

STATE OF ALASKA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2018

Source
HR 7 am

House
Resolve No.
7



Recognizing the importance of safe school environments for students, staff, and their families; and supporting improvement of school safety measures.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

WHEREAS students and staff have the right to attend schools that are safe and free from violence and harassment, and their families deserve to send them to school without fearing they will be harmed; and

WHEREAS a safe school environment that ensures the physical and emotional safety of students and staff creates the conditions necessary to foster academic achievement; and

WHEREAS a school environment that is free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence is most conducive to learning and academic success; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2015 study conducted by the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, social and emotional learning and competency reduces high risk and problematic behaviors, including drug use and violence, and, for every \$1 spent teaching social and emotional skills in the classroom, there can be a return equivalent to \$11 in long-term benefit; and

WHEREAS Alaska is a diverse state with different financial, cultural, emotional, and safety needs in each school district; and

WHEREAS the responsibility of keeping students and staff safe is a shared responsibility that cannot be borne by public schools alone; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2014, the legislature appropriated \$21,000,000 for school safety upgrades for school districts; and

WHEREAS the Department of Education and Early Development plans to conduct an analysis of school safety efforts and gaps in school safety to create a statewide profile of current school safety and emergency response preparedness that will be instrumental in informing future expansion of school safety efforts; and

WHEREAS the Department of Education and Early Development is in the initial stages of planning a statewide school safety convention in the fall of 2018 for key stakeholders, with representatives of all 54 school districts planning to attend; and

WHEREAS the most effective approach to creating a safe school environment will involve a comprehensive, coordinated effort that incorporates school-wide, district-wide, community-wide, and statewide strategies; and

WHEREAS a support network of educators and support staff, students and their families, public health care providers, public safety officers, and tribal and community leaders is required to develop, implement, and monitor policies and programs that foster and support a positive school climate that is free from harassment and violence;

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives recognizes the importance of a safe school environment for students, staff, and their families; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives supports local schools, districts, students, teachers, support staff, and communities working together to implement culturally appropriate measures that prioritize student safety and school environments where students have the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives supports

(1) increased training for school employees and enhanced coordination with law enforcement agencies and first responders to ensure appropriate responses to incidents of violence in schools;

(2) enhanced mental health and support services, including nurses, counselors,

school psychologists, and public safety officers, to help create the positive and nurturing social and emotional school environment that is key to keeping our schools as safe as possible; and

(3) increased access to school safety measures, including school safety infrastructure, public safety officers, emergency planning, and other security measures designed to protect students and staff at school and allow students to focus on learning.