

# **Alaska Legislature**

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## **Sponsor Statement – House Bill 341**

The State of Alaska has a responsibility to communities that public schools are adequately built and maintained. This obligation is carried out in a number of ways: the state may assume the majority of the costs, or in other areas, assume the costs completely. Though the State of Alaska does have a tremendous financial commitment to funding these facilities, the control it has over how that money is spent is limited. In other words, the decisions on design and choice of heating, ventilation and other operating systems are matters for which the state has no say.

The end result of this process has several outcomes. The first is that a patchwork of different buildings systems exists throughout the state. A lack of standardized operating systems means that maintenance training needs to be tailored quite often to each facility. With turnover being high in many school districts, this means either that the maintenance will occur and be much more expensive, or the maintenance will be deferred and the cost for repairs will eventually balloon. In other words, a construction expense, because of decisions on design and operations systems, will inevitably result in higher operations expenses. The State of Alaska more often than not is the entity responsible for funding deferred maintenance and major repairs because of those decisions made in the design phase of a building.

House Bill 341 puts the state on better financial footing. It would require that any construction or deferred maintenance project on a public school, paid in part or whole with funds by the state, to use prototypical designs and energy saving methods. If the State of Alaska needs to fund a building, it should be able to demand that public money be used wisely. Having public schools move towards buildings that focus less on aesthetics which drive costs and more on operational and energy conformity will result in more dollars for schools, and the buildings to have a longer, more functional life. I respectfully request your support.