

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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**SPONSOR STATEMENT
CS for 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 determine how to educate their children.

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.

While HB 156 deletes statutory language that requires the Board of education to “CONFORM TO...” or to “IMPLEMENT...” federal rules it also directs the Board to work to maintain and improve the quality of Alaska’s Education with local schools and districts.

HB 156 does not affect the current state testing infrastructure systems except that testing will be established at the local level with state oversight. 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 includes provisions in the language allowing 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.