



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES, INC.

2011 ANNUAL CONVENTION

RESOLUTION 11-05

TITLE: SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL REFORM

WHEREAS: The Indigenous peoples of Alaska are distinct people with distinct cultures and traditional knowledge; and,

WHEREAS: There exists a need for Tribal schools to meet the cultural and academic needs of our children, who are impacted by a greater “drop-out” rate than other students in Alaska; and,

WHEREAS: Today’s K-12 educational system as offered through our state and local government is not adequate for nor does it respond to the cultural needs of our Native students; and,

WHEREAS: Our state and local government have established a monopoly in that to access free K-12 education one must go to a government school; and,

WHEREAS: Creative, educational opportunities can meet the educational, cultural, and social needs of our Native children; and,

WHEREAS: Pending legislation (House Bill 145, Senate Bill 106, and HJR 16, SJR 9) will permit parental choice and innovations; and,

WHEREAS: HJR 16 and SJR 9, if enacted, would place an amendment to the Constitution on the ballot in the next general election that if passed would amend Art. VII, Sec. 1 of the State Constitution to delete language that prohibits the expenditure of public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution, and add language to Art. IX, section 6 which currently says no public money can be used, except for a public purpose, to say that nothing in that section shall prevent payment from public funds for the direct educational benefit of students as provided by law; and,

WHEREAS: HB 145 and SB 106, would establish a Parental Choice Scholarship Program, whereby public funding could be used to pay for the cost of K-12 education at a public or private school selected by the parent or legal guardian. The school of choice would receive the amount of funding the school district in which the student resides would have received. The legislation sets scholarship amount and eligibility, accountability and enrollment standards for a participating school and the duties of school districts. Public, private, correspondence schools will all compete for the funding that the legislature sends to school districts each year; and,

WHEREAS: The legislation allows Native parents flexibility to start new schools, or select other schools or methods designed to best respond to their children's need and government money follows; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Delegates to the 2011 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation Natives, Inc, endorses the proposed K-12 parental choice legislation.

SUBMITTED BY: AFN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CONVENTION ACTION: PASSED

