

Regulation Specifics and Frontier’s Response.

Regulation language

What it means

Application to Frontier

Approve or Disapprove

Article 4 is amended to read:
Article 4 [STATEWIDE]
Correspondence Study Programs

The word “statewide” is removed from the article thereby applying these regulations to ALL correspondence programs, in-district, statewide charter or otherwise.

Frontier will be required to comply with all the regulations governing statewide correspondence schools.

Disapprove. We believe that oversight of in-district schools should remain with the local school district.

4 AAC 33.405 is repealed and readopted to read:
4 AAC 33.405 Applicability. 4 AAC 33.405-33.490 apply to a correspondence study program offered by a public school district, including statewide correspondence study programs.

This broadens the scope of state authority to include in-district correspondence programs.

Frontier will be required to comply with all the regulations governing statewide correspondence schools.

Disapprove. We believe that oversight of in-district schools should remain with the local school district.

4 AAC 33.410 is repealed and readopted to read:
4 AAC 33.410. Purpose. The purpose of 4 AAC 33.410 – 4 AAC 33.490 is to
(1) ensure that standards for curriculum, instruction, and student assessment for correspondence study programs are consistent with state standards;
(2) ensure the spending of public money by the program is consistent with the public interest; and
(3) establish reporting requirements for districts enrolling out-of-district students and part-time students.

Clarification of purpose of regulation

This particular change has no effect on Frontier as the school already functions in a manner consistent with this language.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs. We believe, however, that to accomplish #2 (ensure that the spending of public money is consistent with the public interest), that public interest must be defined *locally*, not by the state.

4 AAC 33.420 is repealed and readopted to read:
4 AAC 33.420. Department Approval
....

The text requires each district to provide a written statement to the department assuring that the district will comply with 4 AAC 33.405- 4 AAC 33.440

No effect on Frontier

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs. We do believe that if a district offers an in-district correspondence study program, then in-district students may not enroll in a statewide program. In this manner, local authority governs the education of a community's children.

4 AAC 33.421 is repealed and readopted to read:
4 AAC 33.421. Correspondence study program requirements.
(a) A correspondence study program must conform with statewide goals and standards, as set out in 4 AAC 04.010 – 4 AAC 04.900. For each student, the program will assign a certificated teacher who is responsible for the Individual Learning Plan under (d) of this section. For each course offered for credit by the program, the program will assign a certificated teacher who has the primary responsibility for the course."

This will require that EACH course a student takes must be approved and transcribed by a certificated teacher *in that course subject.*

We already utilize an Academic Advisor, who is a certificated teacher, to review ILPs, approve them and transcribe grades. Adding an additional layer of approval will lead to one of two scenarios -- 1. rote signing off on courses without the intended scrutiny due to time and money constraints, or 2. so much additional time and money spent on compliance that fewer courses will be approved (taking away freedom of curriculum choice) and tremendously increased costs to the school for staffing. This change does not insure any meaningful instructional impact. Further, how might this apply to brick-and-mortar correspondence study programs?

Disapprove. We have the oversight through our charter (the terms of which were negotiated with both the State Department of Education and the Anchorage School District) via our Academic Advisors.

We believe this is inconsistent with the charter school law as well, which gives us freedom of curriculum choices.

4 AAC 33.421 (b)
". . . the program must use curriculum materials, including textbooks and other instructional aids, that have been reviewed by the school board of the district, are of the same quality as those materials that the district offers in the district's other programs and are in compliance with AS 14.03.090 and AS 14.18.060."

This requires a review and approval by the district school board of ALL materials used for instruction.

Everything will need to be reviewed. Practically, we don't see how this can be accomplished without greatly diminishing the resources to which we currently have access - which is everything! Again two scenarios are possible: 1. the district will delegate the responsibility to the school as is done now, thereby effecting no change, or 2. a new mechanism for review and approval will have to be established at great costs in time and money, costs which will be borne by Frontier.

Disapprove. Again, inconsistent with our negotiated charter, *which is a legal and binding contract!* An inconsistent with charter school law.

4 AAC 33.421 (c)
An employee of the district, including a certificated staff member, may not advocate religious, partisan, sectarian, or denominational doctrine as part of the employee's instructional or other duties. Nothing in this subsection prevents a parent from providing supplemental instruction to the [parent's own child using materials of the parent's choice, if the materials were not purchased with money provided by the department or district.

A statement regarding use of religious instructional material.

Consistent with Frontier's current practice.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.
Consistent with current practice.

4 AAC 33.421 (d)
The program must provide an individual learning plan for each student. The plan required by this subsection must provide for (1) . . . a statement requiring oversight by a certificated teacher

Consistent with current Frontier practice

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.

(2)an ongoing assessment plan that includes assessments that target instruction and measure student proficiency towards achievement of standards adopted by reference in 4 AAC 04.140.

There is no clear definition of what this means. The districts will interpret it as they wish.

Each ILP, per our charter, must outline means of evaluation for each course studied. We already have in place a requirement for tracking progress. The district would be correct and within the boundaries of the regulation to require up to three or more formative assessments per week per child. However, the costs in time and money would be prohibitive. There is not the capacity at the State level to oversee compliance. We question whether the districts should be held to a higher standard than the statewide programs are held to now.

Disapprove. We believe that to require assessment will lead to a uniform means of evaluation that is inconsistent with the freedom we have as a charter school to define our program and would be detrimental to the overall educational program for our students. We believe in demonstrating progress and mastering standards. In fact, we have developed software to allow families to match curriculum to standards and assess mastery as appropriate for each course and each student. We have defined a program that is results-based vs. validated by any singular form of assessment.

4 AAC 33.421(d)
(3) for monitoring of each student by the assigned certificated teacher; the monitoring must include at least monthly teacher-student or parent-teacher contact and quarterly reviews of the student's work or progress."

Monthly meetings (by phone or in person) with the Academic Advisors.

This requirement may increase the time spent demonstrating that learning is taking place. Many of our families already meet this requirement by choice. Others do not find it necessary. We have always maintained that we will not create "hoops" for the sake of hoops and this is a prime example. We encourage meaningful contact that benefits student achievement. We abhor meaningless requirements that serve only to generate data. Additionally, this mandate will increase the number of Academic Advisors employed to oversee our student population. Any increased costs will be deducted from student allotments.

Disapprove. We approve of the concept that Academic Advisors maintain contact at a level appropriate for each child. We have built into our program a number of 'triggers' that initiate contact with a family including performance on standardized tests, progression through purchased correspondence curricula, or activity on the student account (either no purchases or requisitions that seem awry for one reason or another.)

4 AAC 33.421 (d)
(4)...a statement regarding the assignment of grades

Consistent with current Frontier practice.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.

4 AAC 33.421 (d)
(5) a transcript that includes the source of any course taken by the student that was not offered or approved by the governing body of the district and for which no public funding was provided; the transcript shall note whether the student's mastery of the content of the course was approved by the district as meeting a requirement for graduation."

If a student takes a class such as AP World History, not currently offered by the district, the transcript would have to show the source of the course.
The district is required to approve mastery of the course content without, apparently, approving the course.

The ASD transcripts do not allow this type of information to be recorded on them per se. This seems to be technically impossible to accomplish. So the upshot is, these types of courses will be disallowed or may not count toward graduation or they will be shoe-horned to fit into the current course definition that does not accurately reflect the class. Further, if the course was not offered or approved by the district, how could mastery of the content be approved? The other possible scenario is that the in-district schools will be given carte blanche freedom to "approve" classes, which would effectively be no change in the current system.

Disapprove. A student's transcript should reflect, as specifically as possible, the courses taken. Approval of the course content, the source of the curriculum along with the delivery of curriculum and means of mastery are all defined in a student's ILP which is developed by the parent or guardian and approved by the Academic Advisor as outlined in the charter/contract Frontier has negotiated with the district and the state. This is an unfunded mandate that is not achievable given IT limitations.

4 AAC 33.421 (d)
(6) a signed agreement between the certificated teacher assigned by the correspondence study program and one or more parents of each student that verifies that
(a) the student and parent have the same right to access the district appeal process as students and parents in the district's other programs;
(B) the textbooks or other curriculum materials and the course of study are appropriate for the student, aligned to state standards, and comply with AS 14.03.090 and 14.18.060; and
(C) curriculum materials are aligned to state standards, in compliance with AS 14.03.090 and 14.18.060, and have been reviewed by a certificated teacher of all textbooks and other curriculum materials for each student.

This looks to be an overlay of duplicitous bureaucracy.

It requires parents to sign yet another document.

The goals inherent in this requirement are already achieved through the program developed by Frontier in its charter. This would require more paperwork and is, in fact, not a reflection of actual practice for a charter school, see next column.

Disapprove. The appeal process within a charter school is not the same as that for parents in a brick and mortar school due to the governance structure. Each charter school is required to have a clearly defined policy for appeals, which Frontier does. The language in part (B) is the very core of how a correspondence school functions and signing a paper to that effect is unnecessary. As for part (C), the language is confusing and requiring a signature on something that is a requirement is again, unnecessary.

Additionally, not all students have parents; some are enrolled by guardians. Any language referring to parents needs to acknowledge guardians as well.

4 AAC 33.421(e)
. . . a statement regarding mandatory participation in statewide student assessments

All Frontier students are required to participate in the high -stakes testing

Per our charter, Frontier already complies.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.

4 AAC 33.421 (f)
A district that offers a correspondence program must have an open enrollment policy for the program for the entire school year.

Students would be eligible to enroll at any time during the year, though the funding is based upon a per-student allocation calculated during a count period in October.

Frontier complies with this already, though students who enroll after the count period do not get a student allotment. It does increase the workload of our staff; it does incur unfunded expenses. Additionally, each charter school's enrollment has a cap beyond which it cannot enroll.

Disapprove. While this is the practice at Frontier, a regulation cannot be adopted that counters the enrollment cap that charter schools are subject to.

4 AAC 33.421 (g) (1-12)
... this section clearly outlines limitations on how the student allotments can be spent.

Those listed in the proposed regulations are consistent with the procurement list published by Frontier

The spending limitations have no affect on Frontier's current functioning.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.

4 AAC 33.421 (h)
A correspondence study program, or a parent through a fund account under 4 AAC 33.422, may contract with a private individual to provide tutoring to a student in a subject described in 4 AAC 4.140, fine arts, music or physical education, if (1) the instruction is not provided by a private or sectarian educational institution;

This prohibits a family from using any number of well-qualified instructional opportunities such as private instruction provided by music teachers, artists, local gyms etc if they are associated with a business. It also appears to prohibit taking classes at Alaska Pacific University

The language is ambiguous here. The assumption is that the prohibition is against private schools, but it's not clear.

Disapprove. The intent and the language is too ambiguous.

4 AAC 33.421 (h)
(2) the instruction is part of the student's individual learning plan under (d) of this section

No expenditures are approved unless they are tied directly to instruction described in a student's ILP

Disapprove. Unnecessary language.

4 AAC 33.421 (h)
(3) a certified teacher who is highly qualified under 4 AAC 04.210 to teach the subject or the grade level, if applicable, and who is employed by the program, has the primary responsibility to plan, instruct and evaluate the learning of the student in the subject.

The intent of this language is not clear. It appears to say that a parent may contract with a private individual if . . . a highly qualified teacher has the primary responsibility to . . . instruct. . . This is, at best, contradictory.

The effect on Frontier is unknown since the meaning is unknown.

Disapprove. The language is very unclear as to the intent of this regulation. In no case in any of the correspondence schools does the teacher have "primary" responsibility for planning, instructing and evaluating a student. It is always shared with the parent

4 AAC 33.421 (i)
The total money spent on fine arts, music and physical education for the student in a correspondence program, whether spent by the district or the parent through a fund account under 4 AAC 33.422, may not exceed

This is the issue which seems to have driven the rewriting of this entire section of administrative code. Statewide correspondence school advocates desired that the spending limitation be applied across the board to ALL correspondence schools

Frontier has never placed a dollar amount limitation on spending for fine arts, music and/or P.E. The Academic Policy Committee has given authority to the Principal to evaluate all requests for more than 15% of the student allotment which,

Disapprove. Creating an arbitrary "limit" may result in diminishing the authority the Principal has to deny expenditures for a particular student who clearly requires more core instruction.

(1) 15 percent of the base student allocation provided in AS 17.17.470, unless the governing body of the district has adopted a policy that provides for a limit of more than 15 percent but less than 25 percent; or

within the state – in-district and charter schools included. This language is very generous in that it allows 15-25% of the base student allocation to be spent. Given that correspondence school students generate only 80% of the base student allocation for their school, and that the district within which a charter school functions receives right around 4% of that amount, 15 - 24.9% of the original 100% funding is more than adequate.

in these regulations, is known as the fund account. This number is considerably less than the 15% of the base student allotment.

It is Frontier’s belief that the parent/guardian, the Academic Advisor and the Principal, together, can best assess the value of fine arts, music and/or P.E. instruction for every child.

Being under the direct authority and oversight of the local school district has allowed Frontier to allocate non-core funding as most appropriate for each individual student.

Finally, the school board for the local district, through the local administration, has set clear parameters on guidelines for spending. Since no private school students are enrolled in Frontier, there is never a case where a student’s entire fund account is used for fine arts, music and/or P.E. instruction.

4 AAC 33.421 (i)
(2) if the student achieved a score of proficient or above in the previous school year on the reading, writing and math standards-based assessments under 4 AAC.06.739, 25 percent of the base student allocation provided in AS 14.17.470

It appears that part (1) allows for 15-24.9%, while part (2) provides the allowance for 25%

See discussion on part (1) above.

Disapprove. This seems silly given that the language of part (1) allows for up to 24.9% . . .

Perhaps the intent is to give the impression that students making adequate progress academically may utilize a greater percentage of their base student allocation on non-core electives, but the reality is that there is very little difference.

4 AAC 33. 422 is amended to read:
4 AAC 33.422 Fund Accounts.
. . . this section clarifies how student allotments may be utilized.

This entire section, as rewritten reflects actual practices at Frontier, EXCEPT in that it removes the district as the governing authority for how educational dollars are spent in their district and gives that authority to the state.

Consistent with Frontier’s current practices.

Disapprove. Frontier maintains that the authority for governance of an in-district school should remain with the district.

4 AAC 33.426 is amended to read:
4 AAC 33.426. Core course requirements.

... Statements outlining that students in correspondence schools must take at least 50% of their coursework in defined core subjects, unless the student is a senior and does not need that many core subjects to meet graduation requirements.

4 AAC 33.430 is repealed and readopted to read:

4 AAC 33.430. Enrollment of students.
... a statement clarifying that students may not count as more than 1.0 full-time equivalent for state funding purposes either through dual enrollment in a correspondence program and a district brick and mortar school or through dual enrollment in a correspondence program and a private school.

4 AAC 33.430 is repealed and readopted to read:

4 AAC 33.440. Reporting requirements: [STATEWIDE] correspondence and part-time students.

... this requires a report to the state detailing student enrollment.

4 AAC 33.460 (a) is repealed and readopted to read:

4 AAC 33.460. Program review.
(a) The department may monitor correspondence study programs to ensure compliance with the requirements of 4 AAC 33.405-4

The language mirrors that of Frontier's in the definition of core subjects.

The intent seems to be to address the matter of private school students enrolling in a correspondence program in order to access funding for fine arts, music and/or P.E.

No double-dipping rule – This regulation again addresses the issue of using the correspondence programs as a veiled voucher system.

This introduces yet another report that will take time and personnel with which to comply.

This singular sentence takes away the absolute “must” monitor” by the department to ensure compliance of correspondence programs to and replaces it with “may” monitor” to ensure compliance.

This regulation is consistent with the definition of “core” used at Frontier, but since Frontier does not enroll part-time students, it is not really relevant to the situation at Frontier.

Frontier enrolls only dually enrolls with local brick and mortar schools and never exceeds 1.0 FTE per student.

Frontier currently maintains this information through the district's SMS system.

Frontier currently undergoes a very thorough annual review by the local school board to ensure compliance with all statutes, terms of the charter contract and applicable state regulations.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.

Frontier was founded on the premise that the homeschool programs should never serve as a veiled voucher system for private school students. We believe it is this abuse of the programs that the regulation is addressing.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.

Approve of the concept, but only as it applies to Statewide Correspondence Programs.

DISAPPROVE . It is quite clear that local school districts will monitor each correspondence program within their districts to ensure compliance with all that governs their functioning. That the department would give itself the freedom to not

AAC 33.490.

4 AAC 33.460 (c) is repealed and readopted to read:
... a statement regarding the ability of the department to place a district on a plan of correction for any violation of 4 AAC 33.405- 4 AAC 33.490.

There are a couple of other changes that can be viewed at the State Board of Education's [regulation comments webpage](#)

This defines the consequences of non-compliance.

This regulation creates conflicts for Frontier as our charter defines how we function and consequences for non-compliance.

require the same level of oversight for the statewide programs is unthinkable! Why in the world would the department invest so much time and effort into rewriting regulations and then let themselves off the hook for ensuring compliance? It appears that this one word change could open the door for political favoritism.

Disapprove. Frontier was established through the negotiated contract with the district and state as a charter school. Some of the provisions in these proposed regulations conflict with the terms of the contract. The contract cannot be unilaterally changed to conform with regulations so there will therefore be an inherent, irresolute conflict should these regulations pass as written.