

**CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13(HES)**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/14/03

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**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, one school district has an  
12 enrollment of fewer than 2,200 students attending 10 schools that are not connected by roads  
13 and are spread out over a district covering 88,000 square miles; if this school district were an  
14 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.