

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Introduced: 3/5/03

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging adoption of the Alaska recommendations for implementing the No Child Left**
2 **Behind Act of 2001.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Legislature strongly supports the intent and goals of the No
5 Child Left Behind Act and is committed to implementing state and federal school reform
6 initiatives aimed at ensuring that all children meet state academic standards and benefit from
7 the promise of the No Child Left Behind Act; and

8 **WHEREAS** specific provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act do not consider the
9 specific needs of Alaska's rural, remote, and small enrollment schools; and

10 **WHEREAS** Alaska faces unique implementation issues caused by conditions that
11 include but are not limited to the following factors:

12 (1) of Alaska's 53 school districts, the largest five school districts enroll 70
13 percent of Alaska's students; 39 school districts each enroll less than one percent of the
14 student body;

15 (2) Alaska has a large number of very small schools, each with only a handful
16 of teachers; Alaska has 506 schools, and, of these schools, 135 have fewer than 50 students,

1 and 82 enroll 25 or fewer students; 20 percent of Alaska's total schools employ three or fewer
2 teachers;

3 (3) Alaska has a total student population of more than 134,358; of the total
4 student population, about 23.4 percent are Alaska Native students; with the addition of 1,968
5 American Indian students, the total Alaska Native/American Indian student enrollment is 24.8
6 percent of the total student body; Alaska has a tremendously diverse range of culture and
7 language in its communities and schools; in many villages, the Native indigenous language is
8 the primary language used, and paraprofessionals provide cultural and language assistance
9 that allows students greater opportunity to participate in classes;

10 (4) many of Alaska's rural school districts cover tens of thousands of square
11 miles, have few schools, and have no roads; for example, the North Slope Borough School
12 District has an enrollment of fewer than 2,200 students attending 10 schools that are not
13 connected by roads and are spread out over a district covering 88,000 square miles; if the
14 North Slope were an individual state, it would be the 12th largest state in the nation;

15 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges prompt
16 approval of the Alaska consolidated state application accountability workbook; and be it

17 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature asks the peer review team
18 of the United States Department of Education to take into account the uniqueness of Alaska
19 and its people; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the peer review
21 team of the United States Department of Education to thoughtfully consider the
22 implementation strategies recommended by the Alaska Department of Education and Early
23 Development in its application relating to (1) highly qualified teachers, (2) highly qualified
24 paraprofessionals, (3) English language assessment and Native language immersion, and (4)
25 choice and supplemental services, so that the children of Alaska may experience the full
26 benefits that the No Child Left Behind Act promises for each and every child in our state; and
27 be it

28 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature is committed to working
29 with Alaska's Congressional Delegation to effect responsible statutory amendments to the No
30 Child Left Behind Act that will enable Alaska to implement the No Child Left Behind Act if
31 the United States Department of Education does not approve the Alaska recommendations.

1 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
2 of the United States; the Honorable Rod Paige, United States Secretary of Education; and to
3 the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the
4 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.