

**HB**

**28**

**HFIN**

**FILE**

Adopted

AMENDMENT # 1

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE BROWN

TO: CSHB 28(JUD)

Page 5, lines 9 - 10:

Delete all material and insert:

"(d) Each school district shall adopt a policy providing for the

(1) referral to law enforcement authorities of  
students who violate AS 11.61.210(a)(8);

(2) identification of procedures and conditions for early  
re-instatement of students suspended or expelled under this  
section."

ATTENTION ;  
Lynn

AMENDMENT

#2 A failed

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE BROWN

TO: CSHB 28(HES)

- 1 Page 4, lines 14 - 15, following "officer":
- 2 Delete "to determine compliance with"
- 3 Insert "if the person conducting the search is acting under reasonable suspicion that
- 4 the search will provide evidence of a past or present violation of"

- 
- 5 Page 4, line 16, following "laws.":
  - 6 Insert "A search or examination under this section may not be more intrusive than
  - 7 reasonably necessary to meet the objectives of the search."

2B Adopted



REPRESENTATIVE CON BUNDE  
CO-CHAIR HEALTH, EDUCATION  
& SOCIAL SERVICES  
VICE-CHAIR RULES

**Alaska State Legislature  
House of Representatives**

*DURING SESSION:*  
STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 108  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1182  
1 (907) 465-4843

**SPONSOR STATEMENT  
CSHB 28 (JUD)**

*DURING INTERIM:*  
716 WEST 4th AVENUE  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-2133  
1 (907) 258-8168

The increasing trend towards violence and guns in schools across the nation is the reason the Federal Gun Free Schools Act was passed by Congress. This act requires a school system, as a condition of receiving federal education funds, to implement a program for the control of guns and weapons in schools. HB 28 will put Alaska into compliance with the mandates of the Federal Gun Free Schools Act.

The possession of deadly weapons and defensive weapons on school grounds, in parking lots adjacent to public or private schools, and while participating in school events is prohibited within HB 28. However, a person can obtain permission from the chief administrative officer of a school to carry a prohibited weapon into a school. This provision will allow a school to use an existing gun range or continue functions within a school that require the legal use of a deadly or defensive weapon.

HB 28 provides for a one year expulsion or suspension of a student that possesses a weapon on school grounds. However, in instances of disabled or special education students the school administrator is granted the ability to modify the mandatory expulsion or suspension. Additionally, this legislation requires an annual statistical report to the Department of Education regarding the number of students expelled and the types of weapons involved. This provision will improve the way many school districts keep weapons reports. Both of these provisions are for compliance with the Gun Free Schools Act.

This legislation allows school locker searches in order to determine compliance with school regulations and state laws. The policy of locker searches must be posted in prominent locations throughout the school.

Alaska must comply with the Federal Gun Free Schools Act by passing this legislation, or our schools will lose needed federal dollars. However, the most important reason for passing this legislation is, schools cannot work well when students and teachers are concerned about their safety. The educational process stops when people are afraid. Although a wide range of underlying social ills contribute to violent incidents, children with guns and weapons in our schools is a strong catalyst for governmental action. I urge your favorable consideration of HB 28.

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(11)

Date Referred: March 14, 1995

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 4/10/95

The FINANCE Committee considered:

HB 28

HOUSE BILL NO. 28

POSSESSION OF GUNS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

"An Act relating to the possession of weapons within the grounds of or on the parking lot of preschools, elementary, junior high, and secondary schools or while participating in a school-sponsored event; requiring the expulsion or suspension of students possessing deadly weapons on school grounds; and relating to school lockers and other containers provided in a public or private school by the school or the school district."

recommends it be replaced with the following committee substitute CS HB 28 (Fin)  the same title  a new title

additional referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee  
 attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date)

fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_  fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

zero fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_  zero fiscal note(s) <sup>2/22/95</sup> DPS <sup>2/22/95</sup> DCE

SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS		DP	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Mark Hanley</i>	Hanley	X			
<i>Bill Mulder</i>	Mulder				
<i>Terry Martin</i>	Martin			+	
<i>Will Kohring</i>	Kohring	X			
<i>Jan Grossendort</i>	Grossendort			X	
<i>Mike Navarre</i>	Navarre			X	
<i>Tan Brown</i>	Brown			X	
<i>Pete Kelly</i>	Kelly			X	
<i>Cam Theriault</i>	Theriault	X			
<i>Richard Foster</i>	Foster			X	

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE *Mark Hanley* *Richard Foster*

# FISCAL NOTE

1  
 Bill Version: CS HB 28(HES)  
 (H) Publish Date: 2/22/95

STATE OF ALASKA  
 1995 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Possession of Guns on School Property

Sponsor: Representative Bunde

Requester: Representative Bunde

Department Affected: Education

BRU: K-12 Support and Education Program Support

Component: Foundation Program and Special and Supplemental Services

COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 141 and 166

**Expenditures/Revenues:**

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE FUND SOURCE:						
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**FUNDING:**

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1006 GF/MHTIA						
Other						
<b>TOTAL</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year (FY95) impact: \$ 0.0

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

Federal legislation, *Gun Free Schools Act*, requires that each state, in order to receive funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), must enact a law by October 20, 1995 which mandates a one-year expulsion of a student who brings a weapon to school. Section 6 of HB 28 address this needed provision. In FY 95, the State of Alaska received over \$ 90 million, most of which went directly to local school districts, under ESEA. Please see the attached sheet for a break down on the funds received in FY 95.

Prepared by: Sheila Peterson *Sheila Peterson*

Phone: 465-2803

Division: Commissioner's Office

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Commissioner: *Mike Maher*

Mike Maher, Acting Commissioner

Agency: Education

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Elementary and Secondary Education Act  
FY 95 Program Funding  
(Thousands of Dollars)

Chapter I	\$ 12,475.5
Chapter II	1,833.1
Migrant	6,983.1
Evenstart	250.0
Neglected and Delinquent	149.4
Eisenhower Grants	1,241.5
Drug Free Schools	1,371.2
Governor's Drug Free Schools	441.8
Equity	110.8
Bilingual	75.0
Impact Aid	66,000.0
TOTAL	\$ 90,930.5

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
1995 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL N  
No. 2  
Bill Version: CS HB 28(HES)  
(H) Publish Date: 2/22/95

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Public Safety  
Title: Possession of guns on school property BRU: Alaska State Troopers  
Component: Detachments  
Sponsor: Representative Runde  
Requestor: (H) HESS COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 0799

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars) (inflation not included)

OPERATING	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
<small>Revenue Code</small>						

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

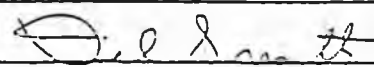
1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF Program Receipts						
1006 GF MHTIA						
Other						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

Estimate of current year (FY 95) impact: \$ -0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)  
No fiscal impact is anticipated.

Prepared By: Francis C. Allan Phone: 269-5691  
Division: Alaska State Troopers Date: 02/10/95  
Approved by Commissioner:  Date: 2/17/95  
Agency: Ronald L. Otte, Dept. of Public Safety

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FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101

130 Seward Street, Suite 409  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2105

**MEMORANDUM**

February 14, 1995

**SUBJECT:** Sectional Summary of CSHB 28 (HES), draft, dated 2/13/95  
(Work Order No. 9-LS0151\F)

**TO:** Representative Con Bunde  
Attn: Patty

**FROM:** Jerry Luckhaupt *JLB*  
Legislative Counsel

You have asked for a sectional summary of the above-described bill. Please be advised that a sectional summary is not an authoritative statement of the contents of a bill - the bill itself is the best statement of its contents.

Section 1 of the bill amends AS 11.61.210(a) by providing that a person other than a student commits the crime of misconduct involving weapons in the fourth degree if the person possesses a deadly weapon<sup>1</sup> or a defensive weapon,<sup>2</sup> on school grounds or the parking lot of a preschool, elementary, junior high, or secondary school, in certain situations or while participating in a school sponsored event. This section also provides that a student commits the crime of misconduct involving weapons in the third degree if the student possesses a deadly weapon or a defensive weapon on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event, except that a student may possess a deadly weapon, other than a firearm as defined under federal law, or a defensive weapon with the permission of school authorities. Violation of this section is a class A misdemeanor.<sup>3</sup> AS 11.61.220(g). The possession of firearms and defensive weapons is currently prohibited at schools and their grounds under AS 11.61.220-(a)(4) which is being repealed in sec. 3 of this bill.

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<sup>1</sup> "Deadly weapon" is defined at AS 11.81.900(b)(13) as:

firearm, or anything designed for and capable of causing death or serious physical injury, including a knife, an axe, a club, metal knuckles, or an explosive . . .

<sup>2</sup> "Defensive weapon" is defined at AS 11.81.900(b)(16).

<sup>3</sup> A class A misdemeanor is punishable as provided in AS 12.55.135 (imprisonment) and 12.55.035 (fine).

Representative Con Bunde  
February 14, 1995  
Page 2

**Section 2 of the bill** provides that a peace officer may possess a deadly weapon on school grounds.

**Section 3 of the bill** amends AS 11.61.220(a) to correspond with the change made in sec. 1 of the bill.

**Section 4 of the bill** amends AS 14.03.080 by adding a new subsection that provides that school officials do not have to admit a child under suspension or expulsion under AS 14.03.160, added in sec. 6 of the bill.

**Section 5 of the bill** amends AS 14.03 by adding a new section that provides for the search and examination of school lockers by school officials. Subsection (c) of that section, provides that this grant of authority does not diminish any separate authority to search that might exist.

**Section 6 of the bill** amends AS 14.03 by adding a new section that mandates expulsion or suspension for students that possess weapons on school grounds and requires reports from school districts concerning these suspensions and expulsions.

**Section 7 of the bill** amends AS 14.45 by adding a new section that permits private schools to search school lockers as provided in AS 14.03.105 (added by sec. 5 of the bill).

GPL:lmb:glc  
95-121.lmb

GUIDANCE CONCERNING STATE AND LOCAL  
RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE  
GUN-FREE SCHOOLS ACT OF 1994

This guidance is to provide information concerning State and local responsibilities under the Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA), which was enacted on October 20, 1994 as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 [the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)], Public Law 103-382. Preliminary information, including a copy of this new legislation, was mailed to Governors and Chief State School Officers in a letter dated November 28, 1994.

The GFSA states that each State receiving Federal funds under ESEA must have in effect, by October 20, 1995, a State law requiring local educational agencies to expel from school for a period of not less than one year a student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school. Each State's law also must allow the chief administering officer of the local educational agency (LEA) to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

The legislation explicitly states that the GFSA must be construed to be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Therefore, by using the case-by-case exception, LEAs will be able to discipline students with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of Part B of the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and thereby maintain eligibility for Federal financial assistance. The Department intends to issue separate, more detailed guidance on discipline of students with disabilities, which will include clarification of the implementation of the GFSA consistent with IDEA and Section 504.

The following questions and answers have been prepared to assist States, State educational agencies (SEAs), and LEAs in implementing these new requirements.

- Q1. What entities are affected by the provisions of the Gun-Free Schools Act?
- A. Each State, as well as its State educational agency and local educational agencies, has responsibilities under the GFSA.
- Q2. Are private schools subject to the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act?
- A. Private schools are not subject to the provisions of the GFSA, but private school students who participate in LEA programs or activities are subject to the one-year expulsion.

requirement to the extent that such students are under the supervision and control of the LEA as part of their participation in the LEA's programs. For example, a private school student who is enrolled in a Federal program, such as Title I, is subject to a one-year expulsion, but only from Federal program participation, not a one-year expulsion from the private school. Of course, nothing prohibits a private school from imposing a similar expulsion from the private school on a student who brings a weapon to school.

Q3. Will SEAs and LEAs have a period of time to comply with the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act?

A. States must take prompt action to implement the requirements of the GFSA, including prompt action to initiate the legislative process. States have until October 20, 1995 to enact and make effective the one-year expulsion legislation required by Section 14501. States that have not enacted and made effective legislation by this date risk losing ESEA funds.

In order to be eligible to receive ESEA funds, LEAs must have an expulsion policy consistent with the required State law.

LEAs must take immediate action to implement the referral policy required by Section 14602, because the GFSA directs that no ESEA funds shall be made available to an LEA unless that LEA has the required referral policy.

Q4. Is compliance with the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act a condition for the receipt of Federal financial assistance under the ESEA?

A. Yes, compliance with the requirements of the GFSA is a condition for the receipt of funds made available to the State under the ESEA.

Q5. Will failure to comply with the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act result in the termination or withholding of funds made available to the State under the ESEA?

A. Failure to comply with the requirements of the GFSA could result in the withholding, under the provisions of the General Education Provisions Act, of funds made available to the State under the ESEA; however, it is anticipated that technical assistance provided to States will result in timely compliance and make withholding of funds unnecessary.

- Q6. May a State request a waiver of the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act?
- A. Yes. The ESEA authorizes the Secretary to waive the requirements of the GFSA if that action will increase the quality of instruction for students or will improve the academic performance of students. However, it is not anticipated that the requirements of the GFSA will be waived except in unusual circumstances.
- Q7. Does the Gun-Free Schools Act's one-year expulsion requirement preclude any due process proceedings?
- A. No. Students facing expulsion from school are entitled under the U.S. Constitution and most State constitutions to the due process protection of notice and an opportunity to be heard. If, after due process has been accorded, a student is found to have brought a weapon to school, the GFSA requires an expulsion for a period of not less than one year (subject to the case-by-case exception discussed below).
- Q8. What does the Gun-Free Schools Act require of States?
- A. The GFSA requires that each State receiving Federal funds under the ESEA must, by October 20, 1995: (1) have in effect a State law requiring LEAs to expel from school for a period of not less than one year a student who is determined to have brought a weapon to school; (2) have in effect a State law allowing the LEA's chief administering officer to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis; and (3) report to the Secretary on an annual basis concerning information submitted by LEAs to SEAs. SEAs must also ensure that no ESEA funds are made available to an LEA that does not have a referral policy consistent with Section 14602.

#### One-Year Expulsion Requirement

Each State's law must require LEAs to comply with a one-year expulsion requirement; that is, subject to the exception discussed below, any student who brings a weapon to school must be expelled for not less than one year.

#### Case-by-Case Exception

Each State's law must allow the chief administering officer of an LEA to modify the one-year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

### Annual Reporting

Each State must report annually on LEA compliance with the one-year expulsion requirement, and on expulsions imposed under the State law, including the number of students expelled in each LEA and the types of weapons involved.

Q9. What does the Gun-Free Schools Act require of LEAs?

- A. The GFSA requires that LEAs (1) comply with the State law requiring the one-year expulsion; (2) provide an assurance of compliance to the SEA; (3) provide descriptive information to the SEA concerning the LEA's expulsions; and (4) adopt a referral policy for students who bring weapons to school.

### One-Year Expulsion Requirement

LEAs must comply with the State law requiring a one-year expulsion; that is, subject to the case-by-case exception, any student who brings a weapon to school must be expelled for not less than one year.

### LEA Assurance

An LEA must include in its application to the State educational agency for ESEA assistance an assurance that the LEA is in compliance with the State law requiring the one-year expulsion.

### Descriptive Report to SEA

An LEA must include in its application for ESEA assistance a description of the circumstances surrounding expulsions imposed under the one-year expulsion requirement, including:

- (A) the name of the school concerned;
- (B) the number of students expelled from the school; and
- (C) the type of weapons concerned.

### Referral Policy

LEAs must also implement a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a weapon to school.

Q10. When must an LEA implement its referral policy?

- A. LEAs must take immediate action to implement a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a weapon to school. The GFSA directs that no ESEA funds shall be made available to an LEA unless that LEA has the required referral policy.

Q11. When must an LEA submit the required assurance?

- A. In its first application to the State educational agency for ESEA funds after the date that the State enacts and makes effective the required one-year expulsion legislation, the LEA must include an assurance that the LEA is in compliance with the State law.

Q12. What is the role of the SEA in determining whether an LEA is in compliance with the Gun-Free Schools Act?

- A. The GFSA requires States to report to the Secretary on an annual basis concerning LEA compliance. Therefore, before awarding any ESEA funds to an LEA, the SEA must ensure that the LEA has: (1) implemented a policy requiring referral to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system of any student who brings a weapon to school; and (2) included in its application for ESEA funds the assurance and other information required by the GFSA. SEAs must ensure that the LEA application contains:

- (1) an assurance that the LEA is in compliance with the State law requiring the one-year expulsion; and
- (2) a description of the circumstances surrounding expulsions imposed under the one-year expulsion requirement, including:

- (A) the name of the school concerned;
- (B) the number of students expelled from the school; and
- (C) the type of weapons concerned.

Q13. Who is an LEA's "chief administering officer"?

- A. The term "chief administering officer" is not defined by the GFSA. Each LEA should determine, using its own legal framework, which chief operating officer or authority (e.g., Superintendent, Board, etc.) has the power to modify the expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Q14. Can any individual or entity other than the LEA's "chief administering officer" modify the one-year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis?

A. No. However, the chief administering officer may allow another individual or entity to carry out preliminary information gathering functions, and prepare a recommendation for the chief administering officer.

Q15. Is it permissible for an LEA to use the case-by-case exception to avoid compliance with the one-year expulsion requirement?

A. No, this exception may not be used to avoid overall compliance with the one-year expulsion requirement.

Q16. How is the term "weapon" defined?

A. For the purposes of the GFSA, a "weapon" means a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

According to Section 921, the following are included within the definition:

- any weapon which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive
- the frame or receiver of any weapon described above
- any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
- any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas
  - (1) bomb,
  - (2) grenade,
  - (3) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces,
  - (4) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce,
  - (5) mine, or
  - (6) similar device
- any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter

- any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled

According to Section 921, the following are not included in the definition:

- an antique firearm
- a rifle which the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes
- any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon
- any device, although originally designed for use as a weapon, which is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line throwing, safety, or similar device
- surplus ordnance sold, loaned, or given by the Secretary of the Army pursuant to the provisions of section 4684(2), 4685, or 4686 of title 10

In addition, we have been advised by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms that Class-C common fireworks are not included in the definition of weapon.

**Q17. Does the Gun-Free Schools Act preclude classes such as hunting or military education, or activities such as hunting clubs or rifle clubs, which may involve the handling or use of weapons?**

A. No, the GFSA does not prohibit the presence at school of rifles that the owners intend to use solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes.

**Q18. Are knives considered weapons under the Gun-Free Schools Act?**

A. No, for the purposes of the GFSA, the definition of weapon does not include knives. State legislation or an SEA or LEA may, however, decide to broaden its own definition of weapon to include knives.

Q19. What is meant by the term "expulsion"?

A. The term "expulsion" is not defined by the GFSA; however, at a minimum, expulsion means removal from the student's regular school program at the location where the violation occurred.

Q20. Is a State, SEA, or LEA required to provide alternative educational services to students who have been expelled for bringing a weapon to school?

A. The GFSA neither requires nor prohibits the provision of alternative educational services to students who have been expelled. Other Federal, State, or local laws may, however, require that students receive alternative educational services in certain circumstances.

Q21. What is an "alternative setting" for the provision of educational services to an expelled student?

A. An alternative setting is one that is clearly distinguishable from the student's regular school placement.

Q22. Is Federal funding available to provide alternative educational services?

A. Yes, formula grants awarded under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act may be used for alternative educational services. In addition, other Federal funds may be available for alternative educational services, consistent with each program's statutory and regulatory requirements.

Q23. Do the requirements of the Gun-Free Schools Act conflict with requirements that apply to students with disabilities?

A. No. Compliance with the GFSA may be achieved consistently with the requirements that apply to students with disabilities, as long as discipline of such students is determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the IDEA and Section 504. The Department intends to issue separate, more detailed guidance on discipline of students with disabilities, which will include clarification of the implementation of the GFSA consistent with IDEA and Section 504.

Q24. Is it permissible to expel a student for a "school year" rather than a year?

A. No. The statute explicitly states that expulsion shall be for a period of not less than one year.

Q25. Does the expulsion requirement apply only to violations occurring in the school building?

A. No. The one-year expulsion requirement applies to students who bring weapons to any setting that is under the control and supervision of the LEA.



# NEA-ALASKA

*Affiliated with the National Education Association*

NEA-ALASKA

POSITION STATEMENT

HB 28

NEA-Alaska supports passage of HB 28 to restrict the possession of weapons on school property and at school sponsored events. We commend the sponsors for taking one step to curb violence in our schools. Passage of this bill will not end school violence but will clearly send a clear message to students and to parents that weapons are not allowed at school or extracurricular events.

We are aware that the epidemic of violence in Alaskan society has reached the school house door. Nationally the Centers for Disease Control have classified violence among youth as an epidemic. Any serious effort at ending this epidemic must address its root causes. Among the causes is family disintegration, loss of moral values and a popular culture that glorifies violence as a means of settling disputes.

NEA-Alaska is committed to working with its local associations and the legislature to insist upon development and enforcement of laws that guarantees the safety of school employees and children from physical attacks on their person or property. We feel that violence must be addressed because it disrupts the school environment which affects the teaching and learning process.

Safe homes plus safe schools equal safe schools. Safe homes begin with parents spending quality time with their children and exhibiting love and caring within the family setting. Children must be taught the difference between assertiveness and aggressiveness. Little can be done if violence is not seen as wrong at home. Schools cannot change student behavior but families can shape constructive behavior in children.

The issue is complex but we view HB 28 as a step toward creating "gun free zones" for children. Schools must be a safe haven where children and school employees can feel safe from violent attacks.

3-10-95