



REPRESENTATIVE ALYSE GALVIN

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and Spenard

Sponsor Statement: House Bill 105

Mental Health Education

(34-LS0558\A)

HB 105 represents a significant effort to address the mental health challenges facing our youth. This legislation recognizes that mental health education is a vital component of a comprehensive K-12 curriculum and aims to ensure it is treated with the same level of importance as physical health education.

To achieve this, the bill directs the Board of Education & Early Development to work alongside the Department of Health, the Department of Family and Community Services, regional tribal health organizations, and both national and state mental health experts. This collaborative effort will ensure that mental health instruction is developed with input from a broad range of professionals, leading to a well-rounded and effective curriculum.

Acknowledging the essential role of parents in their children's education, HB 105 includes a provision requiring schools to notify parents or guardians at least two weeks before introducing any mental health instruction. This measure promotes transparency, strengthens trust between schools and families, and encourages parental involvement in their child's learning experience.

By revising existing health education laws, this bill guarantees that mental health receives the same priority as physical health in Alaska's K-12 education system. The Board of Education will be responsible for creating clear, age-appropriate guidelines to integrate mental health instruction effectively into classrooms.

To maintain oversight and accountability, HB 105 requires the Board of Education to submit a report to the Legislature within two years of the law's enactment. This report will outline the established mental health education guidelines and detail the process used in their development, ensuring lawmakers stay informed on its progress and implementation.

The bill also allows for a two-year transition period, providing sufficient time for careful planning, stakeholder input, and curriculum preparation before mental health instruction is fully implemented in schools.

HB 105 is a proactive measure designed to equip Alaska's students with the knowledge and resources they need to understand and manage their mental well-being. By fostering collaboration among education and health professionals, this legislation lays the foundation for a healthier, more resilient generation. I encourage my colleagues to support this critical initiative.