

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## **REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER** **DISTRICT 10** **SPONSOR STATEMENT** **HB 156**

The time is right to let Washington, D.C. know that Alaska has no intention of being a US Department of Education experiment. Parents, not bureaucrats have the right to control the content and standards of education for their children. When there is a conflict between education laws (federal or state) and parental educational choice, parents ultimately must always have the right to opt-out if the laws cannot be fixed.

We as a state have a Constitutional obligation to provide a free public education, accessible to all. Beyond that obligation we need to strive to make that public education system be so good that most parents opt-in at a level where they assume ownership and engage eagerly, bringing their values with them.

HB 156 sends the message that Alaskans are not here to be a “rubber-stamp” of educational policy. Student assessment, privacy, school designators, teacher evaluation, special education, curricula selection, or education standards must be defined by Alaskans.

HB 156 deletes statutory language that requires the Board of education to “CONFORM TO...” or to “IMPLEMENT...” NCLB (No Child Left Behind) which is amended federal law over K-12 education (ESEA, 1965). Passage will eliminate 1200+ pages of federal code now in our state law.

HB 156 does not affect the current state testing infrastructure and assessment systems except that parents will have the immediate option to opt out of that testing. This ensures parental control through elected local school board members and state legislators instead of the far-off federal government. The intent is to cause a re-evaluation and elimination of unnecessary baggage.

HB 156 will ensure that individually identifiable student data is secure. Provisions in the language allows for methodology to compare proficiency of Alaska students with other states and nations; prioritizes local engagement in school improvement plans for struggling schools, and; ensures that the highest recognition goes to schools that demonstrate improvement.