

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 28

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 4/13/06

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to the innovative application of education technology tools to provide improved**
2 **distance education programs in the state.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** education technology is rapidly developing to provide managed student
5 access to unprecedented arrays of information on the Internet, including curricula, resource
6 and reference materials, search engines, world news, communication, calculations, tables,
7 definitions, and all student records; and

8 **WHEREAS** education technology is rapidly developing to economically provide
9 powerful teaching tools that are capable of generating individualized student learning plans,
10 supplemental and tutorial services, evaluations, communications, assignments, and learning
11 problem diagnostics that can be available on the Internet at any time, from any place in the
12 world, from any computer; and

13 **WHEREAS** education excellence is attainable by using a curriculum that encourages
14 student discovery, innovation, and proficiency as ways to avoid merely teaching to the test
15 and to prevent student boredom and teacher burnout;

16 **WHEREAS**, according to a 2003 United States Bureau of the Census report, the state

1 leads the nation at 68.5 percent of our households connected to the Internet; and

2 **WHEREAS** the federal, state, and local contributions averaged \$10,114 for each
3 student enrolled in the state during the 2003-2004 school year; and

4 **WHEREAS** the state has the highest median cost for each student in the nation at
5 \$16,665, reflecting the high cost of education in rural Alaska; and

6 **WHEREAS** 37 percent of Alaska schools have less than 100 students, and 24 percent
7 have less than 50 students, with many of the schools located in remote, rural settings; and

8 **WHEREAS** the results of the 2003 National Assessment of Education Progress,
9 which is the state's only national and ongoing assessment of student reading and mathematics
10 performance, reveals that performance is only at about 30 percent proficiency, which is at, or
11 below, the national average; and

12 **WHEREAS** increasing demands have been placed on rural education programs in the
13 state by the federal No Child Left Behind Act, including employment of highly qualified
14 teachers, provision of supplemental services, and the requirement to restructure districts and
15 to offer parental choice options; and

16 **WHEREAS** rural education challenges in the state include

17 (1) high teacher turnover rates;

18 (2) high costs of teacher housing;

19 (3) cultural differences between teachers and rural communities;

20 (4) the need to group a small number of students in small schools into 13
21 grade, ability, and interest levels;

22 (5) the difficulty of meeting the needs of isolated students with special needs
23 and gifts; and

24 (6) the difficulty of providing special interest curriculum such as Native
25 language education; and

26 **WHEREAS** public school facilities, employment needs, and related economic
27 considerations are valued critical components of rural Alaska communities; and

28 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development has
29 continued to improve statewide assessment tools in response to legislative intent that provides
30 an increasingly reliable measure of K-12 proficiency;

31 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the innovative and

1 responsible application of education technology tools to improve distance education programs
2 that will enhance rural education in the state; and be it

3 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages local school
4 boards and administrators to look for ways to regroup rural students, especially those in small
5 schools, into virtual educational program groups selected for efficiency, skill and age level,
6 and student and parent interest, and to use educational technology to provide quality teachers
7 for these groups from a distance; and be it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages local school
9 boards and administrators to provide the restructuring, choice, and supplemental services
10 required for schools failing to achieve Annual Yearly Progress under the federal No Child
11 Left Behind Act and state law, and to improve student proficiency as measured by the
12 National Assessment of Education Progress; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages reallocation of
14 savings available from the efficiencies of scale from regrouping of students across rural
15 boundaries to help pay for the application of educational technology while ensuring that rural
16 remote school facilities and local employees are retained in the process; and be it

17 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests local school
18 boards and administrators to apply for the grants available under AS 14.14.115 as a means of
19 installing education technology.

20 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to Al Weinberg, Superintendent, Alaska
21 Gateway School District; Joe Beckford, Chief School Administrator, Aleutian Region School
22 District; Dennis Maasjo, Superintendent, Aleutians East Borough School District; Carol
23 Comeau, Superintendent, Anchorage School District; Brett Agenbroad, Superintendent,
24 Annette Island School District; John Davis, Superintendent, Bering Strait School District;
25 Richard Hebbardt, Superintendent, Bristol Bay Borough School District; Vance Cortez-
26 Rucker, Superintendent, Chatham School District; Bob Crumley, Superintendent, Chugach
27 School District; James Elliot, Superintendent, Copper River School District; Don Clark,
28 Superintendent, Cordova City School District; Ron Erickson, Superintendent, Craig City
29 School District; Dan Beck, Superintendent, Delta/Greely School District; Dale Olson,
30 Superintendent, Denali Borough School District; Arnold Watland, Superintendent,
31 Dillingham City School District; Ann E. Shortt, Superintendent, Fairbanks School District;

1 Jim Smith, Superintendent, Galena City School District; Woody Wilson, Superintendent,
2 Haines Borough School District; Howard Diamond, Superintendent, Hoonah City School
3 District; Bill Raduenz, Superintendent, Hydaburg City School District; Joe Banghart,
4 Superintendent, Iditarod Area School District; Peggy Cowan, Superintendent, Juneau
5 Borough School District; Eric Gebhart, Superintendent, Kake City School District; Gary
6 Stevens, Superintendent, Kashunamiut School District; Donna Peterson, Superintendent,
7 Kenai Peninsula Borough School District; Harry Martin, Superintendent, Ketchikan Gateway
8 Borough School District; Richard Carlson, Superintendent, Klawock City School District;
9 Betty Walters, Superintendent, Kodiak Island Borough School District; Marty Laster,
10 Superintendent, Kuspuk School District; Steve Atwater, Chief School Administrator, Lake
11 and Peninsula School District; William Ferguson, Superintendent, Lower Kuskokwim School
12 District; John Lamont, Superintendent, Lower Yukon School District; and the Honorable Ted
13 Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young,
14 U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.