

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 7 am

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Amended: 5/1/18
Introduced: 4/26/18

A RESOLUTION

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

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

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

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

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

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

16

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the House of Representatives supports

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

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

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

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