

Thomas Obermeyer

From: Friedman_Jeff [Friedman_Jeff@asdk12.org]
Sent: Monday, March 09, 2009 8:43 AM
To: Sen. Bettye Davis
Cc: Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Gary Stevens; Comeau_Carol; Siegfried_Robin; Steiner_John
Subject: SB 101

Dear Vice Chair Davis and Education Committee Members:

I am writing to urge your support for SB 101 which relates to questionnaires and surveys.

SB 101 returns Alaska Schools to an opt out procedure for conducting the Youth Risk Behavior Survey from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is a completely anonymous survey that helps assess the emotional and physical health of our children. Parents are still informed of the survey and may choose not to allow their children to participate. Students who take the survey are notified of their right to refuse to answer any question they don't want to answer.

Under current law, school districts can not permit the administration of this survey without specific parent consent. Many parents don't object, they just don't follow through with ensuring that their child gets the permission form back to school. The Anchorage School District has gone to great expense and effort to obtain returned permission forms and most of the returned forms do give permission. With the opt out system proposed by the amendments in SB 101, parents who do object will be given lots of notice of their right to object and plenty of opportunity to do so. This is a good compromise between the need to get adequate data about the health of our children and the interests of those parents who believe this anonymous survey is detrimental in some way.

The Anchorage School Board supports making the changes proposed in SB 101.

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