

# Alaska State Legislature

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*Representative John Coghill*

## Sponsor Statement House Bill 218

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***"Relating to funding for school districts operating secondary school boarding programs"***

HB 218 broadens present law to allow secondary boarding programs the opportunity to obtain reimbursement for particular costs that currently are unavailable.

Conversations with people throughout Alaska indicate that we have a growing problem with unavailable classes and restricted educational opportunities in Alaska's isolated rural regions. Many people have indicated that regional secondary boarding schools are a good solution.

In addition to offering rural students a greater availability of expertise in specialized subject matter, boarding schools are also a viable option for non-traditional students who are failing or dropping out of traditional school settings from urban areas as well.

Under the current law, school districts that operate a boarding facility are able to obtain a per student room and board stipend rate from the Department of Education and certain incurred costs are able to be reimbursed.

However, this cost ease is only available for students who do not have the opportunity to attend school in their own district, and instead travel to a boarding school to continue their education.

For students who desire to attend a boarding school, but already have an available school in their own district, they are still eligible to attend a boarding school, but do not qualify for the school to be able to obtain the room and board stipend or cost reimbursements from the Department.

HB 218 would not replace any existing boarding programs. By allowing the Department of Education to pay a regional stipend to school districts which offer dormitory facilities, it would expand the opportunities for existing as well as new boarding schools in Alaska.