

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

JUNEAU
STATE CAPITOL BLDG. RM 417
JUNEAU, AK 99801-1182
PHONE (907) 465-4930
ALASKASENATEDEMS.COM/GARDNER



ANCHORAGE
716 W. 4TH AVENUE
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501
PHONE (907) 269-0174
FACEBOOK.COM/BERTAGARDNER

SENATOR BERTA GARDNER

SENATE DISTRICT H

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 185 - Charter Schools: Funding and Facilities

Public education continues to be central to our national identity and to our future. SB185 is part of our goal of expanding access, increasing choice, maintaining accountability, spawning innovation, and empowering students in the public school system. It is our duty as legislators to provide adequate support for our education system to ensure future generations have a meaningful access to the tools for success.

Charter Schools have emerged as an alternative to the traditional system of education, providing school choice to parents, students and teachers within our public school system. Families can select a school that offers a unique learning environment and provides parents with more decision-making authority than do most traditional schools.

On average, Charter Schools receive 70% less operating funds than other schools because they usually pay their own facility costs and are also assessed an administration fee by the school district.

Senate Bill 185 expands the opportunities for Charter School formation and helps bridge the funding gap.

- Increases the Base Student Allocation by ten percent for Charter Schools to help pay for facility costs.
- Charter School Start-up Grant Program for curriculum and program development.
- Provides a path for neighborhood schools to convert in whole or part to Charter Schools if there is majority of support from parents.
- Removes the sunset for the Federal Charter School Grant Program which is set to expire July 2015.

By implementing stronger statutes to support our Charter Schools we are creating more opportunities for success for our students.

- Increase learning opportunities.
- More access to quality education for students.
- More choice for parents and students within the public school system.
- A system of accountability for results in public education.
- Encouragement of innovative teaching practices.
- New professional opportunities for teachers.
- Encouragement of community and parent involvement in public education.

I hope you will join me in supporting Senate Bill 185.