

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

February 11, 2010

3:15 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Wes Keller, Co-Chair
Representative Tammie Wilson, Vice Chair
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Sharon Cissna
Representative Lindsey Holmes

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bob Herron, Co-Chair

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Senator Linda Menard

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 101

"An Act relating to questionnaires and surveys administered in the public schools."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 260

"An Act relating to preventive care and disease management services for medical assistance recipients; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

HOUSE BILL NO. 309

"An Act relating to preventive care and disease management services for medical assistance recipients; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 265

"An Act relating to preventive care and disease management services for medical assistance recipients; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 101

SHORT TITLE: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) DAVIS

02/06/09	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/06/09	(S)	EDC, HSS
03/11/09	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 211
03/11/09	(S)	Heard & Held
03/11/09	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/18/09	(S)	EDC RPT 1DP 2NR
03/18/09	(S)	DP: DAVIS
03/18/09	(S)	NR: OLSON, HUGGINS
03/18/09	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 211
03/18/09	(S)	Moved SB 101 Out of Committee
03/18/09	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/25/09	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/25/09	(S)	Heard & Held
03/25/09	(S)	MINUTE(HSS)
03/27/09	(S)	HSS AT 1:15 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/27/09	(S)	Moved SB 101 Out of Committee
03/27/09	(S)	MINUTE(HSS)
03/30/09	(S)	HSS RPT 3DP
03/30/09	(S)	DP: DAVIS, THOMAS, PASKVAN
03/30/09	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/30/09	(S)	Moved Out of Committee 3/27/09
03/30/09	(S)	MINUTE(HSS)
04/16/09	(S)	TRANSMITTED TO (H)
04/16/09	(S)	VERSION: SB 101
04/16/09	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/16/09	(H)	HSS, FIN
02/02/10	(H)	HSS AT 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106
02/02/10	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/11/10	(H)	HSS AT 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

TOM OBERMEYER, Staff
to Senator Bettye Davis
Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 101 on behalf of the prime sponsor, Senator Bettye Davis.

CARL ROSE, Executive Director

Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 101.

KATE BURKHART, Executive Director

Alaska Mental Health Board;

Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse

Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and answered questions during discussion of SB 101.

MARILYN DAVIDSON, Director of Instruction

Kodiak Island Borough School District

Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and answered questions during discussion of SB 101.

WARD HURLBURT, Chief Medical Officer

Director, Division of Public Health

Office of the Commissioner

Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified and answered questions as a spokesman for the administration during discussion of SB 101.

HTWE CHEMBARS

Fort Wainwright, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 101.

SILVER CHORD

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 101.

PAT FINK

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during discussion of SB 101.

PATTY OWEN, Public Health Specialist

Division of Public Health

Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during discussion of SB 101 regarding YRBS.

HARRIETTE KLANN
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during discussion of SB 101.

CYNTHIA HITE
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 101.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:15:34 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WES KELLER called the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. Representatives Keller, Seaton, Cissna, Holmes, T. Wilson, and Lynn were present at the call to order. Senator Menard was also in attendance.

SB 101-STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS

[3:15:56 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER announced that the first order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 101, "An Act relating to questionnaires and surveys administered in the public schools."

CO-CHAIR KELLER noted that Representative Peggy Wilson had introduced a similar bill, HB 130, and she asked that it be deferred to SB 101. He pointed out that the collection of data was very important, but he established that it was equally important to respect privacy. He opined that it was necessary to have data in order to make decisions to address any problems.

[3:19:06 PM](#)

TOM OBERMEYER, Staff to Senator Bettye Davis, Alaska State Legislature, said that SB 101 was an act to administer questionnaires and surveys in the public schools, and its purpose was to change the parental consent requirement for the voluntary and anonymous Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) from written or expressed consent to implied consent if there is no objection or written denial for the student to participate in the survey. He stated that there would still be ample time for

the parents or students to opt out. He clarified that written permission was still required for all other surveys. He observed that it had been an expensive burden on the school districts to obtain parental permission, and often there were not enough participants to allow use of the data. He reported that research and experience suggested that more often parents were amenable to the survey but neglected to return the consent forms. He opined that the YRBS was the most important survey administered every other year, and it was necessary for 60 percent participation, at the state level, to validate the statistics. He reported that the results of the YRBS survey were integral in the development of health and prevention programs. He listed the many state and federal grant programs that relied on the data, which included tobacco prevention, obesity prevention, and substance abuse prevention. He summarized that the data was necessary to understand the important health and social issues that affected student success.

[3:22:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked what evidence pointed to lack of interest from the parents.

[3:22:29 PM](#)

MR. OBERMEYER replied that it may be anecdotal, but that school districts members had reported it. He reported that school districts went to great lengths to follow up on the return of participation forms. He advised that participation was often close to 62 percent, with 60 percent being necessary for validation. He relayed that, as students were given the written permission forms to return to the school, it was not uncommon for students not to deliver them. He emphasized the impact on the agencies if validation percentages were not attained.

[3:24:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked for an explanation to the survey and the process.

MR. OBERMEYER explained that the YRBS survey was given every other year to the 9-12 grades.

[3:24:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON expressed concern with the process for obtaining the permission.

MR. OBERMEYER replied that it was difficult to distribute the procedural information, and he suggested a number of remedies, including mailing the permission request directly to the parents.

[3:26:19 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER declared that some parents chose not to sign the permission requests.

[3:26:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN expressed concern with the content of the survey, and he referred to his earlier blog response to a similar bill, HB 130. He voiced apprehension of a change from opt in to opt out. He declared this to be an attempt to "pervert the system."

[3:28:18 PM](#)

MR. OBERMEYER stated his agreement with Representative Lynn, but he defended this as an anonymous survey. He detailed the procedure to ensure anonymity for each survey. He emphasized that this was a voluntary survey. He declared the importance for the survey which allowed local, state, and federal agencies to "adequately deal with children's behavior and try to modify it or prevent improper behavior or to give them education on prevention..." He stressed the value for any data, and he pointed to the current inadequacy for data collection.

[3:30:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN clarified that the intent by teachers and administration to curtail "these horrendous behaviors" was good, but the "unintended consequence far outweigh any potential good." He declared support for anyone attempting to make a positive difference in student behavior, but he called the content and the process for the YRBS survey "seriously flawed."

[3:31:44 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER explained that it was not the intent to move the bill today, but that this was an opportunity to "get the

questions on the table." He indicated that he had questions with the wording and the groundwork for the bill.

[3:32:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked to clarify that SB 101 allowed that YRBS to be the only survey with an "opt out."

MR. OBERMEYER replied that all other surveys would require parental consent, as written in SB 101.

[3:34:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN stated that he brings "some degree of expertise to this" discussion as a parent of six children, a retired public school teacher, and a recipient of a Masters degree in Educational Administration.

[3:35:21 PM](#)

MR. OBERMEYER, in response to Co-Chair Keller, said that Section 2(d) still applied, but expanded the due process requirements to give written notice to the parents. He explained that due process protected the privacy of the student and family, yet provided for the return of more YRBS surveys.

CO-CHAIR KELLER expressed concern that SB 101 was ambiguous and may not accomplish the intent.

[3:37:56 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER questioned the constitutionality of SB 101. He read Section 1(a), and offered his belief that a questionnaire or survey that inquired into "personal or private family affairs..." could not be administered without parental consent. He called attention to The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, [Included in committee packets.] read the list of eight survey categories which required written parental consent, and declared that these were all private family issues. He conceded that federal law exempted [the need for written parental permission for] Center for Disease Control surveys which asked these questions, but that the Constitution of the State of Alaska guaranteed the "basic fundamental right to privacy." He acknowledged the need for interpretation of the constitution, and he expressed a desire for the House Judiciary Standing Committee to review the bill. He identified it as a "fundamental, constitutionally given right here that is being

violated or restricted by requiring an opt out, instead of the existing active permission... to answer questions on this private matter," and compared it to the "fundamental right" to carrying fire arms. He opined that constitutional rights can be denied based on "common, public good," but if SB 101 was deemed for the common public good, then there would be the need to review "infringing on what our parents rights would be." He argued that the ten year collection of YRBS data proved that the collection of active, written permission by the parents was effective. He referenced the February 9 presentation of YRBS data by the Mat-Su Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition to the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

[3:43:20 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER emphasized that good data was important, though often expensive to collect and to use. He questioned the justification for removal of the parents' rights when data could be obtained in another way. He allowed that, from a government perspective, data collection was necessary.

[3:45:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLMES, referring to the presentation by the Mat-Su Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, pointed out its inability to access local YRBS data because of insufficient participation to guarantee validity. She asked if this was a prevalent state-wide problem.

[3:47:02 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER acknowledged that the coalition clearly supported SB 101.

[3:47:29 PM](#)

MR. OBERMEYER reported that some school districts were not allowed to participate. He acknowledged that not every student was offered the survey, but that it was necessary for 60 percent participation to determine adequate sampling for an accurate representation of behaviors.

CO-CHAIR KELLER offered his belief that the issue had created a divide, and he pointed to the drug testing of student athletes in Juneau. He stated that the parents of student athletes were required to submit an active permission slip allowing for the

drug test. He suggested the need for a standard criteria to data gathering.

[3:52:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked for a school district representative to describe the procedure for administering the YRBS.

CO-CHAIR KELLER replied that he would prefer a public response to his question as a basis for testimony.

[3:52:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON, agreed with Representative Seaton, and asked how and to whom the survey was being given.

[3:53:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER agreed to first hear school district testimonies.

[3:53:46 PM](#)

CARL ROSE, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), testified that it was a matter of necessity in instruction to assess the measure of success. He reflected that the last YRBS was validated in 2005 and some indicators showed that the risk behavior trend was being reversed. He stated that youth success would be ensured by adult support from the community: school, family, faith, and social clubs. He indicated that youth were making better decisions. He stressed that a reversal of trends was essential, but that a large enough sampling was necessary to validate that information.

[3:57:55 PM](#)

MR. ROSE offered his belief that this survey was in the public's best interest, as substance abuse among youth was at epidemic proportion. He stated that he understood the "other side" and that he was sensitive to those concerns. He explained that SB 101 offered anonymity to YRBS participants and that the data would contribute to the baseline understanding for social impacts. He declared that AASB supported SB 101. He pointed out that the 53 school districts each had different relationships with its community and each administered a bit differently.

3:59:50 PM

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN asked about the margin of error.

4:00:11 PM

MR. ROSE said that a 65-70 percent return allowed for a corporeal indicator of "what your community is doing." He commented that it was more difficult for multiple school sites to generate an adequate return of surveys.

4:00:31 PM

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN asked if private or parochial schools requested this survey.

MR. ROSE said that he did not have that information.

4:00:55 PM

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked if the survey was offered to all the students.

MR. ROSE replied that it was offered to all students who had given permission.

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked what the option would be if there was not enough permission granted.

MR. ROSE replied that it was difficult to seek permission prior to the survey, as opposed to a passive approach. He stated that it was much more difficult in larger school districts, and that even the combined student population of the smaller districts was still only a small percentage of the total.

4:02:34 PM

CO-CHAIR KELLER read AS 14.03.110(b):

For an anonymous questionnaire or survey, written permission required under (a) of this section may be obtained annually and is valid until the commencement of the subsequent school year or until the parent or legal guardian who gave permission submits a written withdrawal of permission to the school principal. The school shall provide each student's parent or legal guardian at least two weeks' notice before

administering a questionnaire or survey described under this subsection.

He said that this was an option for school districts with schools which were widely dispersed.

[4:04:02 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked if high school students were required to have permission to go on field trips, and how often fewer than 60 percent of the students participated.

MR. ROSE replied that as AASB did not operate schools, he did not have that information, but he offered to supply that information to the committee.

[4:04:38 PM](#)

MR. ROSE, in response to Representative Seaton, said that AASB supported passive approval as mentioned in Section 4, but had not looked at the specifics for application.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON requested that other school district representatives also respond to his question.

[4:06:23 PM](#)

KATE BURKHART, Executive Director, Alaska Mental Health Board; Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), explained that both boards were established to give advice to the Executive and Legislative branches, and she clarified that the boards did not represent the position of DHSS or the Governor's office. She stated that she represented the positions of the board members. She expressed her appreciation for the balancing of the rights of parents with the interest of the public for the information. Referring to the YRSB student participation rate prior to required active consent, she noted that there was 78 percent in 1995 and 80 percent in 1999. She compared those figures to the student participation after active parental consent was required, and stated that student participation dropped to 62 percent in 2003, 55 percent in 2005, and 60 percent in 2007. She shared that in both 2003 and 2007, schools were able to "just barely" meet the minimum threshold of 60 percent. She testified that schools had to spend money on pizza parties and other incentives, just to get the permission slips returned. She said that the school districts reported that the effort to

get the permission slips was very expensive, and diverted funding from other projects.

[4:10:36 PM](#)

MS. BURKHART said that the 2008 Board meeting in Kenai heard significant public comment about the difficulties to getting the necessary data. She informed the committee that the Juneau determination for student athlete drug testing incorporated the YRBS data into the decision making, but that it was a struggle for the school district to get that data.

[4:11:42 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER asked about any benefit for the extra effort to collect the parental permission slips for YRBS.

MS. BURKHART replied that she did not know of any benefit, but expressed her concern for the amount of money spent on incentives.

CO-CHAIR KELLER clarified that his concern was not just to receive the data, but to collect "the data in a less restrictive means."

[4:12:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN asked for reasons to the decrease in participation.

MS. BURKHART replied that she did not know of any survey for parents who did not return the permission slips. She explained that about 69 percent agreed to the survey, and 10-11 percent responded to not give permission. It was that remaining 20 percent of parents not returning the slips that were affected by SB 1. She voiced the desire for a response from this group.

[4:15:11 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER reflected on an anomaly of human nature to deal with difficult issues.

MS. BURKHART, in response to Representative Seaton, offered that the board understood the notice requirements in Section 2(d) would apply to the YRBS. She affirmed the importance of balancing the board responsibilities for planning and coordination with advocating for its stakeholders and remaining

a conduit for public comment. She declared that SB 101 would balance the public need for data with the private right to determine participation.

4:17:40 PM

CO-CHAIR KELLER mused whether the right to privacy for children had been extended beyond what the parent had control over.

4:18:45 PM

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON directed attention to Section 2(d)(8), which allowed the student to refuse to answer specific questions or to refuse to participate in the survey, and suggested that even with parental consent, the student could refuse, which could supersede Section 4(g).

CO-CHAIR KELLER agreed that this was a valid factor.

4:20:10 PM

MARILYN DAVIDSON, Director of Instruction, Kodiak Island Borough School District, said that she was speaking on behalf of the Kodiak Island Borough School District. She reported:

At this time, the Kodiak Island Borough School District is divided in our thinking regarding this proposal and the idea of passive approval. Points in our thinking that are in support of the proposal are: first of all, the information gained from surveys is valuable to us in many ways, allowing us to monitor and adjust our programmatic development, adoption processes, and revision processes; second, we do need to hear from as many of our constituents as possible, in order to determine an accurate picture of the communities we serve. Points not in support of the proposed change include: first, the support and protection of parent and family rights is of high importance as is the need for involvement of all parents and families in their children's education. As we work in this district to increase parent involvement in all aspects of their children's education, this would be a reduction of active involvement in an area that is sensitive and personal. It could potentially diminish the interaction between parents, families, their children, and the school. Second, in the most recent survey regarding drug use

and sexual behavior requiring active consent, and I believe that was a YRBS, Kodiak High School, our largest school, achieved an 80 percent response rate. While this required some effort on the part of staff members, there is great value in the personal contact with parents and families. As an aside, I can just add, as one of the parents who had failed to respond to that, I received an e-mail, I printed out the form that was attached, and was able to get that back and my students did participate. I don't know of any incentives that were offered to parents in regard to that. Third point, in many cases parents and families of younger children, and I believe YRBS, and I would stand to be corrected if I'm wrong, I believe YRBS goes into middle school, and for us that includes grade six. In many cases, parents and families of younger children, in particular, have deemed some of the questions on the survey as highly inappropriate for their child's level of social development, bringing up thoughts, questions, and potential actions that their children may have had no encounters with and have not had any reason to entertain. In conclusion, we believe that parents and families will be responsive when they understand the need for the information and the importance of the information to the community and the well being of their children. We believe that the support and enhancement of partnership between families and the schools are vital to supporting the advancement of the education of Alaskan youth. Thank you for the opportunity, and I can take any questions.

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked about the number of students enrolled at the high school, and asked how the permission slips were collected after the initial request.

MS. DAVIDSON replied that Kodiak High School had about 800 students in grades 9-12. She explained that office secretaries, the parent facilitator, and counseling staff had follow up communication with the parents.

[4:25:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked to clarify the grades surveyed by YRBS.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN read the first question on the survey, which asked the participant age, and noted the range of response choices to include "12 years old or younger" and "17 years old."

[4:26:24 PM](#)

WARD HURLBURT, Chief Medical Officer; Director, Division of Public Health, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), identified that the YRBS was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1988, and Alaska began participation in 1995. He observed that all states, with the exception of Alaska, Utah, and New Jersey, had an opt in. In 1999, House Bill 70 had changed Alaska from an opt out to its current opt in provision, and he noted that Governor Parnell, as a legislator during that time, had supported House Bill 70. He observed that the survey was provided statewide to 20 school districts on a randomly selected basis. He elaborated that within each selected school, classes were also selected by random. He explained that parents were given a two week notice to sign permission for participation. He affirmed that children were also given the option to participate. He provided that about 17 percent of parents stated in writing not to participate, and about 25 percent did not respond. He remarked that these figures were at a slight variance to those stated earlier, and he noted that this resulted in a participant percentage below the necessary statistical validity of 60 percent. He reported that although 60 percent participation was not a magical number, it was the percent that the statisticians and CDC had determined for validity and the subsequent award of grants.

DR. HURLBURT shared that participation in 2003 was 62 percent; in 2007, it was 60 percent; and in 2009, it was 62 percent. He noted that in 2005, it did not reach a level for validity. In agreement with Representative Lynn, he commented that some of the questions were very personal and sensitive, but that the data was helpful in identifying the problems necessitating attention.

[4:31:25 PM](#)

DR. HURLBURT reported that the administration had concerns with SB 101, based on consistency with the governor's earlier position. He shared that the governor encouraged innovation for participation. He reported that \$100,000 was available to the schools for parent participation incentives, but he did not know if the schools supplied additional funding. He identified a

problem with SB 101 was its failure to strengthen the involvement of parents with their children and the school.

[4:33:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked if federal funding was attached to use of the YRBS data.

DR. HURLBURT replied that the availability of the data did impact the award of grants.

[4:33:45 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER asked if there was any departmental discussion or concern for "private." He pointed to the constitutional right to privacy, and he expressed concern for possible litigation.

DR. HURLBURT said he was not aware of any discussion, but that the intent was to have privacy built in to the YRBS procedures.

[4:34:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked for the cost of achieving enough participant response to validate the survey.

DR. HURLBURT replied that he would get that information to the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked about the scope of the grants.

DR. HURLBURT said that he did not think any major grants had been denied, and that the current concern was for the jeopardy to future grants.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked about the magnitude of the grants that we did receive.

DR. HURLBURT said that he would get the information, but that it was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, not the millions of dollars.

[4:37:28 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN read several of the questions and asked if there had been any research of the potential harm to students participating in the YRBS.

DR. HURLBURT relayed the CDC response that asking questions did not result in more problems.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN asked if a survey respondent's desire to appear normal could influence the survey results.

DR. HURLBURT responded that high school students were susceptible to many influences.

[4:40:40 PM](#)

HTWE CHEMBARS said that every decision for children should be decided by the parents. She declared that school districts should only offer kids an education, and she did not consider this an education. She voiced her opposition to exposing children to this material.

[4:43:15 PM](#)

SILVER CHORD conveyed that he was an educator with a Masters in school psychology, as well as a director of special education. He stated that it was a travesty to even consider SB 101, as it was "selling parents down the tube to get money." He recommended that a cost benefit analysis should be performed for all programs. He opined that there was a lack of responsibility on the effectiveness of many programs. He reported that school mission statements declared to be "for children and that we invite the parents to be supportive of the schools." He offered his belief that the lack of participant form returns was a result of the decline for school support due to school system behaviors. He suggested that a very bad precedent was being set with this "permission by omission." He suggested payment directly to parents for the return of the participant permissions, instead of payment for incentive programs. He noted a lack of parental testimony.

[4:47:03 PM](#)

PAT FINK, establishing that she was a retired teacher, asked the following list of questions: how many school district personnel had read the YRBS; had the questions changed since 2005; does a school district need prior permission to administer a drug test; and, does a school district demand permission for immunizations and field trips. She suggested sending the YRSB home with the permission slip.

[4:49:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR KELLER, in response to Ms. Fink, replied that each district had different policies. He replied that he did not know if the YRBS questions had changed.

[4:50:03 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON, in response to Ms. Fink, said that she would respond with answers regarding the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

[4:50:23 PM](#)

PATTY OWEN, Public Health Specialist, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), testified that the YRBS questions had not changed since 1995, in terms of general content. She established that there were occasional opportunities to modify and add emerging issues, for example bulimia, or prescription drug use. She emphasized that the YRBS was designed to track trends over time, so consistency of the questions was necessary.

[4:51:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN, in response to Ms. Fink, asked her reaction upon reading the YRBS.

MS. FINK replied that she was startled by the questions, and she suggested for parents to read it before giving permission.

[4:52:36 PM](#)

HARRIETTE KLANN stated that a school board should not usurp the responsibility of the parents. She declared that it was a fundamental right and responsibility of parents to determine what was right for their children. She cautioned against the assumption that "non-return is non-interest." She announced that "school boards are branching out from teaching our children to value judgment retrieval systems." She suggested permitting more involvement from churches, communities, and social and private sectors. She offered her belief that "those in control" assumed "the general public does not have the intelligence or care enough for their kids to get help, so those in power must make the decisions for us." She observed that the difficulty in retrieving the participant permissions indicated opposition to SB 101, instead of parental non-interest.

4:54:16 PM

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked if Ms. Klann had read the YRBS.

MS. KLANN replied that she had not read the entire survey, and in response to Representative T. Wilson, stated that she would not offer it in the classroom.

4:55:16 PM

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked for a 2005 survey to review the changes.

CO-CHAIR KELLER indicated that these would be supplied.

4:55:30 PM

CYNTHIA HITE offered her belief that SB 101 was about the process for collecting data, and that its "intent was to seize the rights of parents and award them to public schools, administrators, and teachers." She stated that she opposed the bill. She indicated that every parent enrolling their child in the Anchorage School District signed a blanket permission slip, which listed the surveys with the opportunity to agree or refuse to participate. She questioned the reason that YRBS was not included with that permission agreement. She announced her distrust of public agencies and public officials.

4:57:51 PM

REPRESENTATIVE T. WILSON asked about the blanket permission slip.

MS. HITE identified this as "Important Rights for Parents Concerning Student Surveys." She announced that it was a requirement to sign this in person.

4:59:06 PM

CO-CHAIR KELLER clarified that this system was "a permissive thing" and that it varied by district.

MS. HITE suggested that all districts should incorporate the Anchorage system.

4:59:36 PM

CO-CHAIR KELLER read a list of people still on line to testify.

[SB 101 was held over.]

[5:00:34 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.