said that the local REAA program his children use is unacceptable. His daughter is struggling with sentence

structure and spelling (in Gustavus). He said that a teacher there put a hand in his face and said she would not help his daughter with science and math. He said that ACS is accredited and accepted by colleges (others don't have sufficiently good distance education programs, he said). He said he was stunned that the department said that it did not want to be in this business any longer. He said that ACS is cheaper than "bricks and mortar". He said that this bill flies in the face of the Republican Party's commitment to choice, alternative and the NCLB law.

**Nancy Richard** testified next. Her son graduated from ACS. She called ACS a "breath of fresh air". She said that the Mat-Su Borough offers high school courses from cut-of-state. She said that these programs offer little school contact. These programs are home-schooling in every respect. She said that her son's success is attributable to ACS.

**Marva Lloyd** testified from Nome. 3 students/children of Lloyd's were enrolled at ACS. He said that the \$\$ paid for ACS will follow the kids anyway. He described ACS as unique, accountable, and noted that teachers have written their own curricula. He said that ACS fills in the gaps left behind by homeschools. He said that ACS does not turn away from anyone. His daughter, Serena (10<sup>th</sup> grade) has a library of well-written courses and that she has found teachers to always be available.

**John Payton**, an ACS counselor, spoke next. He said that students are accepted at any time of the year. He said that he counsels students about their "end plans" (goals/objectives, etc.). He said that tuition can be waived depending upon circumstances. Examples included late enrollment and persons new to Alaska. Rep. Wilson said she disbelieved that \$\$ could be waived indefinitely. Payton said that courses cost \$250 per course per semester.

Rep. Kapsner asked whether rural students' curricula and programs of study could be supplemented by ACS. Specifically, she wanted to know if this could be done in instances where local teachers would be teaching out of their subject. Payton told Kapsner, "yes" this could be done and is done.

Rep. Seaton asked whether ACS fills curricular gaps (e.g., foreign languages). Payton said, "yes", that ACS buys courses and teaches courses.

Rep. Kapsner referred to a letter written by Becky Crabtree from Barrow. Crabtree teaches alternative education courses on the Slope to 50+ students and uses ACS.

Rep. Wilson described the use of ACS as a "cafeteria style" approach to education. She wondered whether persons were using ACS to pick and choose between regular courses, ACS, other distance delivery courses, etc. Rep. Wilson by implication, was implying that this was bad.

Rep. Cissna referred to "special schools" and "regular schools". She said that she used ACS for a stepson who advanced 3.5 years in 12 months through hard work and ACS (circa 1975). She asked the department if it knew of any statistics on why families come to ACS. Payton said that many enroll in ACS to catch up Cissna's stepson did.

Rep. Wilson asked if the principal of ACS was here to testify. It was determined that Margaret McKinnon runs the school (Acting Director) and was not present.

**Theresa DeMont** testified next. She has a son in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade in ACS programs. She asked, "why cut a good school that works rather than a non-accredited school?" She said her son was labeled gifted. She said that the regular school did not provide structure and that all it did was allow her son to have a bit of social time with other gifted students to whom he would be bussed for occasional visits. DeMont said that ACS provided constant contact with teachers, constant support, etc. She asked the committee to make the department "show you more" proof and "get more information". She said that other schools do not offer the same caliber of school.

**Eddie Jeans** testified some more. In response to Rep. Kapsner's question, "why aren't other schools being cut," Jeans said that ACS was the only state school of this sort.

**The Vorhees Family** testified next. The family has a student at ACS. They said that ACS shows personal dedication to their programs of study. ACS provides structure. No other correspondence school does this and, they noted, it would be most costly to close ACS than leave it open. Brick and mortar are more expensive, they noted. Also, the Vorhees indicated that the 2005 NCLB standards would not be met as easily following closure of ACS. Linda Vorhees (mom) said that she had used ACS for over 15 years for home-schooling assistance. She said that ACS is not duplicative because it is not offered anywhere else. She noted that on-line courses are expensive because of web costs. She said it takes 3-5 years to get fully accredited. Parents need options, she noted, and ACS is tailored to the needs of students. ACS is still needed and closing it creates no significant savings, if any.

**Betty Co'me** testified next. She has two children in ACS programs. They live 1.5 miles from Chugiak H.S. Her children are anemic and have immunity problems. Teachers at Chugiak would not have homework ready for her children (to take home with them). IEPs (individualized education plans, a federal requirement) did not work. ACS has helped tremendously. Chugiak on the other hand is very overcrowded. Her students are susceptible to infectious diseases and that environment is not healthy for them.

**Nancy Walatka** testified from Sitka. She has two sons, ages 8 and 2. They have been using ACS for 3 years. She told the committee, "I have two words for you: academic-excellence". She said the ACS staff was dedicated to what they do. The regular curricula did not challenge her son enough (he has been in ACS since the fourth grade). Due to asthma problems, he has been home-schooled. He has been reading the classics since the 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She said that a program comparable to ACS does not exist elsewhere. She called ACS an "Alaska Success Story". She described ACS as providing an irreplaceable service.

**Denise Maloney** testified from the Mat-Su. She is an ACS mom. She said it has been accredited since 1979 and has an extensive curricula. She said the curricula is prepared by the staff and that performance is graded by the teachers and staff. She said that the other correspondence programs are, in fact, duplicating ACS. She said, indeed, that the other programs are using ACS as a vendor.

Rep. Gatto discussed a Johns Hopkins program which allows 7<sup>th</sup> graders to take the SAT based on their CAT scores and benchmarks.

**Shawn Ruddell** (woman) testified. She said that she is a student at ACS. She said that K-6 in the public schools was traumatic for her. She then found about ACS. She rejected Central Middle School, a top science school nationally, for ACS.

**Victoria Martin** testified next, noting that she has children at ACS in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. She said that Mr. Currier's document proves that the SOA saves \$\$ with ACS. She said that many students are working at the same time that they attend ACS. She said that her grandson is gifted and would have gone to Central had he not enrolled with ACS.

Rep. Gatto asked what the teachers are doing inbetween phone calls.

**Verna Gibson** testified, indicating that she was a parent and foster parent. She said her child was an honors student at Dimond High School who got sick and ended up studying with ACS. The child is now an honors student at UAA. She said that some foster parents are inappropriate for the regular school system and that we should keep ACS going.

**Ryan Wilka** testified next. He is 12 years old and a student with ACS. He helps work with his family's business. He said that ACS provides flexibility. He also said that he sent 11 e-mails to other schools (correspondence programs). He said that 6 were returned as undeliverable, 3 didn't respond and two others referred us to their websites.

**Kim Wilka**, mother of Ryan, asked that ACS not be closed.

**Juliette Robinson** was the next witness. She has a daughter at ACS with Tourette's Syndrome. This disease is distracting for her child and for others. She missed school due to illness. She said that anxiety makes the symptoms more pronounced. She said that other programs do not allow enrollment mid-year. She said that her children can contact the teachers whenever they need help.

**Virginia Keller** testified. She said that she started 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the public school system and began with ACS in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. She said that she got one-on-one attention and is now getting As. She said that some of her teacher-student calls may last 40 minutes.

**Valerie** called from Prince of Wales Island. She said that her family has a family business and that the kids stay at home. She said that ACS is a good program and that her kids have been enrolled in for 12 years. She said that one son enrolled in Galena's IDEA Program in 1998. She said that other courses are new and unproven. She said that the witnesses she heard from today prove that the department is confused about what the program does and doesn't do.

A witness noted that there were 78 students per teacher. This number was later revised down, although the testimony and commentary was that the number of students per teacher increases as the grades increase.

**Paula Williams** said that she has 3 boys in ACS. She said that they live in the bush and encouraged members not to close ACS. She said that the family has no other real choice of school to turn to. She said that ACS is constantly updating its curricula.

**Jennifer Christine Wilcox** testified next. She opposes ACS's closure, saying that alternative schools are not as good and that closure will not save the SOA \$\$\$. She said that 1) many alternative schools have not received accreditation; 2) enjoy less support; 3) are just computer-based; 4) are less traditional; 5) and said that educating her students costs \$3,700 through ACS and would cost in excess of \$10,000 per student within a regular school district. She said that she checked on IDEA, Nenana and others and they are inferior.

**Tim Morgan** testified. He has a daughter at ACS. She got pregnant at age 17 and her choices were either to 1) dropout or 2) do ACS. She stays at home with the baby and studies. Her friends have dropped out when they got pregnant and are on public assistance. Tim said his daughter could home school or not study at all.

**Christine Wilcox** noted that closure produced no savings financially. IDEA offered them \$1,500 but provided nothing for back-up services. She said that there was no advantage to closing ACS.

**Cindy Mechow** testified. She said her family supports ACS and that even the Anchorage School District relies on ACS. She said that ACS was "first come first serve" and that it stands in the spot where the ASD cannot.

**Tom Robinson** testified. He supports ACS. He said that "people should applaud it, not shoot it down."

**Briana Robinson** testified next. She said that other programs would not accept you in the middle of the year the way ACS does.

From the Fairbanks LIQ, **Mary Toney** testified. She is an ACS parent of a 9<sup>th</sup> grader named Ruby. **Ruby** said that ACS was there for her after a 5-hour knee reconstructive operation. She said that she enjoys the ACS curricula and that she is one year ahead in math currently. She said that ACS is a great school for both remedial students and super-achievers. She said that ACS has the knowledge and experience and that ACS works.

**Mary Toney** then spoke. Mary said that keeping ACS alive means keeping \$\$ here in the State rather than seeing students end up using correspondence programs from out of Alaska. She noted that one of the main alternatives was a BYU program in Utah.

Rep. Gatto asked Ms. Toney: "Isn't it the books and a person that matters? Why does it have to be ACS? Aren't you just used to ACS?"

**Sheila Simmons** testified. She has 3 boys that have used ACS. She said, whether "high-tech, low-tech, urban, or rural", we all oppose the closure of ACS.

**Alexsander Deliski** testified. He is a social studies teacher at ACS. He said its enrollment fluctuates between 800 and 1100 persons per school year. He said that enrollment decreased when IDEA came onboard. He said that parents are aware of other schools and some have left, but most have not. He said that ACS provides grading, commentary and solutions. He said he taught Russian among other subjects. He said that he is paid for 230 working days, not 186 like a regular school. He said that 30 additional teachers were hired in the summer. He said that ACS staff works longer hours for the same \$\$\$. He said that 459 students were from Anchorage and 450 were from elsewhere. He said that ACS has a consistent record of excellence. He said that ACS has 19 courses on-line at the present time. He said that he has Ph.D. and has published 8 books.

(At this juncture, Rep. Wilson called an at-ease to caucus with the majority members).

**Cecilia Miller** testified against HB 174. She is a math teacher at ACS. She grew up in Anchorage and had never heard of ACS. She works with at risk kids. She teaches business and consumer math, geometry, precalculus, and advanced algebra. She said that ACS was

using a difficult geometry course from the University of Nebraska. She said they later used a program of study obtained from the University of Chicago. That program is presently used in Petersburg, Alaska.

Rep. Wilson said that she would personally see to it that other correspondence courses are held more accountable.

**Kevin Sweeney** spoke to the bill again. He said that most ACS students would enroll in other courses. Sweeney said the money would be saved from the discontinuance of ACSs summer program and its leases. Sweeney said that most students who would move into brick and mortar are not in a \$10,000 ADM situation. He said he wants to use ACS curricula and spread it around and there might be costs savings in this manner. He said the normal ADM is closer to \$4,000.00. He also said that Galena's program was growing and ACSs was shrinking.

Rep. Wilson said, "if ACS was the most popular it would have the most students."

Rep. Kapsner asked, "why force the best store in town to close down just because others are struggling or just to help the others?" At this point, someone noted that the Delta-Greeley program was 100% cyber.

**Debbie Chalmers** of ACS and Rep. Gatto began a discussion of school choice and how ACS fits into this concept.

**Mr. Jeans and Mr. Sweeney** testified that they did not know what programs use paper (hard copy materials) and which are cyber programs. Mr. Sweeney said that districts have district programs, too.

Rep. Seaton wanted to know whether there have been studies done of Alyeska vis a vis the other correspondence programs. The answer appeared to be "no". **Kevin Sweeney** said that Delta-Greeley and Galena could absorb many of the students. Sweeney said that the other districts are developing curricula, too.

**John Alcantra** testified on behalf of NEA-Alaska. He is the Government Relations Director for the union. He said that Alyeska complies with the NCLB intent right now. It could provide supplemental services that other programs cannot provide. Other programs cannot do this because of a lack of accreditation, he said. Alcantra asked that the bill be killed.

**Cecilia Miller** noted that ACS has no age cap. Gatto asked how many teachers would be cut and learned that 26 would be cut.

**Debbie Chalmers**, a 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at ACS said she is an 11 year veteran of that school and has gained a great deal as a parent-educator. She said that home-school partnerships work especially well and that the curricula is not stagnant. She noted that ACS essentially took over the Karluk (Kodiak Island) schools because the student body got so small the school closed. She said that Karluk did not want the district's correspondence programs.

Rep. Coghill said that this was policy call, pure and simple. He said that ACS is great but that the districts will have to be forced to absorb these students. Coghill moved that the bill be sent to Finance. He noted that there are 135,000 students in the SOA and ACS has only 1,000 of them. He said, while he likes education choices and the decision is a tough one, he will look to the districts for a remedy

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

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

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

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# Education Update

Friday

March 28, 2003

Report of  
Activity on

Thursday

March 27, 2003

## Committee Meeting Schedule

Friday - March 28, 2003

Hs/Judiciary - 1:00 pm

HB 18, Parental Liability for  
Damage by Minors

*(BASIS was down, so next week's meeting schedule  
was not available at the time of this report.)*

## Committee Activity

HB 174  
by Gov.  
Murkowski

*Eliminate state  
correspondence  
study program*

After 2.5 hours of testimony from 35 people opposing the bill, House HESS moved HB 174 forward with no changes March 27. The bill eliminates the state correspondence study program and clarifies funding for supported home-schooling programs occurring outside a school facility. The Alyeska Central School (ACS) is the only accredited statewide correspondence study program and serves about 1,100 K-12 students. Eliminating the program saves about \$1.2 million that was spent on the summer school program. Only ACS has authority to use foundation funding for summer school.

Most of those testifying against HB 174 were ACS students and their parents speaking via teleconference. As in past hearings, the testimony focused on the uniqueness of the program, the interaction between students and teachers, the Alaska-based curriculum, and the willingness to accept mid-term students (due to illness, moving to a new community mid-term, or other approved reasons). Many voiced concern that students with only a few years left in high school would not be able to graduate from an accredited program. The actual savings that would be made was called into question, especially if those seeking an accredited degree went back to the local school, which costs the state more than correspondence programs. It was noted the Anchorage Schools use ACS for summer school courses and accept those credits towards graduation. John Alcantra, with NEA-Alaska pointed out that the ACS teachers meet the requirements of NCLB as "highly qualified" teachers. He suggested ACS could also provide supplemental education for Alaska students working to meet the goals set by NCLB and that ACS was the only statewide program capable of providing coursework to help teacher aides meet the requirements of NCLB. (The law allows ACS to serve "any Alaskan" regardless of age.)

Kevin Sweeney, legislative liaison to DEED, was asked to respond for the administration. Sweeney said there were two points he wanted

to address: 1) re: actual savings – Sweeney contended most of the ACS students would choose to go to another correspondence program because their local school did not work for them. He noted most of the kids were from urban areas, so if they did choose the local school the cost difference was not that great, and he reminded lawmakers there was a \$1.2 million savings by eliminating the summer school program and additional savings by giving up the lease. 2) re: ACS curriculum vs. other programs – Sweeney said the plan was to make the ACS curriculum (much lauded for its variety) available to all the other correspondence programs. We hear from other programs (IDEA in Galena says they can accept 1000-1500 more students) that they would adapt to the students' need, said Sweeney. He concluded the closure of ACS was a policy decision and it was time to get the state out of the business of correspondence study.

Rep. Cissna asked what happened to the students who want an accredited program. Sweeney said he believed Galena would be able to meet those needs or the student could go to their local school.

Rep. Seaton asked if DEED had rated the various correspondence programs for effectiveness or for the levels of service provided for special education. Sweeney said he didn't know, but didn't think so.

At 5:30, Rep. Coghill interrupted Rep. Gatto who was questioning an ACS teacher about what would happen to her and her students should the program be eliminated. He noted the late hour and asked for an end to testimony. Chairwoman Wilson agreed and called for the question.

Rep. Coghill moved the bill with individual recommendations. He said eliminating ACS was a policy call, made especially tough because it obviously was a good program. But with designators, said Coghill, we need to give the districts responsibility for the students.

Rep. Kapsner objected and the vote was 4-3 in favor of moving the legislation. Reps. Seaton, Kapsner, and Cissna voted "no". Reps. Coghill, Wolf, Wilson, and Gatto voted "yes".

HB 174 moved with Reps. Coghill and Wolf signing "do pass", Reps. Gatto and Wilson signing "no rec", and Reps. Seaton and Kapsner signing "do not pass". Rep. Cissna had not signed the committee report, but she voted against the bill moving forward. The bill moves next to House Finance.

## **Alyeska Central School Costs and Funding**

**Statement by Rick Currier,**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**ACS Closure is not a cost savings!**

**\$4,010 Per Student**

**641 Students**

**\$ 2,056,328**

Correspondence		Brick & Mortar		Foundation \$	Increase	%
Stay	80%	Switch	100%			
95%	\$ 1,953,512	5%	\$ 128,521	\$ 2,082,032	\$ 25,704	1%
90%	\$ 1,850,895	10%	\$ 257,041	\$ 2,107,736	\$ 51,408	3%
85%	\$ 1,747,879	15%	\$ 385,562	\$ 2,133,440	\$ 77,112	4%
80%	\$ 1,645,062	20%	\$ 514,082	\$ 2,159,145	\$ 102,917	5%
75%	\$ 1,542,246	25%	\$ 642,603	\$ 2,184,849	\$ 128,521	6%
70%	\$ 1,439,430	30%	\$ 771,123	\$ 2,210,553	\$ 154,225	8%
65%	\$ 1,336,613	35%	\$ 899,644	\$ 2,236,257	\$ 179,929	9%
60%	\$ 1,233,797	40%	\$ 1,028,164	\$ 2,261,961	\$ 205,633	10%
55%	\$ 1,130,980	45%	\$ 1,156,685	\$ 2,287,665	\$ 231,337	11%
50%	\$ 1,028,164	50%	\$ 1,285,205	\$ 2,313,370	\$ 257,042	13%
45%	\$ 925,348	55%	\$ 1,413,726	\$ 2,339,074	\$ 282,746	14%
40%	\$ 822,531	60%	\$ 1,542,246	\$ 2,364,778	\$ 308,450	15%
35%	\$ 719,715	65%	\$ 1,670,767	\$ 2,390,482	\$ 334,154	16%
30%	\$ 616,898	70%	\$ 1,799,287	\$ 2,416,186	\$ 359,858	18%
25%	\$ 514,082	75%	\$ 1,927,808	\$ 2,441,890	\$ 385,562	19%
20%	\$ 411,266	80%	\$ 2,056,328	\$ 2,467,594	\$ 411,266	20%
15%	\$ 308,449	85%	\$ 2,184,848	\$ 2,493,298	\$ 436,971	21%
10%	\$ 205,633	90%	\$ 2,313,369	\$ 2,519,003	\$ 462,675	23%
5%	\$ 102,816	95%	\$ 2,441,890	\$ 2,544,707	\$ 488,379	24%
0%	\$	100%	\$ 2,570,410	\$ 2,570,411	\$ 514,083	25%

**Current  
ACS  
Foundation  
Funding**

**Average  
Foundation  
Funding  
Increase**

**Potential  
Foundation  
Funding  
Increase**

**Cost Differential**

Barrow	\$ 6,031.04
ACS	\$ 3,208.00
	\$ 2,823.04

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

**Local Contribution**

JSD	\$ 4,932.30
ACS	\$ 3,208.00
	\$ 1,724.30

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

**A of A**

Elnora Walker  
P.O. Box 13126  
Trapper Creek, AK  
99683

March 20, 2003

Representative Sharon Cissna  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK, 99801-1182

Dear Sharon Cissna,

My name is Elnora Ann Walker. I am a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student at Alyeska Central School. My family lives about five miles from the nearest road, paved or dirt, and five miles north of the nearest town. My brother is also a student at ACS, but he is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. My older sister graduated from ACS and is now a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Nome Elementary School.

I have been enrolled with Alyeska Central School since kindergarten, except for a couple of years when I tried other schools. As a student at ACS, I can honestly say it is a very unique school. In all of the years that I have been going to ACS, I have not been to one that is quite like ACS. Everyone seems to think that they are a duplication of serviced that could be found at other schools. I have been to other schools, and I have to say that whoever says that ACS is duplicating services is sorely mistaken. The teachers, who are all certified, go out of their way to help the students, as does the librarian. If this were the military, they would probably be given a medal for going above and beyond the call of duty. They take into account our remote location. When an assignment comes up that we need the Internet to complete, they either

- A. tell us ways to complete the assignment successfully with out the Internet,
- B. provide alternate assignments already written into the lesson plans,
- C. or they print up the information that we need and send it to us.

That is very helpful because even though we have a computer (the one I am typing this letter on) which is on loan to us from ACS for typing reports, we do not have, and cannot get, Internet access.

The teachers at ACS are wonderful. You can call them at any time with questions about the lessons and they are very helpful. They even write their own lesson plans which they are continually updating. This year, as I stated earlier, my younger brother is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at ACS, and he got to choose what classes he wanted to take from three or four choices per subject. When I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I was not able to. It is very interesting each year to see what improvements have been made to the lesson plans when my brother reaches the grade I was at two years ago, because the school has always updated the lessons, added experiments, added class choices, etc. Not that the lesson plans need improving, but they try to perfect them anyways.

Like I said earlier, I have been to other schools. I have been to two public schools when my family moved to two different towns a few years ago. I also attended a local

correspondence school because it was closer to where we live. However, after about a half year of each public school, and a year of the other correspondence school, we always went back to ACS. The public schools were too easy, they didn't challenge me. The other correspondence school requires an appointment to even ask one question about the lesson plans. ACS does challenge me, the classes are not easy. ACS classes are fun, a lot of work, and challenging at the same time. When I got sick in Fairbanks while going to U-Park Elementary school, I missed about two weeks of school that I had to make up when I got well enough to go back. With ACS, their schedule is flexible. If any ACS student gets sick, he/she doesn't have to worry about missing any school, they just stop where they are in the lessons and start again when they are feeling better. Last year, my brother broke his arm. That schedule flexibility really helped for his recovery and for scheduling his schoolwork around his doctor visits.

In short, I believe that Alyeska Central School should remain open. According to the No Child Left Behind act, every child has a fair and equal opportunity to a quality education. Why eliminate a quality school? If ACS closes, I don't know what my brother and I would do for school. We would probably have to start going to an out-of-state home school program. We would have to pay for that. To send an average high school student for a year with ACS costs approximately \$3800. To send an average high school student for a year to a public school costs well over \$4200. The state would actually be losing money to close ACS. Kids like me would be left behind.

Sincerely,



Elnora Ann Walker

**Subject: HB 174 - HES**

**Date: Thu, 27 Mar 2003 12:09:41 -0900**

**From: Jack Cadigan <ceco@alaska.com>**

**To: Representative\_Sharon\_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us**

Dear Representative Cissna:

I am submitting this via e-mail because I am in Russia on business, and therefore in doubt whether I shall be able to testify via telephone. However, I respectfully request my comments be considered. My brevity is partially driven by the cost of a telephone call from the other side of the world, as well as the depth of prior testimony which I need not reiterate. I am sure your staff has provided you summaries of those hours of testimony offered before the EDU committee.

HB 174 was provided to the governor by the prior administration's appointees as a way the state could save millions through closing Alyeska Central School and presumably cessating "duplicative services." It is eminently clear from the five hours of testimony heard thus far on this bill, including testimony by the department, that there are neither savings to be realized nor are there existing duplicative services within or outside the state. Indeed, most of the various scenarios previously provided would cost the state MORE money since the dollars follow the student. Further, they would require one or more districts to create an accredited correspondence school to replace Alyeska and its modus operandi.

The governor was given a package containing a "red herring."

I suggest the changes in the bill which permit alternative methods of distance education in addition to an accredited state correspondence school be retained. Just as some students cannot meet the rigors of conventional education systems and require alternative methods to intellectually grow, so also not all those choosing distance education can meet the requirements of a distance education school such as Alyeska Central School.

I suggest that HB 174 be amended to sever the Alyeska School District organizationally from the direct control and responsibility of the Department, and to create it as a "stand-alone" district along the lines of Mt. Edgecumbe and under the direct responsibility of the State Board. This organizational restructuring would concomitantly save millions from the department's budget while preserving a long proven educational asset at no additional cost to the state.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jack Cadigan  
Juneau, Alaska

POSTAGE PAID

March 12, 2003  
PO Box WWP  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99950

Dear Representative Cissna,

I live in a remote area of Southeast Alaska where I do not have access to a brick and mortar school. The Governor, through the department of education, has proposed the closure of Alyeska Central School on the grounds that its services are a duplication of services offered elsewhere and that the state would save money by closing it. This is a bad idea based on false premises.

I have educated my children through ACS since kindergarten. My son graduated from ACS two years ago and is currently a student at Stanford University. My daughter is a senior with applications in to similarly distinguished schools and with every expectation of acceptance provided she graduates this year, which probably won't be possible by June 30th. The higher education that my children will receive as ACS graduates will come back to better our state. It is an excellent investment by the state of Alaska in all of our futures. I am convinced that, for us, our success would not have been possible with any other correspondence school. It would be a shame to loose that option.

ACS offers traditional courses, on-line courses, advanced placement classes, the opportunity to take classes that offer high school as well as college credit, courses designed by the parent while being over seen by a qualified teacher. They take the time to work with parents and to assist in the teaching process. While attending ACS, my children have been able to attend Close-Up D.C., Close-Up Juneau, Presidential Classroom in D.C. and the Academic Decathlon. Other students have gone on coastal field trips, Battle of the Books, and the Lego tournament. ACS has managed all of this on the 80% funding that they are allotted. No other program offers so much for so little.

No other correspondence school in the state can offer the staff of certified teachers that ACS can. In light of its proposed closure, I personally called all of the other correspondence schools in the state to see what they have to offer. Most have one teacher to cover all grades and courses. A few had two or three. One estimated 15 teachers for their students but went on to say that the teachers didn't actually grade papers or even necessarily comment on the students' work. The ACS staff is an obvious advantage to the home-schooled and, as the only correspondence school that offers such; it is certainly not a duplication of services offered by other schools. This excellent teaching staff also makes ACS the only correspondence school remotely close to being able to comply with No Child Left Behind by the year 2005 and therefore qualified to receive Title 1 Federal Funds. Has no one asked, "How many correspondence schools will be left in 2005 when specifically qualified teachers are required for each grade and subject in order to stay open?"

ACS is the only Alaska correspondence school with a proven track record. All other options are relatively new. ACS is also our only option that is mandated by the state. This means that all the other correspondence programs can shut down any time they think it is to their advantage to do so, no matter when in the school year, (and I suggest this is apt to happen come 2005) offering no guarantee of continuity to their students.

ACS, as I've mentioned, is funded at 80% of the norm. If its students are forced to enroll in other schools, money won't be saved, it will simply follow the students to other schools,

some of which will be at 100% funding... an additional expense to the state. What will it cost the state to re-open ACS in 2005 if none of the other schools can meet the requirements for Title 1? I see only more expense to the state if you allow ACS to close.

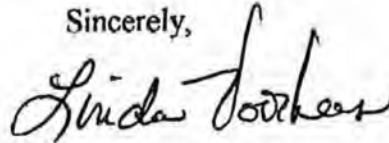
ACS does get additional funding for its summer school but it is the only correspondence school that offers a summer school. There is nowhere else for students without access to a brick and mortar school to go if they need to go to summer school. Abolish that and you've put our remote students at a disadvantage to all the other students in the state of Alaska. As we are all guaranteed the right to an equal education, this is a civil rights offence.

ACS is the only accredited correspondence school in the state of Alaska offering a full staff of involved certified teachers, a summer school, a guarantee of continuity and a history of success. Abolishing it could actually be a civil rights offence to those of us who need it.

There are no duplications of ACS's services offered anywhere, no financial gains to be had by closing ACS, and 44 jobs would be lost. I do not see the advantage of closing ACS. There are only disadvantages

**VOTE NO** on HB 174!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Voorhees".

Linda Voorhees

March 13, 2003

POSTAGE PAID

Dear Esteemed Senators and Representatives,

This morning I had the privilege of testifying at the legislative hearing on HB 174 on behalf of Alyeska Central School, and I thank you for that opportunity. I would just like to reiterate what I so hurriedly tried to convey during my testimony.

I've been homeschooling with ACS for eight years, from kindergarten on up to seventh grade (my others are in fifth and third grades). I also have a three-year-old, who insists on doing schoolwork at the table just like her brothers! My husband and his sister both graduated from ACS, and my children will be with ACS as long as it's there for us.

As mentioned many times in the hearing, ACS is not a "duplication of services" provided by other correspondence schools—it is the only distance education provider that provides direct teacher support for all its courses. The ACS teachers are there for us when we have a question, need help with combining coursework, don't understand something in the text, etc. Not only does ACS already fulfill the No Child Left Behind requirements by having teachers certified in every subject, the ACS teachers are a huge factor in the success of my children—they help my children learn how to learn, as well as help me learn how to teach.

One of my children wants to be an inventor, another a veterinarian. ACS has a proven track record with college admissions offices, and is the only correspondence school that is accredited. Yes, others have applied, but they don't have it yet. Nor have they been around for sixty years; on the contrary, they could choose to close at any time!

ACS is also unique in that it provides an excellent library service. As we live in a rural area, this is imperative! My children as well as I can call up the librarian and request books, articles, even information off the Internet and it will be in the mail the next day. One cannot homeschool without access to information, and ACS provides this for us.

Being a year-round school, we can start in November and end in August, if our schedule requires it. If we lose time due to health or travel reasons, for example, it's not a problem as it would be with a regular school and some of the other correspondence programs.

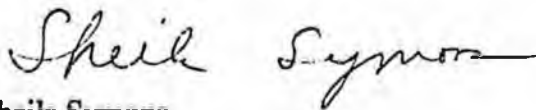
All these reasons aside, it doesn't even make financial sense to close ACS! The state pays approximately \$3,208 per child enrolled in ACS (80% of \$4,010). Even if only one third of the approximately 750 ACS students switch to public school, it will cost the state an extra \$200,000 plus change. If only 5 of the rural students switch to a more costly rural school, that could be as much as, or more than another \$50,000. The state will only spend more to educate the same kids elsewhere than at ACS. The difference more than covers the \$250,000 rent of the building!

Closing summer school will not produce any savings either! Most of the students enrolled in the ACS summer school are not regular ACS enrollees, rather, they're mostly students who are short a credit and need it to graduate, many of whom don't find out they are lacking a credit until this time of year! If they don't have the lower cost summer school, the state will then have to pay for an entire extra year for the student to graduate!

Yet another point that makes no sense: why reinvent the wheel? Why pay for other correspondence schools to develop and provide the services that make ACS unique, when ACS is already doing it? Since the others are not obligated to remain open, what will happen if they decide to close—then the state will need to pay yet another school to do what ACS is already doing? How much will that cost in the long run?

Thank you for taking time to read this letter. Our children's education, our future and that of our children depend upon thoughtful, prudent decisions by our lawmakers. Don't close a valuable, cost-effective educational facility only to spend more for lesser services in the long run. Please deny HB 174!

Respectfully,



Sheila Symons  
P.O. Box 30014  
Central, AK 99730  
(907) 520-5680

cc: Governor Murkowski  
House Special Committee on Education  
Health, Education and Social Services Committees  
House Finance Committee  
Senator Georgianna Lincoln  
Representative Carl Morgan  
DOE Chief Finance Officer Eddy Jeans  
Margaret MacKinnon, Acting Director Alyeska Central School  
Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

**Subject: SB107****Date:** Wed, 2 Apr 2003 20:21:46 -0900**From:** "Kiel Scott" <jkscott@gustavus.ak.us>**To:** <Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Dear Senator Dyson-

My name is John Scott and I and my family live near Glacier Bay.

Please see the attached testimony I have given before House Education (labeled ACS) and HESS committees (labeled ACS II).

Please do not support this legislation as it will not save the state any money and in my daughters case could cost the state more money.

COST to the STATE to educate my daughter (foundation funding formula)

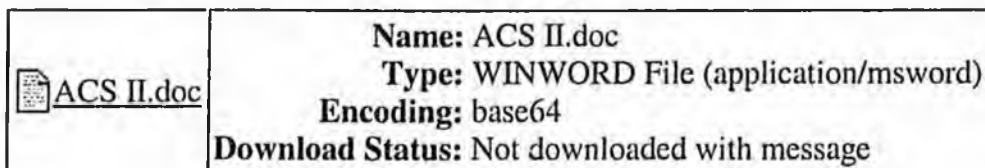
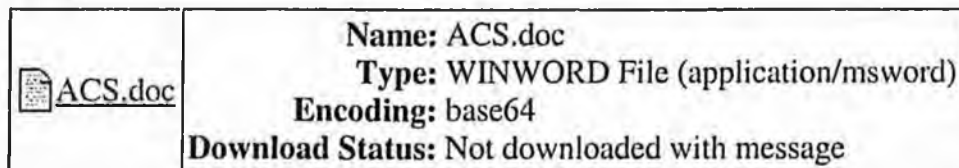
Under ACS	Under Alternative Dist. Ed.
Local School	
\$3800 (all goes toward ~\$10,000 my daughters education)	\$3800 (less \$1800 rake off leaving only \$2000 towards her education)
Boarding School	
~\$15,000	

Also there are those that make it sound like the other distance alternatives are equivalent to ACS. They are not in my eyes and they are also not accredited. Accreditation does make a difference despite what some may try to say. I am a graduate of a non-accredited school. I had to take additional course work in college to make up for that fact. So don't fall for that argument. ACS is not redundant. Redundancy implies equivalence and these other alternatives are not equivalent. If other families are happy with these other schools, great. But please don't wreck my daughters education just to try and feed money to these other schools.

I would appreciate your consideration to vote against this proposed legislation and not pass it out of committee.

Thank you

John Scott  
Box 98  
Gustavus, AK 99826



**Subject: Senate Bill 107**

**Date:** Wed, 02 Apr 2003 18:30:53 -0900

**From:** Ruby <mtony@gci.net>

**To:** Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Bettye\_Davis@legis.state.ak.us,  
Senator\_Lyda\_Green@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Gary\_Wilken@legis.state.ak.us,  
Senator\_Gretchen\_Guess@legis.state.ak.us, letters@adn.com

Thursday evening you will be hearing testimony on Senate Bill 107 which in effect closes Alyeska Central School (ACS). I ask you to consider the issue carefully before you vote and I urge you to vote against closing ACS.  
<?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

I respectfully ask you to open your mind to innovative thinking that ACS may be a solution to other costly problems in the Alaska education system and NOT a problem to be solved by closing.

My 9th grade daughter will be badly affected by the closing because she will not be able to finish her courses in her first year of high school. She is a straight A student. She is behind because of knee surgery earlier. Your vote could really support or severely harm a young person who is very serious about her education as a way to prepare her for career with the Air Force or Navy.

ACS is unique because it is all Alaskan. It is the only program under which students can call, meet, or email their teachers instate. If you care about children and ask them if having an Alaskan teacher is important, they will tell you that it is. The ACS coursework is Alaskan and makes sure the students meet the State requirements. I have been told ACS is the only accredited home correspondence school in Alaska.

Keeping ACS operating fully will show our Alaskan students that we are committed to providing them with excellent education opportunity in state. It is the first step to keeping Alaska's finest resource, its youth, in Alaska's universities and work force.

We looked at Raven Correspondence School this week. All the courses are from programs outside Alaska. I am really concerned that the money for my student does not stay instate with Alaskan curriculum and Alaskan teachers.

Instead of closing ACS, which is unique among home study programs, please seriously consider using it as a tool for the State to succeed with under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Through ACS, students in remote communities could be offered an alternative choice for better educational opportunities. It would be far more cost effective to supplement ACS' highly capable teachers with those with the necessary degrees as called for under the Act to teach particular subjects.

Doesn't it make sense to hire 5 more teachers to offer distance learning from ACS which has 30 years of experience than to try to hire dozens of teachers with specific degrees in each of the remote communities or pay for relocating dozens students to another school?

Wouldn't it be easier to meet the requirements of the Act using ACS which is already up and running successfully than to try to make changes to the Act as U. S. Senator Stevens is valiantly attempting?

Please take the time to study the amount of education money sent outside the State under all the remaining programs if ACS is closed and see if it is really worth it to close the one program the State provides that is accredited.

Please carefully consider if keeping ACS open can provide solutions to meeting the No Child Left Behind Act.

Please work to keep Alaska's future leaders in Alaska with an Alaskan education home study program provided by Alaskan teachers.

Please listen to the people you represent and vote against closing Alyeska Central School.

Please support the ACS students.

Thank you.

**Subject: School Closure**

**Date:** Mon, 10 Mar 2003 11:40:29 -0900

**From:** Gene and Christine Wilcox <drycreek@alaska.net>

**To:** Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Senator Dyson:

I would like to express my concern regarding Governor Murkowski's proposal to close Alyeska Central School. While I understand budget cuts may be necessary, I would support a more balanced and equal reduction in spending.

Alyeska Central School has provided thousands of Alaskan students with educational opportunities at a rather minimal cost to the state. ACS receives only .8 FTE per student while urban schools receive 100% FTE and rural schools receive 100% plus. Statistics will also reveal the high academic performance of many of the ACS students. Last year (2002), Alyeska Central School assisted over 3,000 students around the state obtain high school credits in their summer school program alone.

Alyeska Central School was established in 1939 as an alternative correspondence program. It is an accredited program (since 1979) while some of the alternate "home school" programs are not. ACS has continued

to meet the needs of students in both rural and urban areas with approximately 250 courses in their curriculum and utilize on-line technology for at least 18 courses. Student-teacher interaction is excellent.

Please oppose any effort to discontinue or close Alyeska Central School.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine Wilcox  
HC01 Box 530  
Gakona, Alaska 99586

**Subject: School Policies on Violence**

**Date:** Sun, 16 Feb 2003 15:40:26 -0900

**From:** "William Phillips" <wj\_phillips@hotmail.com>

**To:** senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us, representative\_Peggy\_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us

**CC:** wj\_phillips@hotmail.com

Dear Senator Dyson and Representative Wilson:

As chairs of the HESS Committees, I want to express to you what I believe is the need for serious reform in school districts policies regarding violence.

Current policies encourages school bullies and thugs. If a child confronted by a bullying thug has the courage to defend themselves they are deemed nearly equally at fault as the thug who started the problem and struck first. The school have set up a thugs paradise! Serious students who want to avoid suspensions must not strike back. Thugs, who don't care about suspension, are given free shots to strike whomever they please. Punish the victims!

Why will happen next? Will the state pass laws that a victim of a crime be given two-thirds the punishment of the criminal? This is what school districts are doing.

For example: a friend of my grandson in the Anchorage School District was struck by a thug. He ran without striking back. He got 6 days suspension while the thug got 9 days. Where is justice? Unwilling to take the abuse anymore my grandson's friend dropped out of school. Of course, the bullying thug returned to school to pursue more victims.

Now to my grandson: when asked he and another boy told school officials who had stolen a video camera. Of course, the idiots in the administration revealed who they were to the thief and his friends. The other boy was beaten up. Three thugs and a crowd of watchers rode my grandson's school bus to follow him. They got off at the same stop. Only the intervention by a woman driving by saved my grandson from a similar beating. When my son-in-law went to school to report the incident, the principal's nearly first thought was to suspend my grandson for 5 days. Insanity! The principal created the problem by revealing who told about the theft then wanted to punish my grandson.

I assume the lesson my grandson has learned is to never be a reporting witness. What a "great" thing to be teaching our children.

Schools districts will justify their policies as a reaction to Columbine -- we want to prevent violence. BS! The problem is that there is not an ounce of common sense in all the school administrators combined! You don't put an end to violence by giving thugs a free shot! If that were so, President Bush should be in Iraq kissing Saddam's rear then off to kiss Bin Laden's. School district administrators and the French have a lot in common.

What can you do? Put an end to the insanity! Make it illegal for school districts and school administrators to punish the victims as well as the thugs.

Sincerely,

William J Phillips  
Kenai, Alaska 907-283-2733

**Subject: SB5****Date:** Sun, 09 Mar 2003 07:00:55 -0900**From:** Tom Shackle <tshackle@gci.net>**To:** Senator\_Betty\_Davis@legis.state.ak.us**CC:** Senator\_Johnny\_Ellis@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_John\_Cowdery@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Con\_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Lyda\_Green@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Gary\_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us

Senator Davis:

As the parent of an ADD teenager, I am concerned that **Senate Bill 5 goes too far with its intent**. My son has benefited from the communication I have cultivated with his teachers. None are mental health professionals, nonetheless I have encouraged the expression of their insights and opinions with regard to my son's classroom behavior. These I balance with my own insights and opinions about my son, his disability, and his needs. The cumulative results have been a better year of academic performance.

Of the spectrum of disabilities, I believe ADD is getting off lightly. For more severe conditions I am concerned that Sec. 14.30.171(6)(a) of SB5 would ban teachers from reporting to DFYS parents who refused to administer antidepressants to a suicidal child, antipsychotic medications to a schizophrenic child, or other mental health drugs to a child.

I am concerned that Sec. 14.30.171(6)(b) and (c) similarly would prevent a teacher or school counselor from calling DFYS in the rare but critical circumstance of a child who confides a problem like drug addiction or suicidal/self-destructive behaviors, but whose parents do nothing to help.

I am also concerned about Sec. 14.30.171 (4) that prohibits school personnel from recommending a specific licensed physician, psychologist, or other health specialist to a parent or guardian for a child. In fact, I recently asked my son's high school psychologist for such a recommendation. I dread the thought that SB5, if passed, would stop such helpful information for other parents.

After reading SB 5 several times, the question I have is: why is this bill so necessary? What research in Alaska is it based on? How big a problem is this actually? Unless the "problem" that SB5 attempts to "cure" can be better substantiated, I will urge your Senate colleagues to vote against the bill.

Sincerely,

Tom Shackle  
6334 Red Tree Circle  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
[tshackle@gci.net](mailto:tshackle@gci.net)  
907-346-1911

**Subject: Alyeska Central School**

**Date: Mon, 10 Mar 2003 08:10:34 -0900**

**From: "valery white" <wwpval@starband.net>**

**To: <Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>**

Dear Senator Dyson,

I am very concerned about SB107. Correspondence study is an issue my family has much experience in. I have two sons in high school. One is currently enrolled with ACS and one with IDEA. I know both programs very well since we've been with ACS for 12 years and IDEA for 5. We live in an area where the nearest public school is a 2 hour bus ride over rough roads; for this and other reasons we believe correspondence is the best choice. I am very grateful that Alaska offers such a variety of choices in correspondence study and believe we have the best programs in the country. My children have received an excellent education utilizing both the ACS and IDEA programs.

Judging by your comments in the Anchorage Daily News Article last week, you do not understand what Alyeska Central School offers its students and families.

Duplication of services:

The ACS program is not duplicated anywhere else in the state. There is no other cross district correspondence program in Alaska that offers:

- 1) Teacher services for each subject (which means teachers actually comment on work, not just multiple choice tests).
- 2) Courses in core subjects written by Alaskan teachers.
- 3) Washington DC Close Up and Alaska Close Up available to all interested high school students without charge.
- 4) Online Advanced Placement English taught in house
- 5) Structured curriculum with detailed teaching instructions
- 6) Teachers available 5 days a week and in the summer months by email, mail and phone to assist students and parents with the teaching and learning process.
- 7) Summer School
- 8) The only accredited correspondence study program.

If any of the other cross district correspondence programs were ever required to offer all of the above services, I believe they would cease to exist.

Cost:

Alyeska's per student annual cost is far below many other districts in the state. My own district, Southeast Island, educated each student at a cost to the state of about \$12,149 in the '98-99 school year, while a student at ACS cost about \$2076. Even at this year's enrollment of 1100 students, the per student cost is around \$4500 at ACS, far below the per student cost in most other Districts.

Online Delivery:

ACS has made great strides in recent years to embrace this technology. We can now access grades and course information online, as well as many courses. I would like to point out that there are still people in Alaska, including many in my community, that do not have internet access. Many of the new correspondence programs require this access and would not be available to the rural children who are currently enrolled in ACS. My family purchased a satellite dish at great cost to be able to use the internet, but there is no program that offers this equipment to rural families.

In our efforts to save money, let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Rather than closing it down altogether, there should be other ways to make ACS more efficient. Enrollment could be limited, with courses and curriculum still available to other districts and programs. It could be made into strictly a high school and summer school program.

I hope that you will support families who are willing to volunteer to teach their children at home and continue to provide the wide variety of programs that exist today in Alaska, including ACS.

**Subject: ACS Closure**

**Date:** Thu, 6 Mar 2003 16:08:32 -0900

**From:** "Tyrrells" <rtyrrell@ideafamilies.org>

**To:** <Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

I am writing to you to express my distress that the Governor has proposed a budget excluding Alyeska Central School. This is an ill advised plan to save money. Correspondence schooling costs a fraction of education in a brick and mortar school. There is no bus, no hot lunch program, no special education, no funds for building a swimming pool nor basketball court but there is a cost effective method of educating students in twelve grades. Test scores prove the success of this program. ACS student's test scores are some of the highest in the state while some of the public schools these students would attend are among the lowest. Why cut a program that is working?

ACS provides courses with certified teachers that can aid our state in complying with the Federal mandate for No Child Left Behind. The Summer school alone helps almost 3500 high school students state wide to receive classes necessary to complete their graduation requirements that include, but are not limited to, Alaska History, English, and Alaska Science (all courses written by ACS staff).

The Governor mentioned that this service is a duplication of other services provided by the state. I have two students in two separate programs. One is in ACS and the other IDEA (another correspondence program). They each have differing philosophies that suit the learning styles of my different students. ACS provides direct teacher support for each subject area that my elementary student studies. It is important to him to have the support and guidance of the teacher in his studies. It is definitely not a duplication of the services I receive from the IDEA program.

Please support a change to the budget that would allow ACS to continue to provide services.

Thank-you

Laurel Tyrrell  
PO Box 30168  
Central, AK 99730-0168

**Subject: Charter Schools**

**Date:** Sun, 2 Mar 2003 20:54:44 -0900

**From:** "KENNETH KIFFER" <kkiffer@worldnet.att.net>

**To:** <Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us>

Senator Dyson:

My name is Karleen Kiffer, and I am one of three founders of the Ketchikan Charter School. I am writing to you as the HESS Committe Chair for two reasons.

The first is to encourage you to introduce and support legislation to strengthen Alaska's Charter School Laws. I appreciate your efforts on behalf of bettering education in the State of Alaska, and recognize the Legislatures strides in working toward helping all children gain the education they need to succeed. However, our charter school laws have crippled many charter schools because of the necessity to gain local district support.

The second purpose of this correspondence is to ask what I can do to help Village Charter School in its efforts to gain a 10-year recharter. Having just gone through some of the same challenges Linda is facing, I appreciated her support as President of the Alaska Charter School Association. I am sending an e-mail to Louie Yanotti, but fear it is out of his hands once again. If you have any suggestions, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Thank you,

Karleen Kiffer

Ketchikan Charter School

**Subject:** Closing charter schools

**Date:** Wed, 05 Mar 2003 19:57:54 -0900

**From:** Linda Sharp <lsharp@alaska.net>

**To:** Skookums <skookums@gci.net>

**CC:** Linda Sharp <lsharp@alaska.net>, Jim Sharp <jsharp@acsalaska.net>, Kathy Sue Justus <knit\_wit@att.net>, Helvia <santijon@gci.net>, Caprice A Larimer-Musty <caprice@3pyramids.zzn.com>, "Harriet A. Drummond" <harrieted@alaska.net>, Rita Holthouse <Holthouse\_Rita@asdk12.org>, metcalfe\_jake@asdk12.org, steiner\_john@asdk12.org, marks\_mary@asdk12.org, ossiander\_debbie@asdk12.org, Carol Comeau <Comeau\_Carol@asdk12.org>, tim scott <scott\_tim@asdk12.org>, Fred Dyson <Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@Legis.state.ak.us>, Representative Vic Kohring <Representative\_Vic\_Kohring@Legis.state.ak.us>, Senator\_Bettye\_Davis@Legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Gretchen\_Guess@Legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_John\_Coghill@Legis.state.ak.us

*Skookums, the author of this message, asked me to forward this. ASD has already closed one of four charters that has opened, after micro-managing internal problems it did NOT need to manage.*

*The second charter for ASD to close could be this one by the pocket veto of not allowing the State Board to calendar it now.*

*Superintendent Comeau says she "needs to investigate" in April, she is too busy to do it now. She has had a rep now at five parent meetings we have held over the last two weeks. About 60% of the school has attended the meetings.*

*Not getting us on the State Board's agenda is the likely demise of the school. We will not have the enrollment to get the funding critical to survive. We are at 160. If we go below 150, our funding is cut by \$300,000, just by being at 149 students. The problems are internal conflicts of interest and resolvable within.*

*Linda Sharp*

***Hello All, VILLAGE CHARTER SCHOOL MUST BE ON THE MARCH, 19-20,2003, STATE BOARD AGENDA FOR THE RENEWAL OF ITS 10-YEAR CONTRACT OR THIS SCHOOL WILL CLOSE! I am a parent at the Village Charter School. I have had children in Anchorage public schools since 1972. The downward spiraling demise that Village Charter School (VCS) is in is entirely preventable if our superintendent Carol Comeau will put the renewal of our 10 year contract on the March agenda for the State Board. Carol wants to put it off until June. If that happens this school can no longer exist! VILLAGE CHARTER SCHOOL WILL BE FORCED TO CLOSE IF CAROL DOES NOT PUT THE SCHOOL ON THE MARCH SCHOOL BOARD AGENDA. We cannot survive without that contract. It is NOW that we should be enrolling for next year while teachers are making their commitments to stay or transfer in or out. We have the staff to enroll now. We have the enthusiastic interest and commitment of our***

*families to re-enroll. If we are not approved of until June, after school vacation begins we won't have staffing in July, to enroll and our families will have needed to begin to look elsewhere, not to speak of our teachers!! Each charter school is founded on meeting particular needs of children's education. VCS is no exception. My daughter who is in the 6th grade has a great challenge with linear thinking. The approach of education here teaches her!! I am a single parent with my own business. I've tried the neighborhood school and home schooling to determine how she learns. VCS is the most successful match for her! I am not the only parent who feels this way. All of us have made a conscious educational choice. The founder of a charter school has the vision and thus carries the essence of the philosophy. I have seen other charter schools come and go since Carol Comeau has been superintendent. There was Aquarian; she not only was responsible for the original headmaster (its founder) be replaced but then also the second headmaster as well. What this does to a school of specific design is it changes the essence of the school and begins to create inner turmoil. This way Carol can simply withdraw herself and let the vision sabotage itself. Waldon Pond went away the same ways!!! Family Partnership has Struggled and even found a split of families beginning another charter as a solution to their inner turmoils due to their horrendous struggles for approval. This is the pattern since Carol Comeau has been superintendent. VILLAGE CHARTER SCHOOL MUST BE ON THE MARCH, 19-20, 2003, STATE BOARD AGENDA FOR THE RENEWAL OF ITS 10-YEAR CONTRACT OR THIS SCHOOL WILL CLOSE! Thank you, Skookums Sonnenschein (907) 522-5550*

**Subject: Closure of Alyeska Central School**

**Date:** Thu, 13 Mar 2003 10:50:47 -0900 (Alaskan Standard Time)

**From:** Ken & Judi's <kjh@alaska.com>

**To:** Representative\_Mary\_Kapsner@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_Les\_Gara@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_Kelly\_Wolf@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_Peggy\_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_John\_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_Paul\_Seaton@legis.state.ak.us, Representative\_Carl\_Gatto@legis.state.ak.us

**CC:** Senator\_Gary\_Wilken@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Bettye\_Davis@legis.state.ak.us, Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Representatives and Senators:

Since this is going to the Chair and the members of the Representative & Senate Education & Early Development Finance Committees/Subcommittee I see no need to address each of you formally. I also am not able to participate in the Teleconference scheduled for March 13, 2003 at 11:00 am. so I hope that one of you will see fit to present my views and/or at least talk among yourselves to review the issue of closing Alyeska Central Correspondence School.

Coming before you is an area that Governor Murkowski feels the need to address in the area of closing the Correspondence Study program that the State of Alaska operates, House Bill No. 174. I fully understand that this unit of DOE has been operating since 1939 when there were few schools within Alaska. I also know that there are many School Districts within our Great State now and that offer correspondence study. Within the district that I am in, which is the Matanuska-Susitna School District, I did not like the curriculum nor the options that their correspondence offered on the High School level. At this time I have one full time student getting through their final year of High School, and one part time student getting some of his schooling from the State's program and from one of the public schools. In making the choice of which Correspondence program we would go with the State's program is far superior then what is being offered by the School District that my family resides in. The staff of Alyeska Central School is excellent in dealing with students and parents alike. They can make things understood either by phone, e-mail or fax better then any I have found. The fact that the school work goes through them and not sent all over the lower 48 also gives them high marks with me. My students have tried to use the Correspondence Study of our district and between the distance, the US Postal Service, and the lack of communicative skills within the High School level it was not productive and lower 48 schools do not have a good idea of Alaska still yet and the US Postal Service to the lower 48 was abominable . The amount of time that it takes to send school work outside and get it back, unless it is sent Registered, Return Receipt Requested, and possibly Express Mail, plus having to make copies of the work in case the US Postal Service loses, destroys, etc. it; these expenses are not very well liked by many parents who have chosen to home school their children. None of us that have chosen to home school our children have taken it lightly when choosing what program is right for our youngsters. It was not very well liked that the School District does not want to deal with students who do use the State of Alaska's program, due to money I believe, that area is dealt with by many of us. Closure of this Unit does not help the students, as the State's program is more realistic then that of many school districts, and the students that come from this program have, in the past, receive higher marks on tests, the students have gotten scholarships and received better information on grants for higher education. The staff of Alyeska also work 12 months of the

year, whereas the staff of school districts only work 9 months of the year. The staff of Alyeska are trained in their areas, whereas the teachers within the school districts are not always trained in the teaching areas that they are in. The staff of Alyeska provide a year round schooling for students that are not able to meet the 9 month period that the school districts only offer. If the school districts offered at least the same that the Alyeska Correspondence offers maybe thoughts would be different, but they do not, for High School students 85% of the material is sent out of State with the districts correspondence study, and for many studies that my students had to deal with the correspondence study teachers within our district were mute. Before closing a wonderful program, maybe the ideals and what knowledge that this unit has should be taught to the other school districts of this State so that we as parents have a good educational system to go to if the public school system is broke, which in many areas it is.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Hammond's

kjh@alaska.com

---

 *Incredimail* - Email has finally evolved - [Click Here](#)

RE: Keep Alyeska Open

**Subject: RE: Keep Alyeska Open**

**Date: Tue, 11 Mar 2003 11:45:05 -0900**

**From: "Kiel Scott" <jkscott@gustavus.ak.us>**

**To: "Fred Dyson" <Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@Legis.state.ak.us>**

**CC: <Jillian\_Schroeder@legis.state.ak.us>**

*Not  
A Constituent  
SHE IS NOT  
NICA TO YOU  
NO RAPHY needed.*

Dear Dyson - You obviously have not read my message. I have reviewed the other in-state and several out-of-state correspondence schools.

None of them have Alyeska's history, accreditation, course catalog and experience.

You also may want to consider what will really happen to the money "saved" to the State by closure of ACS. The money the State spends for the ACS students will just go to another school. Therefore where is the savings???

If you really care about education of Alaska's students you would strongly consider maintaining ACS as an alternative, unless of course you have an ulterior motive to try and send the ACS foundation/student funds to a district or program that you can take credit for sending the funds to.

Where is the concern for the students?? in this proposal to close ACS. ACS students have made a choice to attend there, their choice NOT YOURS.!!! If you support the closure of ACS then you are not really showing much concern for ACS students. No one has proposed that ACS's students were not performing, that ACS's program was deficient, they have only mentioned MONEY. Money that they (the supporter's of the closure) might be able to send somewhere possibly of their choosing. This proposal does not seem to solve anything.

Sincerely,  
John and Joan Scott  
Box 98  
Gustavus, AK 99826

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

From: Fred Dyson [[mailto:Senator\\_Fred\\_Dyson@Legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Fred_Dyson@Legis.state.ak.us)]

Sent: Monday, March 10, 2003 5:54 PM

To: Kiel Scott

Subject: Re: Keep Alyeska Open

Dear Kiel, there are many better correspondence schools available in our state.

If you need help finding one, call my office at 465-2199. Dyson

Kiel Scott wrote:

> Dear Senator Dyson -

>

> Please see that Alyeska Central School is fully funded. I do not support  
> closure of Alyeska as it has been rumored that the administration is  
> proposing. Alyeska's 60+ year history, its accreditation, its course  
> catalog, its curriculum, its accomplishments and what it offers to the  
> education of my daughter and other rural students make it important to  
> continue.

>

> Other distance education outlets exist, but we have reviewed them and  
found

> Alyeska to be the best.

>

> Please see our attached letter to the Governor in support of Alyeska.

RE: Keep Alyeska Open

>  
> Sincerly,  
> John and Joan Scott  
> Box 98  
> Gustavus, AK 99826  
> Phone 907-697-2217  
> FAX 907-697-3010

>

>

>

> -----  
> Part 1.2    Type: Outlook Express Mail Message (message/rfc822)

>            Encoding: 7bit

*F4I - you must answer him  
of this is his reply back.*

**Subject: Funding For Education**

**Date: Thu, 6 Mar 2003 18:18:06 -0900**

**From: Ron and Ann Keffer <rkeffer@alaska.net>**

**To: Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us**

Dear Senator Dyson,

The first year I taught in a public school was the 1969 - 70 school year, and I have been principal of Homer High School since 2000. Through all those great years of working with some truly fantastic young people, I never have observed a situation that called for strong leadership as much as the one in which we now find ourselves.

In a country and state as rich as ours, it is quite disingenuous to plead that we cannot afford to fund public schools. That plea is particularly odd because, of course, education is not an expense but an investment. Every dollar spent on educating our children returns, in the long run, between seven and eight dollars to the state.

This year, when the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District is relying upon the state for the increased and equitable funding that will see us through our doldrums into better times, Governor Murkowski has proposed a significant cut in school funding. Please step up and help provide Alaska's children and their parents the most basic service that is expected of state government. Restore the cuts and give serious consideration to implementation of a redress to the imbalance in the area cost differential. I would cheerfully pay the increased taxes needed to fund our educational system.

We all depend upon you as an elected official to take the lead in doing what is right and what works for the citizens of this wonderful state in which we choose to live.

Thanks for your kind attention!

Sincerely,

Ron Keffer

--  
Ronald L. and Ann Keffer  
189 Island View Court  
Homer, Alaska 99603

907-235-8293  
rkeffer@alaska.net

*NO REPLY  
NEEDED*

*Deleted*

Victoria Martin  
530 E 46<sup>th</sup> Pl  
Anchorage AK 99503

Dear Committee Members Fred Dyson, Lydia Greene, Gary Wilkens, Betty Davis, and Gretchen Guess:

This letter is intended to inform you of the great influence that Alyeska Central School has had on my two grandchildren who are students there. I am a grandparent who is raising both children, both are gifted, yet in the Anchorage Schools they are not able to focus on their studies because there is such an atmosphere of violence, for instance, on Friday, there was a shooting at the steps of East High.

The governor is proposing the idea that closing the school will save the state money, but how could that be? It would be costing at least 20% more to educate the students enrolled at Alyeska elsewhere. The students in the rural areas need to be on correspondence, and yes, there are other correspondence courses available, but not like Alyeska's. This school has an individual educational plan for each student. The others send away to North Dakota, and Nebraska, and other states for the lessons, you can't just pick up a phone to get help when you need to explain a lesson to your child.

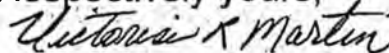
My student, Haylie just attended an Academic Decathlon, the students at Alyeska only had eight weeks to study for it because of a lack of funding. We came in 10<sup>th</sup> out of the 30 schools across the state, and seventh in the 4A division. One of our students, Mariah Warren was the second highest scorer overall, and the other schools had the material to study months before ours did. Does that not speak highly of Alyeska's commitment to academic excellence?

I have been a lifelong Alaskan since 1946; both children were born here. Please show them each of you took the time to study the Governor's proposal and realize shutting this school down is not helping. Isn't the current slogan "No child left behind" something to ponder when considering closing this school that is producing students who focus on academics instead of violence and vandalism?

The Governor also wants to eliminate funding for the sex offenders program, I wonder if he cares about our Alaskan children, will you?

Please forward a copy of this letter to the yearlong Has. Committee for their consideration.

Respectively yours,



Victoria R. Martin

Parent Advisory Council  
Alyeska Central School  
P.O. Box 770190  
Eagle River, Alaska 99577  
(907) 748-4141

Mail Distribution  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

March 14, 2003

Please distribute to the Following:

Governor Murkowski, Lieutenant Governor Loren Leaman, Speaker of the House Pate Kott, Senator Fred Dyson, Senator, Senator Gary Wilken, Senator Bettye Davis, Senator Gretchen Guess, Senator Lyda Green, Senator Con Bunde, Senator Scott Ogan Representative Carl Gatto, Representative Paul Seaton, Representative John Coghill, Representative Kelly Wolf, Representative Les Gara, Representative Mary Kapsner, Representative Bob Lynn, Representative Beverly Masek, Representative Sharon Cissna,

Please save our School,

Alaska will lose the only state mandated correspondence program, which up until the threat of House Bill 174 and Senate Bill 107 has assured all Alaskan families there will always be a correspondence program for those who need it or choose it. There have been many correspondence programs developed over the past few years, and we support their right to exist, they have grown out of the needs of different families and their desires for teaching their students the program of their choice. These programs will lose the resource of purchasing ACS courses for their students. Also, every other correspondence program, because they are not mandated, can choose to close at anytime. ACS and its state mandate assure the unique population of Alaska a quality education choice.

Paula Williams, President  
Parent Advisory Council  
Alyeska Central School

- Excellent track-record
  - Longevity
  - Graduates attend such Universities as Stanford, Duke, Tulane, University of Pennsylvania, Reed and the U of As
  - ACS usually places in the top 4 schools at the Academic Decathlon
- Flexible program for families with multiple children
- Parent Advisor Council
  - Provides a link between parents, students, ACS staff and home teachers.
  - Diverse group of parents from across the state.
  - Support to all Parents
  - Work with parents input to help individual programs to evolve.
  - Wolf Tracks Newsletter
  - Is a voice for parents concerns that influences policies and curriculum
- Specialized Alaskan courses
- Dual Enrollment
- Supplemental Material i.e. computers, special materials, maps, microscopes, calculators, etc.
- Services Provided to Special Needs
- Alternative Education Program
- Warehouse and Print Shop
- Continued Technology
- ACS continues to evolve with the time.
  - 18 online courses available with more being developed
  - Webb site:
    - Grade book Access for parents and students
    - Immediate teacher access via email
    - Course material access
    - Library Access
    - Links to additional educational Webb sites
    - Continually updated courses

By school year 2005/2006 all schools in Alaska will have to comply with the federally mandated no child left behind program. This program requires that all schools have teachers in about 12 core subjects who have to be certified and highly qualified in subject and content for the specific developmental ages they are teaching. Because ACS has been developed and run as a state mandated program with the highest standards it will be able to meet these requirements. Without ACS what will it cost the people of the state when the other correspondence programs are threatened with closure by not being able to meet these standards? What outcry will there be when these other schools close mid-year (Jan. 2005) as they can, not being mandated.

- Closing ACS will not save the state money.
- ASC for the past 5 years has not required the full 5.5 Million.
  - 2002/2003 Allocation 5.50 million vs. cost 3.8 million.
  - 2001/2002 Allocation 5.02 million vs. cost 4.4 million.
  - Revenue generated not included to off set the costs allocated:
    - Grants – Teacher Enhancement 200,000
    - State Grants – 210,000
    - Sales to other Schools/Districts – 100,000
    - Summer School Deposits – 100,000
- Shifting the State funding problem to a District/Borough problem. Pros vs. Cons (children returning to there local school):
  - Overcrowding
  - Cost to build new schools, Increased staff required to support the additional enrollment
  - Lack of funding already existing in the districts/boroughs
  - Increase cost by 20% to the state due to the 80% Correspondence Foundation formula as compared to District/Borough Funded at 100%.
- \$250,000 rent paid for warehouse & office (office rent paid to permanent dividend fund due to ownership). Funds go from one state pocket to another. ACS takes in more than that in revenue & grants.
- Additional Cost to state: ACS summer school Program VS another full semester of district/borough school per student.
- Abolishing the summer school program takes the option of summer school away from students without access to a brick and mortar school denying them an equal education... a civil rights offence. A civil suit could be more expensive than the summer school.
- Additional Cost to state: Student moves to higher funding required area. Example: ACS cost \$3,200 vs. rural schools up to \$16,000 per student.
- ACS has developed 18 of the 29 online courses used by other schools in the state.
- What does ACS provide/benefits vs. other optional/home school/correspondence courses? All K-8 and the majority of high school programs/courses are written and developed by ACS Educators.
  - Teachers for every student per subject.
  - Individual Care
  - Direct Phone Support
  - Road Maps/Lesson Plans
  - Library and Librarian
  - Full Accreditation
  - Every subject area in every grade there is a structural environment.
  - Curriculum has Depth Quality & Consistency
  - Offers Higher Level of Education
  - Advanced Placement courses – English & Calculus fully accredited
  - Summer School Program

P.O. Box 13126  
Trapper Creek, AK. 99683

March 11, 2003

AK. State Legislature  
Representative Fred Dyson  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK. 99801-1182

Dear Representative.

I'm writing about Alyeska Central School. Alyeska is the oldest correspondence school in Alaska, and has been in existence since 1939. This is a correspondence school with fully certified Alaskan teachers. There is a lot of interaction between students, parents, and teachers. My children can call their teachers with concerns they have over their assignments. The school provides a wide variety of courses with up-to-date materials. They even offer some courses on the Internet.

Alyeska is a great school for students all across Alaska. At Alyeska Central School, the students can work at their own pace. If one does not understand a concept, a teacher is always available! This provides the children with self confidence as they are responsible for their own work. The school is *especially needed* for those who do not have access to public schools, those who don't have Internet access, and those people who travel a lot (like Alaskan military families). The U.S.A. Olympic skiing champion, Tommy Moe, was a student at Alyeska Central School! Also, if a student gets sick, one does not have to worry about missing important lesson work or assignments. This was helpful during the flu season, and when my son broke his wrist last year.

We have tried other correspondence programs with little success. At the Mat-Su correspondence program, the students are required to come in once a month. This requirement was not met because we live so far in the bush. At times rural Alaskans can not get to the road system due to weather conditions, break-up, etc. The children also had difficulty reaching their teacher by phone when they had questions about their assignments. The teachers at Alyeska are very nice; they even get to know the students on a personal level.

Alyeska Central School has superior curriculum, more so than the other correspondence school in Mat-Su. Living out in the bush, Internet access is nearly impossible and very costly if it is offered. That is just one of the reasons we do not go with a correspondence school that focuses mainly on the Internet and computers, like Cyber Links.

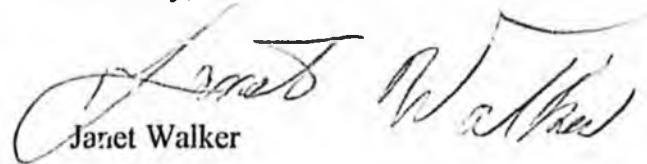
Alyeska Central School IS COST EFFECTIVE! The students send back materials which the next year student can use. The teachers are working to put some courses on disks. This will save cost on postage. The school has over 1,000 students. In addition, money is not spent on sports. To maintain a sports team and transport them across state to play, like most high schools do, costs a lot of money. Alyeska does not have this expense whatsoever!

I know that the education department needs to present ways to save money. Closing Alyeska Central School is not the answer! Here are some suggestions to save money.

The salary of principals and superintendents could be lowered. If teachers, superintendents, and principals were paid the same, the schools would get people who would actually work *for the students (and not for the money)*. Eliminate the sports programs. Education is what is important! Let's keep the money for education budget for worthwhile schools like Alyeska.

Also for additional money for the state, put in a sales tax. Food, fuel, and rent should be exempt!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janet Walker".

Janet Walker

My name is John Scott and I reside near Glacier Bay, Alaska.

I am here to testify against HB 174.

I do NOT support the closure of Alyeska Central School (ACS).

In very general terms all I have ever asked of this State's constitutionally mandated and funded educational system is:

- 1) What subjects are you going to teach my children
- 2) When are you going to teach the subjects
- 3) How will you know if mastery has been achieved
- 4) Will you provide assistance to me as a parent and to my child as a student if mastery has not been achieved

The local REAA school could not provide clear answers to questions 1 through 3 and in several cases refused assistance when we as parents found mastery of subjects being taught was lacking.

As a result we as a family studied what options were available.

ACS provided the only alternative with a 60-year history, with a Legislative charter, that offered accreditation and a complete course catalog and program that we could plan by. They also offered the only experienced distance education staff willing to evaluate student performance and capable of providing assistance. ACS also has the support capable of providing quality course work.

NONE of the other in-state correspondence schools could offer the

1. History and prestige of ACS
2. Accreditation and therefore acceptance by colleges of course work completed
3. Course catalog and program
4. Willing and able staff capable of evaluation of mastery and provision of assistance and support

The proposed closure of ACS smacks of a money raid by the shills of other less qualified and less organized correspondence school programs in the state.

ACS is not redundant. It provides the only acceptable, accredited correspondence school program in the state.

If you are going to push this proposal forward, what are you going to provide or offer to the ACS High School students as an or-equal alternative in their last years of study? How are you going to handle ending the program, meaning how do the current students complete their one-year course of study if their year is up in September and your ax falls in June?

The Republican Party public stand regarding education has been to "leave no children behind" and to "provide choice and alternative to families faced with poor or failing schools (i.e.; better choice and alternatives)" Yet here I sit testifying on a bill which leaves children behind and does not promote choice and does not provide for better alternatives.

Please do not support this bill. If you want to follow this logic you will get rid of the State library (there are three libraries in Juneau alone) or perhaps the State Museum (does not Anchorage or Fairbanks have a museum). I would not support these tongue in cheek proposals and I hope you won't either.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is John Scott and I reside near Glacier Bay, Alaska.

I am here to testify against HB 174.

I do NOT support the closure of Alyeska Central School (ACS).

In my previous testimony before the Education committee I told this body:

- How the local REAA school could not offer an acceptable education for my children.
- I told you how the REAA could not tell us as parents what classes would be offered in a timely manner so we could plan.
- I told you how the REAA school could not tell us how the classes would be taught and would not or could not tell us how mastery of the subject matter would be evaluated.
- They also would not give assurance of assistance to me as a parent or to my children as students if mastery was found lacking. We were actually refused assistance when we as parents pointed out problem areas.

Our family needed *quality choices* and *alternatives* in order for our children not to be left behind. As a result we as a family studied what options were available and found *ACS as our only real alternative.*

*NONE of the other in-state correspondence schools could offer the*

1. **History and prestige of ACS**
2. **ACS's accreditation and therefore acceptance by colleges of course work completed**
3. **A complete course catalog and program to plan by like ACS's**
4. **Willing and able staff capable of evaluation of mastery and provision of assistance and support like ACS's**

As I sat in the gallery last time I testified against this proposal:

- I was struck by the appearance of the assumption (or the attempted assertion by some) that the other correspondence schools in Alaska can offer an equal alternative to ACS for distance education. **I can state categorically that the other available distance education options DO NOT provide an equal educational experience for my children that ACS does.**
- I was struck by the testimony of the Dept. of Education personnel indicating that “they- didn’t want to be in this business” and that other distance education schools could pick up the “slack” and were willing or able to do so. What business does the Department want to be in and **again I can state categorically that the other available distance education options are NOT ABLE to provide an equal educational experience for my children that ACS does.** The only thing that these other providers were willing to do was to take the state’s money for per pupil education cost and they wanted me to sign up before the count date in October so they could get the money.
- I was struck by the emphasis on and the assertion that money could be saved by closure of ACS. **If you close ACS then the state’s contribution toward my children’s education will rise from about \$3,800 each to over \$10,000 each.** There are other children that I know of in ACS’s student body who will have to go to boarding school and their cost to the state will rise to over \$15,000 each. What kind of accounting rules are used here?? Is Arthur Anderson lurking in the Administrations fiscal department??

ACS is not redundant. It provides the only acceptable, accredited correspondence school program in the state.

If you are going to push this proposal forward, what are you going to provide or offer to the ACS High School students as an or-equal alternative in their last years of study? How are you going to handle ending the program, meaning how do the current students complete their one-year course of study if their year is up in September and your ax falls in June?

The Republican Party public stand regarding education has been to "leave no children behind" and to "provide choice and alternative to families faced with poor or failing schools (i.e.; better choice and alternatives)" Yet here I sit testifying on a bill which leaves children behind and does not promote choice and does not provide for better alternatives. Excuse me if I take this personally but it is my children whose education this bill proposes to beggar and my children's choices and alternatives for education that this bill removes.

Please do not support this bill. I as a citizen would much rather see this body legislate that the other distance education alternatives be brought to accreditation standards, that they provide a complete course catalog so parents and students can plan and that they be staffed and supported to provide quality course work and assistance to parents, including evaluation of student's work and mastery of subject matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Subject: Alyeska Central School**

**Date: Fri, 28 Mar 2003 14:46:16 -0900**

**From: "Kathy Hanson" <kathyh@bethel.uaf.edu>**

**To: Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us**

P.O. Box 22  
Bethel, AK 99559

March 28, 2003

Dear Members of the HESS Committee:

I was unable to speak during the public testimony yesterday but would like to offer my thoughts on the closure of Alyeska Central School. I have been an educator in southwest Alaska for 25 years and am currently on the Bethel Advisory School Board. I have tutored students who were students through Alyeska Central School and have found that the quality of the program is very high.

Many students in southwest Alaska have been served by Alyeska over the years; students who were unable to attend their regular village school due to pregnancy, extended illness, expulsion, school closure or other personal reasons. The services the school provides to these hard-to-reach students in our region cannot be duplicated by other programs. We do not have acceptable connectivity to the internet in the southwest region to make internet schools an option and many parents are not willing to send their children away to boarding schools anymore. Alyeska Central school, with its over 30 year history as a correspondence school, has a proven track record with rural families. Alyeska is not glamorous or sexy. It is low-tech, the quality is reliable, and the program is affordable. To dismantle Alyeska in favor of the assumption that there are acceptable alternatives does not make sense.

In this day and age when we have such a diverse population in our state and many stresses that are impacting families and schools, a state that is truly interested in making quality education accessible to all of its students will provide a number of alternatives. In Alaska, Alyeska Central School is an alternative that has shown it works and it is no more expensive than any other school in the state. So, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Please keep Alyeska Central School. Please make education a higher priority in our state.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hanson

To: Senator Fred Dyson  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska  
800 342 2199  
Fax: 907 465 4587

Date: April 1, 2003

**RE: SB 107 Correspondence Schools / Closure of Alyeska Central School**

Dear Senator Dyson,

Alyeska Central School is very important to my family. My children have been enrolled with ACS for 12 years. When they first started school we were overjoyed that there was a choice. In our remote location not only could they choose to learn at home, but they could choose a program other than what the local district offered. President Bush has been an advocate of choice in education, and I agree with him that being able to choose which school to attend has a profoundly positive effect on the quality of a child's education. If you eliminate ACS, a large part of this choice will be gone. There is no other state-wide correspondence program like ACS in Alaska.

**The Governor and the Department want to close ACS. WHY?**

**To Save Money?**

**NO.** It has been proven over the course of the last few weeks of testimony that the closure of ACS will not save the state money.

**To Decrease Duplication?**

**NO.** Anyone who takes the time to look closely at the state-wide correspondence programs offered in Alaska today will understand that duplication is not an issue. As I said earlier, there is no other correspondence program like ACS available to all Alaskan students. Most of the other state-wide programs duplicate each other.

**ACS is Contrary to Department Policy?**

What is the policy? If the Department of Education no longer wishes to operate schools for Alaska's students, what about Mt. Edgecumbe High School? Mt. Edgecumbe offers choice and gives students who might not have it, opportunity... just as ACS does, except that ACS students can stay home with their families, and an education at ACS costs the state far less money.

**By supporting ACS, you support the Alaskan family and excellence in education. You support an excellent accredited program that has proven itself over time. Please vote NO on this bill.**

Sincerely,



Valery White  
Whale Pass, Alaska 99950  
907 846 5223  
wvpval@starband.net

POSTAGE PAID

March 19, 2003

Dear Legislator,

House Bill 174 is not logical, nor reasonable. It's pure folly!

Instead of bragging to the rest of the nation about the superior educational resource he has in Alyeska Central School, Governor Murkowski is trying to abolish it! Why? It is overwhelmingly obvious that HB 174 makes no sense! Alaskans from all over the state have been testifying that closing ACS will not save any money and would be a huge mistake. The DOE says it's not just a budget issue, but a policy issue...and the DOE doesn't want to be in the business. The business of what? I thought that's what the DOE is for—to provide Alaskans with the best education possible! If the DOE doesn't want ACS, then kill HB174 and write another bill that releases ACS from the DOE, but doesn't close it!

To reiterate some of the testimony: ACS is the ONLY state-mandated correspondence school. It's been here for sixty-plus years! It is the ONLY fully accredited correspondence school. Some of the other schools have recently applied for accreditation, but it's a three-to-five year process, and they don't have it yet. ACS is the ONLY correspondence school that has a proven track record with college admissions offices—they know that certified teachers have graded student's work, as opposed to getting a transcript of grades by Mom. It's the ONLY correspondence school in Alaska that has a full staff of teachers certified in every subject that provide direct support to students and home teachers. It's the ONLY correspondence school that writes many of its own courses and sells them to other state schools (check out most of the Alaska Studies courses and Alaska Online Consortium courses, folks) and has won accolades and awards for said courses. It's the ONLY correspondence school that provides summer school—critical to all those students who need just another credit or two to graduate. ACS is the ONLY correspondence school that already meets the No Child Left Behind requirements. It is the ONLY choice for many rural and special needs students.

HB174 will only leave more children behind. It will possibly put the state into litigation for discrimination and civil rights suits (remember Molly Hooch?). Closing Alyeska Central School will cost Alaska more money than leaving it open. We'll all pay the price if we lose this precious educational resource. HB174 is ridiculous. It's folly. I urge you to do the smart thing—make it fiction!

Respectfully,



Sheila Symons  
Central, AK



Michael & Esther Jeffery  
Post Office Box 808  
Barrow, AK 99723

April 2, 2003

Senator Fred Dyson, Chair  
Health, Education & Social Services Committee  
Alaska Senate  
Mail Stop: 3100  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

By Fax

Re: Support for Alyeska Central School; Opposition to SB107

Dear Senator Dyson:

I just wanted you to know I have appreciated the opportunity to work with you on the Statewide Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Steering Committee. I respect very much the solid contribution you have been making to the FASD issue and also the enormous workload you must be facing at this time. So I will keep these comments brief.

As a parent of children 14, 16, and 18 who are students with Alyeska Central School over the last 5 years, I oppose SB 107 and I strongly support continued authorization for the Alyeska Central School:

- It's accredited since 1979. We have been with Alyeska for 5 years now. Our oldest daughter is 18 and applying to colleges. She's already been admitted to 2 very selective schools on the East Coast and we're still waiting for another response. Having an accredited school with a proven track record known to college admissions officers is REALLY important.
- Closing Alyeska won't save money. The foundation formula will follow the student. Transfer to another correspondence school would cost the state the same. Many students would become full-time students in rural communities like Barrow, or they may go to a state boarding school. Their education will cost many times the Alyeska rate in state funds.

Support for Alyeska Central School  
April 2, 2003  
Page Two

- Alyeska teachers are **ALASKAN**, providing us with Alaska-oriented lesson plans and personal assistance. They are available by email, phone and letter. They respond personally to our children's work with solid feed-back and credible grading. We have been unhappy with courses from out of state when we have used them.
- Alyeska teachers are **certified in their fields**. Alyeska provides a critical choice for parents and for rural districts to comply with the **No Child Left Behind Law** at minimal cost.
- Alyeska is **year round** allowing Alaskan students with different lifestyles and schedules to still complete their work.
- Alyeska uses **cutting-edge technology**. There is an interactive web site for many courses and Alyeska developed 18 of 29 of the courses for the Alaska Online Consortium. Our daughter is now taking an Advanced Placement English class via the internet from Alyeska.

There is another way to save Alyeska Central School and still trim the budget. The Legislature could save \$1.2 million by simply ending extra Legislative appropriations for the summer school program Alyeska has been providing to students across the state. That would eliminate an important service, but it would save real money and still preserve a great institution. On the other hand, passing SB 107 would wipe out a fine, Alaska-grown product. Please vote against SB 107.

Thanks for taking time to read these comments!

Sincerely,



Michael I. Jeffery

cc. Senator Donny Olson  
Representative Reggie Jolie  
Frank Homan, Special Assistant, Office of the Governor  
Margaret McKinnon, Acting Director, Alyeska Central School

Alaska Committee, Commission on Schools  
Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and Universities

3210 Seawind Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99516-3493  
Phone 907-344-3364  
Email: [stowell@Alaska.com](mailto:stowell@Alaska.com)



January 2, 2003

Tom Kleaver  
Raven Correspondence School  
4762 Old Airport Way  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Dear Tom Kleaver:

Enclosed is the information on your school's Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASCU) and Universities accreditation rating for the 2002-03 school year. To determine this rating the Alaska Committee at their most recent meeting reviewed the Annual Report of Raven Correspondence School submitted to determine the school's compliance with the NASCU standards as well as the Alaska State Standards for Quality Schools. The rating was then recommended to the NASCU's Commission on Schools at the 2002 winter meeting and was validated on December 10, 2002.

Raven Correspondence School has been accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and Universities for the 2002/2003 school year and awarded **CANDIDATE PROVISIONAL** status. The report of the Alaska State Committee is enclosed. Please pay special attention to deviations noted on the report as the Committee requests an explanation of how your school is moving toward correcting the noted area in your 2003/2004 report.

Candidacy is granted to schools that would otherwise be approved for membership with the understanding that the self-evaluation is to be completed within three years of the date of submitting the initial annual report to the Alaska State Committee. Candidate members are members in good standing with the exception of the right to vote.

The required date for your school to complete its self-evaluation using a performance-based process is 2005. Should this date be less than three years in the future it is time to start the process.

You are invited to contact the Alaska Committee Secretary, Stowell Johnstone, about any accreditation questions you may have.

Stowell Johnstone, Secretary

Enclosure: Report on the accreditation status of Raven Correspondence School.

80 (School Number)

The Alaska Committee  
of the  
Schools Commission, Northwest Association of Schools and of Colleges and Universities

Report on the accreditation status of Raven Correspondence School for the 2002/2003 school year

Standards

X Indicates a deviation to Standards

|     | 00 | 01 | 02 |      | 00 | 10 | 02 |
|-----|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| I   |    |    |    | VI   |    |    |    |
| II  |    |    |    | VII  |    |    |    |
| III |    |    |    | VIII |    |    |    |
| IV  |    |    |    | IX   |    |    |    |
| V   |    |    |    | X    |    |    |    |

| School Status         | 00 | 01 | 02 |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|
| Approved              |    |    |    |
| Approved with Comment |    |    |    |
| Advised               |    |    |    |
| Warned                |    |    |    |
| Dropped               |    |    |    |

General Comments and Recommendations

NASCUSTANDARD (# ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NASCUSTANDARD (# ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NASCUSTANDARD (# ) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Alaska State Standards for Quality Schools School meets all state standards.

\_\_\_\_\_

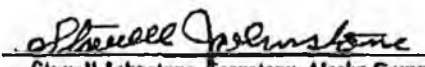
Commendations \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation: School must complete a self-evaluation  
2005

\_\_\_\_\_

  
Len Daenzer, Chair, Alaska Committee

  
Stowell Johnstone, Secretary, Alaska Committee



# FAX

Yukon Koyukuk School District  
Administrative & Support Offices  
4762 Old Airport Way  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-4456

Christopher Simon  
Superintendent

Telephone: (907) 374-9400  
Fax: (907) 374-9440

Atlatkat School  
Atlatkat, AK  
(907) 888-2205  
Fax: (907) 888-2260

Andrew K. Demostri School  
Nabato, AK  
(907) 886-2204  
Fax: (907) 888-2340

Bettles Field School  
Bettles Field, AK  
(907) 892-5101  
Fax: (907) 892-5102

Ella B. Vorneth School  
Koyukuk, AK  
(907) 827-2212  
Fax: (907) 927-2251

Jimmy Huntington School  
Hunka, AK  
(907) 829-2205  
Fax: (907) 829-2270

Johnny Oldman School  
Hughes, AK  
(907) 888-2204  
Fax: (907) 888-2220

Katag School  
Katag, AK  
(907) 534-2204  
Fax: (907) 534-2227

MHS Gladys Dart School  
Manley Hot Springs, AK  
(907) 672-3202  
Fax: (907) 672-3201

Merrilene A. Kenges School  
Ruby, AK  
(907) 488-4485  
Fax: (907) 488-4444

Minto School  
Minto, AK  
(907) 788-7212  
Fax: (907) 788-7282

Raven Correspondence  
Fairbanks, AK  
Anchorage, AK  
Juneau, AK  
(907) 374-9401  
Fax: (907) 374-9440

Wiseman School  
Coldfoot, AK  
(907) 878-5207

## FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: Wes Kellen FROM: Tom Klever

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: 04.03.2003

FAX NUMBER: 465.4587 TOTAL NO OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: (3)

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ SENDER'S REFERENCE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

RE: RCS Accreditation YOUR REFERENCE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

URGENT  FOR REVIEW  PLEASE COMMENT  PLEASE REPLY

### NOTES/COMMENTS

As per your request. It is interesting that people know all about our accreditation status. As far as we are concerned, the letter says we are accredited.

Our report (self-evaluation) is under way & will be submitted sometime next year.

Thank,

Tom Klever

The mission of the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, in active partnership with its village members, is to provide our students with the skills and knowledge necessary to become contributing members of their families, communities and society.

**TO: Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee Members**  
**RE: SB 107 (& HB 174)**

**SUBJECT: Closure of Alyeska Central School**

Please accept this written testimony in opposition to SB 107 (& HB 174) in which the Governor proposes to close the Alyeska Central School effective July 1, 2003.

I realize that budget reductions must be made in most departments, but I must object strongly to the lack of notice & the timing with regard to this specific program cut.

I am the parent of two high school juniors who are accelerated, non-traditional learners. They have both been in the gifted & talented programs since kindergarten. Since the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the services provided to them have decreased each & every year to a virtual non-existence due to continual budget cuts. As such, we and many other similarly situated parents have been forced to find alternative ways to provide an appropriate education for our children. This, I would also like to point out, comes at great personal expense to us. We have found such avenues through programs such as the University of Alaska and Alyeska Central School.

The biggest problem I have with this bill is due to the timing & lack of notice. The high school has already finished the class selection process for the next school year. The choices we have made in this current (02-03) school year and for next (03-04) year have been based upon the ability to take ACS classes last summer (which they both did) as well as this summer. We have planned for the past two years for an early high school graduation and early entrance into college. If this bill passes at this time it will scuttle these plans.

Also with regard to timing, the governor introduced this bill on March 6, 2003, which was five days AFTER the final deadline for application to take the last set of courses offered through ACS. Now this option is no longer available to us either. Had we been given an adequate amount of notice we could have planned for this and made some other arrangements.

These kids have worked hard to get where they are & are very active in planning their futures. It is not fair to balance the budget at the expense of students who are so deserving of our support. These kids will be our future leaders, lawmakers, teachers, and other productive members of society.

Please find an alternative way to make the necessary cuts. In time I realize that this program may have to go, & I can accept that. What I cannot understand is doing it without giving hundreds of parents & kids enough time to properly plan for it.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Terri Begley-Allen  
6907 Sunny Drive  
Juneau, AK 99801

discussed Alyeska Central School facts sheet.

**Subject:** Previously discussed Alyeska Central School facts sheet.

**Date:** Thu, 3 Apr 2003 18:44:19 EST


**From:** CoffyCreed@aol.com

**To:** Senator\_Fred\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us

These are the facts that you requested in the promise that you would copy them and distribute them to the rest of the Senate HESS Committee for the meeting concerning SB 107. Thank you kindly.

Sincerely,

Ayaire Cantil-Voorhees

 Closing ACS will not save the state money.doc

**Name:** Closing ACS will not save the state money.doc

**Type:** WINWORD File  
(application/msword)

**Encoding:** base64

**Download Status:** Not downloaded with message

## Closing ACS will not save the state money.

- ASC, for the past 5 years, has not required the full 5.5 Million.
  - 2002/2003 cost: 3.8 million.
  - 2001/2002 cost: 4.4 million.
- Shifting ACS' students to District/Borough schools would cause:
  - **Increased costs by 20%** to the state compared to the 80% that ACS gets.
  - **Overcrowding** (About 750 ACS students reside in the state's largest five districts, and are most likely to return to local schools.)
  - Cost to build **new schools** and to hire **new staff** when small communities suddenly have enough students who are interested in going to a local school.
  - An increase in the lack of funding already existing in small schools.
- At least 1/3 of our 200 seniors are not going to be able to graduate by the deadline.
  - ACS seniors who do not graduate by June 30<sup>th</sup> will each either cost the state another full semester of classes, or will drop out of the school system altogether.
- Rent for warehouse/office, \$250,000, is paid to permanent dividend fund. **Funds go from one state pocket to another.** ACS takes in more than that in revenue & grants. (ACS makes \$400,000 from grants, sales to other schools/districts, and summer school deposits.)
- **No other correspondence school:**
  - Is fully accredited (others are applying, but IF they are accepted, it won't be or another 3-5 years.)
  - Offers dual enrollment
  - Is mandated to enroll students mid school-year
  - Has the facilities and know-how to aid special-needs children. ACS has a certified resource (special needs) teacher.
  - Has the ample teachers, or the support that ACS offers. This makes ACS the only correspondence school capable of meeting the 2005 No Child Left Behind criteria.
  - A summer school; without the ACS summer school, students without access to a brick and mortar school are denied an equal education.
  - Offers participation in as many unique programs, such as National (DC) and State (Juneau) Close-Up, Academic Decathlon, Presidential Classroom, Geography-B, Battle of the Books, and Lego League Tournament.
- These things, along with ACS's Parent Advisory Council, Library, the individual support teachers give to their students, structure of lesson plans, optional flexibility, advanced, Your Choice, online and traditional courses and a proven track record, **make ACS dynamic, unparalleled and absolutely unique.**
- ACS has developed **18** of the 29 online courses used by other schools in the state.
- Many other correspondence schools, such as IDEA and PACE use ACS-written courses; so closing ACS will harm all Alaskan correspondence schools.

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

The Honorable Fred Dyson  
State Senate  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Dyson,

My family is very distressed about the proposed closing of Alyeska Central School (Senate Bill 107) as it is our children's only educational option. We live on Shelter Island. Although our home is within the limits of the City and Borough of Juneau, we have no access to regular public school. We have schooled our children successfully for 5 years with the guidance of Alyeska Central School.

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

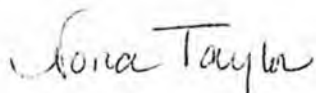
ACS is a unique educational resource and the best one offered to students in remote locations when no other school is available. No other program offers my children what ACS does. ACS offers Accreditation, Certified Teachers, and Curriculum written by Alaskan teachers for Alaskan students. It provides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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nora Taylor".

Nora Taylor