

Alaska Legislature

Representative Charisse Millett

Session:

State Capitol Building, Room 403

Juneau, AK 99801

Phone (907) 465-3879

Fax (907) 465-2069



Interim:

Anchorage LIO, Room 620

716 West 4th Avenue,

Anchorage, AK 99501

Phone (907) 269-0222

Fax (907) 269-0223

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 210

Alaska is currently one of the less than 15 states that have no statewide policy regarding how children can either be physically restrained or secluded in schools. Placing students in positions where they are immobilized or put into a room by themselves are emotionally charged subjects that require our attention. The conditions under which these actions are allowed are vague and require clarification. The three areas that require clarification include: what constitutes physical restraint and seclusion; under what conditions physical restraint and seclusion can be exercised; what actions are required of school personnel.

Students need to attend a school that is safe. Parents need to know if their child was involved in an incident of restraint or seclusion and the reasons for these actions need to be clearly defined. School personnel and administrators need to know that the actions they take to protect the safety of their students were justified and that they will not be held liable for carrying out their duties correctly.

House Bill 210 is a balanced approach to ensure school safety. It requires that a school district's safety plan be made available to parents, legal guardians, students and the public. If an incident of restraint or seclusion occurs, the student's parents or legal guardians need to be informed the same day as the incident. With the exception of emergency situations, only those who have undergone training approved by the Department of Education and Early Development can engage in physical restraint or seclusion. Each school district needs to report all instances of restraint and seclusion on an annual basis to the Department of Education and Early Development.

HB 210 will protect students from trauma, keep parents informed of what happens to their child, and support teachers and school personnel tasked with incredibly difficult decisions. By ensuring a statewide, consistent set of rules, we make our schools safer for everyone. I would respectfully request your support.